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AICGS POLICY REPORT

CHANGING PARAMETERS IN U.S.-GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

Omer Taspinar

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY GERMAN STUDIES THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

AICGS

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AICGS is grateful to the German Marshall Fund of the United States for its generous support of this publication.

FOREWORD

The central importance of Turkey to the future of Europe has been a topic of concern to both Europeans and Americans for over forty years. For the United States, the strategic importance of Turkey as a NATO ally during the Cold War was a key component of its global strategy, since Turkey shared a border with the Soviet Union. For Europe, Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union (EU) has been a process that has engaged Europeans for over four decades. And for Germany, with the largest population of Turks within its borders than any other country in Europe, there is a particular interest in good relations with the Turkish Republic.

The debate over the long-standing Turkish bid for membership in the EU was settled with the December 2004 decision of the European Council to begin accession negotiations in October 2005. While the start of these negotiations is the first step in a process expected to take at least another decade, the issues surrounding that process will reflect the changing parameters of relations across the Atlantic and within the EU. The process will also be affected by events in the Broader Middle East, one of the most volatile regions in the world.

AICGS has been tracking the evolution of the Turkish bid for EU membership and Germany's key role in that process for several years. Because there remains a substantial American interest in the role Turkey can play in Europe and now, in particular, with regard to the Broader Middle East, AICGS, with the generous support of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, organized a conference in Berlin on September 20, 2004 to examine the implications of Turkey's dialogue with Europe and its future role in the Broader Middle East.

This Policy Report, written by Omer Taspinar, presents an assessment and analysis of these issues. Taspinar begins his analysis by asking how it was that Turkey was able to so quickly reverse its prospects for EU membership from the "lost decade of the 1990s" to the successful EU summit of December 2004. He identifies the driving factors of change both within Turkey and in Germany and the United States that have shaped relations between these countries over the past few years. Taspinar's explanation of Turkey's progress toward gaining acceptance as a candidate for EU membership and its unique position as a secular, democratic, and pro-western country in the Islamic world is illuminating, and his assessment of whether Turkey-EU relations may be seen as a model of democratic and economic transformation of the Broader Middle East will be of particular interest to readers. Taspinar concludes with an analysis of the future course of Turkey's relations both with Europe and within the dynamics of the transatlantic relationship. The report is designed to contribute to the ongoing debates in Berlin, Brussels, Washington, and Ankara as all sides work to meet the challenges of a changing world.

I wish to express my appreciation to Omer Taspinar for his tireless efforts in piloting the project and writing this report. I also wish to thank the many participants and speakers at the conference who enriched our discussions. I am also grateful to Heinz Kramer of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, F. Stephen Larrabee of the RAND Corporation, and Soli Özel of Istanbul Bilgi University for their thought-provoking essays. This project and publication would not have been possible without the generous support of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Special thanks also go to Lufthansa German Airlines and the Körber Foundation, who were important partners in our Berlin conference.

Jackson Janes
Executive Director

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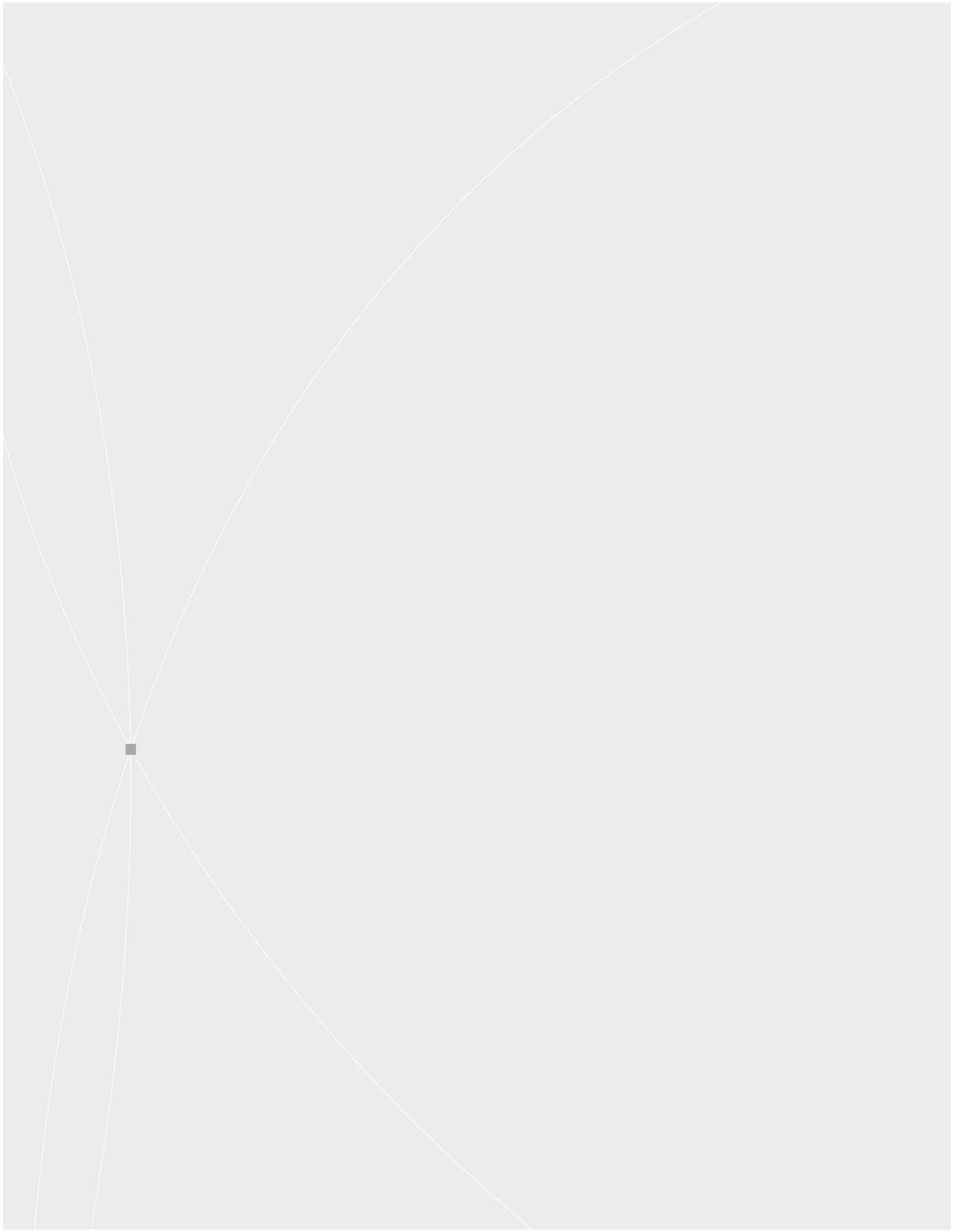

