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Turkey and European Institutions

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Turkey's relations with Europe have gone through three stages. The first stage was before the modern state of Turkey emerged in the international system, and the identification of the Ottoman Empire and the notion of Turk were defined in terms of the adversarial "other". Turkey, although a peripheral European power like Russia at the time, was nevertheless involved in the evolution of European politics, alliances, wars and the emergence of the European states system, of which it came to be considered a part in the mid-19th century.

The second stage of Turkey's identification *vis-à-vis* Europe came with the creation of the modern Turkish state and its pledge to follow a path of modernisation to accede to a level of contemporaneity. The beginning of the Cold War and the redefinition of the idea of Europe in terms of what constituted the "West" brought Turkey into the fold. This led to the creation of a "Western security community" centering around NATO. According to Bradley Klein, it constituted a "project" to create a "Western system" through a variety of institutions which ranged from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (the Pacific Security Pact between Australia, New Zealand and the US). But as Klein maintains, the focal point of this system was the transatlantic relationship embodied in NATO for the *raison d'être* of this system was preserving one "way of life" against another.² In this sense, Turkey was no longer the other in terms of Western identification,

1 This is a revised version of a paper presented to the IAI conference on "US-European Common Approaches to Turkey", held at Palazzo Rondinini, Rome, on 20-21 November 1998 and funded by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

2 B. Klein "Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defence Politics", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1988.

but very much a part of that way of life that was being preserved and the architecture set up to preserve it. Turkey's involvement with essentially Western institutions commenced in this period.³

The third stage of Turkey's role and identity *vis-à-vis* Europe started with the end of the Cold War as the "Western security community" inherited from the Cold War searched for a new *raison d'être*. Defending one way of life against another was replaced with the promotion of those values that were defended during the Cold War – that is, democracy and free markets – with an added emphasis on human rights, and using the institutions inherited from the Cold War as a vehicle to achieve this purpose, particularly to radiate these values to the post-communist world. Thus since 1990, a European security architecture is being constructed largely for redefining the purpose and legitimacy of these institutions. Whilst Turkey's place in the Western security community of the Cold War has not been questioned, its place in terms of the European identity that is being reforged in political, cultural and historical terms has become unclear – perhaps not so much with the other components of this European security architecture, such as NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), but certainly in terms of its long-standing relationship with the European Union (EU).

Turkey and the European Union

Turkey's relations with the EU have never been static. In this sense, Turkey's bid for EU membership is markedly different from that of the other candidates in line for membership. Turkey's relations with the EU have evolved over time alongside the EU's own structural development and Turkey's evolving role and identity with respect to Europe.

Turkey's relations with the then European Community (EC) commenced at a time when Turkey's role and identity was clearly defined in institutional and security terms as being part of the Western security community. The 1963 Ankara Treaty establishing Turkey's associate membership of the EC was part of the same package which involved absorbing Turkey into this security community in a practical working relationship with essentially Western institutions. These institutions ranged from the EC (a solely European economic grouping which at that time consisted of the founding six members and hence excluded many of today's prominent voices in the EU, most notably Britain) to the Council of Europe, which Turkey joined in 1949. Turkey's membership in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, then OEEC) in 1948 and its membership of NATO in 1952 completed this package.

Turkey was thus absorbed into the Western security community and its role

³ For an account of the development of the "Western security community", see G. Aybet, *A European Security Architecture After the Cold War: Questions of Legitimacy* (London: Macmillan, forthcoming 1999).

within this community was never questioned during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War era, with the shift in the objective of the Western security community from collective defence against an identifiable threat to the promotion of the Western values of democracy, free markets and human rights to the post-communist world, Turkey's place within it is changing.

As explained in the introduction, what was significant about the early Cold War era which saw the evolution of these institutions and the absorption of Turkey in the system was the nature of the project: absorbing all the units of the so-called Western camp in institutional bonds ranging from security to economic and monetary cooperation. The West as such was identified by these relations and practices and found its moral definition and purpose in preserving a certain way of life against another. The dissolution of the other after 1990 left a trail of redefinitions as to what constituted the West. Here, Turkey's identity *vis-à-vis* Europe entered shaky ground, as the new objectives of this security community turned towards the absorption of the post-communist vacuum. Radiating stability to regions where it was scarce in the post-Cold War era through institutional absorption was, as explained above, the second objective of the Western security community. Turkey, already a member, did not fall into the category of those needing to be absorbed. Its absorption had commenced a long time ago in 1948, but somehow it has never been completed. And this is where the problem lies in terms of Turkey's grey area status in Europe. This has become more acute in Turkey's relations with the EU than with other institutions.

The evolution of Turkish-EU relations runs parallel with the evolution of the EU and the development of democracy and sociological and demographic factors within Turkey. These parallel processes which occurred independently of each other, were further complicated by the changing parameters of European objectives at the end of the Cold War, which required institutional rebuilding, not dissimilar to the institution building that took place in Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These three ongoing developments have shaped the nature of Turkish-EU relations.

When the 1963 Ankara Treaty was further enhanced by the Additional Protocol of 1970 which foresaw the establishment of a Customs Union between Turkey and the EC, the EC's structural evolution was not yet as wide-reaching and sophisticated as it is today. For a start, the EC agenda in political terms was not as ambitious. True, there was the European Political Cooperation (EPC) process – the predecessor to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – but the EPC measures of that time were more aimed at protecting vital EC economic interests than promoting the EC as a major political voice with an impact on international affairs. The most significant aspect of the EPC process in the 1970s was the Euro-Arab dialogue which reflected European economic interests in relation to the oil embargo. However, nothing as far-reaching as a CFSP, which involves the regular passing of joint decisions and opinions on all aspects of global affairs, including the recognition of new states, existed. Similarly, in terms of the economic and structural development of the EU, the *acquis communautaire* of the 1970s was not

as dense as today's. Furthermore, the criteria for adhesion of new members was still largely defined in the framework of the Rome treaties with enhancing measures as put forward at the 1993 Copenhagen summit not yet in place.

At that time, despite its on/off democratisation process and the relative internal turmoil it was experiencing, Turkey nevertheless projected stability in foreign affairs and concerning its membership of NATO, which at that time was still the cornerstone of the Western security community; Turkey was undeniably part of the West. Indeed, it is more likely that a major consideration for the EC for future Turkish membership at that time would have been based on economic factors rather than political ones.⁴ This is because the Turkish economy in the 1970s was still largely unprivatised and its capacity for competition in international free markets therefore dubious.

When Turkey finally did apply for EU membership in 1987, this came at an inopportune moment for the country. In some respects, in terms of Turkey's internal profile, things looked better than they did in the 1970s. After the 1980 coup, the restoration of order, the withdrawal of the military and the creation of many new political parties, a new wave of democratisation had begun. Furthermore, the large privatisation process started under Özal's regime was creating a more open and competitive economy. However, sociological and demographic factors had begun to emerge that would inevitably play a role in the redefinition of Turkish politics and identity. This rapid socio-economic change was due to the "economic marginalisation and alienation of lower middle urban classes and fixed income groups".⁵ This not only increased migration from the rural eastern areas to the urban western areas but also increased the profile of political Islamist and ultranationalist movements. The resort to guerrilla tactics and terrorist activities by the separatist Kurdish group (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK) also occurred at this time (1984). The Turkish state's response to this situation, immediately with military operations in the southeast of the country and subsequently with the declaration of a state of emergency in the region, and the repercussions this had on the political voice of some PKK sympathisers, coupled with the rise of other extremist movements, all proved a setback for the post-1980 democratisation process. And this has inevitably come to be reflected in the status of Turkish-EU relations. These internal developments – ironically coupled with a growing and booming economy – were already taking place in Turkey at the time of its application to the EC in 1987.

In the international sphere the timing was also inopportune: with the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the removal of all short- and

4 However, of all the EU institutions, the European Parliament has been the one to consistently criticize Turkey's democratization process. See the 1985 Balfe Report and the 1988 Werner Report, European Parliament.

