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Tarik Oguzlu

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How Encouraging is the Latest Turkish–Greek Reconciliation Process?

TARIK OGUZLU

ABSTRACT *The main contention of this article is that the recent thaw in bilateral Greek-Turkish relations is promising yet insufficient for future stability and cooperation in and around the Aegean Sea. To the surprise of committed observers of Turkish-Greek relations, the two countries set in motion a cooperative interaction process in mid-1999 and since then have succeeded in sorting out some problematical issues. Unsurprisingly however, the main platform for this painful exercise has been Turkey's EU accession process as well as Greece's continuing efforts to catch up with the latest stage of the EU integration process. Taking stock of these processes of Europeanisation in the two countries, some observers have rushed to conclude that these are irreversible and that as long as both countries maintain their aspirations to further 'Europeanise', neither the Cyprus dispute nor the Aegean problems would remain unresolved. However, as this article will argue below, there is little justification for this vague optimism about the future, which reflects the prevalence of instrumental-strategic thinking on both shores of the Aegean Sea. Neither Greece nor Turkey has approached the settlement of the disputes from an ideational perspective, whereby their resolution would be seen as a legitimate and appropriate goal in the age of globalisation. On the contrary, they appeared to regard the resolution of these disputes as necessary within the context of their relations with the European Union. Turkey has implicitly threatened to embroil Greece in conflicts in and around the Aegean sea, in order to discourage any Greek attempts to block Turkey's route to Brussels by constantly Europeanising Turkish-Greek disputes. Greece on the other hand has adopted a facilitative conditionality policy towards Turkey by appearing to support Turkey's EU membership on the condition (and in the hope) that Turkey would show greater flexibility on resolving the Aegean and Cyprus disputes in ways more favourable to Greece.*

Introduction

The main contention of this article is that the recent thaw in bilateral Greek-Turkish relations is promising yet insufficient for future stability and cooperation in and around the Aegean Sea. To the surprise of committed observers of Turkish-Greek relations, the two countries set in motion a cooperative interaction process in mid-1999 and since then have succeeded in sorting out some problematical issues. Unsurprisingly however, the main platform for this painful exercise has been Turkey's EU accession process as well as Greece's continuing efforts to catch up with the latest stage of the EU integration process.

Taking stock of these processes of Europeanisation in the two countries, some observers have rushed to conclude that these are irreversible and that as long as both countries maintain their aspirations to further 'Europeanise', neither the Cyprus dispute nor the Aegean problems would remain unresolved. Sooner or later, they would come to an permanent settlement over these issues, so as not to hamper their desires to become true Europeans by taking their seats around the same EU table in Brussels.¹

However, as this article will argue below, there is little justification for this vague optimism about the future, which reflects the prevalence of instrumental-strategic thinking on both shores of the Aegean Sea. Neither Greece nor Turkey has approached the settlement of the disputes from an ideational perspective, whereby their resolution would be seen as a legitimate and appropriate goal in the age of globalisation. On the contrary, they appeared to regard the resolution of these disputes as necessary within the context of their relations with the European Union. If Turkey wanted to proceed with its accession process to the EU, she would have to come an understanding with Greece over these issues. Similarly, if Greece wanted to join the first-tier members of the Euro-zone and experience the peace dividends of the EU's overall enlargement process, then the resolution of the Cyprus and the Aegean disputes was imperative. Otherwise Greece would remain enmeshed in the sphere of conflict, whereas existing and prospective members from Central and Eastern Europe enjoyed the fruits of peace. From this perspective, both countries have adopted an instrumental attitude towards each other. Thus Turkey has implicitly threatened to embroil Greece in conflicts in and around the Aegean sea, in order to discourage any Greek attempts to block Turkey's route to Brussels by constantly Europeanising Turkish-Greek disputes. Greece on the other hand has adopted a facilitative conditionality policy towards Turkey by appearing to support Turkey's EU membership on the condition (and in the hope) that Turkey would show greater flexibility on resolving the Aegean and Cyprus disputes in ways more favourable to Greece.

From this logical perspective, this article will first of all analyse the main reasons why the latest Turkish-Greek détente appears promising for the future and then discuss the underlying fragility of this détente.

Reasons of Hope

The Greek-Turkish rapprochement since 1999 seems to have been different from the previous periods of cooperation and détente.

The first reason is that the new thaw in bilateral relations has strong domestic public support. Whereas in previous periods public opinion usually placed severe constraints on the ability of political leaders to take bold initiatives, the new era has seen the majority of the Greek and Turkish people supporting the current reconciliation process.²

Second, in addition to public support, the majority of the political leaders in both countries are also in favour of closer cooperation. It is getting more and more difficult for political parties to get votes by adopting a strictly nationalistic discourse.³ Further democratisation, linked to the Europeanisation process in both countries, is likely to reduce further the public appeal of more nationalistic and unilateralist policies.