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Council's recent decision to start membership negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005 is a major turning point in Turkey-EU relations. No country has ever started accession negotiations with the EU without achieving full membership. Yet there is tendency in the EU to see Turkey as an exception. It is therefore crucial for both sides to exercise good judgement so that premature celebrations and political complacency are avoided.

Although Turkey has shown an impressive ability to transform itself, the forthcoming negotiations with the EU will be the real test of Turkey's democratic maturity and political stability. There is no doubt that the slightest sign of political turmoil in Turkey will bolster anti-Turkey skeptics in the EU and derail membership negotiations. While attempting to avoid trouble at home, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) will have to pursue a farsighted and balanced foreign policy in its relations with the West. Maintaining good relations with both the EU and the United States will prove vital for Turkey's western strategy.

Although Turkey perceives France as the most problematic EU country in terms of its membership prospects, it would be a mistake for Ankara to take Germany for granted. Germany is the "indispensable" nation for Turkey's European quest. Home to nearly 3 million Turks, Germany is Turkey's number one economic partner in trade volume, foreign direct investment, and financial interaction. Perhaps more importantly, Germany is also the number one contributor to the EU budget. Berlin will therefore be in a very legitimate position to set the pace and tone of Turkey's accession process.

This is potentially bad news for Ankara. A Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) victory in the 2006 elections would plague Turkish-German relations and complicate Turkey's EU agenda. While unable to re-negotiate Turkey's terms of accession, the German Christian Democrats—together with France, possibly under the leadership of Nicholas Sarkozy—would do their best to slow Turkey's membership process. They would also probably continue to lobby within the EU for a "privileged partnership" with Ankara. Such actions may be legally impossible but are politically feasible, particularly if Turkey fails to implement and enforce its new laws.

Ankara needs to urgently develop a political strategy to deal with Christian Democratic and other conservative European political parties that have major reservations about Turkey. To avoid being labeled as "anti-Muslim" in a world where the clash of civilizations has turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy, such conservative and Christian Democratic parties, in time, may be in a position to oppose Turkish membership on grounds other than religion and culture. German Christian Democrats, for instance, are increasingly able to articulate their opposition to Turkey's full membership on strategic and political grounds without any reference to religion.

Depending on how the political situation evolves in Ukraine, Ankara should be prepared for a debate under the technical guise of "variable geometry" about the borders of Europe that may somewhat marginalize Turkey's future relations with the EU. Such a strategy would seek to promote a "privileged partnership" between Turkey and the EU in more subtle ways. Needless to say, the best way for Turkey to avoid such scenarios will be to give no political and economic ammunition to German and French conservatives. This will require, above all, political stability, economic growth, and no hint of military-civilian tension in Turkey. The AKP will therefore have to refrain from challenging the secular establishment on issues such as headscarves and religious education.

Turkey also needs to take German and European public opinion much more seriously. European public opinion is currently far from enthusiastic about embracing Turkey. The potential impact of Turkey's population of 70 million and its lower economic standards creates considerable nervousness among EU member states. Ankara has to cooperate with and support public opinion campaigns on Turkey's EU membership in Germany and Europe.

Such campaigns should not center solely on presenting Turkey as a strategic asset. This strategy would fail to capture the imagination of average Germans and Europeans, who rarely think of the EU as a strategic actor in world affairs. Although presenting Turkey as an answer to the "clash of civilizations" has its own merits, a truly efficient public opinion campaign should focus on issues that will affect the daily lives of European citizens.

A positive public opinion campaign should present Turkey as the catalyst for structural reforms in the German economy and the functioning of the EU. In that sense, the argument that the EU has been a major impetus for Turkish reform can be reversed by arguing that Turkey's prospective membership to the EU could speed up German and European structural reforms in two major areas: labor markets and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Most Germans are opposed to Turkey's EU membership not because they fear Turkish Islam but because they are concerned about large numbers of unemployed Turks coming to Germany, while Germany itself is suffering from double-digit unemployment.

An honest German public opinion campaign on Turkey should therefore stress the demographic realities of Germany—its aging population and the looming pension crisis. A campaign about Turkish migration should emphasize the following two points: (1) Turkish migration to Germany will not be substantial, not only because of legal restrictions but also because EU membership is the best way of improving Turkish economic standards and keeping most Turks employed at home; and (2) Germany needs to replenish its working age population to keep its welfare state alive. Thus, a certain increase in skilled Turkish labor should be welcomed, although Germany must first reform its rigid labor market system. An approach that focuses on the viability of the German welfare state and labor market reforms would have more credibility in the eyes of average Germans who fail to understand why Germany will soon need more labor given such high levels of unemployment at home.

