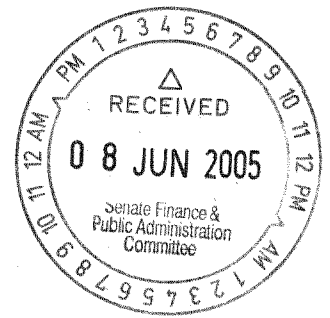


From: vbasarin [mailto:vbasarin@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 June 2005 5:01 PM
To: FPA, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Submission to the Senate Gallipoli Inquiry



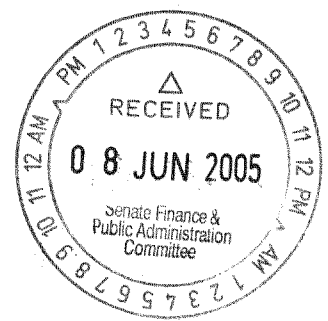
Dear Sir/Madam

Attached please find my submission to the above mentioned inquiry.

Sincerely yours

Vecihi (John) Basarin
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Hampton, 3188
Tel: 03-95020605, 0438055056

**Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia**



Inquiry into matters relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula

Please note that I would like to address (a) and (d) of the Terms of Reference.

(a) the circumstances surrounding the request by the Australian Government to the Turkish Government in August 2004 to undertake work to ease congestion on the Gallipoli Peninsula;

I am a Turkish Australian, born in Istanbul and migrated to Australia 30+ years ago as a chemical engineer. Before I came to Australia, I did not realise the importance of Gallipoli for Australians, nor did I know the involvement of Australia in the famous campaign. However, soon after arrival, the significance of Gallipoli and its immense meaning to Australia became quite clear to me.

Realising the need to also tell the other side of the Gallipoli story in Australia, as early as in 1985, jointly with my wife Mrs Hatice Hurmuz Basarin and Dr Kevin Fewster, we wrote a book entitled 'A Turkish View of Gallipoli; Canakkale', Hodja Publications, Melbourne, 1985. The book told the history of the Gallipoli campaign from both sides and established a peace based platform to tell the story. We believe that this book made a significant impact on the Australian society and assisted a process of mutual understanding with the Turkish Australians and later with Turkey.

When the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke visited Anzac Cove with veterans in 1990, the visit became the catalyst for the increase in numbers of people visiting Gallipoli. The steady stream of Australians coming to Gallipoli, in particular around Anzac Day, in turn raised the interest of Turkish people. They were trying to understand the reasons for Australians to visit Gallipoli in ever growing numbers. Over a period of several years, the interest in Turkey turned into a sizeable visitation of Gallipoli by Turks as well. The display of the military genius of Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk, the first president of the Republic of Turkey) against Anzacs during the 1915 campaign became the focus of Turkish attention at the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The three authors mentioned earlier, updated and totally revised their first book and it was then published in 2003 by Allen & Unwin as 'Gallipoli- The Turkish Story'. This book was then translated into Turkish and published in Istanbul with the title 'Gelibolu-Savasla Baslayan Dostluk' (2005) which translates as "Gallipoli 1915- The Friendship that began with a War". Both books have sold well in respective countries, reflecting the interest in both Turkey and Australia and the two communities' desire to understand the perspective of the other side.

Prepared by Vecihi (John) Basarin

Although 18th of March, the anniversary of Turkish victory against the Allied Naval Armada at Gallipoli, has always been officially celebrated in Turkey, 25th of April has in later years also become important. At the 90th Anniversary which I attended, there were apparently 22,000 Australian/New Zealanders and 10,000 Turks at Anzac Cove.

Moreover, the present Turkish Government has asked that the Gallipoli Peninsula be the first visit of any school in Turkey. So there are up to 1000 (yes one thousand) buses every week visiting the Peninsula. The roads have been deteriorating over the years, in particular around Anzac Cove area where the sea began to undermine the road.

The Turkish authorities involved in constructing the road I spoke to recently, told me that they were really worried that one of the busses full of school children or tourists would be involved in a road collapse in to the sea. They also told me that the condition of the road was well documented and reported to the Australian authorities long time ago. They apparently have received only encouragement from the Australians to fix the problem.

Other Turkish authorities at the Gallipoli National Park told me that they have never seen any graves disturbed during the road construction. They were quite categorical about this.

During a conversation with the Prime Minister at the breakfast at Kum Hotel, Gallipoli on 25th of April, I mentioned that the main issue in all of this road construction was the failure to communicate with the public of what was happening. I hope the lesson has been learned.

(d) any other related matters.

Apparently the light and sound show at Anzac Cove costed \$3 million to the Government. The value of that is rather questionable, in fact due to the inappropriateness of the pop music played at one stage there were strong negatives. Another faux-pax which the Australian public would not be aware that happened during the dawn ceremony relates to the Turkish music played by the Australian string quartet. They actually played a mixture of two Turkish tunes; "Canakkale Icinde" with "Uskudara Giderken". This was almost culturally offensive since the first one is a solemn song that is totally identified with the event and the second one is a light-hearted flippant love song.

To spend so much money and end up with very little to show for it can't be condoned. It would be a better to fund projects beneficial to the improvement of the Gallipoli National Park and also enhance links between the Turkish and Australian communities. The following should be the yardsticks for a meaningful outcome:

- ◆ A fund to be established for distribution to worthy projects from Turkey or Australia
- ◆ The fund distribution decisions to be taken by a group of prominent Turks and Australians who would be culturally and historically aware.