Third, the business elites in both countries have also encouraged the political leaders to mend fences. The fact that bilateral trade volume has increased at least three-fold over the last three years shows the degree of support the business circles give to the ongoing cooperation process.⁴ The activation of the Greek-Turkish and Turkish-Greek business councils in 1998, the increase in the number of joint ventures and investments, all confirm that the business elites have an increasing stake in the continuation of the cooperation process. If the volume of these bilateral economic activities continues to increase, it would be extremely difficult for future political leaders to reverse the process. The creation of the Turkish-Greek academic forum in 1998 and the fact that Greece and Turkey have put into practice various confidence-building measures since 1998 are also positive steps worth mentioning in this regard.

Fourth, the current Turkish-Greek cooperation process seems to operate in accordance with the functional approach of David Mitrany. Instead of dealing with the resolution of hard security issues in the short run, the leaders in both countries have actively supported the view that cooperation should first continue in areas of low politics. The hope has been that the more the level of cooperation increases in areas of low politics, the more difficult it would be for political leaders to jeopardise the gains of this process by adopting intransigent and unyielding approaches towards the resolution of high-politics issues.⁵ Since 1999, both countries have signed more than ten treaties regulating as many issues as possible. Cooperation on terrorism, immigration, energy transportation, environment, de-mining, illegal drug traffic, tourism, fisheries, education, sport are worth mentioning in this regard.⁶

It is to be noted with satisfaction that both countries have also initiated a process of consultation on the issues of high politics as well. Since the early months of 2002, diplomats from both Foreign Ministries have come together to discuss these issues with a view to determining areas of contention as well as the means of handling them. It is a good omen for the future that the Steering Committees which prepared the content of the treaties on the issues of low politics have not been dissolved, and that the Task Force established with a view to channelling Greece's experiences and know-how to Turkey in her efforts to adopt the EU's Community Law is still functioning.

Fifth, the Greek national strategy towards Turkey has evolved in such a way that the majority of the Greek political and military elites are today in favour of Turkey's closer relations with the European Union. For the moment it seems that Greece regards this as favourable to her own national interests, because backing this Europeanisation process seems the only way for Greece to settle territorial disputes with Turkey. The old strategy of 'conditional sanctions' has given way to the new strategy of 'conditional rewards'. Instead of threatening to veto Turkey's EU membership aspirations unless the latter supports more acceptable settlements over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus disputes, the new Greek strategy emphasises that Greece would actively support Turkey's EU membership prospects should the latter show more accommodating and cooperative stances over the bilateral disputes.⁷ Both the New Democracy Party of Karamanlis and PASOK of Simitis and Papandreou agree on this point. This new Greek policy is promising because the materialisation of Greece's national interests requires both the resolution of Turkish-Greek territorial disputes and the continuation of Turkey's EU accession process. Besides, it is based on positive incentives rather than negative conditions. The Greek politicians seem to have been aware of the

fact that the road to peace and security in the region passes through the further Europeanisation of Turkey and the resolution of Turkish-Greek disputes. The hope that a more Europeanised and democratised Turkey would be more peaceful and cooperative in her foreign policy appears to underpin the current Greek strategy.⁸

Sixth, Turkey's perception of Greece's relative position within the EU has also started to change since the second half of the 1990s, so that the Turkish elite now sees the dynamics of Turkey-EU relations as strongly affected by the tone of Turkey-Greece relations.⁹ The Turkish political elites have gradually embraced the view that Turkey has also to come to terms with Greece over the Aegean and Cyprus disputes, if she wants to join the EU. Greece is now considered more seriously by Turkey. The more Europeanised Greece has become, the more difficult it has become for Turkey to rely on the major members of the EU to put pressure on Greece not to put obstacles on Turkey's route to Brussels. This has been a direct outcome of Greece's further efforts at Europeanisation, which has gained momentum with the accession of the Simitis government to power in 1996. Since then Turkey's perception of Greece's role in overall EU-Turkey relations has started to change. The current Justice and Development Party government in Turkey seems to have adopted the rationale that the faster Turkey comes to an agreement with Greece, the more the EU would feel inclined to start accession talks.

