IT'S A BIRD; IT'S A COUNTRY; IT'S TURKEY

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Category: Opinions

By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 29 February 2016

AHMET: Sabah Khayeer, Mehmet. Where have you been? I heard the Ankara bureaucrats are keeping you busy.

MEHMET: Evet, evet, I've been working long hours.

AHMET: The last time we talked you said you had joined a government brain thrust which monitored anti-Turkey letters on the Internet.

MEHMET: There's now a more urgent project I am involved in. It's highly confidential.

AHMET: Come on, arkadash.You know you can trust me. Tell me… what is it?

MEHMET: Two weeks ago I and 500 others public relations experts were invited to the new Presidential Palace in Ankara for a top-secret conference.

AHMET: You mean the 1,150-room palace which cost us $615 million?

MEHMET: It is really something to behold.

AHMET: The Ottoman Sultans didn't have it so good, I hear. Paid for by you and me and millions of Turkish taxpayers. And now we have a financial meltdown. Did you ride the 63 elevators or drink from the gold-inlaid glasses which cost 700 million liras? Did you walk on the Italian marble which cost 3,000 euros per square meter?

MEHMET: What's with you today? You've become a wet blanket. Why are you carping? I thought you adored Padishah Erdogan.

AHMET: Did you know the monthly natural gas bill (344,000 liras) of the palace is equal to the monthly salaries of 364 minimum wage workers? Did your idol Erdogan take you to his underground bunker? But go on…tell me about Erdogan's super-secret project.

MEHMET: We gathered in the Great Hall and after prayer and blessings by a dozen imams, the President Erdogan told us about the hush-hush project. It's a daring plan. It will shake the English language. Listen carefully now. We will launch a campaign to force English dictionary publishers and lexicographers to delete "turkey" from their dictionaries. We will force them to come up with a new word to describe the ugly, unwieldy American bird. There will be no more "turkey" in the infidel dictionaries. The only Turkey will be in capital T. No more ridicule of our great country.

AHMET: Sorry, Mehmet but it sounds like a hare-brained idea.

MEHMET: I am beginning to regret confiding in you. You are close to talking sedition. What's happened to you?

AHMET: Nothing except that I am reading foreign books and the Internet. I am reading sources other

than the ones approved by our democratic and progressive government. You remember decades ago we tried to change "Turkey" to "Türkiye" but no one paid any attention to our diktat.

MEHMET: But we are better organized now. When Erdogan gives the word, Diaspora Turks will demonstrate 24/7 in front of the Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale Universities. They will denounce the dictionary publishers as racist, Islamophobic, anti-Turk…

AHMET: And you will fire actor Ben Affleck as spokesman for the Turkish Airlines…

MEHMET: With a name like that, I am sure the actor has Turkish roots.

AHMET: Another thing: the word "Turkey" is a word fabricated by Italians. In Ottoman times "Turk" meant "bumpkin". The filthy Arabs even punned about it. They said: "Itrak bi-i idrak" meaning Turks are jerks.

Don't you think it would be a better idea to hold a competition and offer the infidel professors $10,000 for the best new word for "turkey".

MEHMET: Subhan Allah. That's a great idea. Erdogan and his son have billions of dollars, thanks to their oil purchases from you know who. $10,000 isn't even pocket money for them.

AHMET: Ulan… wait a moment: I have a better idea. Why not give the money to me? I have a great substitute word: "Gobble-Gobble Bird".

MEHMET: Are you making fun of me?

AHMET: Certainly not. There's grouse, grebe, goose, gannet, gull… Gobble will fit in nicely.

MEHMET: Enough, I said.

AHMET: How about "Armenian Bird"? Why not? We have changed thousands of Armenian place names into Turkish. It would be a meagre return of the compliment.

MEHMET: You keep it up… and this will be our last conversation, arkadash.

AHMET: Tell me something: at the brain thrust did Erdogan give any hint about his preference?

MEHMET: Erdogan doesn't hint. Everyone knows that.

AHMET: So back to the drawing board, as our American allies say.

MEHMET: Thanks to the gavoor books you've been reading you've now begun to use foreign expressions too.

AHMET: Why so huffy about a mere word? After all, we are happy when the infidels say "Turkish bath" although that mode of bathing preceded the Turks by thousands of years. We are happy when the infidels say "turquoise" although that gem stone has never been mined in Asia Minor. We are happy when infidels say "Turkish coffee" when the beverage or that mode of brewing is not native to

Turkey….

MEHMET: That does it. Salaam aleikum.

AHMET: Arkadash, if you expect your friends to agree with you on every topic then they are not your friends. What's the point of conversing when we only echo each other?

MEHMET: The devil has gotten into you….

AHMET: Next thing you will accuse me of is being a hidden Armenian.

MEHMET: Why didn't I think of that? For all I know, you could be an Armand: one of those French-sounding names Istanbul Armenians adopt believing we don't know it's intended to disguise their gavoor identity.

AHMET: Eureka! By Allah, I've got it. Why not tell the infidels to replace "turkey" with "gavoor"? Let on next Thanksgiving Day infidel Americans eat gavoor and corn on the cob.

MEHMET: That does it. Don't be surprised if you hear a knock at your door at 3 o'clock tomorrow morning.

AHMET: Be my guest. I will be reading Hoja Nassredin stories. The book is full of characters like you.