5 See M. Muftuler-Bac, "The Never Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4, 1998, p. 248.

medium range land-based nuclear forces from Europe, it seemed that at least the Cold War in its most dangerous form had subsided in Europe. By 1989, when the European Commission passed its Opinion that Turkey's application ought to be shelved, it was evident that the Cold War itself was about to come to a end with the commencement of the "velvet revolutions" in Central and Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Not only the parameters of European security, but also those of European culture were being redefined, as the division of Europe ceased to exist and Europe – east and west – was finding new grounds for bonding in historical, cultural and religious terms.

Meanwhile in Turkey, because of the socio-economic revolution mentioned above, the cultural differences with Europe became more visible. From that point on, Turkey's place in Europe and its future in the European Union became increasingly questionable. The rest of the story consists of an increasingly frustrated Western Turkish elite and an increasingly adamant, insistent EU. The Turkish elite is surprised and angry that, whilst Turkey's place in Europe was not questioned during the Cold War when it was of strategic importance *vis-à-vis* the Soviet threat, Turkey's European identity is now being questioned in cultural terms. For the EU, enlargement to those who most need "absorbing", that is, the post-communist East, and contemporaneous deepening of the structural foundations of integration leave no room for the absorption of Turkey. Furthermore, as the values of democracy and human rights gain more prominence in the post-Cold War era, the EU has become more critical towards Turkey's performance in these areas.

The result was the tightening of the admission criteria at the Copenhagen summit in 1993, particularly emphasising the conditions for stable democracy, human rights and protection of minorities. In this context, Turkey's Kurdish problem has been pointed to in EU circles as an impediment to fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria for membership. A decade after Turkey's application, 1997 proved to be a particularly bad year for Turkish-EU relations. In July, European Commission President Jacques Santer brought out *Agenda 2000*, setting out the Commission's enlargement strategy. The Commission proposed undertaking negotiations for accession with five countries: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia. At the EU Luxembourg summit at the end of the year, it was decided to add Cyprus to the list of so-called fast track countries. The "slower track" countries eligible for accession were listed as Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. Turkey did not feature in either list, but it was decided to establish a European Conference comprising all the above countries plus Turkey. The Conference, which met for the first time in London in March 1998, has however been boycotted by Turkey, which refuses to participate unless treated on an equal basis with the other acceding states. Also made public at the Luxembourg summit was the European Strategy for Turkey, which emphasises the unique relationship between the EU and Turkey to justify that Turkey's application process be treated separately. In particular, the one to one meetings between Turkey and the Commission on the Strategy focused on the payment of EU funds allocated to Turkey and the financial compensation due Turkey as part of the 1995 Customs Union

agreement that have been blocked by Greece's veto.

Turkey's non-participation in the European Conference and its criticism of the Luxembourg and *Agenda 2000* decisions did not go unnoticed. The EU's Cardiff summit of June 1998 not only paved the way for the definition of Turkey as one of the twelve acceding states but also emphasised the need for a more detailed working timetable for the Strategy. Pursuant to this, the EU Commission presented a report to Turkey at the same time as the other applicant states, removing the Luxembourg suggestion that Turkey be excluded from membership negotiations in the near future. At least for the time being there seems to be an earnest attempt on the part of the EU to help bring Turkey closer to meeting the Copenhagen criteria; this even includes the possibility of lifting the Greek veto on payment of EU funds due Turkey by making the issue a qualified majority vote decision.

These are efforts to keep Turkey well embedded and bonded with Europe. Despite the difficulties Europe has had in clarifying the role and identity of Turkey in a post-Cold War Europe, these latest developments show that a Europe without Turkey is an uncomfortable thought for most EU states. In this sense, Turkey's policy of insisting on nothing short of membership has proved successful; for Turkey, other forms of relations without membership, such as the 1995 Customs Union Agreement and even Turkey's participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue have not been satisfactory as replacements for membership. At least now that this is clear, there seems to be a serious search on both sides to come to some agreement on preparing Turkey for accession. As to how long this might take remains an open-ended question.