Seventh, Turkey's interest in EU membership has increased in the post-Helsinki period, particularly following the ominous events of 11 September 2001. Given that the stakes of exclusion from the EU, particularly on cultural and civilisational grounds, will be much higher today than the past, Turkey has speeded up its efforts to meet the accession criteria. Besides, Turkey's interest in EU membership is also affected by the concern to avoid having to deal with the Americans on a bilateral level. Given that NATO has started to lose its cementing role between the two sides of the Atlantic, any further estrangement of Turkey from the EU would mean that NATO membership alone would no longer be sufficient gauge of Turkey's 'European-ness'.¹⁰

Additionally, the political Islamists have made a U-turn and decided to give support to Turkey's accession process with the EU. Even though many claim that their prime reason for this change has been their hope to find an external ally against the secular establishment within the country, the fact that these circles represent nearly one third of Turkish society is important in this regard.¹¹

A short-term concern for Turkey has been Cyprus. It appears that the Turkish foreign policy makers have realised that if Cyprus joins the EU as a divided island by May 2004, this would have a catastrophic impact on Turkey's relations with the EU. It would be highly likely that the Greek Cypriots would ask Turkey to make some radical concessions on Cyprus should Turkey still aspire to join the EU. Once inside the EU themselves, they would feel stronger and more justified in demanding Turkish concessions on the island. It would become more difficult for Turkey to achieve EU membership with Greek Cypriots able to block her efforts from within the EU.¹² That is why the current JDP government is arguing for the resumption of the inter-communal talks in Cyprus on the basis of the Anan Plan.

To this end, the Grand National Assembly has recently passed some radical laws and the security establishment of the state has rewritten Turkey's National Security Policy Document. All these changes aim at adapting Turkey's internal

and external profile in line with that of the European Union. Reflecting this new mood in Turkey, even the ex-Chief of the General Staff argued for Turkey's EU membership on strategic-security grounds claiming that accession to the EU is a geo-political necessity for Turkey.

Eight, the European Union and the United States actively support the current cooperation process for their own security reasons. It might even be claimed that bilateral initiatives are becoming highly institutionalised with Turkey's EU accession process. In this regard, the most important thing is the evolving EU policy towards Turkey. Since 1999 Turkey has been an official candidate for EU membership destined to join the Club on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other would-be members.

The Americans are also encouraging the latest Greek-Turkish cooperation process in the hope that Turkey's EU membership prospects would be higher if one of the great obstacles in this regard is eliminated with the settlement of the Turkish-Greek disputes. To US politicians, Turkey's pro-Western and pro-American character would be bolstered if Turkey joins the EU. A more European and Western Turkey would be more willing and likely to cooperate with the US in the realisation of the latter's strategic-security interests in the Greater Middle Eastern region.¹³

Ninth, a strong reason to become more optimistic about the future of Turkish-Greek relations is that these two countries have gradually developed the habit of cooperation over the last four years. Below is a summary of the cases of cooperation.

In June 1999, on the margins of a UN meeting in New York, the foreign Ministers of Turkey and Greece launched a new policy of reconciliation. Note that this was happening before the earthquakes struck both countries in August and September. Following the high level bilateral meetings and consultations in Ankara and Athens throughout the second half of 1999, Turkey and Greece signed a total of 10 agreements on various issues, ranging from organised crime, tourism, drug trafficking and illegal immigration to environment, culture, trade and terrorism. Half of these agreements were signed in Ankara when the Greek Foreign Minister Papandreou paid an historic visit to Turkey on 19–22 January 2000, the first for three decades. The other half was signed in Athens during Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem's visit on 1–3 February 2002.

Since the first Turkey-Greece EU Committee meeting in February 2000, Greek officials have offered training to their Turkish counterparts on customs and financial issues, judicial reform, agricultural matters, and law enforcement concerning illegal immigration, narcotics trafficking, and organised crime in the region.

In early 2001, both countries agreed to eliminate the landmines on their common borders over the next ten years. They also simultaneously became signatories of the 1997 Ottawa Convention requiring the destruction of their existing landmines and prohibiting future landmine use and production. In early 2001, Greece lifted the state of mobilisation of war against Turkey. Turkey is no longer officially considered as the prime threat to Greece.

In early 2001 they agreed to cooperate on a feasibility study under the EU's Inogate program for a series of pipelines to carry natural gas from Central Asia to Europe. The \$10 billion project would bring interconnections between the Greek and Turkish networks. In spring 2002 they agreed to build a cross-border pipeline to carry natural gas from central Asia to Western Europe. The 177-mile

pipeline would be the first joint infrastructure project launched since the two neighbours set aside their traditional hostility in the wake of disastrous earthquakes in both countries in 1999. The pipeline, which would cost \$300 million and take three years to build, is the first intergovernmental project to take practical shape.¹⁴

In mid 2001, the soccer authorities of both countries agreed to make a joint bid to host the 2008 European soccer championship.

