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Turkey's Long Path Towards Accession A Greek Viewpoint

Realities and Perspectives

Although European doubts and concern at the prospect of Turkish membership of the EU are not alien to Greek public opinion and in spite of the fact that such doubts and concern, based on political, economic and cultural considerations are broadly shared in Greece, one might venture to assert that the question of Turkish membership is addressed by both government and public opinion on an exclusively bilateral basis. On the basis of the serious problems existing between the two countries and on a different evaluation thereof the Greek Government had opposed Turkish membership of the Union as long as the Turkish Government refused to comply with basic rules of international law, did not refrain from provocative attitudes and did not renounce the threat of war as a means of solving international disputes. Such an approach of the prospect of Turkish membership on the part of the Greek government was sound but it proved counterproductive in the midst of conflicting interests and attitudes of other powers, inside and outside the EU. The Greek government therefore adopted a different approach at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, when they accepted the principle of Turkish candidacy. In so doing, the Greek government ceased to play as a fig leaf for their partners' doubts about Turkey's European prospects and compatibility and put their hopes on some kind of change of Turkish policy, which would ease tension and lead to a peaceful settlement of disputes.

The attempt to introduce Western values in the practice and policies of the Ottoman administration goes back to the 19th century. Some efforts came from above i.e. from the Sultans themselves, who saw in Western type reform the only means to save their declining Empire. After the Crimean war the Empire was even admitted into the Concert of Europe in view of the fact that it still possessed large provinces on the continent of Europe. By the same opportunity the Sultan promised to

introduce considerable reforms but he never put his promises into execution¹. As a rule efforts at Westernization made from above did not yield results. Neither did efforts by the powers prove more successful so much so as the nature of the Empire did not lend itself to Western type change and the powers did not enjoy real credibility at the court of the Sick Man. Following the collapse of the Empire in 1918, Kemal's Turkey chose Western Europe as a model for its new secular structure.

Yet, in spite of radical change in the structure of the state, Turkey remains a country of Islamic culture ruled by a superficially Westernized élite. Thus when Turkey applied for European Community associate status in 1959 her application followed a long and tortuous road for reasons that come again to the foreground.

That being as it may, Turkey was and remains a central issue in Greek foreign policy. Athens perceives Turkey as a constant threat and major security concern. Relations between the two countries have evolved in the course of the last four decades in the shadow of the unwavering effort of the Turkish government to become a regional power. In the framework of that effort the Turkish government adopted since 1973 an attitude challenging Greek sovereignty in the Aegean. They furthermore insist to discuss their continuously enlarged claims only in the framework of a comprehensive bilateral negotiation and seek agreement in the form of a package deal, the whole proceedings taking place without preconditions, i.e. on strictly political basis and without reference and restrictions of international law and Treaties. The Turkish challenge is assessed in Athens as implying a condominium in the Aegean. The position of the Greek government is that negotiations with Turkey are welcome and necessary but only on objectively existing issues and on the basis of international law and Treaties. The Greek government hope that the prospect of Turkish membership of the EU might induce Turkey to behave in accordance with European standards and EU *acquis* and thus make a settlement possible, which would contribute to peace and stability in the turbulent and unpredictable region of the Balkans and the Near East.

In the light of the above, the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey on the 3rd of October 2005 was perceived in Athens as an

1. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, Oxford 1987, p. 85.

opportunity to build on, so much more so as the European Council stressed the need that solution of disputes should be reached in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Such is the policy of the Greek government and it seems that it is the only possible and yet optimistic approach to the problem. But this is only one part of the equation and it is not sufficient to bring about a breakthrough. Is the Turkish ruling élite ready to surrender its privileges and accept European values and attitudes and is Turkey willing for change? Is the approach of the Greek government to Turkish accession realistic and would the shifts and fortunes of international and European developments help such an approach to bear fruit?

The Issues Involved

The Delimitation of the Aegean Continental Shelf

The question of the Aegean continental shelf is the only objectively existing issue between Greece and Turkey. The Greek position is based on the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf and on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as on customary International Law. Article 1b of the 1958 Geneva Convention explicitly states:

For the purpose of these articles, the term “continental shelf” is used as referring (a), (b) to the seabed and subsoil of similar submarine areas adjacent to coasts of islands².

According to article 121, paragraph 3 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea only

rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf³.

Based on the explicit rules of those two International Conventions, of which she is part, Greece maintains that islands in the Aegean are entitled to own continental shelf. Turkey being part of neither of these Conventions claims that the Aegean is a *sui generis* case, where the

2. UN Convention on the Continental Shelf, Article 1, 1958.

3. UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Article 121, paragraph 3, 1982.

above general rules of International Law will not apply. Ankara's novel theory is based on a geological and a legal argument. According to the geological argument, the Greek islands of the Aegean close to the Turkish coast are a simple protuberance of the Anatolian plateau. They are part of it and thus are not entitled to their own continental shelf. However, that part of the argument is not relevant from the legal point of view. According to the legal argument, because of "special circumstances" prevailing in the Aegean the boundary line between the Turkish coast and the Greek islands should not be the median line but a line determined according to the principle of equity, article 6 of the Geneva Convention, to be agreed between the two countries on the basis of bilateral negotiations. Regarding this last argument Greece sees no special circumstances other than the archipelagic structure of that sea, a structure the unity of which should not be interrupted by another country's continental shelf interference.