Independently of what happens on the Turkey-EU front and in Turkish-German relations, Turkey needs to pay more attention to its strained relations with the United States. This issue is key in maintaining a balanced western foreign policy strategy. Currently, Turkey's relations with the United States face significant challenges because of the situation in Iraq, growing anti-Americanism in Turkey, and the troubled transatlantic context. The fact that Turkey's relations with the EU are at an all time high while transatlantic relations are going through arguably their most difficult phase can be turned into a strategic advantage if Turkey is prepared to help bridge differences between the United States and Europe.

In the long run this may become the only way for Ankara to avoid having to choose between the EU and the United States. For the first time, the EU and the United States may be perceived as mutually exclusive alter-

natives for Turkey. Turkey needs good relations with both Brussels and Washington, just as it needs transatlantic cooperation in Iraq to succeed. Without such cooperation between Americans and Europeans, deteriorating conditions in Iraq could lead to civil war and potentially to mass violence among Kurds, Arabs, and Turcomans in the north of the country. Any unilateral Turkish intervention, even if presented as necessary to stop further bloodshed, would certainly poison Ankara's relations with Washington and Brussels. Such a scenario would leave Turkey without any western allies and could fuel isolationist tendencies, nationalist resentment, authoritarianism, and economic collapse.

These alarming scenarios illustrate why it is in Turkey's strongest national interest to have a stable Iraq. Transatlantic collaboration to secure Iraqi stability would not only maximize the chances for a successful transition to democracy in Iraq, but it would also create non-military alternatives for dealing with Syria and Iran. As the only NATO member bordering Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and as a country that will soon begin membership negotiations with the EU, Turkey can help improve transatlantic cooperation in the Broader Middle East in three major areas: the mediation process between the West and the problematic duo of Tehran and Damascus; Arab-Israeli peace efforts; and democratization in the Broader Middle East.

It is important for the AKP government to show that Turkey's improving economic and political relations with Tehran and Damascus is fueled by concerns other than growing Kurdish nationalism in the region. For Ankara, the best of way of doing so is to play an active role as a mediator on issues at the heart of transatlantic problems, such as nuclear proliferation in Iran. As far as Syria is concerned, Turkey's major contribution can be to help revitalize the "road map" for the Middle East peace process. In this second area, Turkey is in a unique position to help since Ankara has good relations with Israel and now, thanks to the AKP, has a much-improved image in the Arab world. With the passing of Yasser Arafat, most observers believe that a moderate and democratic Palestinian leadership will emerge, and that Israel will proceed with its withdrawal from Gaza. The time is ripe for Turkey to assume such a role within the framework of an international conference in Istanbul. With American, British, and German support, Turkey could eventually be the host of a long term "Istanbul peace process."

As far as democratization in the Broader Middle East is concerned, Turkey can also play a role in bridging transatlantic differences. It may prove instructive for the United States to take a closer look at how the EU has helped galvanize the process of democratization in Turkey. In that sense, Turkey-EU relations, more than the "Turkish model" itself, can become a model for thinking about the transformation of the Broader Middle East. What the Turkey-EU model of democratization illustrates is that incentives, combined with strong conditions, can be effective. Europe, Turkey, and the United States can work together to provide stronger political and economic incentives for reform in the Broader Middle East.

Many countries in the Broader Middle East receive democratization assistance but remain recklessly authoritarian because no serious conditions or measures of successful democratization have been established. Countries that fail to reform their authoritarian systems continue to receive aid because of their geo-strategic importance or their willingness to make peace with Israel. This is where the EU-Turkey model can teach an important lesson. Both the EU and the United States can show their commitment to democratization by stating clearly that democratic assistance will be conditional on democratic performance based on measures roughly comparable to a "softer," more streamlined version of the Copenhagen criteria.

It is Turkey's democratic and economic reform progress driven by EU incentives, rather than Turkey itself, which should become the real model for transforming the Broader Middle East. Free trade agreements between the region and the United States and EU, as well as more economic and democratic assistance with tougher conditions, are steps in the right directions. Such a realistic and progressive vision will pave the way for Turkish, German, and U.S. cooperation on the troubled periphery of Europe.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The EU Brussels summit of December 16-17, 2004 marked a historic turning point in Turkey's long journey toward Europe. The European Council's decision to start membership negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005 created unprecedented optimism and hope in Turkey. The outcome of the summit is a major political victory for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) government. It is truly remarkable that such progress toward EU membership was made under the leadership of a conservative political party with Islamic roots. The symbolism of this achievement is a testament to the success of Turkish westernization.

Yet, it is too early to celebrate. The tormented saga of Turkey-EU relations is likely to continue in the near future. Ankara has yet to embark on the long and challenging accession process that may very well last a decade. In the short run, the most pressing problem facing Turkey is the unresolved conflict over Cyprus. A very difficult compromise was reached on this issue in Brussels, only after Erdogan issued a statement of intent to extend the 1963 Ankara protocol—the legal foundation of the relationship between Turkey and the EU—to cover the ten new members of the EU prior to October 3, 2005. Although Erdogan quickly declared that this should not be interpreted as an official recognition of the Republic of Cyprus, the issue is likely to remain problematic as long as the island remains divided. The domestic opposition in Turkey is already blaming Erdogan for accepting a date from the EU that is in effect conditional upon the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus.