In mid 2001 the militaries of both countries announced plans to downsize their military spending. Even though the main reason behind the decision of the Turkish military authorities was the latest economic crisis precipitated by the developments of February 2001, the Greek authorities foresaw this and announced that they would also go for savings.

In early 2002, the two foreign ministers, Papandreou and Cem achieved a political breakthrough when they agreed that Greek and Turkish experts should start talks on a package of long-running bilateral disputes, such as airspace over the Aegean Sea and ownership of mineral rights in the seabed. The aim is that if agreement cannot be reached, the two countries would jointly refer these issues to the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

The success of the latest reconciliation process between Greece and Turkey was reflected symbolically in early August 2002, when Turkey's new National Security Policy Document did not mention Greece as the top external threat to Turkey's national security.

Their cooperation within the NATO framework is also worth mentioning. In July 1997 they signed a memorandum of good neighbourly relations on the margins of the NATO's Madrid summit where the Alliance has officially endorsed the primacy of the Eastern Mediterranean region for the Alliance's future interests. Greece and Turkey also finally reached agreement on NATO's new command structures, which were promulgated in December 1997. In the summer of 1998 both countries agreed to revitalise the Confidence Building Measures, to which they had initially agreed in 1988. In this process, the role of the then NATO General Secretary Solana was immense. In September 1998 they agreed to the establishment of a Balkan regional peacekeeping force alongside NATO allies Italy and the United States. Their cooperation in NATO's war in Kosovo in 1999 is also worth remembering. Last but not least, Greek and Turkish soldiers have for the first time since 1982 participated together in a NATO military exercise in May 2000, called Dynamic Mix.¹⁵

Causes of Fragility

Despite all the above-mentioned promising developments, there are other factors that have the potential to make the latest Turkish-Greek cooperation process look more fragile.

The Burden of the Past

The record of the Turkish-Greek interaction process in the first decade of the post-Cold War era does not bode well for the future because the decades-long culture of mistrust has penetrated deep into national thinking in both countries. In the section that follows, we will argue that it will be extremely difficult for

these countries to break the well-established conflictual cycle in bilateral relations.

The historical analysis of Turkish-Greek relations in the 1990s seems to confirm the view that the next decade would not be so different from the previous one. The main assumption behind Greek policies was that Greece would feel more secure and safe if Turkey continued to remain outside the EU. From Greece's accession to the EU in 1981 until the second half of the 1990s, the majority of Greek political parties converged on the foreign policy goal of Turkey's exclusion from the EU orbit and the confirmation of Turkey's non-European character by Greece's partners within the EU.¹⁶ To this end, the continuation of the no-solution situation in the Aegean Sea and Cyprus served Greece's interests in driving wedges between the EU and Turkey. There was virtually no serious commitment to the resolution of these disputes, as long as their non-settlement helped Greece erect additional barriers to Turkey's membership of the EU. Besides, from 1982 until 1986 Greece tried to obstruct the reconvening of the EU-Turkey Association Council, which was suspended by the EU following the 1980 military coup in Turkey. The Greek governments of that time also tried to prevent the flow of financial aid to Turkey, designed to help the latter meet EU requirements. Given this heritage of a persistent anti-Turkish bias in Greek foreign policy, it has been very difficult for Turkish politicians to accept since 1996 that Greece has really changed its perception of Turkey and started to act on the basis of a new cooperative logic. The legacy of the first two decades of Greek EU membership has not been so easy to put aside.

Moreover, the strategic rationale behind support for Cyprus's EU membership and the Joint Defence Doctrine of late 1993 were further examples of anti-Turkish policies on the part of Greece, because they were based on the perceived expansionist and irredentist threats coming from the other side of the Aegean Sea.¹⁷

On the other hand, the main rationale behind Turkey's behaviour towards Greece was the assumption that whatever Turkey does to accommodate Greece over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus, the EU would never agree to its membership due to other problematic issues. When Turkish politicians observed that Greece's behaviour in the Balkans during the first half of the 1990s was anti-European and anti-Western, they did not consider Greece as a serious factor in Turkey's EU accession process. In Turkey's view, if the major EU member states were convinced of the merits of Turkey's accession, then they would put pressure on Greece not to veto the process, and thus there was no need for Turkey to agree to Greece's terms on Cyprus and the Aegean.¹⁸

The Turkish elites have also developed a consensus that the more the EU viewed Turkey's membership positively, the more Turkey would accommodate Greek claims over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea. In one sense, Turkey countered the Greek strategy of 'conditional rewards' with the strategy of 'conditional sanctions'—i.e. if you create problems in my relations with the European Union, then you had better forget the sort of peaceful atmosphere in the Eastern Mediterranean region that would have enabled you to complete your 'Europeanisation process' successfully.¹⁹

Starting with the divergence of opinions about how to handle the crises in the territories of former Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey set off a chain of rivalry in the Balkans reflecting their desires to dominate the regional politics in the post-Cold War era.²⁰ Despite the claims that both are members of the Western

security community and therefore have a shared interest in working together for peace and stability in the region, they preferred completely divergent and conflicting courses of actions in the Balkans. Instead of cooperating within the institutional links they have with the West, they constructed a kind of rivalry in the region. The crises in the territories of the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Macedonia, have revealed that Turkey and Greece were actually in opposite camps. They were at loggerheads both during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in the dispute over the naming of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

However, it should be noted that while Greece's Balkan policies in the first half of the 1990s were mainly nationalistic, unilateral and anti-Western, Turkey's stance was multilateral, pro-western and cooperative. Indeed, the image of Turkish-Greek rivalry in the Balkans has little basis in fact—it was largely a Greek fabrication based on Greece's fear of encirclement in the face of Turkey's cooperative relations with Greece's neighbours.²¹

The content of Turkish-Greek conflictual relations in the 1990s has also expanded. A serious crisis broke out in February 1996 over the legal status of two small islets in the Aegean Sea situated within three miles of the Turkish coast, called *Kardak* by the Turks and *Imia* by the Greeks. The two countries came to the brink of war.²² The significance of this crisis was that Turkey for the first time started to question the legal status of some scattered islands in the Aegean Sea. Coining the term 'grey areas' Turkey initiated a policy of bringing sovereignty issues onto the agenda of Turkish-Greek relations. The *Imia/Kardak* crisis also revealed that if EU support for Turkey's ongoing democratisation process does not involve giving credible backing to pro-democracy and pro-EU circles in Turkey, then democratisation will only benefit the partisans of parochial and unilateral nationalism. The performance of the then Prime Minister Ciller of the True Path Party was proof enough of this. Given the EU's ambiguous policy towards Turkey's accession, it would be easy enough for political parties successfully to employ mobilising ideologies of 'nationalism' and 'political Islam'.²³

Another crisis took place when the Republic of Cyprus announced its intention to bring in S-300 surface-to-air missiles from Russia. Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus jointly declared that such a move by the Greek Cypriots would be reciprocated severely. It was made clear that Turkey would strike at the missiles if they were installed on the island. Although the tensions seem to have been reduced with the decision of the Greek government to install the missiles on the island of Crete, instead of Cyprus, the underlying logic that dictated the policy of ordering such surface-to-air missiles still prevails in the southern part of the island.²⁴

Another crisis has been the involvement of the Greek agents in the Ocalan case. For the first time, the Turkish accusation that Greece has been giving support to the PKK terror organization was shown to be correct, when it was made public that Ocalan, the leader of the outlawed terror organization, had been given shelter in the residence of the Greek ambassador in Kenya.²⁵

The Logics on the Eve of the Helsinki Summit

Many observers of Turkish-Greek relations have concluded that the main reason why the two countries launched a new cooperative process in the middle of

1999, and then crowned this by accepting the terms of the EU's Helsinki summit agreement, was that both believed in the legitimacy of the permanent settlement of their disputes in an age of globalisation. To them the so-called seismic diplomacy has really shaken up the old confrontational logic. However, this essay argues that the underlying reasons behind Turkey and Greece's cooperative attitudes towards each other have been mainly driven by strategic and instrumental factors rather than by a reciprocal change of heart.

The main motives behind Turkey's cooperative stance towards Greece have not been to resolve long-standing Turkish-Greek disputes, but to enhance her prospects of EU membership by taking advantage of the changing dynamics of the regional environment in 1999, and indeed to ameliorate Turkey's image in the eyes of the major EU members.²⁶ In other words, relations with Greece have been instrumentalised in order to accelerate Turkey's EU accession process. When Greece was caught off-guard in the Ocalan affair, and when the EU's ability to forge a common foreign and security policy was seriously undermined by the EU's poor performance on the Kosovo conflict, the international strategic environment favoured Turkey's adoption of a more cooperative posture. The thinking was that both Greece and the EU had lost bargaining power vis-à-vis Turkey, and that Turkey had more to gain than to lose from a cooperative policy towards Greece and the EU. Greece would have to show more flexibility towards Turkey's positions on Cyprus and the Aegean Sea in order to recuperate her tarnished image in the eyes of Turkey and the international community. Besides, political elites in Ankara might have calculated that a Turkey on good terms with Greece, a member of the EU, might have better chances of admission into this exclusive club. Given that Athens holds one of the 15 keys to Ankara's EU membership, Turkey might have approached Greece with such strategic considerations in mind.²⁷ Ankara's main motivation to cooperate with Greece has not been to please the latter but rather to gain the favour of other EU members.