Turkey and the European Security and Defence Identity

In the early stages of the development of a European security architecture in 1990-93, debate focused on whether to bring the WEU into the EU as the defence arm of the CFSP or whether to enhance the WEU as NATO's European pillar. The so-called Atlanticist versus Europeanist debate came to centre around the crucial question of whether NATO could develop beyond a collective defence alliance in the post-Cold War era and whether it could undertake "out of area" operations, which technically the WEU is not limited by treaty to undertake. This debate subsided as NATO's involvement in collective security operations, most notably in the former Yugoslavia, commenced. NATO had indeed found a new role for itself in the post-Cold War era – that of using its military capabilities in directing and coordinating collective security missions of a humanitarian and peace-support nature and involving non-NATO states in this operation. In terms of the absorption of the post-communist world into Western practices, this became a very valuable asset. The involvement of non-NATO forces in SFOR is a good example. The growing prominence of NATO's military edge was also of significance, heralding France's rapprochement with NATO military circles after its departure from the integrated military structure in 1966. It also altered the NATO-WEU rela-

tionship, as the WEU's operational capabilities came to rest on NATO's and as the development of the defence side of CFSP – the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) – did not evolve as smoothly as envisaged back in 1991.

In terms of where Turkey fits into this evolving architecture, its full membership of NATO but only associate membership of the WEU once more leaves it in a grey area. In terms of military operations, Turkey participates fully in NATO's post-Cold War activities; as an associate member of the WEU, Turkey has the right to participate in all operational aspects. The closeness of the NATO-WEU relationship makes things a little awkward for the non-full member states of the WEU. In 1996, NATO and the WEU signed an agreement for the sharing of intelligence. In the same year, NATO adopted the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept as a "deployable multinational, multi-service formation generated and tailored for specific contingency operations".⁶ Thus, through the CJTF, forces assigned to NATO and trained in NATO exercises could be used in conjunction with or entirely for WEU operations. This linkage of the WEU's operational role to NATO has resulted in "separate but not separable" capabilities, to be used either by the WEU or NATO. In this sense, Turkey's associate membership of the WEU is no different in operational terms from full membership.

What is different between the two memberships, and a cause of some concern for Turkey, is the fact that Turkey is not involved in EU decisions that have direct bearing on the security and defence dimension of the CFSP and the role of the WEU. This problem may become more acute should the WEU be absorbed in the EU. In particular, should the functions of the present WEU Council, in which Turkey participates as an associate member, be taken over by the EU Council, in which Turkey does not take part, Turkey would be marginalised from any defence-related EU decisions. Some non-NATO EU full members actually participate and have a chance to feedback their views in NATO through NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. However, a similar mechanism to involve NATO non-EU members like Turkey does not exist in present EU structures and it is unclear if and how the current WEU associate members will be involved in EU decision making and activities relating to defence, should the WEU become part of the EU.

Conclusions

Although Turkey's identity in terms of the political and cultural evolution of post-Cold War Europe has come under scrutiny, a European security architecture cannot be envisaged without Turkey. It is wrong to assume that Turkey's strategic importance for Europe has decreased. Security in the post-Cold War era is no longer identified in terms of building a massive collective defence against an identifiable enemy. Instability, national movements, the control of natural resources in regions of turmoil all have a bearing on European security interests. In this context,

⁶ See A. Cragg, "The Combined Joint Task Force Concept: A Key Component of the Alliance's Adaptation", *NATO Review*, July 1996.

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Turkey's geostrategic importance for Europe has, if anything, increased. A country with democratic institutions (which may not satisfy EU criteria for the moment, but are nevertheless democratic), a country with a competitive free market economy, a country which refrains from unilateral action in times of crisis and works through institutional and diplomatic channels as part of the Western system, a country which has a long-standing working relationship with Western institutions in a region of instability hosting vital strategic natural resources such as oil and gas has to remain part of the European security architecture; any other alternative would be detrimental to European security interests.