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Transcript

Chatham House Prize 2010: Award Ceremony

HE Abdullah Gül

President of Turkey, Winner of the 2010 Chatham House Prize

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HE Abdullah Gül

Your Majesty, Sir John Major, your Excellencies, Dr Niblett, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I accept this award with profound honour and humbleness on behalf of my beloved country and the people of Turkey. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Your Majesty for your gesture of awarding the Chatham House Prize while we were still cherishing the wonderful memories of Your Majesty's second state visit to Turkey in 2008. Your presence tonight has made us truly enchanted. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the distinguished members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs for offering this award to me, and I wish to extend my congratulations on the 90th anniversary of the institute.

Your Majesty, distinguished guests, although I take personal pride in receiving it, the award presented to me tonight truly acknowledges the progress achieved by the Turkish nation in recent years, despite many internal and external difficulties. I remember how Turkish people defied the nation's misfortune following the unprecedented economic crisis.

It also honours the resilience and perseverance of a people who have never lost the aspirations for progress and hopes for a better future. As we have all witnessed, a silent revolution in democratic, social and economic standards is taking place in the process of Turkey's quest for full membership to the European Union. This award bears testimony to the merits of a great nation which acts with wisdom, common sense, and civilised culture.

I recall how the Turkish people opposed an unjust war in Iraq and how they are united in the fight against terrorism. The award signifies the role played by Turkey in its multi-dimensional neighbourhood and beyond, where she nurtures peace, stability and welfare.

The prize awards Turkey for becoming a source of inspiration, as a shining and great example in the Islamic world of a vibrant democracy and a flourishing free market economy. The award also symbolises the success of hard working people whose sweat was key to making Turkey the fastest growing economy among the OECD members this year.

Finally, the award that I receive tonight thoroughly signifies once again the eternal friendship between Turkey and the United Kingdom whose alliance and cooperation made a huge difference in history, and are destined to offer even more promising prospects in the future.

Your Majesty, distinguished guests, with these thoughts I would like to once again extend my sincere thanks to Your Majesty, and to the members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Thank you.