It was also assumed that the EU would have to ameliorate its policy towards Turkey by offering her official candidate status in order to secure Turkey's support for moves towards regional security cooperation.²⁸

This is not to say that Turkish politicians have given up thinking that the resolution of Turkish-Greek disputes would have been good for its own sake. The idea was not that if Turkish-Greek problems were solved, then the EU would treat Turkey better. The rationale was that Turkey could utilise the current state of Turkish-Greek relations in order to enhance its EU membership prospects. By indexing the overall quality of Turkish-Greek relations to EU-Turkey relations, Turkey approached Greece from an instrumental perspective. The more the EU has behaved receptively to Turkey's membership, the more Turkey has made conciliatory overtures towards Greece. This Turkish strategy has been all the more evident in Turkey's approach to the solution of the Cyprus dispute both within the UN and EU frameworks.²⁹

Greece also has approached Turkey from an instrumental perspective by viewing relations with Turkey within the context of overall Greece-EU relations. Given the negative impression among her NATO and EU partners that Greece was responding like a Balkan rather than a European country to developments in the region, as her performance in the Bosnian and Kosovo wars and over the Macedonian question demonstrated, her image was further tarnished when she

was caught off-guard giving overt support to the outlawed PKK, depicted by many of her partners in NATO and the EU as a terrorist organisation.³⁰ This did nothing to improve Greece's reputation as a troublemaker within NATO and the EU, and it is not surprising that the Greek government of the day launched a new policy strategy towards Turkey with a view to improving her rock-bottom image in Western circles.

The two fundamental Greek foreign and security policy objectives in the second half of the 1990s were first to restore Greece's image in the eyes of her EU partners and thus enable Greece to join the first tier EU members of the Euro-zone; and second that the Republic of Cyprus joins the EU even if no *a priori* political settlement could be reached.³¹ These objectives were further highlighted by the failure of Greece's internal strategy to counter Turkey's growing power and influence in the 1990s. Greece simply could not emulate Turkey's growing military expenditure in the second half of the 1990s, and her strategy of deterrence against Turkey was undermined by her humiliation in the 1996 Imia crisis.³² When all these factors combined, the only strategy left for Greece to adopt against Turkey would be to increase Greece's 'soft' power via its external alliance relationship with the EU. It seemed that for Greece to fulfil its two priority objectives, Turkey would have to be encouraged in its Europeanisation process.

The hope was that the more Turkey wanted to join the EU and was encouraged in this direction, the more it would adopt a flexible attitude towards the resolution of the Aegean and Cyprus disputes. Similarly, the more the resolution of these territorial disputes became a reality, the faster Greece would be able to join the EU's zone of peace. Without Turkey becoming an EU candidate, it might have been difficult for Greece to accomplish its Europeanisation project, since a Turkey which feels further alienated from the EU would continue to keep Greece occupied with territorial issues in the midst of the EU's deep transformation process. In one way or the other, cooperative relations with Turkey constituted a necessary must for Greece to realise all these goals.

It has no longer been stated that Turkey is not a European country and can never become an EU member. On the contrary, this new Greek policy of 'facilitative conditionality' has been based on a new discursive practice emphasising that Turkey *is* a European country and is capable of becoming an EU member, and that the EU should soon start the accession talks with Turkey. Moreover, if Turkey softens her hardline approach towards the Cyprus dispute, then her chance of acceding to the EU would most likely increase.³³

Moreover, Athens might have hoped that by launching a new policy initiative towards Turkey, some circles in Ankara and the EU might conclude that it was not Athens but other EU members that were blocking Turkey's accession. A further advantage of such a policy might also have been that Athens would be relieved of the additional burdens of her military armaments program, set up to achieve military balance with Turkey in the Aegean Sea. A side-benefit of reductions in military spending would be that Greece would be able to devote more resources to her economic programme for meeting the EU's criteria for joining the European Monetary Union. The fact that Greece will host the Olympic Games in 2004 might have further propelled the Greek authorities to downsize military spending in order to allocate more resources to the realisation of this project.

Greece's attitudes towards Turkey and the Turkish-Greek disputes in the post-11 September era appear to be instrumental as well. It seems that Greek foreign policy makers are aware of the fact that Turkey's strategic importance has increased in this new era and that Greece's above-mentioned strategic goals might be seriously endangered by a more intransigent and intimidating Turkish attitude towards Greece in general and the resolution of the bilateral disputes in particular. Therefore, the Greek government has been vociferously arguing for the start of accession talks with Turkey lest the latter switch from her current cooperative stance to a much harder line.³⁴

Despite Greece's apparent support for Turkey's EU membership, her rationale on the ESDP dispute has once more alerted Turkish politicians to the possibility that Greece has not entirely given up its well-established exclusionary policy towards Turkey. What has proved difficult to understand for objective analysts has been that while Greece has on the one hand been arguing for Turkey's EU membership within the context of Cyprus's accession to the EU, she has on the other hand adopted a very intransigent attitude towards the resolution of the ESDP conflict between the EU, Turkey and NATO. Her reaction to the Ankara deal of November 2001 was a case in point. Until the latest EU summit in Copenhagen in December 2002, where the dispute over the ESDP issue reached a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties concerned, the Greek governments had appeared to act on the assumption that Turkey would never join the EU and therefore what was the purpose of offering her full rights to participate in the decision-making process of EU-led and EU-only military operations.³⁵ If she sincerely believed in the legitimacy and possibility of Turkey's EU accession, would she still try to sabotage this deal by vetoing it on the margins of the EU summit meetings in Leaken and Sevilla?

Prospects

Based on the analysis above, the following points are reasons for further scepticism about the latest détente in Turkish-Greek relations, and unless they are given serious consideration, hopes for a cooperative future may prove slim. The first and the foremost point concerns the fact that Turkey's cooperation with Greece seems to be dependent on the nature/quality of her relations with the European Union. The danger is that whenever Turkey-EU relations deteriorate, the quality of Turkish-Greek cooperation might degenerate.³⁶ If the European Union does not increase her commitment towards Turkey's accession to the EU by adopting more positive policies, then Turkey's ongoing democratisation process might result in a decrease in Turkey's penchant for EU membership and this might in turn lead Turkey to embrace more non-cooperative policies towards Greece. If the EU is to contribute to the resolution of the Turkish-Greek disputes, both parties must have confidence in the EU-mission. However, this is what is missing in Turkey. Turks remember that when the Greek Cypriots applied for EU-membership in 1990, the Europeans told Turkey that this application would not be taken into consideration so long as the Cyprus dispute remained unresolved. The same scenario happened in 1997 when the Europeans told the Turks that the accession talks with the Greek Cypriots would not start before the resolution of the dispute. Lastly, the Europeans told the Turks that the Greek Cypriots would not be admitted to membership so long as both communi-

ties on the island remained separated from each other. History has shown that the EU has not kept its promises.

Turkey's policy towards the Cyprus plan of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan seems to be a case in point. In his attempts at ending the long-lasting division of the island and paving the way for a non-problematic accession of the island to the EU, Mr. Annan has recently proposed a very detailed solution framework to the parties concerned.³⁷ Even though many of the fundamental Turkish claims have been addressed in the text, and in the further revisions Mr. Annan has made to the original text, the well-established security elites in Turkey have frowned at these initiatives and adopted a very cautious approach. The strange thing in this process is that some pro-EU circles in Turkey initially supported this plan in the hope that EU membership for Greek Cyprus, taken to represent the whole island, would not constitute an obstacle to Turkey's future accession to the same club. However, these pro-EU and pro-solution circles, including the leading figures of the ruling Justice and Development party, soon appeared to line up with more doubtful and pessimistic Euro-sceptic circles. The reason for this rapid switch seems to be that both pro-EU and Euro-sceptic circles in Turkey share the view that unless the European Union offers Turkey a credible and imminent membership perspective, Turkey would have more to lose than to gain from the EU membership of the divided island. It seems that the majority of the Turkish elites have not interpreted the EU's Copenhagen summit decisions as favourable for the start of accession talks with Turkey.³⁸

As the brief account above indicates, unless the EU seriously encourages Turkey's EU accession process with credible rewards and sanctions, pro-EU sympathies will be outweighed in number and intensity by Euro-sceptic opinion. This would likely result in more intransigent Turkish policies towards Greece. An additional danger is that the longer it takes for Turkey to take some bold steps on the issues concerned, the more difficult it would be for the Greek politicians to rely on the support of Greek public opinion. At some point, Greek politicians might revert to their old habit of courting nationalistic sentiments to boost their domestic political interests. Turkey should reciprocate Greece's latest cooperative overtures towards Turkey.³⁹

Second, for the current Turkish-Greek cooperation process to deliver permanent peace in the region, the parties should also deal with 'high-politics' issues. Cooperation on questions of low politics is positive but not enough.