Even if the Cyprus question is solved and accession negotiations start on schedule, there is no shortage of potential factors likely to complicate Turkey's long negotiation process. European public opinion, for one, is far from enthusiastic about embracing Turkish membership. The potential impact of Turkey's large population and lower economic standards creates considerable nervousness among EU member states. To the dismay of Ankara, such concerns found their place in the final communiqué of the Brussels summit, including "permanent safeguard" clauses likely to restrict free movement of people and structural aid policies in agriculture that will come into force once Turkey becomes a member. Perhaps more troubling is the fact that France and Austria have already promised their voters that referenda will be held prior to Turkey's eventual membership. Finally, to the list of potential problems one can also add uncertainties about the final destination of Turkey's membership

negotiations with the EU. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany, for instance, is adamantly opposed to the idea of Turkey's full membership to the EU and instead favors a "privileged partnership" with Ankara.

As these serious problems clearly illustrate, Turkey's journey to EU membership is still prone to many uncertainties. There is no doubt that the slightest sign of political turmoil in Turkey will bolster anti-Turkey skeptics in the EU and derail membership negotiations. While avoiding any trouble at home, the AKP will have to pursue a farsighted and balanced foreign policy in its relations with the West. Maintaining good relations with both the EU and the United States will be important components of Turkey's western strategy. Although the current thinking in Turkey singles out France as the problem country within the EU, it would be a mistake for Ankara to take Germany for granted. Germany remains central to Turkey's European policy. Similarly, in relations with the EU and in the broader geo-strategic context, the United States will continue to be an indispensable ally for Ankara. Yet, the effectiveness of Washington's support for Ankara will depend on the general state of transatlantic relations.

Currently, there are already signs of potential difficulties with the United States and Germany. With Washington, concerns over northern Iraq dominate, while with Berlin the apprehension is caused by a potential Christian Democratic victory in 2006. These two major factors are creating considerable unease in Ankara. The transatlantic rift is an additional overlaying factor complicating Turkish foreign policy toward Germany and the United States. With such concerns in mind, this report will examine Turkish-German and Turkish-American relations and provide an assessment of changing parameters and dynamics within these critical relationships.

The German Factor

There are good reasons for focusing on Germany. Simply put, Germany is the "indispensable" nation for Turkey's European quest. Home to nearly three million Turks, Germany is not only Turkey's number one economic partner in trade volume, foreign direct investment, and financial interaction, but it is also the most important contributor to the EU budget. Given the Turkish demographics in Germany and the level of political, economic and human interaction between the two countries, Turkey is considered to be a "domestic question" in Germany. When all these factors are taken into consideration, it should not be surprising that Ankara's hope of joining the EU will always depend on Berlin's position on Turkish membership. Germany's support, moreover, is pivotal in balancing French reservations vis-à-vis Turkey. In that sense, the Schröder government's unwavering support for the opening of accession negotiations proved absolutely crucial for Turkey.

Yet, as mentioned earlier, it would be a grave mistake for Turkey to take German support for granted. The more challenging part of Turkey's quest for EU membership is still ahead. With Turkey's membership now gaining momentum, Berlin will hold Ankara up to the highest standards of democratic and economic harmonization with the EU. Moreover, as the EU country that will be affected the most by Turkish membership, Germany will be in a legitimate position to set the pace and tone of Turkey's membership negotiations. This could be bad news for Ankara. Given the clear opposition of the CDU/CSU to Turkey's full membership in the EU, any change of government in Germany after the 2006 elections will certainly complicate Turkish-German relations and Turkey's EU agenda.

The U.S. Factor

There are also good reasons for focusing on the United States, independently of what happens on the EU front. Turkey's relations with the United States are also central to Turkish interests, but currently, Turkish-American relations are complicated by the situation in Iraq, growing anti-Americanism in Turkey, and the troubled transatlantic context. It is an irony of history that Turkey's relations with the EU are at an all time high while transatlantic relations are going through arguably their most difficult phase. A quick glance at the map clearly shows Turkey's geo-strategic relevance for all of the issues that polarize Europe and the United States. The fact that Iraq, Iran, and Syria are Turkey's neighbors speaks for itself. The transatlantic tension over Turkey's southern neighbors and the Arab-Israeli dispute presents major

challenges for Ankara. Probably for the first time in Turkish diplomatic history, the EU and the United States face the risk of becoming mutually exclusive alternatives.

In other words, unless the transatlantic rift proves temporary, Ankara may eventually find itself in the undesirable position of having to choose between the United States and the EU. While such a choice would present considerable problems in itself, an even grimmer scenario may arise if Turkey decides to go it alone by opting for unilateral action in northern Iraq, should large-scale ethnic violence between Turcoman, Kurdish, and Arab communities erupt. Needless to say, such a Turkish intervention in northern Iraq, even if presented as a legitimate attempt to prevent further bloodshed, would fatally poison relations with both the United States and the EU, leaving Turkey angry, isolated, and on the brink of economic collapse.

Leaving such gloomy scenarios aside, it is nevertheless important to get a sense of the very real stakes involved in Turkish-German and Turkish-American relations. Current dynamics in Ankara's relations with Berlin and Washington present major opportunities as well as serious challenges.

It is therefore important to understand how we came to where we are today. This report will begin the process by analyzing the developments that played a crucial role in changing mutual perceptions and shaping a new political mood in bilateral relations. After identifying the drivers of change, the report will conclude with an analysis of the potential evolution of Turkey-EU and transatlantic relations. This final section will also assess whether EU-Turkey relations may provide a model of democratic and economic transformation for the Broader Middle East and thus pave the way for Turkish, German, and American cooperation on the troubled periphery of Europe.

