

Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Differences in European and US Attitudes, and Challenges for Turkey

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This article provides an interpretive overview of developments that changed European Union (EU) policies toward Turkey's candidacy for membership, with a special focus on European and US differences on this issue as well as implications for Turkish government policy.

It reviews developments from the December 1997 Luxembourg summit (when the EU, in effect, "rejected" Turkey's request for accession) to the December 1999 Helsinki summit (when the EU reversed that decision and made Turkey a candidate state). The article then examines Turkey's vulnerability to external threats; and US and EU (especially German, French, and Greek) perceptions of Turkey's role relative to their post-Cold War security interests. It looks at two key issues regarding Turkish membership: 1) the form an Accession Partnership Document (APD) with Turkey would take and whether the EU would endorse it; and 2) the European Security Defense Policy (ESDP), the role Turkey would play in it, and whether NATO would endorse it. Finally, it attempts to understand the challenges Turkey faces in balancing the steps necessary to begin negotiations for accession against the risks such steps pose for internal cohesion and regional security.

Recent Developments in Turkish-EU Relations

1. The European Union decision in December 1997 to reject Turkey's request to be named a candidate for accession.

Turkey's interest in accession to the European Union can be traced back to 1959 when it applied for associate membership in what was then the European Economic Community. Turkey became an associate member following the Ankara Treaty on September 12, 1963 (effective in 1964) and applied for full membership during the prime ministership of Turgut Ozal in April 1987. In December 1989, the European Commission told the Turks that they were eligible but their application could not be considered before 1993 at the earliest. The Commission argued that enlarging the Community would weaken its capacity to pursue policies required for the success of the Single European Act of 1986, which called for the establishment of a wholly integrated internal market by the end of 1992.

Specific concerns addressed by the commission were Turkey's size and population—it had a bigger area and eventually would have a larger population than any member state—and the fact that Turkey had a substantially lower level of development than the European average. Purchasing power in Turkey was one-third that of the EC average, while the country suffered from high inflation rates and high unemployment. More than 50 percent of the labor force was employed in agriculture, and the Community was concerned about the access of Turkish labor to the EC labor market at a time when unemployment was a problem in the 12 associated economies.

Other important issues involved problems relating to human rights, the Kurdish question, disputes with Greece, the Cyprus problem, and the level of democracy in

Turkey. The critical factor in the EU's deliberations, however, was the fact that in recent years political considerations had become more important than economic ones. The rejection of Turkey's application was influenced by a number of these political factors, including the EC's plans for southern enlargement, an ongoing reformulation of its external identity, and the increased importance it gave to shared norms. The bottom line was that when it came to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, Turkey lagged behind.¹

The commission did recommend a number of measures that would enable both Turkey and the EC to move toward increased interdependence and integration. While the Turks were disappointed, the postponement was not unexpected. The government, putting on its best face, emphasized the report's reaffirmation of Turkey's qualification to become a full member and its call for a customs union between Turkey and the EC by 1995.² One analyst has observed that the foreign offices of the larger EU states, under the assumption that Turkey could not be "digested" at the same time as Central and Eastern Europe but believing that a Customs Union would be good for the future of Europe, promoted the Customs Union as "necessary and enough to keep Turkey pro-European while denying membership."³ Another way of putting it is that the Europeans believed a vote for the Customs Union would preclude Islamicists from coming to power in Turkey.⁴

Turkish commentators, meanwhile, worried that developments might lead to the creation of a fortress Europe that excluded Turkey, as in the early postwar era. They saw the lack of commitment to Turkey's entry down the road as the denial of a right that Turkey had earned and a rejection of Turkey's civilizational commitment to Europe and the West that went back to the time of Ataturk.⁵ They saw EC membership, on the other hand, as guaranteeing Turkey's continued Westernization and cementing its identity in Europe. Anything less, Turkish commentators thought, would be hypocritical and discriminatory. Ozal himself warned that rejection would push Turkey away from Europe and encourage the spread of religious fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalists had not captured more than ten percent of the vote in Turkey in recent years, but their cause in Turkey, in conjunction with other factors, would be fueled by rejection.⁶

By 1993, Turkey's primary focus was on joining the Customs Union, a goal realized in 1996 in spite of the threat of a Greek veto, which was withdrawn only when

¹ See EC Commission, "Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community," SEC (89) 2290 final, Brussels, Dec. 18, 1989, and Sevilay Elgun Kahraman, "Rethinking Turkey-European Relations," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp 1-20.

² See Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1991, pp. 41-42.

³ Christopher Brewin, "European Union Perspectives on Cyprus Accession," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, January 2000, p. 26.

⁴ Christopher Brewin, *The European Union and Cyprus* (Eothen: Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, 2000), p. 137.

⁵ Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Overlook Press: Woodstock, N.Y., 2000), p. 538. Ataturk's biographer Andrew Mango notes that Ataturk's defined goal was best translated as "contemporary civilization," by which (according to Zeki Kuneralp) he clearly meant those Western principles that ensured material well-being and political order for humankind; Ataturk's recorded statements, Mango argues, make clear that he believed in "an inclusive civic nationalism." Andrew Mango, "Ataturk and the Future of Turkey," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 117, 119.

⁶ Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 41-43.

the EU agreed to establish a firm date for opening accession negotiations with the Greek Cypriot-controlled Republic of Cyprus (which had applied for membership in July 1990). In March 1995 the EU signed a Customs Union agreement with Turkey; in December 1995, after significant lobbying by many parties, including the US government and Europe's social democrats, the agreement was endorsed by the European Parliament; and in January 1996 it went into effect. If the Customs Union's success was evident in the ensuing increase in free trade in manufactured goods between Turkey and the European Union, it was also clear that further changes would be required to make EU regulations applicable to Turkey, and that these changes ultimately depended on Turkey's accession to the EU—full membership was necessary to permit financial assistance and the negotiation of mutual preferences.⁷

At the Luxembourg summit in December 1997, however, the European Union rejected Turkey's request to be included among the countries eligible for membership. The French and Italian governments were supportive, but Germany and Greece were opposed to Turkey's candidacy. Among the reasons for rejection, aside from the continuation of many of the problems cited earlier, were rising tensions in Turkey between secularists and Islamicists, the consequent role being played by the military in Turkish politics, cultural prejudice in the EU, unrealistic expectations on the part of Turkey, and misunderstandings between the Turks and the EU. While included in the enlargement process, Turkey was not given a pre-accession strategy.⁸

The Turks, in turn, "rejected" the Luxembourg decision on December 14, and suspended political dialogue with the EU. They were bitter because, despite France's and Italy's favorable attitude toward a fellow Mediterranean state, Germany and Greece took a more negative attitude—Germany, according to one account, because of the Kohl government's efforts to play on anti-immigrant sentiment in its upcoming national elections, and Greece because of longstanding differences over Cyprus and the Aegean, which had been particularly problematic between 1995 and 1997.⁹

Greece also was successful in placing Cyprus on a fast track for EU accession in spite of Turkey's desire that there be a prior settlement between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The EU had declared, in 1993, Cyprus eligible in principle for membership. In 1995, in a decision that accompanied the conclusion of the Customs Union between Greece and Turkey, and which, as noted previously, was critical in lifting Greece's veto and obtaining its consent to the Customs Union with Turkey, the EU decided that negotiations with Cyprus would take place six months after the conference on adopting the EU institutions for enlargement (scheduled to begin at the end of March 1996). In 1997, therefore, consistent with that decision and benefiting from the assumption in Brussels that the EU could pressure the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities

⁷ Clement Dodd, "Turkey and the Cyprus Question," in Alan Makovsky and Sabri Sayari, eds., *Turkey's New World: Changing Dynamics in Turkish Foreign Policy* (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: Washington, D.C., 2000), pp. 158-159; Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Brookings: Washington, D.C., 2000), pp. 186-191.

⁸ Atila Eralp, "Turkey and the European Union in the Post-Cold War Era," in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 177; Kramer, pp. 192-196.