From the outset, the Greek Government proposed that the issue be referred to the Hague International Court of Justice. In 1975, Prime Ministers Karamanlis and Demirel meeting at Brussels for the NATO Summit, agreed to proceed to a peaceful settlement of differences and particularly to refer the issue of the continental shelf to the International Court, according to article 36.1 of the Court's establishing Treaty. A common communiqué was issued to the press accordingly in which they stressed that there should be a peaceful solution. However by a memorandum to the Court dated 25 August 1976, the Turkish Government maintained that the Brussels communiqué was not an official agreement because it was not explicitly signed by the two Prime Ministers and therefore was not binding. On the 11th of September 1976, the International Court of Justice decided that the continental shelf of the Aegean was a disputed area.

In view of changing international conditions and of Turkey's wish to join the European Union the issue of the continental shelf has been the object of exchange of views at the level of Secretaries General of the Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministries, over the last years. The danger for Greece is that in order to decide on the width of the continental shelf, the Court will have to take into consideration the width of the territorial sea and thus involve itself indirectly, on the issue of the Greek claim to a 12-mile territorial sea.

Turkish challenge of Greek sovereignty in the Aegean – The Territorial waters

Greek territorial waters extend to 6 nautical miles. Yet Greece claims the right to extend them to 12 nautical miles, as allowed under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea⁴. That legitimate claim, based on a multilateral International Treaty on the Law of the Sea, is opposed by the Turkish Government who threaten to resort to war in order to prevent such an extension of the Greek territorial waters. The Turkish threat of war became more concrete, when, in June 1995, the Turkish Government asked and obtained authorization of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to use military force against Greece on the issue.

In so doing, Turkey acts in violation of article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, which forbids the use of force or the threat of the use of force as a means of settling international disputes:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations⁵.

It is to be noted that although Turkey has not signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, she has extended her territorial waters to 12 nautical miles in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

The Air Space

In 1931, for the purpose of air navigation control, Greece fixed by law the width of national air space to 10 nautical miles, i.e. 4 nautical miles beyond the limit of her territorial waters. No reaction was then registered either on the part of Turkey or by any other power. However as of 1974, Turkey challenges the 10 nautical mile air space by systematic violations. She has also raised objections to the discrepancy between territorial waters and the territorial air zone or, as Turkey calls

4. Panayiotis Tsakonas & Antonis Tournikiotis, "Greece's Elusive Quest for security, Providers: The Expectation-Reality Gap", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 34, No 3, September 2003, p. 303.

5. Charter of the United Nations, Chapter I: *Purposes and Principles*, Article 2, paragraph 4.

it, Greece's national air space⁶. Massive armed military aircraft formations very frequently penetrate deep into Greek air space even beyond the 6 nautical mile limit. Moreover, Turkey challenges Greece's authority to coordinate civil and military air navigation and flight safety within the limits of the Athens Flight Information Region (F.I.R.), as fixed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (I.C.A.O.).

Demilitarization of the Eastern Aegean islands

Turkey challenges the right of Greece to maintain military forces and defend the Eastern Aegean islands against possible Turkish threats, claiming that these islands have been demilitarized by International Treaties. In as far as this particular point is concerned, it should be noted that the East Aegean islands fall under three distinct categories:

1. Lemnos and Samothrace were demilitarized by the 1923 Lausanne Convention on the Straits. The 1923 Convention was abolished by the 1936 Convention of Montreux⁷, which authorized remilitarization of the Straits and consequently of the above two Greek islands, as explicitly acknowledged by the then Turkish Foreign Minister Russtu Aras.

The text of the Protocol annexed to the 1936 Convention of Montreux on remilitarization of the Straits gives Greece indirectly but beyond any doubt the right to remilitarize the islands of Lemnos and Samothrace. On May 6th, 1936, the Turkish Minister in Athens writing to Prime Minister John Metaxas, letter sub-number 7894/65, made it known officially and in no uncertain terms that Turkey agreed unreservedly to the remilitarization of the aforementioned islands:

La militarisation des îles grecques à envisager actuellement est celle des îles de Samothrace et Lemnos. Nous sommes entièrement d'accord en ce qui concerne la militarisation de ces deux îles en même temps que celles des Détroits. Quant aux autres îles grecques de la Mer Egée, elles font l'objet des dispositions de l'art. 13 du Traité de Lausanne, se rapportant aux clauses territoriales.

6. Christos Rozakis, "An Analysis of the Legal Problems in Greek-Turkish Relations 1973-1988", in *ELIAMEP Yearbook* 1989, p. 220.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 237 (Special Issue Southeastern Europe).

That document is to be found in the relevant file of the Greek Foreign Ministry. It was communicated by the then Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou to the December 1984 NATO Meeting. There was no comment from the Turkish Government.

In order to complete the picture, one should note the following: On 22 December 1936, Greece notified the powers that she had occupied militarily the two afore-mentioned islands. On 8 February 1937, official notification was handed over by the Greek Ambassador to Sir George Rendel, a Foreign Office official on Greece's military occupation of the two islands in question. Rendel said that Greece "was of course quite within her rights in so doing". On 3 April 1937, Greece announced by Royal Decree that Lemnos was a zone of surveillance. No objection was registered by any part whatsoever⁸.

2. For Chios, Lesvos, Samos and Ikaria a special status was foreseen by the 1923 Peace Treaty of Lausanne "for the sake of peace" which was not demilitarization in the proper sense of the word. Article 13 of the Peace Treaty of Lausanne allows Greece the presence of a small contingent for military service⁹.

