

---

## Ankara, Yerevan Exchange Warm Messages

Today's Zaman, Turkey - 28/4/2008

---

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sent a congratulatory message to his new Armenian counterpart, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, expressing hopes for a new era that will contribute to regional peace, stability and welfare.

It is a duty for the two prime ministers to resolve bilateral disputes through dialogue and within the framework of good-neighborhood principles, Erdogan said in his message to Sargsyan, the Anatolia news agency reported yesterday from Yerevan, citing a report by the Armenia-based Mediamax news agency.

Sargsyan took office as prime minister on April 9 by the decree of newly elected President Serzh Sarkisian. Referring to presidential elections held in Armenia in February, Erdogan said that a new era has opened via those elections and that certain steps for improving relations could be taken in this new era via Sargsyan's support.

"I would like to emphasize that earlier proposals introduced by your side which will contribute to the process [related to improving relations] are still valid," Erdogan was quoted as saying in the message, in an apparent reference to his 2005 proposal to Armenia's then-President Robert Kocharian for establishing a joint committee of historians for exploring the controversial 1915 killings of Anatolian Armenians. In his response to Erdogan, Sargsyan said that "he believes direct bilateral talks will be helpful for the resolution of all problems which concern both sides," Anatolia said.

Meanwhile, newly appointed Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian responded to a congratulatory message he had received from Turkey's Foreign Minister Ali Babacan last week.

"I believe that our peoples, who overcame the hard periods of the past, will build in the future a world of peace and confidence together. We cannot even imagine a world without peace," Nalbandian said. Last week Babacan said he had written to his Armenian counterpart, saying that Turkey was "open to dialogue to normalize Turkish-Armenian ties in the new era."

---