⁹ M. James Wilkinson, "The United State, Turkey, and Greece—Three's a Crowd," in Morton Abramowitz, ed., *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (The Century Foundation: New York, 2000), p. 207.

to resolve their differences,¹⁰ Cyprus was given the go-ahead to begin negotiations over accession. The negotiations began in 1998.¹¹

2. *The Helsinki European Union Council decision on December 13, 1999, to grant Turkey the status of a candidate for EU membership.*

In December 1999, two years after its rejection of Turkey's candidacy for accession, the EU agreed to accept Turkey as a candidate for EU membership. It also asserted that the accession of Cyprus, with which accession negotiations had been opened in 1998, was not conditional on a political settlement between the two communities on Cyprus. While this decision "accepting" Turkey's candidacy was seen in Turkey as reversing the EU's 1997 "rejection" of Turkey, it was already clear (from the second regular Commission report in October 1999) that Turkey would need to make substantial progress on the Copenhagen political criteria (established in 1993 as conditions for formal accession talks) before negotiations could begin. The EU continued to see "serious shortcomings in terms of human rights and protection of minorities," and asserted that "Turkey's stance on the Cyprus question remain[ed] at odds both with UN resolutions and with the EU position." The European Parliament, in its resolution on preparations for the Helsinki European Council, pointed out that "negotiations cannot be opened because Turkey is still nowhere near meeting the political criteria of Copenhagen." The Parliament insisted: "As a candidate country, Turkey must make clear and verifiable progress in meeting those criteria."¹²

The factors that contributed to this reversal in policy grew out of Turkey's response to its rejection by the EU in 1997, articulated at the time by Foreign Minister Ismail Cem: Turkey was becoming a regional power and no longer needed to be fixated on Europe.¹³ This development was evident even at the very beginning of the post-Cold War era in Turkey's pursuit of a more independent foreign policy that would support its aspirations to be a regional power.¹⁴ A direct consequence of this independent foreign policy, subsequently reinforced by a "strategic partnership" with Israel, was Turkey's 1998 threat to use force against Syria if it did not expel Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which Syria had been supporting.¹⁵ Syria agreed to comply with Ankara's wishes in October 1998, causing Ocalan to flee—first to Russia, then Italy, and finally to Kenya where he was captured by the Turks in February 1999.

The capture of Ocalan had a number of important ramifications: 1) It resulted in a change in the foreign ministry of Greece from the rabidly anti-Turkish Foreign Minister

¹⁰ Tozun Bahcheli, "Turkish Policy toward Greece," in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 140; and Wilkinson, "The United States, Turkey, and Greece," in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 207.

¹¹ Kramer, pp. 177; and Brewin, "European Union Perspectives," p. 29.

¹² http://www.europarl.eu.int/enlargement/briefings/7a1_en.htm

¹³ Stephen Kinzer, "Turkey Turns Away from Europe Toward New Strategic Relationships," *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1997.

¹⁴ See Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," pp. 34-38. For a good discussion of Turkey's more adventurous foreign policy in general and the Turkish-Israeli relationship in particular, see Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter-Spring 1999), pp. 88-119.

¹⁵ See Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VI, No. 4, June 1999, pp. 174-191.

Theodor Pangalos, who had referred to Turks as “bandits, murderers, and rapists,”¹⁶ and who allegedly had assisted Ocalan in his wanderings, to George Papandreou, who has been much more constructive in his approach to Greek-Turkish relations; 2) it contributed to the popularity in Turkey of Bulent Ecevit, whose party was reelected in the April 1999 national elections with a plurality of votes, and who subsequently formed a relatively stable coalition government that could pursue a more constructive foreign policy;¹⁷ 3) it led to Ocalan’s trial and death sentence in June 1999; and 4) it produced Ocalan’s order in August 1999 to the PKK to end its armed struggle, signaling the beginning of the end of the PKK (which resolved in January 2000 to drop its armed struggle, giving Turkey a bit more latitude to address the complicated Kurdish question). These developments, along with others discussed below, encouraged the EU (which also desired that Ocalan’s death sentence be overturned) to provide carrots to the Turkish government in the way of opening the door to accession. Also significant in the EU change of heart was continuing US support for Turkey’s accession.¹⁸

The advent of Papandreou (who seemed persuaded that Greek security was better achieved by Turkish membership rather than exclusion from the EU) and good chemistry between him and his Turkish counterpart, Ismail Cem, resulted in better relations between Greece and Turkey—a development evident in mutual visits and several minor agreements.¹⁹ A further catalyst to this process was provided by two catastrophes: the first, an earthquake in Turkey in August 1999, that, along with a subsequent (much smaller) one, killed approximately 18,000 people and made homeless 600,000 more; and a smaller earthquake in Greece in September 1999 that killed 150 people. The immediate response of citizens in both countries to the tragedies of their neighbors facilitated a warmer attitude on the part of both governments.

The European Parliament, meanwhile, had also undergone changes—in particular, the replacement in October 1998 of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (who only a year before was quoted as saying that “Turkish membership in the EU is not possible,” and that the EU was “a civilization project” within which “Turkey has no place”) with Gerhard Schroeder who, with his Green party coalition partners, was more favorably disposed toward Turkey’s accession. The Italians, too, after the row over Ocalan’s extradition during his sojourn there, had been seeking to restore better relations with Turkey and support Turkish candidacy. As one commentator observed, “The quake shifted Brussels debate from *whether* the Turkish candidacy would be elevated to *how* this should be done, from *whether* to loosen the purse strings for Turkey to *which* channel should be used for generous fund transfers.”²⁰ The result was that in December 1999 the EU agreed to accept Turkey as a candidate for EU membership.

¹⁶ *Financial Times*, Feb. 19, 1999.

¹⁷ For the Turkish elections, see the references cited in n. 74.

¹⁸ On the question of US support, see Morton Abramowitz, “The Complexities of American Policymaking on Turkey,” in Abramowitz, *Turkey’s Transformation*, p. 180; and Alan Makovsky, “US Policy toward Turkey: Progress and Problems,” in Abramowitz, *Turkey’s Transformation*, p. 245.

¹⁹ Stephen Kinzer, “Turkey and Greece Enter a ‘New Era,’” *The International Herald Tribune*, January 21, 2000.

²⁰ *Guardian*, March 7, 1997, cited in Meltem Muftuler-Bac, “Through the Looking Glass: Turkey in Europe,” p. 34; Atila Eralp, “Turkey and the European Union in the Post-Cold War Era,” in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 184; Wilkinson, “The United States, Turkey, and Greece,” in Abramowitz, *Turkey’s*

Before examining the most recent developments regarding Turkey's accession—the European Union's decision in December 2000 to endorse the Accession Partnership Document with Turkey, and its efforts to develop the European Security Defense Policy—it will be useful to discuss the important security issues that Turkey sees at stake in these deliberations and the different perspectives of its US and EU interlocutors.

The Security Issues involved in Turkey's accession to the EU

Some of the critical security issues and tensions involved in Turkey's accession to the EU and the related question of Turkey's relationships with its allies can be illuminated by: 1) a better understanding of the potential threats that regional powers pose to Turkey's existence, and 2) a comparison of US and EU perceptions of the threats to Turkey and their differing assessments of Turkey's potential role in furthering their own security interests.