That being as it may, Greece has the right to defend these islands against the threat of possible invasion implied by the existence of the Turkish 4th (Aegean) Army and of a large number of landing craft along the Asian coast opposite to them.

3. The same principles apply when it comes to the Dodecanese ceded to Greece by the 1947 Peace Treaty of Paris. The 1947 Peace Treaty of Paris provides that these islands were to be demilitarized. This clause can hardly be invoked by the Turkish Government since Turkey was not party to the Peace Treaty and, therefore, the Treaty is *res inter alios acta* for Turkey. What is more, Greece has a right of self-defence when it comes to those islands by virtue of article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations¹⁰. It should be noted that the whole notion of demilitarization lost its ground after the creation of NATO. It is hard to

8. Domna Kontatas, *Greece and Turkey: The Regime of the Straits, Lemnos and Samothrace*, Athens 1987, pp. 147-148.

9. Hellenic Republic – Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "The Military Status of the Islands of the Eastern Aegean", Athens 2004.

10. Charter of the United Nations: Chapter I, *Purposes and Principles*, Article 2, Paragraph 4.

believe that Turkey should invoke unilateral demilitarization within NATO Alliance¹¹. That being as it may, and, apart from any legal aspect of the question, Greece is faced with a security problem in as far as that part of her national territory is concerned.

The Imia crisis

The Turkish challenge of Greek sovereignty in the Aegean reached a dangerous climax when the Imia crisis broke out on 26 January 1996. Turkey used military force to back her arbitrary claim on the Imia rocks briefly landing troops on Greek territory and risking a war with Greece. War was avoided by a hair's breadth, owing to United States intervention, but the crisis left a very heavy burden on Greek foreign policy. It meant the collapse of Greek strategy of deterrence. The occupation of the rock represented an action of strategic coercion. Turkey tried to manipulate events rather than escalate the dispute to the level of an all-out engagement because her aim was to change the *status quo*¹² and to challenge Greek sovereign rights over an unspecified number of Greek islands, islets and rocks, inviting at the same time Greece to bilateral negotiations with a view to defining the legal status of such islands, islets and rocks.

The then Turkish Foreign Minister Gonensay introduced the novel theory of the so-called *gray zones*, the status of which allegedly was not specified by International Treaties. The Turkish President Demirel went as far as to claim that 937 islets and rocks of the Aegean belonged to Turkey, in her capacity as successor of the Ottoman Empire¹³.

However article 12 of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty cedes to Greece all islands, islets and rocks of the Aegean, with the explicit exception of Imvros, Tenedos, Lagoussai, as well as the Dodecanese, and leaves to Turkey only all such islands, islets and rocks, which are situated

11. Hellenic Republic – Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “The Military Status of the Islands of the Eastern Aegean”, 2004.

12. Efstathios T. Fakiolas and Panayiotis Mavrides, “Strategy of Crisis Management and the Greek-Turkish Rivalry: the Case of the Imia Islets”, in *Greece and Turkey after the end of the Cold War*, Aristides D. Caratzas (ed.), Athens 2001, pp. 220, 223.

13. Hellenic Republic – Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “The question of the Imia islands, Turkish allegations on ‘Grey zones’ in the Aegean Sea”, 2004.

at less than 3 nautical miles from the Asiatic coast¹⁴.

In April 2005, Greek and Turkish fighter pilots jostled over the Aegean and Greek and Turkish coast guard boats engaged in a 26-hour standoff near Imia islets. On May 2006, there was a tragic collision of the Greek and the Turkish fighter jets¹⁵, when Turkey renewed her challenge of Greek sovereignty in the Aegean¹⁶.

When the 1947 Peace Treaty of Paris ceded the Dodecanese to Greece, Greece inherited the rights and obligations of Italy in as far as those islands were concerned by virtue of article 14, paragraph 1 of the Treaty¹⁷. It should be stressed that Italy and Turkey had proceeded in a very accurate delimitation of their border along those islands in 1932 and signed a Convention on the matter, registered with the League of Nations in 1933. A Technical Protocol attached to that Convention gave Imia to Italy (art. 30). That Protocol was not ratified by the Turkish Grand National Assembly nor registered with the League of Nations. However, such ratification and registration were not necessary since the Technical Protocol in question was only an attachment to the Italian-Turkish Convention.

It is to be noted that the sea border between Greece and Turkey has not been traced with the exception of the border along the Dodecanese. In 1949 Turkey proposed a meeting to that end. Later in 1955 and 1956, Greece proposed the creation of a joint Committee, in order to trace the border "North of the Dodecanese", along Samos, Chios and Lesvos and the Turkish coast opposite to them. The tracing of the border has not yet taken place. That, however, does not cast any doubt as to Greek sovereignty as described by the 1923 Peace Treaty of Lausanne.

Cyprus – Recent History

Taking advantage of the fact that the Greek Junta organized a coup d'état against the Cypriot Government, and that this was perceived as a threat against the Turkish-Cypriot Community, Turkey invaded the Republic of Cyprus in July 1974, occupying 36% of the Republic's terri-

14. See the Lausanne Treaty of Peace, 24 July 1923, Article 12.

15. *Kathimerini*, 10-11 June 2006.

16. *Kathimerini*, 18 April 2005.