Photo by Engin Soysal

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CHAPTER TWO
CHANGING PARADIGMS:
TURKEY: FROM THE LOST DECADE TO THE AKP

CHANGING PARADIGMS
TURKEY: FROM THE LOST DECADE TO THE AKP

The 1990s were a lost decade for Turkey. For the most part, relations with the EU reflected the troubling situation. As recently as 1997, the EU had decided to exclude Turkey from its enlargement process, without even recognizing Ankara's candidacy for full membership. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the current upturn in relations with Europe came in such a short period of time. What went wrong in the 1990s? And what happened in the last several years to put things back on track?

The most important challenge haunting the Turkish Republic in the last twenty years is the Kurdish question. Starting in the mid-1980s and ending only in 1999, Ankara fought a bloody Kurdish insurrection in southeast Anatolia. The separatist challenge posed by the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), a terrorist guerilla movement with considerable regional support, proved extremely costly in political, economic, and foreign policy terms. Between 1984 and 1999, in addition to a death toll of 30,000, the conflict cost the Turkish economy an estimated $100 billion in military expenditures.

In terms of relations with the EU, the Kurdish conflict came at the worst possible time. The escalation of the war coincided with Turkey's official application for full membership in 1987. Moreover, Turkey was already under additional pressure to prove its democratic credentials. With the Cold War at an end and with the demise of the Soviet Union, Turkey's "westerness" could no longer be conveniently linked to geostrategic value and NATO membership. In other words, democratization had become an urgent priority in terms of illustrating Turkey's European credentials. The Kurdish conflict, however, hijacked all prospects of democratization from Turkey's political agenda. Instead, it projected the illiberal image of a nationalist regime fighting for territorial integrity. To the dismay of Ankara, Germany and other western European countries saw in the Kurdish conflict the rebellion of an ethnic group whose cultural and political rights were denied by an authoritarian political system dominated by the military.

By the mid-1990s, things went from bad to worse. Not only did the war against the PKK escalate, spreading Kurdish nationalism all over southeastern Turkey, but an equally important threat to the Republic—the rise of political Islam—also gained momentum. The foundations of secularism appeared to be challenged by the victories of the Islamic Welfare Party at local and national elections in 1995 and 1996. Political Islam thus came to represent a second "identity-based" internal threat that further exacerbated Turkey's sense of territorial and political insecurity. There was something disturbingly familiar in these threats that went to the heart of Turkey's Kemalist identity.

A Sense of Déjà-Vu: The Roots of Turkey's Internal Conflict

Neither Kurdish dissent nor Islamism were exactly "new" challenges for Ankara. These two political forces had been the twin threats to Kemalist nation-building in the 1920s and 1930s. These formative decades of the Turkish Republic witnessed the cultural revolution of Ataturk, which aimed at nothing less than "civilizational change" in Anatolia. Out of the remnants of the defunct Ottoman Empire—multi-

national and Islamic in its character—Kemalism (the political project of Kemal Ataturk) strove to create a secular, enlightened, and homogeneous Turkish nation. The most serious political resistance to Ataturk's project came in the form of seventeen Kurdish-Islamic uprisings between 1923-1938 that had to be suppressed militarily.

After World War II and the transition to multi-party democracy in the 1950s, neither Kurdish nationalism nor political Islam totally disappeared from Turkey's political agenda. During the Cold War, Turkey's domestic political fault-lines reflected the global ideological division of a bipolar world order. As a NATO member that bordered the Soviet Union and a country struggling with economic development, Turkey's political dynamics came to strongly reflect left-wing and right-wing rivalries. These ideological cleavages, however, presented only the façade of deeper cultural divisions. Kurdish nationalism and political Islam easily found their place within this polarization: Kurdish discontent—often expressed in terms of "class struggle"—was embraced by the socialist left, while the anti-communist right co-opted the Islamic segments of Turkish society.

Perhaps the most important feature of this era was that Kemalism lost its relevance in defining the parameters of Turkish politics. Even the military was to a certain degree divided along right-wing/left-wing political lines. Yet, the Turkish Armed Forces did not hesitate to intervene in civilian politics to restore a sense of law and order whenever things got out of hand. The Turkish generals did so three times, in 1960, 1971, and 1980 without staying in power for long periods of time, as compared to Latin American militaries. In that sense, the Turkish military often acted as a *deus-ex-machina* that stopped perceived threats to the Republic and restored a sense of law and order. While the 1960 military coup had strong Kemalist undertones, it is important to note that the second and third interventions had unmistakable anti-left tendencies. In a NATO country with acute income disparities and borders with the Soviet Union, the military had serious concerns about the appeal of socialism and communism. In fact, it was this anti-left proclivity of the 1980-83 military rule that proved most damaging in terms of undoing the leftist-Kurdish alliance in Turkish politics mentioned earlier. The political and military suppression of Kurdish-leftist groups in the early 1980s planted the seeds of Kurdish separatism in the southeast.

In retrospect, the military rule of the early 1980s did more harm than good, not only in terms of fueling Kurdish dissent but also by indirectly helping the rise of political Islam. Once again, it was the anti-communist nature of the military intervention that legitimized the use of state-controlled Islam against the ideological popularity of the left. Such instrumentalization of religion was a well-established political practice made possible by Turkey's peculiar understanding of secularism based on state administration of Islam in order to assure better control over the religious realm. Interestingly, the military did not hesitate to increase the budget of Directorate of Religious Affairs *(Diyanet Isleri)* and the number of Islamic high schools *(Imam Hatip Liseleri)* in an attempt to use religion for depoliticizing the Turkish youth. Although such policies alone can hardly explain the rise of political Islam in Turkey, they nevertheless played an important role in boosting the ranks of a religiously conscious youth that later sympathized with Erbakan's Welfare Party.