Third, if the United States continues to view Turkey and her relations with Greece and the European Union from a strategic-security perspective, Turkey's approach towards Greece and the European Union might continue to reflect more strategic and instrumental considerations. Besides, if the current intra-Alliance rift cannot be healed soon, Turkey's behaviour towards the European Union and Greece might be destabilised. This would make it difficult for Turkey to assess the possible consequences of her actions and to line up with European positions against American ones. A Turkey which would constantly felt sandwiched between European and American choices would end up thinking in more strategic and instrumental ways. A Turkey which perceives her foreign policy environment through strategic-security lenses would tend to interpret developments in the region from a zero-sum perspective, highlighting costs at the expense of benefits.⁴⁰

For Turkey to cooperate with Greece on the margins of the EU accession process, the United States should also give active encouragement to the EU's

strategy towards Turkey. This has become extremely important particularly in the aftermath of September 11. If Turkey thinks that the new international environment provides her with opportunities to secure US support for Turkey's hardline attitudes towards Greece and the European Union, then her incentive to Europeanise her foreign policy outlook would decrease.

Fourth, the current Greek strategy towards Turkey should attach more value to Turkey's membership of the EU than to the resolution of the Aegean and Cyprus disputes in ways acceptable to Greece. The former should be the end, with the latter being the means, not the other way around. Given that Turkish public opinion and the military-security elites have been highly suspicious of Greece's intentions to use EU mechanisms against Turkey, it would be difficult for the Turks to believe in Greece's sincerity on Turkey's accession to the EU. The widely-shared Turkish view is that Greece advocates Turkey's accession to the EU in general, and the start of Turkey's accession talks with the EU in particular, in the hope that Turkey would agree to more pro-Greek solutions in the Aegean Sea and Cyprus. It is still not certain whether the latest Greek overtures towards Turkey reflect a 'change of heart', or rather a 'change of mind' - new tactics deployed in pursuit of the same old belligerent and exclusionary strategy.⁴¹

Finally, the interpretation of the latest Copenhagen summit by the majority of the Greek political elites does not seem promising for the ongoing Turkish-Greek détente because it once again reveals that the Greeks still approach Turkey from an instrumental perspective. To these circles the new status quo has resulted in a win-win situation for Greece. On the one hand, if Turkey accepted these conclusions and fulfilled the EU's requirements, then her behaviour towards Greece would be cooperative and accommodating. On the other hand, if Turkey chose the path of escalation and refused to comply with the EU's decisions over the Aegean and Cyprus disputes, then Turkey would have to face the European Union, rather than Greece. If Greece found itself in a win-win situation in the aftermath of the Copenhagen Summit whereas Turkey felt betrayed and frustrated, the expected benefits of simultaneous Europeanisation processes in both countries would not take place.⁴²

Notes

1. The main reason for optimism in these circles has been the dynamics of the EU's enlargement process, which would dictate cooperative neighbourly relations among candidate and member states.
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3. Ibid., 20.
4. Larabee, F.S. and Lesser, I.O. (2003) *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, p. 87 (Prepared for the Centre for Middle Eastern Public Policy: A Rand Publication).
5. Heraclides, A. (2003) p. 18
6. The content of these treaties can be seen on the web pages of the Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministries at: <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr>> and <<http://www.mfa.gov.gr>>
7. Couloumbis, T.A. (1999) Strategic consensus in Greek domestic and foreign policy since 1974, in V Coufadakis *et al.* (Eds) (1999) *Greece and the New Balkans Challenges and Opportunities*, pp. 407–422, 414 (New York: Pella Publishing Company).
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10. Oguzlu, H.T. (2002) The clash of security identities. The question of Turkey's membership in the European Union, *International Journal*, Autumn 2002, pp. 579–603.
11. See Oguzlu, H.T. (2003) The impact of democratisation along the EU accession process on the Turkish foreign policy. A Paper presented at the 5th Kokkalis Graduate Students Workshop, organised by the Kokkalis programme under the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University on February 7, 2003.
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18. Guvenc (2000).
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34. It is within this context that many Greek politicians have stated that the European Union should soon start accession talks with Turkey. Interestingly enough, Greece has now become the most vociferous supporter of Turkey's EU membership.
35. For a thoughtful discussion of these issues see Missiroli, A. (2002) EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management: no Turkish Delight for ESDP, *Security Dialogue*, 33(1), pp. 9–26.
36. Larrabee and Lesser (2003).
37. For the plan, one can visit the web pages of the Turkish and Greek foreign ministries.
38. For the wording of the decision see the EU's web site at: <<http://europe.eu.int>>
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