17. Kostantinos P. Economides, *Topics on International Law concerning Greek Foreign Policy*, Athens 1999, p. 155.

tory and forcing the Greek-Cypriot population of the occupied North to flee to the South and become refugees in their own country. The Security Council condemned the invasion but failed to take action. Turkey settled more than 50.000 colons from Anatolia in the occupied North and stationed there 30.000 heavily armed troops plus local ones.

According to the Greek view, the question of Cyprus is not a bilateral issue between Greece and Turkey¹⁸. It is an international question, which however has cast a heavy shadow on the relations between the two countries. In November 1983, the leadership of the Turkish-Cypriot Community declared the “independence” of the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, an act immediately and unreservedly condemned by the Security Council and recognized only by Ankara. Ever since Turkey acts on the assumption that there exist two equal and independent entities in Cyprus and demands that such situation be recognized and taken into account in the framework of any solution.

An event of momentous importance was Cyprus’s membership of the European Union. Since 1995, Greece’s foreign policy was based on progressively “Europeanizing” the Cyprus problem and Greece’s relations with Turkey¹⁹. Turkey first tried to prevent the accession of Cyprus to the Union. Then she reverted to an attitude more compatible with her own wish to join the European Union. Cyprus was an obstacle which has constantly and negatively influenced Turkey’s relations with Europe. However, Turkey has sought and still seeks a solution that is satisfying her own interests and demands which she had always considered beyond negotiation.

The Anan Plan

In November 2002, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan, proposed a plan in a “last” effort to break the deadlock in Cyprus, prior to the accession of the Republic to full membership of the EU at the Athens Summit of June 2003. The plan became known as the Anan Plan but in fact it was the spiritual child of a British Diplomat, Sir David Hannay, the British Special Representative for Cyprus. As it will be recalled, at

18. The Hellenic Presidency of the EU, eu2003 - Greece’s Foreign Policy - Greece in Brief.

19. Costas Melakopides, “Turkish Political Culture and the Future of the Greco-Turkish Rapprochement”, *Occasional Papers*, OP02. 06, ELIAMEP, p. 5.

that time Britain and the USA were preparing to invade Iraq, which in fact they did in March 2003. The USA foresaw the opening of a second front through Turkey and Prime Minister Recep Tayyib Erdogan was asked to visit the White House in January 2003, in order to discuss details. By that opportunity, the “Anan Plan” was also discussed and given its real substance. Kofi Anan was invited to the White House soon afterwards to discuss the invasion of Iraq. On 26 June 2003, Daniel Fried, former USA Ambassador to Poland, speaking to a group of prominent Greek Americans in his capacity as member of the National Security Council Staff, described what happened. Daniel Fried, who is currently Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, is quoted as having made the following statement to his Greek-American visitors: “When we were trying to persuade Turkey to allow the passage of our troops through its territory into Northern Iraq, we offered Turkey two incentives, several billion dollars in grants and loans and Cyprus in the form of the Anan Plan”²⁰.

But there was more to it. The Anan Plan, if approved by the two Communities of Cyprus, would lead to the “solution” of the problem and would thus contribute to remove a serious obstacle to Turkey’s accession to the EU.

The provisions of the Anan Plan contradicted all UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus which were adopted for almost four decades. It offered the Greek Cypriots certain territorial concessions as bait in order to induce them to accept arrangements which were favourable to the Turkish Community and to Turkey herself. In one word, it was legalizing Turkish invasion and occupation of the Northern part of the Republic as well as giving, in practical terms, control of both the North and the South of the Republic to Turkey²¹. The government of the Republic were apprehensive of these provisions. They found themselves in dire straits either to accept the plan, which would mean the demise of the Republic, or to reject it and take the blame for the failure. In March 2004, the plan and its annexes of several hundred pages were put to the parties, i.e. the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey, the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Head of the

20. *Kathimerini*, 17 June 2005.

21. “Why we voted No to the Anan plan”, 6 June 2004, <http://www.Voice.com.cy>.

Turkish Cypriot Community at a meeting convened by Kofi Anan at the Swiss resort of Bürgenstock²². The parties were given 48 hours to accept or reject it. The Turks were agreeing with it. Yet, they asked for amendments, which would render the plan even more favourable to them and although such amendments were contrary to the plan's own provisions, the Secretary General had no difficulty to grant them.

President Papadopoulos of Cyprus refused to accept the plan which was subsequently put to the two Cypriot Communities to decide on it by separate referenda. On 24 April 2004, the Turkish Community approved the plan by a 65% majority, whereas the Greek Community rejected it by an overwhelming majority of 76%²³. In the 21 May 2006 parliamentary elections, Greek Cypriot voters confirmed the governing coalition of President Tassos Papadopoulos thus reinforcing the President's position on the Anan plan. By not having accepted the Secretary General's plan, the President left the way open for further efforts that might prove more successful in the future.

That being as it may, the premises for a successful new exercise seem rather remote. It is only natural to expect that the Turkish Government will not surrender what they have gained in Washington and that the Government of Cyprus will not agree to a new round of contacts unless there is room for real negotiation, without preconditions and without the Secretary General having the last —and decisive— word, in case the parties fail to agree. The Government of Cyprus have the advantage of being now a member of the EU. That does not guarantee that they will be successful in their effort to renegotiate the Anan plan but gives them additional leverage and a guarantee against any possible Turkish attempt at further invasion.

Further Developments

It is the declared policy of the Government of Cyprus that Turkish membership of the EU is in the interest of the Republic and that therefore Cyprus has done nothing to prevent the beginning of Turkey's accession negotiations. In the light of Ankara's refusal to recognize the Republic, the attitude of the Cypriot Government seemed extremely

22. "Cyprus solution or dramatic expectations?", *Turkpulse*, No 118, 4 April 2004.

23. *Kathimerini*, 24 May 2004.

moderate so much more as Turkey intended to negotiate on her own terms and ignore one of the members of the Union. Ankara's paradoxical attitude was made plain at the 17 December 2004 Summit. Even so the Presidency confirmed in its conclusions that "the Turkish Government was ready to sign the Protocol on the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement prior to the actual start of accession negotiations"²⁴. This ought to lead to the *de facto* recognition of the Republic of Cyprus and remove considerable obstacles in the relations of Turkey with the EU, Cyprus and Greece²⁵. However, it soon became clear that in order to bring pressure to bear on Cyprus so as to submit to the Anan plan, Turkey would not recognize the Republic and would do her best to avoid ratification or even signature of the extension of the Protocol prior to the beginning of accession negotiations. In fact Ankara first tried to extend the Protocol to nine only new members of the Union excluding Cyprus.

Under pressure from the EU, the Turkish Government declared that they would accept the extension of the Protocol to the ten new members, but they reserved their right not to apply it to the Republic of Cyprus. The EU —Greece and Cyprus— reacted to such a fanciful interpretation of basic rules of International Law. On 13 June 2005, the Council of General Affairs approved the text for the extension of the Protocol and sent it to Ankara. At the outset, the Turkish Government made it known that they would ask their Permanent Representative in Brussels to sign it during the European Summit. They allegedly hoped that by signing the extension of the Protocol, they would induce the European Council to reaffirm in the conclusions of the Presidency the EU's policy vis-à-vis Turkey. Prime Minister Erdogan, who, together with his Foreign Minister made known that in view of summer recess, the Turkish Grand National Assembly would not be able to examine and ratify the extension of the Protocol before it reconvened in October 2005, i.e. after the date set for the beginning of Turkey's accession negotiations. The negotiations started as planned and nine months later, the EU leaders are still emphasizing the need for Turkey to implement the

24. Council of the European Union: *Presidency Conclusions*, 16238/04, 16-17 December 2004, p. 5.

25. Michael Glacking, "Turkey's Dream to join EU grows less despite assurances", *The Daily Star*, 30 May 2005.

Ankara protocol, pledging to open its ports and airports to the 10 newest EU members including Cyprus. Turkey is not indicating any willingness to comply with her commitment²⁶.

The Impact of Turkey's Accession to Europe

The impact on relations with Greece

For many decades Greek-Turkish relations have suffered from tension and crisis. However, the Greek Government had neither reason nor interest to feed relations with Turkey with tension. They adopted a defensive and moderate attitude and tried to avoid crisis or find ways out of it with UN assistance and in the framework of International Law. The Greek Government hoped that Europeanizing Turkey was perhaps the only means to bring about a genuine climate of détente and some kind of change of attitude at the other side of the Aegean. Thus, the Simitis Government moved away from the so-called strategy of "conditional sanctions" to the strategy of "conditional rewards". Greece abandoned the policy of veto qualifying mechanism within the EU and became actively and constantly supportive of Turkish EU membership²⁷.

European orientation would eventually promote a process of adopting international laws and agreements thus adapting a more European way of behaving²⁸. Membership of the European Union thus implies a constant reconciliation of national interest and standards. Therefore, Greece can only gain from the Europeanization of Turkish society and the dissemination and further strengthening of European civic values in Turkey. Turks will live as citizens of Europe; European integration offers another opportunity to go beyond the narrow understanding of sovereignty and exclusionist national development strategies. Greeks and Turks would then increase their economic, social and political interdependence which would render conflict unthinkable as an option in the future²⁹.

26. *Kathimerini*, 17-18 June 2006.

27. Theodore A. Couloumbis, "Greek-Turkish Relations in a European Setting", *Turkish Area Studies*, No. 53, November 2001, p. 5.

28. Panayotis J. Tsakonas, "Turkey's Post-Helsinki Turbulence: Implications for Greece and the Cyprus Issue", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn 2001, p. 1.

29. Theodore A. Couloumbis, "Greek-Turkish Relations in a European Setting",

A stable, democratic and peaceful Turkey with a market double the size of that of all the other Balkan countries combined with strong ties to Greece would be the best partner for the construction of a new European Balkan and Near Eastern order³⁰. As it will be recalled, Greek and Turkish entrepreneurs are already busy exploiting the tremendous development, investment and trade opportunities in the area's newly evolving market economies.

Turkey has evolved into one of Greece's main business partners. Bilateral trade exceeded USD 1.3 billion in 2003, thus increasing up to 47.1% from the previous year³¹. There is also an important potential for a Greek-Turkish partnership in promoting Balkan business development with several projects involving both Greece and Turkey³². There has already been some progress in cooperation between the two countries under the aegis of Southeast Cooperation Initiative (SECI) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)³³.

On December 2003, Greece and Turkey signed an agreement to build a natural gas pipeline connecting the two countries. The pipeline will initially deliver 500 million cubic meters of natural gas from Azerbaijan to Greece, via Turkey, beginning 2006. It will serve not only as another important economic link between Greece and Turkey, but will also provide a new source of natural gas for Greece, coupled with the prospect of further connection to markets in the heart of Europe³⁴.

On 3 July 2005, the two countries were introducing the works on a 285-kilometer pipeline that will be the key link supplying Caspian natural gas to Western Europe.

Turkish Area Studies, No. 53, November 2001, p. 3.

30. Dimitris Keridis, "Domestic Developments and Foreign Policy, Greek Policy towards Turkey", in *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, Brassey's 2001, p. 14.

31. Investment Forum 2005: "Bilateral Business, trade, tourism, investment relations", *Gloria Golf Resort, Turkey*, April 22 & 23, 2005.

32. John Sitilides, "Greek-Turkish Partnership in Balkan Business Development", *Policy Analysis*, 14 November 2000, p. 1-2.

33. M. James Wilkinson, "Moving Beyond Conflict Prevention to Reconciliation": Tackling Greek-Turkish Hostility", Report, *Carnegie Corporation of New York*, June 1999, p. 13.

34. Investment Forum 2005: "Bilateral Business, trade, tourism, investment relations", *Gloria Golf Resort, Turkey*, April 22 & 23, 2005.

The pipeline will begin in Karacabey in the Sea of Marmara and run to Komotini in Thrace, initially supplying 3.5 billion cubic meters of gas annually. The project is due for completion by the beginning of 2007. The start of work on the Greek-Turkish pipeline can contribute to the strengthening of peace and stability, to the further development of economic and trade relations, to the improvement and widening of cooperation between the two countries³⁵. In one word, Greece and Turkey seem to understand that it is in their interest to cooperate at least as far as business is concerned. There are also other connections and other potential suppliers. Iran has already been discussing possible deliveries of gas to Greece via Turkey.

The cost of enlargement

Although Greeks are genuinely supportive of Turkey's membership of the EU in the hope for better bilateral relations, they are also worried at such a perspective when they come to look at it as Europeans. In fact, Greeks share as Europeans the general concern that Turkey's membership of the Union might have negative political, economic and organizational aspects. The Greek Government conceive and defend a politically and economically strong Europe, able to play the role of a global partner. They are not alien to the fact that the last big enlargement and the heterogeneity of the Europe of 25 render the transformation of the EU into a political union extremely questionable and problematic. Apart from strict bilateral considerations, which play a key role in their thinking, the Greek Government were in favour of enlargement but after the deepening and consolidation of the Union's institutions.

In that the Greek Government were not alone. However almost all EU members, including Greece, gave precedence to enlargement, each for its own reasons, i.e. in view of own interests or heeding to outside pressure. As a result, EU governments put *la charrue avant les boeufs*. In so doing, member states and Brussels technocrats not only introduced an element of malfunction into the system of the Union; they also ignored the feeling of the European citizens. The results of such policies were not late to come. As a result, the European Summit of 16-17 June 2005, which was held on the morrow of the French and Dutch referenda, had no

35. *Kathimerini*, 4 July 2004.

choice other than to postpone the time limit for the ratification of the European Constitutional Treaty, and avoid any reference to further enlargement. On the other hand, as a result of a bitter quarrel between Britain and France, the Summit failed to agree on the Union's budget for the period 2007-2013.

Such developments inside the EU had much to do with possible Turkish membership. The cost of Turkey's accession would represent a bit more than twice the cost of the 2007 accession of Bulgaria and Rumania. It has been suggested that the budgetary cost of Turkish membership could amount in 9-12 billion Euros net transfers the first post-membership years and of about 15 to 20 billion Euros in the 2020s³⁶. On the other hand, Turkish accession risks flooding markets with Turkish immigrants at a moment when unemployment rose in the 15 EU countries on the morrow of the last enlargement. Europeans are now fearful of loosing their jobs due to cheap Polish and other East European labour. That is why many Europeans do not want Turkey in³⁷ because their first concern remains by far employment.

For all those reasons, the conditions which the EU put to Turkey for the starting of accession negotiations were the toughest yet faced by any nation aspiring to join the Union³⁸. At the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Summit of December 2004, it was underlined that specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses may be considered in areas such as free movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture³⁹, because Turkey is, like many Central and East European countries, a poor country with a large agricultural sector and deep seated problems of governance⁴⁰. Apart from all that, one has to bear in mind that if Turkey joins the Union, it would be the country with a population exceeding 71 million. If she becomes a member, Turkey will overcome

36. Kemal Dervis, Daniel Gros, Faik Oztrak and Yusuf Isik, "Turkey and the European Budget, Prospects and Issues", *Turkey in Europe Monitor*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Issue 9, September 2004, p. 7.

37. *Turkish Press Review*, 30 May 2005.

38. *International Herald Tribune*, 18/19 December 2004.

39. Council of the European Union: *Presidency Conclusions*, 1638/04, 16-17 December 2004, p. 7.

40. "Strategy for the EU and Turkey in the Pre-Accession Period", a joint project of the *Centre for European Policy Studies*, Brussels & Economics, *Foreign Policy Forum*, Istanbul, Turkey in European Monitor, Issue 2, February 2004, p. 7.

Germany as the biggest nation with the strongest vote. Therefore many Europeans fear that in the event of Turkish membership we would have a Turkish-oriented Europe instead of a Europe-oriented Turkey.

The difficulties which were confronted by the European Union were quick to produce comments on the other side of the Atlantic. Commentators were speaking about a Europe which *has been* and about a United States of Europe which *will not be*⁴¹. Those who were in a hurry to predict and hail the EU's demise were motivated by their own wishful thinking. One year after the European Summit of 2005, there are already hopes for a new European Constitution. Germany will probably present a proposal during its 2007 EU presidency.