By the 1990s the domestic and international context had changed radically. As a result of domestic and global dynamics, Turkey's ideological cleavages were being replaced by ethnic and religious ones. After the long interlude of the Cold War, it was as if the Turkish Republic was back in the 1930s, once again facing the "identity" problems of its foundational decades. In that sense, Kurdish nationalism and political Islam were familiar threats, this time reemerging in a radically different globalized context. Ankara's official response to political Islam and Kurdish nationalism, however, came in strong Kemalist fashion—with the Turkish military's determination to reject any cultural or political compromise with the enemies of the Republic. The result was a lost decade of civil war, secular-Islamic polarization, authoritarian proclivities, economic crisis, and systemic corruption at the hands of inept politicians.

Turkish Frustrations with the EU and Germany

Turkey's relations with the West clearly reflected these problems in this radically altered geo-political

context. With the Soviet threat gone, the EU turned its back on Turkey and focused on enlargement toward central and eastern Europe. Since the security dimension of an anti-Soviet alliance no longer defined its "western and democratic" credentials, Turkey had to assert its liberal political credentials on grounds other than geo-strategic importance. Simply put, Turkey was under unprecedented democratic scrutiny. And this was happening at the worst possible time because of the Kurdish conflict and the rise of political Islam. Turkey was moving away from liberal democracy at precisely the time when it needed it most.

To the dismay of Ankara, the post-Cold War rise in global ethnic nationalism and the concerns voiced in such international fora as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) about the rights of national minorities coincided with the deterioration of the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Moreover, developments in northern Iraq, such as the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi army in Halepce and the painful death suffered by 5,000 victims in this town alone, strongly contributed to the legitimacy of Kurdish claims and increased their accessibility to the western media and public.

For a long time the Turkish elite failed to recognize the changing circumstances in the European political environment that made tolerating an imperfect democracy with a failing human rights record impossible. The conviction on the part of the Kemalist elite that Europe, and Germany in particular, was at best tolerant and at worst supportive of the PKK complicated relations even further. The political solidarity that the PKK received in socialist segments of European politics and the absence of any reprimand for such behavior on the part of Turkey's allies in NATO awakened long-held Turkish fears about European intentions.

The intrusion of the Kurdish issue into relations between Turkey and the EU was fostered by the growing Kurdish expatriate presence in western Europe and its increasingly sophisticated political organizations. For many Kurds who were not ethnically conscious or politically active, the resurgence of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey and the events in northern Iraq marked a turning point. Among the *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) who since the late 1950s had migrated to western Europe from eastern Anatolia, there were many who in fact gained a "new" sense of Kurdish ethnic consciousness. It is estimated that the number of Turkish Kurds in Europe is around 400,000, between 10-15 percent of the total Turkish community.

As the war between the PKK and the Turkish military escalated in the 1990s, numerous political fora in Europe attributed the upsurge in violence to the government's repression of the Kurds and pressed for the Kurds to be granted "minority rights." Left-wing members of the European Parliament sought to introduce reports calling for recognition of the right to Kurdish "self-determination," including the right to independence. Not surprisingly, such attempts exacerbated Turkey's sense of insecurity and deepened suspicion of European intentions regarding a "political solution" to the Kurdish conflict.

For Germany, the use of German arms by the Turkish military against Kurdish targets proved to be a particularly sensitive subject. In 1992 Germany halted all arms sales to Turkey after it was asserted that armored personnel carriers sold to Turkey had been used in the anti-insurgency operations in Turkey's southeast region. The subsequent bureaucratic error that resulted in fifteen Leopard tanks being delivered to Turkey in spite of this ban was the cause of German Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg's forced resignation. The affair provoked a tit-for-tat retaliation that saw Turkish ministerial visits to Germany being cancelled and an official call for a boycott of German goods. Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin was later quoted as saying that at the time relations with Germany were at a "freezing point." Although relations improved slightly when Germany banned the PKK from operating within its territory—only after the organization mounted attacks in Germany in the winter of 1993—the German government's decision to once again suspend military sales to Ankara in 1995 signaled that serious problems remained in bilateral German-Turkish relations.

Although Turkey and the EU managed to sign a Customs Union Treaty in late 1996, the 1997 Luxembourg summit's decision to exclude Turkey from the enlargement process brought political rela-

tions between Turkey and the EU to an end. In Ankara, the CDU government of Germany was viewed as the major instigator of the EU's decision to leave Turkey out in the cold. Chancellor Kohl appeared to have objections to Turkey's membership not only on democratic but also on cultural grounds. In addition to general reservations about Turkey's Muslim identity, the arrival of the Islamic Welfare Party to power in 1996 and the forced resignation of Prime Minister Erbakan in 1997 tarnished Turkey's democratic image in Europe. Not surprisingly, Turkey's relations with Germany hit an all-time low during 1998. The legacy of the 1990s for Turkish-German and Turkey-EU relations was therefore a very negative one.

The Way Out: Helsinki 1999

Given all these daunting problems, the more interesting question is how Turkey managed to find its way out of this impasse. The answer is strongly related to two seemingly contradictory factors: (1) the Turkish state's success in defeating Kurdish separatism and in "taming" political Islam on its own terms; and (2) the improvement of relations with the EU after the December 1999 Helsinki summit.

