

**Article of Ambassador Ertuğrul
(Japan Times)**

I am honored to address the esteemed readers of the Japan Times on the occasion of the 102nd anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye.

On this meaningful day, we once again respectfully commemorate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, and we pay our deepest gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives for our nation.

Guided by our enduring objective to achieve “Peace at Home, Peace in the World”, as set out by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, today we continue to follow a proactive foreign policy that reflects the genuine values of our nation.

Democracy, rule of law, human rights, and global welfare are the cornerstones of our foreign policy approach.

Although our diplomatic relations with Japan officially started in 1924, our friendship goes back even further. After delivering the official gifts of the Ottoman Palace, the Ertuğrul Frigate sank off the shores of Kushimoto in 1890. This tragic event, which fostered time-tested friendship between the Turkish and the Japanese people, symbolizes the beginning of our long history of solidarity. We always remember the bravery and assistance of the Japanese people who saved the Turkish sailors and sent them back home.

In the same manner, during the Iran-Iraq War in 1985, Türkiye evacuated 215 Japanese citizens from Tehran by the Turkish Airlines aircrafts. This evacuation was another milestone in the long history of the Turkish-Japanese friendships.

Following these memorable milestones, our friendship has consolidated even stronger with the solidarity demonstrated mutually in the recent decades following the major earthquakes.

The centennial of our diplomatic relations last year has given momentum to our cooperation in every field. On this occasion, we had the honor to host Their Highnesses Crown Prince and Princess Akishino. We have organized numerous cultural events throughout the year, and the Turkish and Japanese military vessels have mutually paid port visits.

Earlier this year, H.E. Numan Kurtulmuş, Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and H.E. Ömer Bolat, Minister of Trade, visited Japan.

The visit of H.E. Nakatani, Minister of Defense in August, was particularly notable as the first ever visit to our country from Japan at this capacity.

Most recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming Her Highness Princess Akiko on her 8th visit to our country on the occasion of commemorating the 135th anniversary of the Ertuğrul Frigate incident. Princess Akiko pledged to strengthen the enduring

"humanitarian, cultural and scientific bridge" between Türkiye and Japan, a cherished bond spanning three generations.

Being the easternmost European and the westernmost Asian country, Türkiye aims to strengthen its existing strategic ties and establish new ones. In this framework, our "the Asia Anew" initiative has provided us with the opportunity to lay the foundations of a comprehensive approach towards Asia and the Pacific, "The Asia Anew" and the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) have a common ground.

In this vein, Türkiye places significant emphasis on strengthening and developing its cooperation with Japan in every field, in particular economy, energy, science, education, culture and technology.

As a clear reflection of the importance we attach to our cooperation with Japan, we upgraded our relations to the level of "Strategic Partnership" in 2013.

Recently, we hosted the 28th meeting of the Türkiye-Japan Joint Business Council. Bringing together business leaders from both countries, Business Council continues to serve as a fruitful platform to explore cooperation opportunities in various sectors. We are confident that such gatherings will deepen our collaboration in trade and investment in Türkiye and Japan.

Tourism is another field that has potential to be explored. Last year, we welcomed 134,000 Japanese tourists in our country, and 64,000 Turkish tourists visited Japan. These numbers, which have already surpassed the pre-pandemic levels, are expected to increase in the near future.

Currently, Turkish Airlines has 21 weekly frequencies from Tokyo and Osaka, while All Nippon Airways (ANA) has three weekly frequencies between Tokyo and Istanbul. We are looking forward to increase the Turkish Airlines' frequencies starting from early next year.

Before concluding, I would like to underline that, the Osaka Expo 2025 provided an excellent opportunity to share our cultural heritage, strengthening our commitment to cultural exchange. I once again sincerely congratulate the Japanese authorities for the successful organization of the event.

As celebrating the 102nd anniversary of our Republic, we are pleased to witness that the Turkish and Japanese people always stand by each other. I am confident that this solidarity will pave the way for the next generations to carry the existing excellent social ties even further.

Oğuzhan Ertuğrul

Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye