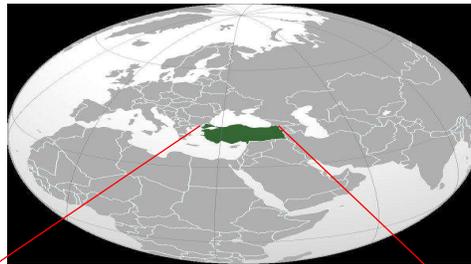


SPOTLIGHT ON TURKEY



Turkey, the Land Bridge between East and West is a meeting ground of cultures for almost 10,000 years. Connecting Western Europe and the Balkans to Central Asia and the Middle East, Turkey has been a kingpin in Eurasian history. Silk Road traders, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Mongolian horsemen were just a few who passed through the country, while the Ottoman sultans used Istanbul as the capital of an empire that sprawled from Budapest to Bagdad. Throughout its long history the Anatolian Plateau has provided a corridor of commerce and conquest for such varied peoples as Assyrians, Hittites, Phrygians, Lycians, Lydians, Urartians, Greeks, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Armenians, Byzantines, Arabs, Kurds and Seljuk and Ottoman Turks. Not many countries have a longer history than Turkey. For more than a hundred centuries it has spawned diverse empires and those, along with the disparate peoples who have lived here, all contributed to the formation of a modern Turkish identity. The Turkish people today represent a fusion of all of these different strains. The Turkish identity rests not so much on a common ethnic heritage, but on cultural and linguistic bonds forged under the Ottoman rulers for over six centuries and the revered Kemal Atatürk who founded the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923.