1. Turkey's Vulnerability to External Threats as Factors Regarding EU Accession

Since the Gulf War, and in the context of what it has seen as an increasingly hostile post-Cold War regional environment, Turkey's more activist foreign policies toward its neighbors contrast markedly with its prior, more conservative foreign policies.²¹ Explanations for these policies are not mutually exclusive. As Deputy Chief of staff General Cevik Bir observed in 1997, some of Turkey's neighboring states continue to claim Turkish territory (one could cite Armenia, Syria, and Greece); some try to export regimes contrary to Turkey's constitutional order (one could cite Iran); and some have supported terrorism against Turkey (one could cite Russia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and, relatively recently, Greece).²²

Turkey's response to these threats, based on the notion that one's enemies determine one's friends, has been periodically reinforced by a sense that Europe fundamentally rejects Turkey—as evidenced by actions of the European Commission in 1989 and 1997 and by comments about Turks such as those by Helmut Kohl in 1997—and has resulted in defensive statements and a greater emphasis on self-reliance. The EU decision at the Luxembourg summit in December 1997 to exclude Turkey from the list of the next potential candidates to join the EU, for example, caused Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz to react angrily, freeze ties with the EU, and rethink his country's foreign policy. His reaction, which was widely shared by his compatriots, explains, in part, the more independent foreign policy subsequently pursued by Turkey, even after the decision of the EU at the Helsinki summit in December 1999 opened the door to the EU.

Turkey's foreign policy, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem told Stephen Kinzer of the *New York Times* in December 1997, was no longer fixated on Europe. The fall of the Soviet Union, the creation of the newly independent states, and a growing consciousness of Turkey's European and Asian identity, he observed, had provided Turkey with a new approach. The fixation on Europe had been the result of a limited outlook, he noted, of a

Transformation, pp. 204, 209-10. See also Abramowitz, "The Complexity of American Policymaking on Turkey," in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 180.

²¹ See Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," pp. 34-38.

²² For a shortened version of his presentation to the National Defense University in Nov. 1997, see General Cevik Bir, "Turkey's Role in the New World Order," *Strategic Forum*, No. 135, Feb. 1998.

feeling that Turks had to resolve a conflict over whether they were European or Asian. Culturally, historically, and geographically, Turks were becoming aware of the fact that they didn't have to choose and that they were a global state.²³

The result of this line of thinking (which could be characterized as both prudent and defensive), reinforced by what the Turks regard as Europe's unhelpful response to the Ocalan affair and by the need to develop friends and allies, has been twofold: on the one hand, a cautious attitude toward Turkey's relationships with a de facto network of regional states (*which one could loosely characterize as "anti-Turkish"*) whose interests are often at cross-purposes with Turkey and whose antipathies are often directed toward Turkey; and, on the other hand, an attempt to seek common ground with a de facto network of friendly states (*which one might loosely characterize as "pro-Turkish"*) bound by common interests and antipathies in the Balkans, the Caspian Basin, and the Middle East.²⁴ The discussion that follows is only suggestive and is meant to give those with a Eurocentric focus a sense of the extent to which Turkey lives in a "rough neighborhood."

A. *The "Anti-Turkish" States* in the region include:

-- *Russia*: which historically (like other "Christian" countries such as Armenia, Greece, Serbia, and Cyprus) has been hostile toward Turkey. More recently, it has been hostile toward Turkish interests in the Caucasus, where it has promoted ethnic tensions as a means of controlling the region. Russia opposes Azerbaijani and Georgian attempts to assert themselves, opt out of the CIS, and move closer to Turkey and NATO. With Iran, Russia supported Armenia in its war against Azerbaijan, and it has been building up its forces in Armenia. Beyond shipping over \$1 billion in arms to Armenia in the past, Russia recently delivered MiG-29s and S-300 air defense systems to Armenia. It has supported Iran's interest in acquiring nuclear technology and has close relations with Iraq. In the past, with Syria, Russia supported the PKK against Turkey. It also sold S-300 air defense systems to Cyprus; and it supported Serbia against NATO in Kosovo.

--*Armenia*: which, according to PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, supported PKK terrorism in Turkey. It benefited from Russian and Iranian support in its war with Azerbaijan and continues to rely on Russian support to protect its interests in the Caucasus. It serves Russian interests by blocking Azerbaijan's (and Georgia's) desire to construct a pipeline directly to Turkey. Through the Armenian lobby in the US Congress, Armenia also blocks US assistance to Azerbaijan and opposes deployment of Turkish or NATO forces in the Caucasus.

--*Iran*: which has been accused by Turkey of trying to export Islamic revolution to Turkey (through support of the Turkish Hezbollah group). It also has been accused by Turkey of supporting the PKK. With Russia, Iran supported Armenia in its war with Azerbaijan. It opposes a closer relationship between Azerbaijan and NATO (Ayatollah Ahmed Janati has warned that Iran would not tolerate a US base in Azerbaijan, which he saw as a plot against Iran). Iran is worried about irredentism from Azerbaijan that could

²³Stephen Kinzer, "Turkey Turns Away from Europe Toward New Strategic Relationships," *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1997.

²⁴The discussion in this section is drawn from Bruce Kuniholm "Security and Identity: The Evolving Strategic and Political Significance of Turkey's Relationship with NATO," in *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years* (Macmillan: London, forthcoming in June 2001), Gustav Schmidt, ed.

pose a threat to Iran's northwestern province of Azerbaijan. It also shares a common interest with Russia in defining the Caspian's legal status in a way that blocks development and export of the region's energy resources except through their territory. Along with Russia, Iran opposes the US/Turkish/Azerbaijani/Georgian proposal for a pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan in Turkey. Iran has opposed the Arab-Israeli peace process and supported terrorism against Israel. It also condemned the NATO bombing of Serbia.

--*Iraq*: which resents Turkey's permission for its allies (the US and Britain) to use its airbases in enforcing the no-fly zone. Iraq has good relations with Russia and opposes virtually every aspect of US policy in the region. It has worked with Syria to support Hezbollah against Israel. Iraq also condemned the NATO bombing of Serbia.

--*Syria*: which supported the PKK insurgency in Turkey for many years and which, with Iraq, has serious differences with Turkey over the water flow of the Euphrates. Its vice president, Abd al-Halim Khaddam, has characterized Turkey's military cooperation agreement with Israel as a "satanic alliance." With Iran, Syria has supported Hezbollah against Israel.

--*Greece*: which has had serious and ongoing differences with Turkey over Cyprus and a range of longstanding Aegean issues.²⁵ It has a strong and active anti-Turkish lobby in the US Congress. Its former foreign minister, who had to resign over the Ocalan fiasco, met trilaterally with his Armenian and Iranian counterparts for the four years before his resignation. Revelations by Ocalan indicate that Greece directly supported the PKK's training within its borders. Greece is an historic ally and key trading partner of Serbia and shares the Serbs' Orthodox faith (a poll by Greece's largest daily newspaper during the war in Kosovo indicated that, despite the government's loyalty to NATO, 95 percent of Greeks opposed bombing Serbia, while 94.4 percent had a negative view of President Clinton and 63.5 percent a favorable view of President Milosevic). Because Greece could provide an alternative to the Bosphorus for the export of Russian and Caspian oil (i.e., a pipeline from Burgas, Bulgaria to Alexandroupolis, Greece), it has the capacity to undermine the Main Export Pipeline planned by Turkey, Georgia and the United States (and opposed by Iran and Russia).

--*Cyprus*: which has very close ties with Greece and seeks to recover the Turkish-supported one-third of the island. Cyprus contemplated deploying Russian S-300 air defense missiles against Turkey before backing down. It also backed Yugoslavia in Kosovo.

--*Yugoslavia*: whose deputy prime minister Vojuslav Seselj addressed the Russian Duma in November 1998 and called on "brotherly" countries (including Armenia, Greece, and Cyprus) to join in a new alliance to "counterbalance the forces of NATO and the European Union." Yugoslavia received sympathetic support from Cyprus, the Greek people, and Russia in the war over Kosovo.

B. The "Pro-Turkish" states in the region are not as numerous and include:

²⁵ These longstanding issues include the limits of territorial waters in the Aegean, the delimitation of the continental shelf, the militarization of Limnos, and the control of airspace in the Aegean. See, for example, the issues discussed in Thanos Veremis, "Greek Security: Issues and Politics," Adelphi Paper No. 179, Winter 1982; Andrew Wilson, "The Aegean Dispute," Adelphi Paper No. 155, Winter 1979-80; Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, "Turkey's Security Policies," Adelphi Paper No. 164, Spring 1981; and Bruce Kuniholm, "Rhetoric and Reality in the Aegean: US Policy Options Toward Greece and Turkey," *SAIS Review*, Winter-Spring 1986/Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 137-157.

--*Azerbaijan*: which has ethnic links and alliance links to Turkey. It lost a war to Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh and regards Armenia as a foe. Azerbaijan has differences with Iran over the Caspian, and sees the Main Export Pipeline (MEP), which goes from the Caspian across Turkey to the Mediterranean, as a means of extricating itself from Russian and Iranian monopolies. It has opted out of the Russian-dominated Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and has expressed a willingness to host US, Turkish, or NATO military bases. It supported NATO policy in Kosovo and toward that end deterred a Russian cargo plane loaded with MiG's and bound for Yugoslavia from continuing to its destination during the war in Kosovo.

--*Georgia*: which, with Azerbaijan, has been destabilized by Russian support for ethnic minorities (President Shevardnadze has accused the Russians of siding with Abkhaz separatists), has a desire to opt out of the CIS and move closer to NATO. It also supports an alternative outlet through Turkey—the MEP—for Caspian oil. President Shevardnadze, with Azerbaijan's President Aliyev, attended NATO's fiftieth anniversary celebration. Both supported the NATO bombing of Serbia.

--*Israel*: which has an important military and economic cooperation relationship with Turkey. Israel shares common enemies with Turkey in Iran, Syria, and Iraq (it carried out a preemptive strike against Iraqi nuclear developments in 1981, was targeted by Saddam Hussein's SCUD missiles during the Gulf War, and has had to contend with Syria's and Iran's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon). Israel also has an economic interest in the Caspian Basin (it has a stake in one of the trans-Caspian pipelines) and the MEP. Its lobby (AIPAC), moreover, supports Turkey in the US Congress.

Clearly, relations among these countries—both as individual countries and as de facto blocs—are much more complicated than space permits to discuss here, and this selective summary in some cases runs roughshod over more complicated tensions and subtle interdependencies. Turkey, for example is a NATO ally of Greece (with whom relations have improved markedly since the earthquake in 1999, although serious differences over Cyprus and the Aegean continue). Turkey also signed two major multi-billion dollar deals with Iran and Russia for natural gas. Syria has sought to improve its relations with Turkey. But the relationships described here, however changing and dynamic they may be, indicate a general and meaningful inclination toward or away from Turkey.

The sets of relationships described here suggest why countries that can be described as “anti-Turkish”—all holding territory once possessed by the Ottoman Turks, all but one of which are not members of the NATO alliance, most of which have troubled relations with the alliance, and some of which retain historical animosities toward Turkey—may be interested in blocking Turkish interests and, in some cases, undermining Turkey's stability. They point to the likelihood that, even with the Helsinki decision, because Turkey feels less welcome in the West, and because the reciprocal ties that bound Europe to Turkey during the Cold War have been lessened, Turkey will depend less on NATO (especially on NATO's EU members) to look out for Turkish interests. It follows that Turkey will feel less constrained by NATO—especially by its EU members—than in the past to pursue its own agenda, and will follow a more activist course in safeguarding its security interests.

Clearly, as the process of accession to the EU evolves, tensions between a closer relationship with the EU (and all that is required in terms of meeting the Copenhagen

criteria) and the imperatives of survival in a tough neighborhood will continue to exist, especially if the implementation of reforms leaves Turkey increasingly vulnerable to neighbors who seek to take advantage of that fact. As a result, the necessities of state may well impede, delay, and even halt the process of accession.

2. *US and European views on the importance of Turkey in the geopolitical arena.*

Just as there are vulnerabilities associated with living in a tough neighborhood, so there are strengths associated with this situation for Turkey's allies. In that context, Turkey's strategic importance as seen by both the United States and the EU is a comparison that underscores their very different perspectives. The United States, with its global responsibilities, has long supported Turkey because of its location and strategic importance in the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Balkans. The EU, constrained by institutional impediments in addressing collective responsibilities and establishing its collective identity, is divided over the best means to secure its defense interests.

A. *A US Perspective*

In the aftermath of the Cold War, US policy in the Caspian region is based on the premise that stability there requires a diversification of outlets for oil, freeing the area from the monopolistic control of Russian and, potentially, Iranian pipelines, while safeguarding the energy security of the United States and its allies. Related objectives include strengthening the sovereignty and independence of these states, enhancing US commercial opportunities, resolving regional conflicts (e.g., between Armenia and Azerbaijan), and providing economic and humanitarian assistance.²⁶ Turkey has an important role to play in the attempt to achieve all of these objectives.

In the Middle East, Turkey's strategic importance derives from its borders with Iran, Iraq, and Syria²⁷; its alliance with Israel; and the critical role of its airbases in facilitating, through Operation Northern Watch, US containment of Iran and Iraq.²⁸ During the Gulf War, Turkey's contribution to the anti-Iraq coalition included: effective closure of the Iraqi pipeline to the Mediterranean (through which Iraq exported 54 percent of its oil, or approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil a day); allowing US access to military bases in Turkey; deployment of over 100,000 troops along the Iraqi border, which forced Iraq to keep substantial forces in the north by threatening it with a two-front war; and use of NATO airbases able to hit targets in northern and central Iraq.²⁹

Stability in the Balkans is an important priority for the United States—and even more for the EU, which increasingly sees the Balkans as an area directly affecting Europe's prosperity and security.³⁰ Turkey has participated in peacekeeping in the region in several multinational forces. It has trained the Bosnian-Croat federation's army and participated in NATO's Kosovo-related military campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999;³¹

²⁶ See Bruce Kuniholm, "The Geopolitics of the Caspian Basin," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Autumn 2000, pp. 546-571.

²⁷ Ian Lesser, "Beyond 'Bridge or Barrier': Turkey's Evolving Security Relations with the West," in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 209.

²⁸ See Henry Barkey, "Hemmed in by Circumstances: Turkey and Iraq since the Gulf War," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VII, No. 4, October 2000, pp. 110-126.

²⁹ Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," p. 37.

³⁰ Lesser, "Beyond 'Bridge or Barrier,'" in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 208.

³¹ Bahcheli, "Turkish Policy Toward Greece," in Makovsky and Sayari, p. 137.

it has been a forceful, anti-separatist advocate of Bosnia and Kosovo,³² and is a critical player in the region's military and economic cooperation. Without Turkey, stability cannot be achieved in the region.³³

Beyond these geopolitical factors, the United States sees Turkey as a secular democratic model for the surrounding region and as a counterweight to fundamentalist Islam. It is also more sympathetic to Turkish problems than the Europeans. Unlike its European allies, US policy was quick to condemn PKK leader Ocalan as a terrorist and separatist and may have helped the Turks to capture him. Despite powerful anti-Turkish lobbies in the US Congress, the US government supports Turkey's relationship with Azerbaijan, its plans for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project, its strategic relationship with Israel, and its membership in the EU, which the US sees as necessary to anchor Turkey in the West and facilitate domestic reform. Turkey's "friends" in the region (the pro-Turkish states) have been supportive of US policy in general (e.g., they all supported the NATO bombing of Serbia), while those whose interests are often at cross-purposes with Turkey (the anti-Turkish states) often have opposed US policy.

Finally, Turkey gives NATO an out-of-area capacity that has been of significant benefit since the Gulf War. Thus, the Turkish strategic role is increasingly valuable—particularly to the United States, whose international responsibilities and capacities to project power give it a greater strategic interest in Turkey than its EU allies.³⁴

B. The Difficulty of Identifying a European Union Perspective

The EU's attitude toward Turkey reflects a fundamental institutional weakness, which involves all the member states' 15 executives, 16 presidents, and other institutions in deciding major issues, and which gives individual countries (especially those that have a particular agenda to pursue) disproportionate influence in the decision-making process.³⁵ The implications are profound and were underscored by the intense, sometimes bitter, unresolved discussions over governance within the EU (e.g., over how far to extend majority voting, the weighting of votes, and giving up the veto) at the Nice summit in December 2000.³⁶ As Heinz Kramer has observed, the EU:

“is still unable to develop genuine strategic relationships with nonmember countries because it lacks effective common foreign and security policies. This has meant that the EU has never developed a strategic place for Turkey within political conceptions about, for instance, relations with the Middle East, Central Asia, or the Caucasus...The Association Agreement relationship was never regarded as an element of European strategic foreign policy, although it came into existence for just such a purpose during the Cold War...Because of its poor performance in pursuing strategic political interests, the EU has been ambiguous in defining its relationship with Turkey. It was hesitant to declare Turkish membership in the European Union as the long-term goal of relations and shield

³² Makovsky, “US Policy Toward Turkey,” in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 222.

³³ Kramer, p. 148.

³⁴ Abramowitz, “The Complexities of American Policymaking on Turkey,” in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 159.

³⁵ Brewin, “European Union Perspectives on Cyprus Accession,” p. 29.

³⁶ See “Leak reveals bitter feuding at Nice summit,” in the *Sunday Times*, December 17, 2000.

away from developing a political strategy toward that end. Thus its affirmations of the strategic importance of relations with Turkey become dubious in the eyes of many a Turk.”³⁷

The lesser strategic interests of EU countries in the regions surrounding Turkey (including the Balkans) and the weakness in their commitment to Turkey was best evidenced by Germany’s opposition to viewing an Iraqi missile attack on Turkey during the Gulf War as an attack on NATO.³⁸ There are a range of explanations for such treatment, from those citing profound cultural prejudices (the civilization argument), to a higher Western European reluctance to intervene in areas where their national interests are not perceived as being involved or where relatively low-level risks seem excessive.³⁹

A related explanation of EU policies toward Turkey relates to the increasing prominence of the Green parties in some states, the greater role of the European Parliament, and the EU’s political aspirations. These have given greater importance to moral values (which are easy to assert) as opposed to strategic interests (which require agreement on what is at stake and what compromises and sacrifices the EU should make in its behalf).⁴⁰ This manifests itself in an emphasis on such issues as the role of the military in politics, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the protection of minorities. A concern for the plight of the Kurds, to cite but one example, supported by the presence of a Kurdish lobby in some EU countries, has led many in the EU to focus on human rights in Turkey (a legitimate concern downplayed in Turkey) while diminishing the threat to Turkey posed by Kurdish nationalism there (a legitimate concern that has been downplayed by the EU).⁴¹

A final, and critical, factor affecting the EU’s policies toward Turkey has been the fact that Greece has seen Turkey as an enemy. Since 1981, Greece has used the EU as a forum for its differences with Turkey by vetoing or threatening to veto Turkey’s potential candidacy for accession on several occasions, finally yielding only when it received the quid pro quo it desired on Cyprus. It has also vetoed EU payments due Turkey on numerous occasions (under the Fourth Protocol, the Development Aid Programme for Mediterranean Countries, and the Customs Union); threatened to block all external actions of the EU; and clearly intends to hold the accession of Poland hostage to the Cyprus question. Under these circumstances, its capacity to veto EU policies toward Turkey has impeded both the articulation of a strategic concept for Turkey and a more constructive engagement between the EU and Turkey.⁴²

³⁷ Kramer, p. 233.

³⁸ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: The Remaking of the World Order* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1996), p. 145.

³⁹ Brewin, “European Union Perspectives,” pp. 26-29.

⁴⁰ Kramer, p. 231. All EU members have abolished the death penalty and have made it clear that if Ocalan were executed, it would have an extremely negative affect on Turkey’s EU aspirations. Marvin Howe, *Turkey Today: A Nation Divided over Islam* (Westview Press: Boulder, Col.: 2000), p. 282. It should be noted that Turkey has not executed anybody since 1984. In the US, by contrast, 682 people have been executed since 1976. In July 2000, the national death row population in the US stood at 3,682. (See http://deathpenalty.org/facts/other/facts_statistics.shtml) One wonders if the US would pass muster before the EU.

⁴¹ Brewin, “European Union Perspectives on Cyprus Accession,” pp. 26-29.

⁴² Ibid.

Recent Developments

1. *The European Union's decision in December 2000 to endorse the Accession Partnership Document.*

At the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, which included Turkey (and Malta) in the new list of candidates for membership in the EU, Paragraphs Four and Nine of the Presidency Conclusions made clear that Turkey's accession would be conditional upon its efforts to settle border disputes with Greece and back a settlement in Cyprus (or, within a reasonable time, bring the disputes to the International Court of Justice). The wording in Paragraph 9(b), however, underscored the fact that conclusion of a settlement of outstanding disputes (which Paragraph Four noted would be reviewed by the end of 2004 at the latest) would not be a precondition to accession. Rather, the Council would "take account of all relevant factors." In short, obstruction by the Greek Cypriots could not preclude Turkey's accession (although, of course, a Greek veto could); but if Turkey were judged to be responsible for Turkish Cypriot intransigence, Turkey could not become a member of the EU until a settlement had been achieved.⁴³ In contrast, the accession of the Greek-Cypriot controlled Republic of Cyprus is not conditional on a political settlement or subject to the same constraints when it comes to responsibility.

The terms of Turkey's Accession Partnership Document (APD) with the EU, meanwhile, had yet to be spelled out and were the subject of extended discussions—on the one hand between Turkey and the EU, and on the other between Greece and the EU. In the course of these discussions, a number of the factors discussed in earlier sections of this paper impeded the EU's formal endorsement of the APD set for December 2000.

The contentious issues surrounding negotiations essentially concerned whether—and, if so, the extent to which—the APD would include two preconditions to Turkey's accession: a solution to (or serious effort to solve) the Cyprus problem and a resolution of (or serious efforts to resolve) differences between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean.

In the end, a document carefully crafted by the French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine fudged the wording⁴⁴ so it could be interpreted favorably by all parties and in different ways by analysts in each country.⁴⁵ Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou complemented his French counterpart on the document's "ingenuity," while Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem emphasized his desire not to go into theoretical discussions on how best to interpret it.⁴⁶

The French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine referred to the process of drafting the APD (which described a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem and efforts to resolve Aegean issues as "political criteria"—which, in turn, were enveloped in the concept of "reinforced political dialogue") as comparable to doing a jigsaw puzzle and "almost like doing wood inlay."⁴⁷ Whatever one wanted to make of them, the short-term steps (to be achieved by the end of 2001) and medium-term steps (to be achieved

⁴³Helsinki European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 10 and 11 December, 1999, http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm; and Brewin, *The European Union and Cyprus*, pp. 138-139.

⁴⁴"Greek, Turkish PM shake hands at Nice Summit," *Agence France Presse*, December 7, 2000.

⁴⁵ See the *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 5, 2000; and articles by Inci Hekimoglu, Coskun Kirca, Ilter Turkmen and Sukru Elekdag in the *Turkish Daily News*, December 9, 2000.

⁴⁶ See "Document Endorsed, Ball in Turkey's Court," *Turkish Daily News*, Dec. 6, 2000; and the article by Andrew Borowiec, *The Washington Times*, December 7, 2000.

⁴⁷ Europe Information Service, *European Report*, December 6, 2000.

between 2001 and 2004), Vedrine observed, were fully in line with the framework decided at the Helsinki summit the year before.⁴⁸ As the Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand observed, the problem wasn't solved, it was postponed. Turkish sensitivities on territorial issues (and Turkey's opposition to Greece's desire that a settlement to the Cyprus question be included in the short-term political criteria) were made known; Greece made clear that it would obstruct progress on accession if there were no solution to the Cyprus and Aegean issues, and the EU was enabled to continue with the process of accession—at least for now.⁴⁹

The implications of these developments, meanwhile, continue to be troubling. In the next few years (and before Turkey's accession to the EU becomes a possibility), the critical question that will have to be answered will be whether or not Cyprus will become a member of the EU, and, if so, whether it does so prior to or only after a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. Much will depend on the willingness of the parties to compromise, on the EU's judgments as to whom is at fault, on other priorities (such as getting Poland into the EU), and on the extent to which the EU has a clear sense of the implications of its decision.