Europe will go on against all odds because no European Union at all is absurd and, by now, impossible. On the other hand, the Europe of 2055 will not be the same with the Europe of today as today is with 1948⁴². The difference all that makes can be summed up in that Governments of member states and Brussels technocrats will have to understand that Europe cannot move on without the European citizens. A vision of Europe that is more connected with voters, should be reconstructed. As a consequence some policies will have to be reviewed, some others to be slowed down and a few ones to be abandoned altogether.

Furthermore, the gap between political and business élites and public opinion on further EU's expansion continues to grow, which means that enlargement will most certainly suffer in the midst of this political landscape and that concerns Turkey in the most direct way. Therefore, there are many who argue that Turkey should be offered a "special relationship" instead of full membership. Those ones often overlook the fact that this special relationship already exists in the economic field —namely in the form of a customs' union— which has been operational for some time now⁴³. Also, a more generous relationship with the EU would give Turkey the right to have a strong influence on many important issues concerning the EU without having the restrictions or constraints that the EU full members might have⁴⁴.

41. See William Pfaff in *International Herald Tribune*, 18-19 June 2005.

42. *International Herald Tribune*: 5 April 2005.

43. Daniel Gros, "Economic Aspects of Turkey's Quest for EU Membership", Policy Brief, *Centre for European Policy Studies*, No. 69/April 2005, p. 9.

44. *To Vima*, 6 July 2005.

The question of Turkish identity

Turkey has never been considered as a European country, but neither is she considered fully Asian. She is at the crossroads of two continents and cultures. It is thus very difficult to categorize this country among a group of states. She is not part of the Christian world. Neither is she part of the Arab and Middle Eastern culture⁴⁵. She is a country which for the best part of the 20th century struggled to transform itself into a secular republic but which remained Muslim and finally produced a tendency known as political Islam, which claims the upper hand in leading her destinies.

The Ottoman Turks conquered a considerable Part of South Eastern Europe. They even reached the outskirts of Vienna and kept their conquests or part of them until the Balkan wars. As already mentioned, they were admitted into the Concert of Europe only in the mid 19th century, after the end of the Crimean War and in the context and framework of the 1856 Congress of Paris. Yet they were never classified as Europeans⁴⁶. That is why the role of the European Union in the “reconstruction” of a Turkish identity could be important.

While Turkey is knocking at the door of Europe, Turkish society and body politic are torn between a secular Western-type style of life and behaviour and the traditional cultural expression of Islam. It seems paradoxical that the ruling Islamist Party of Prime Minister Erdogan is the driving force behind Turkey's effort to join the EU. Yet, the paradox is only superficial. Just as his 19th century predecessors hoped that some kind of European type reform would save their declining empire, Erdogan hopes that Turkey's membership of the EU will, among other things, favour freedom of expression and thus save his political Islam from the military and their hostility, a hostility which brought about the downfall of Necmetin Erbakan, the leader of the Refah Party and predecessor of Erdogan at the helm of political Islam. Here, we are not faced by Islam as a religion but by an Islam that has become an expression of political ideology and which seeks in Europe a means for survival.

45. Meltem Muftuler-Bac, “The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union”, in *Turkey Before and After Ataturk, Internal and External Affairs*, edited by Sylvia Kedourie, Frank Cass, London 1999, p. 242.

46. *Ibid.*

The identity of Europe is based on a common cultural and religious heritage with foundations in Greece and Rome, in Christianity and European enlightenment. But whereas that heritage captured the heart and mind of the Europeans and shaped their physiognomy and character, Islam failed to make any significant inroads in the continent. The Ottomans left their religious heritage only in Bosnia and Albania.

Their Arab predecessors were more successful in that they brought Aristotle and their own early enlightenment to Europe. Not only did European culture have no particular influence on Muslims for over a thousand years but it benefited from the early Islamic “enlightenment”. The practice of translating Greek texts into Arabic becomes common already in the 9th century⁴⁷. Muslims are then as much heirs to the legacy of ancient Greece as Christians are⁴⁸.

That being as it may, contemporary European image of Islam sets Islamic culture outside Europe⁴⁹, in spite of the fact that Christianity with its roots in Judaism is a religion of non-European origin, from which Islam has borrowed quite a few things. However the fact that Jesus is mentioned 93 times in the Koran and that Saint Thomas Aquinas is referred to in it as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) 251 times cannot alter much. It is not through theological disputation that people —and nations— come to appreciate one another; the point only is that it is possible to find in Islam as broad a range of attitudes as in any other religion or culture⁵⁰. But that is not sufficient to convince the citizens of Europe that Turkey should be culturally acceptable to them as a full-fledged partner. Indeed, from the cultural point of view, the position of women in most Muslim countries is probably the most serious obstacle for Westerners⁵¹. In the Koran it is said, “women shall with justice have rights similar to those exercised against them, although men have a status above women”⁵². When it comes to that point, Turkey has trouble accepting European

47. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, “Arabic Gospel of Cypriot Origin”, in *Graeco-Arabica*, Volumes IX-X, *Institute of Graeco-Oriental Studies and African Studies*, Athens 2004, p. 261.

48. Theodore Zelding, *An Intimate History of Humanity*, London 1995, p. 451.

49. Dimitris K. Xenakis, “The Contribution of Greece to Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Relations”, *Perceptions*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, June-August 2003, p. 182.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 450.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 452.