By the end of 1990s, the unwavering determination of the Turkish military to deal with systemic threats on its own terms produced important political and military victories. This sense of Kemalist vindication against Kurdish separatism and political Islam proved crucial in restoring political confidence in Ankara. Such confidence, combined with a major change in relations with the EU, greatly facilitated the acceptance of necessary reforms by Turkey's nationalist establishment. In that sense, the major incentive for reform came from the EU after the 1999 Helsinki summit, which restored Turkey's status as a candidate for full membership. This vital adjustment in the EU's position vis-à-vis Turkey's candidacy owed a great deal to the efforts of the U.S. government and a change of government in Germany. It was the Clinton administration that tried hard—at a time when Turkey had decided to suspend its political relations with the EU—to remind European leaders of Turkey's strategic importance.

Although the EU provided the main catalyst for Turkish reform, it is equally true that Ankara would not have been able to embark on a reformist path without a clear sense of victory against Kurdish separatism and political Islam. The upper hand was gained first against political Islam and later against Kurdish nationalism. As far as political Islam is concerned, the secular establishment took matters into its own hands in 1998. The limits of Kemalist tolerance for an Islamic government became abundantly clear when the military—in a concerted effort with like-minded civil society organizations and the mainstream secularist press—forced the Welfare Party and Prime Minister Erbakan out of power. This "post-modern coup" paved the way for serious soul-searching within Turkey's Islamic movement.

Such a clear and forceful imposition of the boundaries of Kemalist secularism played an instructive role for the young guard of the Welfare Party. It was the ability of pragmatic young leaders within the party (such as Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan) to come to terms with the limits of Kemalist secularism that substantially moderated the political philosophy of what later emerged as the Justice and Development Party (AKP). For current Prime Minister Erdogan, this was a lesson learned the hard way, after having spent four months in jail for reciting a religiously inspired poem. Perhaps more importantly, the backlash against the Welfare Party helped moderate Islamic politicians better appreciate the benefits of liberal democracy. This, in itself, should explain why the leadership of the AKP did not hesitate to support a pro-EU democratization agenda when such an opportunity presented itself, though a number of secularist Turks are suspicious of this support and believe the AKP is pursuing a secret agenda to weaken the military's grip over Turkish politics.

The ideological evolution of the AKP was shaped by the fact that Turkey's Islamic movement had the advantage of participating in a democratic process for over three decades. Although Turkey's Islamic movement was anti-western, anti-secular, and anti-liberal from its inception, it always played by the electoral rules. Compared to political Islam in the Broader Middle East, Turkish political Islam was therefore much more moderate and inclined toward gaining electoral legitimacy. Yet, the political ambitions of Turkish Islamists clearly surpassed their competence. In 1997, when political Islam came to power under its third incarnation as the Welfare Party (WP), it failed

to rise to the challenge of running a complex and diversified country. The ousting of the WP led to a generational and ideological rift within the ranks of the movement. As the patrimonial structure of the old guard broke up, the Islamists in Turkey split into two parties, the AKP and the Felicity Party (FP), but only after an uneasy coexistence in the transitory Virtue Party. The FP now represents the traditional wing of the movement with a very marginal following.

Although taming political Islam proved in itself a major development, it was the military's decisive victory against Kurdish separatism, crowned by the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, which restored a sense of Kemalist stability in Turkey. Soon after Öcalan's arrest, a militarily weakened and politically demoralized PKK declared a cease-fire. As the PKK disintegrated, Ankara's victory against Kurdish separatism vindicated the logic of the Turkish military in rejecting political solutions to a conflict that had lasted for fifteen years. With the Kurdish threat defeated and political Islam subdued, the sense of siege that characterized the difficult 1990s was coming to an end. Turkey's Kemalist establishment was finally in a position of strength. The restoration of such political confidence eased the transition to a more reformist mindset and facilitated the conceptualization of democratization as intentional rather than imposed.

Yet, it is far from certain that Turkey's internal dynamics would have been conducive to democratization without the help of external motivators. In that sense, when the EU reversed course at the December 1999 Helsinki summit and restored Turkey's candidacy for membership, the hope of joining the EU became the real catalyst for Turkish democratization. The Helsinki summit put Ankara on an equal footing with all other candidates, provided that the political principles of the Copenhagen criteria were fulfilled. These criteria consisted of stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and a functioning market economy. For good measure, Turkey was also asked to avoid a potential Greek veto and show good will in resolving the long festering Cyprus problem.

The Helsinki summit was a crucial turning point in Turkey-EU relations, after which various Turkish governments used the incentive of EU membership as leverage in pressing for otherwise very difficult domestic reforms. The question of why the EU changed its mind on Turkey's candidacy between 1997 and 1999 is an interesting one that will be addressed in the next chapters. For now, suffice it to say that both the United States and the new government in Germany played a central role in this adjustment that proved so decisive for the course of events in Turkey.

Despite the importance of the Helsinki summit, political and economic dynamics in Turkey did not change overnight. The 1990s pattern of inept coalition governments prone to political and economic patronage—nine coalition governments ruled Turkey in the 1990s alone—continued for several years and culminated in early 2001 with the worst-ever financial crisis in Turkish history. As the Turkish currency plummeted and the banking sector came near to collapse, the Turkish economy was rescued thanks largely to Ankara's strategic importance for the United States. The fact that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) came to Turkey's assistance with a record-high $39.5 billion rescue package—at a time when the Bush administration was well known for its opposition to IMF bailouts—clearly illustrated Turkey's privileged status in Washington. Turkey's exceptionalism became all the more apparent when Argentina, whose currency crisis coincided with Turkey's, failed to receive any support from the IMF.