If a Greek-Cypriot controlled Republic of Cyprus (ROC) joins the EU without the Turkish Cypriots and before a comprehensive settlement, Alan Makovsky has observed, the result could be a permanently divided Cyprus (because the Greek-Cypriots would have less of an incentive to compromise), an increase in Greek-Turkish hostility (because Greece and the ROC would have powerful voices in the EU and would hold Turkey's accession hostage to a deal on their terms), and Turkey's alienation from Europe.⁵⁰ For these reasons, the Turks oppose the admission of Cyprus in whatever form until Turkey is admitted. In the conclusion of his book on the relationship between Cyprus and the EU, Christopher Brewin poses, in his final sentence, the stark alternatives likely to result from the EU's choices: "A multicultural Europe including Turkey and a reunited Cyprus" as opposed to "the likely alternative of an anti-Islamic, anti-Orthodox, and possibly anti-American Europe defined by a continued frontier in Cyprus and between Greece and Turkey."⁵¹

2. *Efforts to Develop the European Security Defense Policy.*

The EU summit in Helsinki, Finland, in December 1999, in addition to its inclusion of Turkey in the list of countries that were candidates for membership in the EU, also was notable for a major announcement: the EU intended "to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises." The EU's desire to consolidate what has become known as the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP),⁵² was manifest in its decision almost a year later, in November 2000, to create a rapid reaction force that could, by 2003, send up to 60,000 troops abroad within 60 days and sustain them for a year. Also put forward in 1999 were plans for a

⁴⁸ See the *Turkish Daily News*, December 6, 2000.

⁴⁹ Mehmet Ali Birand, "Nobody Understood a Thing," *Turkish Daily News*, December 6, 2000.

⁵⁰ Makovsky, "US Policy Toward Turkey," in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 249.

⁵¹ Brewin, *The European Union and Cyprus*, p.247.

⁵² Alan Makovsky notes that the initiative within NATO is properly called the European Security and Defense Identity, or ESDI. Makovsky in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 280 (n.14).

political and security committee, a military staff, and a military committee of defense chiefs. These new structures were scheduled to be in place by the end of 2000, but have yet to be coordinated with NATO structures for reasons discussed below.⁵³

The Helsinki announcement in 1999 can be attributed in considerable part to the conflict in Kosovo, which underscored Europe's military dependence on the US and its desire to have a force in readiness for humanitarian action, peacekeeping, and peace maintenance operations ("the full range of Petersburg tasks").⁵⁴ Beyond that common desire, however, the November 2000 decision by the EU to create the rapid reaction force clearly had mixed motives. The British sought to demonstrate support for EU integration; the French, the only NATO ally that doesn't belong to NATO's integrated military structure, to create an independent force and limit what it sees as excessive American influence in Europe. Whatever the motives, the EU decision constituted an important first step in addressing the problem raised by the conflict in Kosovo; one *New York Times* writer called the pledge of troops and equipment to create a 60,000-person force by 2003 "the most important European military initiative since the end of the Cold War." While that judgment awaits confirmation, the EU will have to make substantial investments in transport planes, cargo ships, communications systems, laser-guided munitions, and electronic jamming aircraft if it is to succeed.⁵⁵

It is not clear whether the EU, which had difficulty coming up with 40,000 troops for Kosovo and whose members spend only \$165 billion annually for defense (or 2.1 percent of GDP), is capable of the expenditures necessary for the military equipment required in military operations. For comparison's sake, the United States spends around \$285 billion annually, or 3.2 percent of GDP.⁵⁶ Political feasibility, in short, is a critical question. In the interim, and to compensate for its limitations, it will have to rely on NATO bases and other military assets. There is the rub, because the extent to which NATO assets and structures will be relied on, and the extent to which NATO's non-EU members will veto EU missions that rely on them, is also not clear. Currently, eight of NATO's nineteen members, including Turkey, are not in the EU. The potential for conflict when the EU wants to use NATO assets and when countries such as Turkey are denied a place in the decision-making process poses potentially serious problems.

In the year subsequent to the announcement of the ESDP, Turkey's message to the EU was clear: it was prepared to take part in the ESDP and to provide 6,000 troops for the rapid reaction force, but it wanted to have a voice in decision making and planning processes and be treated as a full-fledged partner on issues that affected its security in the region.⁵⁷ It would not acquiesce in the EU's automatic use of NATO capabilities and assets, and it was prepared to consider the use of its veto if the situation required.⁵⁸

⁵³ http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm; Phillip H. Gordon, "Their Own Army? Making European Defense Work," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2001, pp. 12-17.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Wesley K. Clark, "US Actions Push the EU to its own Military Force," in the *International Herald Tribune*, December 9-10, 2000.

⁵⁵ Michael Gordon, "Europe Acts to Build Own Military Force," *New York Times International*, November 21, 2000.

⁵⁶ Phillip H. Gordon, "Op. Cit.

⁵⁷ Sami Kohen, *Milliyet*, Nov. 23, 2000, cited in the *Turkish Daily News*, Nov. 24, 2000.

⁵⁸ "Turkey Warns EU on NATO," *Turkish Daily News*, November 7, 2000.

The virtue of an EU defense force—at least theoretically—is that it could provide the EU with a means to address security issues in situations where the United States chose not to be involved, and that it could provide the EU with more autonomy. The danger is that, if it is not closely tied to NATO, it could duplicate NATO structures and assets and cause friction with non-EU members of NATO—including the United States and particularly Turkey. Members of the EU are divided over these questions. The French (both President Chirac and Foreign Minister Jospin), for example, have emphasized the issue of “autonomy” in the context of independence from NATO; they seek a European force that is independent in its planning capabilities.⁵⁹ But they don’t have much support. The British, Germans, and Dutch (with the Americans), as Atlanticists, have emphasized NATO’s central role, with NATO’s military headquarters (the Supreme Headquarters of Allied Powers in Europe, or SHAPE) planning the military operations and establishing weapons requirements for both NATO and the EU.⁶⁰ If the EU relied on NATO planning, they believe, complete transparency among the allies in any emergency would ensure good communication and obviate the necessity of creating an independent military staff that could, eventually, rival that of NATO.⁶¹

What worries the United States, and what Secretary of Defense William Cohen clearly articulated as a concern on the eve of the Nice summit in December 2000 (which, among other things, was seeking an agreement within the EU over the ESDP’s relationship with NATO), is that a separate operational planning capability would create an “EU caucus” in NATO. Such a development, Cohen asserted, could also weaken ties between NATO, the United States, and the EU, and make NATO a “relic of the past.”⁶² This worry is shared by the current Bush administration.⁶³

What worries Turkey about the creation of an EU defense force is that areas near Turkey’s borders are those most likely to be the location of EU missions (13 of 16 possible crisis regions throughout the world cited in one NATO survey were in regions near Turkey).⁶⁴ Because Turkey is a non-member of the EU, its representatives would be outside decision-making circles if the defense force were not closely tied to NATO. They worry that EU planners could adapt a blueprint from NATO and implement it in ways dictated by the EU (where, unlike NATO, Turkey has no voice).⁶⁵ An EU defense force, moreover, to the extent that it were less reliant on (and therefore more independent of) the US, which the Turks see as more closely aligned with them, would downgrade NATO and weaken the US commitment to Europe, leaving the Turks marginalized in Europe

⁵⁹ See John Vinocur, “Rethinking French-German Ties,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 18, 2000; and “Will Gaullist Grandeur Obstruct a New Europe?” *International Herald Tribune*, December 28, 2000.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; and Keith Richburg, “European Military Force to Cooperate with NATO,” the *Washington Post*, December 9, 2000.

⁶¹ Joseph Fitchett, “Turkey Puts Roadblock in EU Force Negotiations,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 26, 2001.

⁶² “Cohen Warns Europe that NATO Could Become ‘Relic.’” *International Herald Tribune*, December 6, 2000; see also the *Turkish Daily News*, December 5, 2000; and William Drozdiak, “NATO Allies Grow Edgy Over Change of Guard,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 15, 2000.

⁶³ “Bush aides launch assault on Euro Army,” the *Sunday Times*, December 17, 2000.

⁶⁴ “Turkey and EU at Loggerheads over ESDP,” *Turkish Probe*, Issue 414, *Turkish Daily News*, December 24, 2000.

⁶⁵ Fitchett, “Turkey Puts Roadblock in EU Force Negotiations.”

and more dependent on the United States (whose commitment to Turkey would also be weakened).⁶⁶

It may appear counterintuitive, therefore, for the Turks to oppose a solution (i.e., EU reliance on NATO) that in part serves their interests and, by default, to support the French position, which does not. One interpretation of their position, suggested by NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, is that Turkey's intransigence is driven by a desire to exert leverage in its negotiations to become an EU member "through the back door."⁶⁷ He is not alone. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who backed the close collaboration between the EU and NATO, even warned the Turks not to expect such a tactic to be successful. The Turkish ambassador to NATO Onur Oymen, however, has insisted that Turkey's position is motivated by legitimate security concerns.⁶⁸ In that light, a more charitable interpretation of Turkey's behavior would be that it has legitimate objections to being excluded from EU military councils and is banking on its veto in NATO and on the political impracticability of the French option to get a hearing.

A related concern of Turkey is tied to the issues discussed in the previous section. If the Greek-Cypriot controlled Republic of Cyprus were admitted to the EU (which could happen before 2004), and there were a subsequent crisis in Cyprus, it is theoretically possible that an EU defense force (representing, among others, Greece and the ROC), and using NATO assets and facilities, could be deployed in Cyprus without prior consultation with Turkey. As a result, although the EU foreign ministers were able to reach an agreement in early December at Nice over the development of the ESDP, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, in the NATO meeting in Brussels later in the month, exercised Turkey's right to veto future cooperation between NATO and the rapid reaction force and refused to allow the EU force "assured access" to NATO's military planning staff unless Ankara were part of the decision to deploy it.⁶⁹

There was widespread criticism of Turkey's decision, which provided a smokescreen for the French and their desire for an independent force. The *Financial Times*, for example, observed that "What Turkey has demanded amounts to membership of the EU in defense matters. The EU cannot agree to this."⁷⁰ But the *Financial Times'* solution, a promise of close consultations, was unacceptable to the Turks. Turkey's stance, in addition to being informed by the reasons already given, was based on the logic that it was not prepared to give assured access to NATO assets to EU members who were not members of NATO (Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Ireland) because the EU had refused to give NATO countries who were not EU members (Turkey, Iceland, and Norway) the same privileges.⁷¹

The Turks clearly remember, discussed by the Turkish ambassador to the United Kingdom Ozdem Sanberk in July 1998, that when Greece joined the EU in 1981, Turkey was told by the EU and Greece that Greek accession would not affect the EU's relations

⁶⁶ See Lesser, "Beyond 'Bridge or Barrier,'" in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, p. 217; and Makovsky, "US Policy Toward Turkey," in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, pp. 246-7.

⁶⁷ Drozdiak, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Fitchett, "Turkey Puts Roadblock in EU Force Negotiations."

⁶⁹ See "Turkey and EU at Loggerheads," Op. Cit.; "Turkey Scuttles NATO-EU Plan," *International Herald Tribune*, December 16-17, 2000; Michael Evans, "Turks block development of EU Army," *The Times*, December 15, 2000, and "Turkey and NATO," *Financial Times*, December 19, 2000.

⁷⁰ "Turkey and NATO," *Financial Times*, December 19, 2000.

⁷¹ Drozdiak, op. cit.

with Greece. “Those promises,” he observed, “turned out to be utterly empty.” He cited as examples the cutting off of almost all EU financial cooperation and loans to Turkey, including those pledged to Turkey as part of the Customs Union.⁷² With that history, and given the security questions at stake, there is little wonder that Turkey seeks assurance in understandings that have greater reciprocity.

The Struggle for Turkey’s Soul: The Challenges Confronting Turkey

Ultimately, Turkey’s accession to the EU, however complicated by geopolitics and the dynamics of its relations with the United States and EU discussed above, will be determined by how it answers the following questions—questions which are at root internal and related primarily to the ongoing struggle over the soul of Turkey and its identity.⁷³

1. Political/economic questions:

How can Turkey find the leadership to clean up its corrupt patronage system and transcend the feuding among the secular, democratic parties who represent a majority of Turks, but who, instead of working together, work at cross purposes, letting less representative parties (such as Refah in 1996-1997) rule by default? And how can Turkey address an increasing disparity in income distribution, institute tax reform, make privatization really work, build a safety net, and address the host of economic problems which, without solution, risk turning the country over to demagogues?

One might draw the conclusion that the politicians' irresponsibility in the face of national disaster—and encouraged by the way the party system is structured—is made more flagrant by the knowledge that the military is there to protect them from themselves. In a sense, one could argue that the politicians must be allowed to fail and that the consequence of failure—or impending failure—might cause them to change their behavior. But the military is reluctant to let the system fail (it came close in 1980), and its de facto rule, meanwhile, impedes responsible leadership. In the interim, without political leadership, it is almost impossible to address the other questions with which Turkey is confronted.

Many Turks suggest that only under the rule of law that is applied equally and equitably to all Turks and accompanied by a transparency that permits accountability, will reform be possible. Without leadership, the only hope for reform is through the prodding provided from outside: the requirements for membership first in the Customs Union and then in the European Union. One Turkish professor told me only half in jest that the only really successful reforms in Turkish history have been in the context of a response to outside pressures or incentives. In this sense, the question of accession to the EU is an opportunity to get done what the Turks can’t do on their own.

⁷² See Ozdem Sanberk, “The Outlook for Relations between Turkey and the European Union after the Cardiff Summit,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 20, 1998. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/sanberk.htm>

⁷³ For elaboration of this question, see Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (Hurst and Co.: London, 1997), who sees a number of competing nationalisms vying for hegemony: an ethnic nationalist variant of pan-Turkism; Kurdish nationalism; Islamic variants; the classic secular Kemalist nationalism; and a center-right, which espouses Sunni Islam subordinated to Kemalist norms.

But steps toward reform must be taken by the Turks themselves; those steps risk creating economic and political instability that—to the extent that they weaken the state and to the extent that there is substance to the threats enumerated above—threaten Turkish security and raise the possibility that the military will once again feel forced to play the role of guardians of the state. The consequences, by now, are clear: the legitimacy of political leadership will be undermined, impeding the growth of responsible government and creating the prospect of military rule that the EU sees as antithetical to the democratic process. This is a vicious cycle that, somehow, must be broken.

2. *The Kurdish Question.*

Another critical issue for Turkey is how it can find a way to accommodate legitimate Kurdish cultural aspirations while maintaining its integrity as a state and functioning democracy. Part of the problem is external—support given in recent years to extremists by countries outside Turkey. That has to stop, and Turkey deserves international support in opposing it. But part of the problem is internal. Turkey has not found a way to accommodate those legitimate rights, and until it does, Turkey will not have taken the steps it needs to take to be a truly civil society—or, one might add, a member of the EU.