52. The Koran Chapter 2: “the Cow”, 2:226, Penguin Books, 2003, p. 33.

norms. In March 2005, pictures beamed around the world of Turkey's less than liberal police violently breaking a women's day protest have hardly helped persuade EU on the merits of Turkish membership⁵³. For Europeans, women's rights are basic to Turkey's EU bid.

For many Muslims living in the EU the common European culture is based on Christianity; 40% of the Turks also think that the EU is a Christian Club. Other Muslims have a different view thereon. Because they live in the EU, they maintain that there exists what they call a Europe's Islam, i.e. an Islam which embraces an international morality and which values consensus, an Islam which accepts the entry of women into modern roles and which is more moderate⁵⁴. Such is the expression of what we would call Euro-Islam, an Islam which wants to be part of Europe⁵⁵. The question is whether the average European citizen is ready to acknowledge such a European Islam as part of Europe.

However, in post-modern Europe, the most contradictory inspirations can be brought together because nothing is rigidly fixed any more in a given cultural belonging. Never before in history did societies and cultures communicate in such an intensive way as they are doing nowadays⁵⁶. That is why we speak more often of a "Europe of cultures" rather than of a "European culture". Therefore, in case Turkey joins, she could provide the Union a unique cultural and historical dimension, bringing back in patterns of Turkish and Islamic culture bridging the gap between different tendencies in the North and the South of Europe.

Some political analysts, academics and political visionaries go even further. They promote the idea of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. De Gaulle first put forward such an idea and, today, the USA seem to promote it for reasons of their own. Since 1950 Europe has achieved much that was unthinkable and could not have been predicted. This evolution is part of what Europe is. That is why, although Europe went through many crises in the past, she has always managed to prevail by

53. Michael Glacking, "Turkey's Dream to join EU grows less despite assurances", *The Daily Star*, 30 May 2005.

54. *International Herald Tribune*, 7 July 2006.

55. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, "What perspective for Islam and Muslims in Europe? An Overview", *The European Policy Centre*, 5 March 2005.

56. Pamela Sticht, *Culture européenne ou Europe des cultures? Les enjeux actuels de la politique culturelle en Europe*, L'Harmattan, 2000, *passim*.

sticking to her values and her rules of the game and so must also do those who knock at Europe's door in the hope to join one day. Candidate states have to meet the Copenhagen criteria, both political and economic and this should also apply to Turkey. This implies a brand new constitution and fundamental changes of legislation. However, changes in legislation are not enough. They should be followed by changes in practices as well.

Turkey has questionable human rights record with religious intolerance and ill treatment of minorities. In that spirit, Ankara has been depriving the Oecumenical Patriarchate of human as well as financial resources and has closed down the Chalki Theological School, a Patriarchal Institution of high level religious education. Pope Benedict XVI has reportedly reiterated his desire to support the activities of the Oecumenical Patriarch, a declaration that was interpreted as a message to Turkey regarding her future in Europe. The Vatican misses no opportunity to emphasize its interest in the problems the Oecumenical Patriarchate faces in Turkey⁵⁷.

Turkey needs to achieve real and visible progress in the fields of human rights, women's rights and religious freedom⁵⁸. However, those in charge in Brussels are very surprised not to see any substantial progress concerning main issues of Turkey's adjustment to the *acquis communautaire*⁵⁹. In October 2006, the European Union is expected to make an assessment of Turkey's progress in meeting Brussels's demands for candidates. In a draft progress report, nine months after the starting of the accession negotiations, the EU is criticizing the Turkish military's role and influence in politics, the lack of political reform and calls for more work for juridical independence and rights for women and minorities⁶⁰.

Conclusion

Is Turkey ripe and ready for accession? Today, she is sending controversial signals to both Greece and the EU and she wants to join

57. *Kathimerini*, 4 July 2005.

58. "MEPs support 'rigorous' negotiating framework for Turkey", 5 July 2005, Enlargement, <http://www.euractiv.com>.

59. *To Vima*, 9 July 2005.

60. *Kathimerini*, 19 June 2006.

Europe under her own tune unable to grasp that joining the Union is consistent with surrendering a part of decision making to the Union itself. Will a fifteen or twenty year long period of reform bring about the change required for her to become more European? The question remains to be answered. It all depends upon Turkey herself. That being as it may and in view of a changing situation in Europe, one should expect Ankara to face additional difficulties on her way to the EU. However, the greater the difficulty Ankara is confronted with in her effort to join the EU, the heavier her pressure will be on Greece and Cyprus. Already there are massive violations of Greek air space by formations of armed Turkish aircraft and dogfights take place in the sky of the Aegean between Greek and Turkish fighters. Turkey is sticking to her claims and continues to behave as an imperial power with a strong sense of autonomy⁶¹. When the Islamic Party of Prime Minister Erdogan was swept into power yet a perception of Turkey gained in popularity in Europe and particularly in Greece. One was inclined to think that there would be a clash between the new Government and the military who still ruled behind the scene. Nevertheless the new myth of the democratic Islamists versus the military was soon dispelled. Inspite of differences of opinion between the Government and the military on domestic issues, it becomes clear that there were no such differences on foreign policy. Under those circumstances, it is only natural that the hope of the Greek Government to have to deal with a Europeanized Turkey on European standards and terms might be frustrated. In that case Greek-Turkish relations will enter yet another difficult phase and Turkey's road to Europe will have to overcome a few more obstacles —obstacles that Turkey will have created for herself, having difficulties to break the bonds with her Ottoman past.

61. *Kathimerini*, 25 April 2005.