

[From the Washington Times, June 25, 1995]
 UNDERVALUATION OF A KEY STRATEGIC ASSET

Years ago, a Turkish general was quoted as saying that the trouble with being allied to the Americans was that you never knew when they would stab themselves in the back. This half-serious observation expressed the U.S.-Turkish relationship well. It was solid overall but subject to inexplicable actions, often on Washington's part, that simply negated America's own self-interest.

That is in fact what we are doing once again today. American aid to Turkey has been steadily reduced. Much of it is no longer grant aid at all but loans that since 1994 have been financed at market interest rates. For 1995, even this package has been subjected to restriction, including attempts to tie it to Cyprus, various human rights issues and Turkey's relationship with Armenia.

The generally punitive approach of these amendments reflect American politics at their worst—totally bereft of any consideration of our own strategic interests. A familiar complaint about our relationship with Turkey is that it should be re-examined in light of the end of the Cold War. The implication, of course, is to devalue the alliance as no longer so necessary in the absence of a Soviet threat.

The alliance should be re-examined but the critics will be disappointed. A strong U.S.-Turkish partnership remains fundamental to American interests.

First, Turkey's geographical position puts it in a bad neighborhood that is still vital to U.S. security. This was illustrated dramatically by the Persian Gulf war. There should be no doubt that without Turkey's help in closing Iraq's pipelines, allowing use of North Atlantic Treaty Organization air bases and general political support we could not have defeated Saddam Hussein. Turkey was and is fundamental to an anti-Saddam coalition.

Second, the outcome of the war, as we know, was not to create a new Gulf security order, much less a new world order. Instead we have seen four years of broken-back warfare against Saddam's regime. For this Turkey has paid a very large economic price exacted through disrupted trade and oil flows. The consequences for the Kurdish-populated regions of Turkey and Iraq have been even more troublesome. Operation Provide Comfort, run from Turkey, has averted the worst for the northern Kurds but not established security or peace. Instead the PKK, an authentic terrorist movement helped by such human rights activists as the Assad regime in Syria, among others, has found safe haven in northern Iraq. Turkey's recent military incursion was intended to settle this issue or at least to diminish the problem. But whatever the outcome this is indisputable: The failure of American policy to settle with Saddam has been borne very heavily by Turkey.

To this trouble must be added another. The newly independent states of the former Soviet-run Central Asia see new economic and political relationships with such countries as Turkey and Iran as the best route to secure their future. The oil and gas of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan must flow through these countries or be controlled again by Russian hands on the tap.

Whatever the potential today the Caucasus is torn by war, the Chechnya slaughter; the Russian-manipulated civil war in Georgia; and the Russian-influenced contest between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Seen from Ankara, the once-promising prospect of a less dangerous Central Asia has dissolved into bloodshed and a revival of Russian ambitions. The Turks must view

with great alarm, and so should we, the idea that the Russians will be allowed to station large forces there in violation of the conventional arms-reduction treaty (CFE) about to come into force. It is inexplicable that at the recent Moscow summit President Clinton supported revisions in these force levels in the name of stability; in virtually every instance, Russian military action has made things worse not better.

Finally, there is the frightening consequence of continued mismanagement of the Bosnian crises by the United Nations and NATO, and especially the U.S. failure to act clearheadedly in this crisis, which risks the continuation of essential secular leadership in Ankara. A worst case outcome of Bosnia could well broaden the conflict in a way that might result in Turkey's involvement, with unforeseeable consequences for Western interests.

Against this geopolitical backdrop, the paragons of human rights have railed against Turkey's democracy—and Prime Minister Tansu Cillar has admitted that Turkish democracy is a less-than-perfect mechanism with plenty of rough edges.

We must all be alarmed at the growth of anti-Western sentiment disguised as a return to Islam. In Turkey, as in many other countries, the end of the Cold War has given rise to a struggle for national identity. But whose side shall we take? That of the less-than-perfect democrats or that of the authentic anti-democrats?

At this critical juncture, those who support cuts in assistance or in support for Turkey are willfully blind to U.S. strategic interests. The Turks are a hardy people; they will survive as best they can. But this is not the time for America to stab its own interests in the back. The stakes are too high.

In the absence of an effective U.S.-Turkish partnership, the entire U.S. position in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East will be the biggest loser. The winners will be neither pro-Western nor those interested in human rights. It is high time that we recovered from strategic amnesia.

SPECIAL PEOPLE PROGRAM OF IBPOE OF W

HON. LYNN N. RIVERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 1995

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Special People Program of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks of the World [IBPOE of W]. This program was established to promote assistance to young persons who have special needs because of physical or mental challenges. The members of the IBPOE of W have dedicated their time and efforts to make this very important program a success, to reach out to the special people of their community and to focus attention on the contributions of those special people.

This year Shaun-Keith Pierre Thomas from Ann Arbor, MI has been selected as the 1995 Special People Poster Child and will be honored at a ceremony on August 7. Five-year-old Shaun-Keith represents all special people who face additional physical and mental challenges. In Shaun-Keith's case, cerebral palsy, sometimes prevents him from participating in favorite activities. Daily he struggles to accomplish tasks that most of us take for granted yet he somehow always shows his courage and

his strength. His determination, perseverance, and courage are an excellent model to us all. I offer Shaun-Keith my sincere congratulations and admiration and together with his friends and family wish him all the best.

A CAREER THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 1995

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the people of Michigan are about to lose one of the greatest friends they have ever had. Jim Collison is retiring after 21 years of service in the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. He has had responsibility for EDA programs for the entire State, overseeing more than \$600 million in more than 1,000 projects.

Jim Collison helped make EDA programs succeed because he knew the people of Michigan, and he knew the realities of doing business in Michigan as a result of his being a life long resident of our State, and himself having been involved in a number of businesses and serving as an official of local governments. His dedication to his home State is a great example of how people can be productive in their own areas, rather than looking for the American dream in some place away from home.

His presence in Saginaw goes back to his days at Holy Family High School in Saginaw, and his work at Saginaw Lumber Co. He then became involved in real estate development until he was appointed to the Zilwaukee Township planning department where he developed the city's master plan. He also served at Township Supervisor, and chairman of the county board of supervisors, before it became the board of commissioners.

His sense of community extended beyond his professional activities. He serves as a lecturer and communion assistant at St. Matthew's Catholic Church. He also is a member of the Northwest Utilities Consortium and organized the board of urban renewal.

In addition, he has been blessed with his wife of 44 years, Lozamae, and their five children and six grandchildren. There is no doubt that the support provided by his family has helped him succeed in being the kind of public servant that everyone can respect.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when those who work for governmental agencies fail to receive the proper accolades for the excellent job that they are doing, I believe it is particularly appropriate to recognize and thank Jim Collison for his years of service. His work has meant a great deal to business development in Michigan, and more importantly, to the thousands of people who have benefited from the projects that have gone forward as a result of his careful consideration. His career truly has made a difference. I ask that you and all of our colleagues join me in thanking Jim Collison for his years of service, and wish him the very best with the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.