Turks resent gratuitous advice, especially when it is uninformed, about the complexities of their problems. Such advice to them smacks of the capitulations, in which minorities in Turkey became a means of foreign interference in Turkish affairs that eventually contributed to the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. They worry that such interference (some of which is prompted by ethnic lobbies with an axe to grind in the United States and Europe) could cause the demise of the Turkish state. One response to Turkey's dilemma is to avoid polemics and focus on the question formulated by the Helsinki Commission and its staff in 1988: "whether Turkey can find a way to accommodate legitimate Kurdish cultural aspirations while maintaining its integrity as a state and functioning democracy."⁷⁴ The capture of Abdullah Ocalan and the events that have followed in its wake create the opportunity to explore this question in a constructive way.

3. *The role of Islam.*

What role will Islam play in Turkish political life? While Islam currently has become a focus of Western concern about Turkey, it may well be that it represents a problem that is at heart political. Growing support for Turkey's pro-Islamic Refah Party, before it was banned, was built on a hard core of supporters. But its growth (it received 21.4 percent of the popular vote in the December 1995 elections) also can be explained as a protest against the corruption and ineptitude of Turkey's traditional parties (which have been heavily involved in patronage⁷⁵) and in part as a response to Refah's capacity to

⁷⁴ See Bruce Kuniholm, "Sovereignty, Democracy and Identity: Turkey's Kurdish Problem and Europe's Turkish Problem," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Winter 1996), pp. 353-370.

⁷⁵ Just as Fazilet (Virtue), its successor party, suffered losses in the April 1999 election (Fazilet received only 15.41% of the vote, a loss of 6%) that can be explained at least in part by charges that Refah leader Necmettin Erbakan was no different from his peers and by questions surrounding his accumulation of enormous wealth while in public office. Frank Tachau, "Turkish Political Parties and Elections: Half a Century of Multiparty Democracy," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (spring 2000), p. 142, postulates that the

deliver services on the municipal level, where migrants from rural areas, who have not been blessed by Turkey's growing economy, have responded favorably to its well-organized efforts—particularly in urban areas.

Traditional parties haven't done this. There used to be an invisible peasant population largely unaffected by secular reforms that now is socially mobile and increasingly pinched by income inequalities; it is taking advantage of its freedoms to vote and, by so doing, to seek help. Refah's relatively brief success could well have been a function of the failure of the other parties to meet the needs of those who have moved to the cities. While secularists generally have regarded Refah (and now the Fazilet, or Virtue, Party) as a threat to the nationalist-oriented secular political order established by Kemal Ataturk, and there is some evidence of this view,⁷⁶ one could also see it as a safety valve for concerns that might otherwise follow a more subversive course.

Others see the public expression of pro-Islamic sentiment, under secular control, as a source of support for the secular order—at least to the extent that it meets an inner need for meaning that some, like Serif Mardin, have argued, is not satisfied by Turkey's political culture.⁷⁷ The Refah coalition government, to the extent that it depended on that nationalist-oriented secular political order for its legitimacy when it was in power, had an interest in sustaining it, even as its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, may have tried to subvert it in the long run.⁷⁸ It also had an interest in delivering better government and improving Turkey's economic situation or it risked losing the legitimacy it gained by default.

One reading of the message it sent to rival parties was that they had to reform in order to beat Refah. They had to reform to survive. Unfortunately, they didn't reform. The politicians and political parties didn't respond. Refah began to take advantage of that

Virtue Party's problems with the military "may have given voters the impression that the party either could not govern, or would not be allowed to govern freely." Ali Carkoglu's analysis suggests that a significant percentage of the Fazilet Party's support went to the right-wing Nationalist Action Party (MHP). Ali Carkoglu, "The Geography of the April 1999 Turkish Elections," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 163, 166.

⁷⁶ See the discussion of Fetullah Gulen, one of the key figures promoting a dialogue between secularists and Islamicists, who was videotaped urging his followers to feign a policy of conciliation as he discussed a strategy of undermining the secular system and returning Turkey to its Islamic routes. Kramer, pp. 66-67; and by Heath Lowry, "Betwixt and Between: Turkey's Political Structure on the Cusp of the Twenty-First Century," in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation*, pp. 38-40. But see also Howe, pp. 251-252. For an indication that some radical Islamicists in Turkey may be dedicated to overthrowing the secular state, see the discussion of dozens of bodies unearthed beneath the hideouts of the religious terrorist group Hizbullah. Stephen Kinzer, "Among Turkish Terrorists' Victims, a Muslim Feminist," *International Herald Tribune*, January 26, 2000.

⁷⁷ Serif Mardin, "Religion and Politics in Modern Turkey," in James Piscatori, ed., *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983), pp. 138-59.

⁷⁸ On Refah's behavior, see the following discussions of Erbakan's governance: Marvine Howe, while cognizant of many concerns over the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, downplays the evidence that there was a plot to overthrow the regime or wrongdoing. Howe, pp. 136-143. Heath Lowry notes that Erbakan sought to change Turkey's foreign policy orientation and appeal to the extreme fundamentalists among his supporters in a manner sufficient to convince the elite that he represented a threat to the secular order. Lowry, pp. 33-41. Heinz Kramer's judgment is that "The behavior of the RP's representatives in government and parliament hardly revealed a strong impetus in the direction of establishing an Islamic republic. What cannot, however, be excluded was a strategy of furthering the creeping Islamicization of Turkey by low-profile government activities that aimed at a long-term change of the basic tenets of the republic toward more pronounced Islamic values and practices." Kramer, pp. 69-73.

development, and the military, ultimately, acting in its role as guardian of the state, did not trust the capacity of the system to survive and felt it had to step in as it did in 1980. In short, one reading of recent history is not that Refah should have been banned, but that the political parties needed to get their act together so that a religious party wouldn't be such an attractive option.

Turkey's place in the twenty-first century will be determined in part by how it handles its neighbors in what everyone acknowledges is a very rough neighborhood—a neighborhood that will be made even more dangerous in the future by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to which Turkey will be increasingly vulnerable as it opens its democratic political and economic structures. The imperatives of survival in the region, to the extent that they require a more activist policy by the Turkish government and affect democratic practices regarding a range of issues of interest to the EU (civilian control of the army, freedom of religious expression, and a civil, non-military solution to the Kurdish question), will create tensions between Turkey and the EU and will complicate Turkey's accession to the EU.

To the extent that the government is willing and able to meet the requirements of accession, and to the extent that necessary reforms risk undermining the stability of the government, inviting mischief from Turkey's neighbors, the military will rein it in. To the extent that the government is able to remain reasonably stable and the military to let it muddle through, Turkey, drawn into Europe, will evolve along the lines envisioned by Ataturk. Still, as Eric Rouleau has pointed out, claimants to his legacy have their own camps: the "Kemalist republicans," the soldiers and bureaucrats who regard the military as "the infallible interpreters of Ataturk's legacy and the sole guardian of the nation and the state"; and "the Kemalist democrats," the intellectuals, businessmen, Kurds and Islamicists who seek adaptation to modernity and Western norms.⁷⁹ The latter, clearly, espouse a point of view that is consistent with Ataturk's belief in "an inclusive civic nationalism."⁸⁰

Even if the Kemalist democrats are victorious over the Kemalist republicans, as Rouleau defines them, whether Turkish efforts will be sufficient to qualify for accession will depend not only on what they do, but how the Cyprus question and the ESDP is handled by the EU. As a result, the process will be long. Recently, in Ankara, Former Foreign Minister Karayalcin told me he estimated that it will take Turkey ten years to become a member of the EU.⁸¹ I hope he is right, but I am betting that 25 years might be needed to accomplish this goal.

⁷⁹ Eric Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6 (November/December 2000), pp. 100-114. As Cengiz Candar notes, "Turkish secularism is not as democratic as it appears to some Westerners, and Turkish Islam is not as fundamentalist as it is portrayed." Cengiz Candar, "Ataturk's Ambiguous Legacy," *Wilson Quarterly*, Autumn 2000, p. 88-96.

⁸⁰ Andrew Mango, "Ataturk and the Future of Turkey," (see footnote. 5).

⁸¹ Conversation with Murat Karayalcin, Ankara University, November 7, 2000, Ankara, Turkey.