In any case, no amount of external help was enough to restore the electoral fortunes of Turkey's inept political class. The popularity of the incumbent coalition parties reached unprecedented lows. Amidst growing mass discontent and painful economic adjustment to fiscal austerity, however, only the newly established AKP led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan was gaining solid ground. Thanks to the dynamics outlined above, the AKP proved extremely tactful in its approach to the electorate. By distancing itself from radical Islam, condemning corruption, and embracing a populist message with moderate, democratic, and liberal positions, Erdogan's party successfully appealed to the downtrodden underclass of Turkey. Perhaps even more important was the fact that the AKP put Turkey's EU membership on top of its domestic and foreign policy agenda.

Thanks to its pro-EU political campaign and electoral platform, the AKP managed to achieve two crucial

objectives. First, the party gained a sense of legitimacy in the eyes of Turkey's Kemalist establishment. In other words, the military was much more willing to give the benefit of the doubt to a political party with a European vocation, rather than one with pan-Islamic or pro-Arab proclivities. Second, thanks to its pro-EU stance, the AKP became more appealing to Turkey's business community, the provincial middle classes, and liberal intellectuals. It is therefore no exaggeration to argue that the AKP owed its domestic political legitimacy in great part to the EU and the Helsinki summit of 1999.

The AKP reforms

The AKP came to power in an electoral landslide in November 2002. This victory amounted to a political earthquake in Turkish politics, with Erdogan's party winning two-thirds of the seats in the Parliament. Only one other political party, the center-left Republican Peoples Party, managed to surpass the 10 percent threshold. Humiliated, the majority of political leaders who ruled the country since the 1990s resigned.

From very early on, the AKP made it clear that it would remain loyal to its pro-EU electoral platform. Further encouragement came from the December 2002 Copenhagen summit, when the EU declared that membership negotiations with Turkey would begin "without delay" should Turkey fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. In fact, negotiations could begin as early as after the EU's December 2004 summit. The AKP pursued the reform process initiated in the summer of 2002 by the previous government with growing zeal and political determination. Throughout 2003 and 2004 an impressive series of democratic reforms were enacted by the Turkish Parliament. While more progress must still be made, the nine reform packages passed by the Turkish Parliament have advanced human rights and democracy beyond what was imaginable only a few years ago. Key areas of reform included the following:

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

New laws have substantially reduced the role of the military in politics. As of August 2004, the National Security Council (NSC)—a platform where the Turkish military traditionally has exerted major political influence over the civilian government—is no longer headed by a general. The NSC meetings are now limited by number and governed by policies enforcing transparency. New laws also provide greater transparency in the military budget process. Civilian control also has been enhanced by the removal of military representatives from boards that oversee broadcasting and higher education. New limits on the jurisdiction of military courts over civilians have also been enacted.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Erdogan government stresses a "zero tolerance" policy on torture. Provisions on the rights of detainees and prisoners have been improved. Pretrial detention periods have been shortened, and detainees are now guaranteed immediate access to an attorney. Recent legislation also has broadened freedoms of expression, press, association, assembly, and demonstration. The repeal of Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law, which prohibited the dissemination of separatist propaganda, has led to a significant reduction in the number of political prisoners being held.

CULTURAL RIGHTS

Ankara now acknowledges that Turkey has minorities based on "racial, religious, sectarian, cultural, or linguistic differences"[1] and has repealed laws curtailing the rights of such minorities. In a revolutionary measure, recent reform packages introduced the right of broadcasting, publication, and instruction in languages other than Turkish, in effect officially liberalizing the use of the Kurdish language. As of August 2004, even state-run radio and television have started limited broadcasts in Kurdish, Arabic, and other languages and dialects.

JUDICIAL REFORM

The Turkish judicial system has been significantly reformed—and Turkish criminal and anti-terrorism laws amended—in line with EU requirements. The death penalty was abolished in August 2002. The reforms now allow for the retrial of legal cases that have been challenged by the European Court of Human Rights. This particular alignment with EU law led to the June 9, 2004 release (pending a new trial) of four formerly imprisoned Kurdish members of Parliament, including the well-known Kurdish human rights activist Leyla Zana. Most recently, the May 2004 reform package abolished the State Security

Courts that had been set up following 1980 military coup to deal with "security offenses against the indivisible integrity of the State."[2]

CYPRUS POLICY

Turkish efforts to find a solution to the division of Cyprus were never made an explicit precondition for EU accession, but the political reality has always been that Turkish opposition to a Cyprus settlement would undermine its chances of joining the EU. Reversing the course of the hard-line Ecevit government that preceded it, the Erdogan government made a Cyprus settlement a high priority, largely in the name of removing the issue as an obstacle to Turkey's accession to the EU. Erdogan invested significant political capital and defied Turkish nationalists in urging Turkish Cypriots to approve a UN plan for political settlement. In the April 2004 referendum on the proposed UN plan, 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots supported the plan, whereas 75 percent of Greek Cypriots rejected it. The Turkish government's strong support of the plan (in contrast to the Greek Cypriot leadership's opposition) earned it much political credit with the EU and has helped Turkey's case for membership.

ECONOMIC REFORM

The painful structural reforms in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis started to pay off under the AKP government. Thanks to its fiscal discipline, mostly dictated by the IMF, Turkey appears to have weathered the most severe economic crisis in its modern history (after the economy shrunk by some 7.5 percent) and is now on a strong path of recovery. Inflation is down from over 70 percent in 2001 to 12 percent, interest rates are down, and growth is expected to be over 5 percent for 2005. The stock market shows signs of investor confidence and has been performing well in anticipation of foreign direct investment expectations linked to the EU membership process. Overall, the IMF and private rating agencies also appear to be satisfied with the fiscal discipline of the AKP government.

All these reforms certainly strengthened Turkish democracy and the case for starting accession negotiations in October 2005. However, as mentioned earlier, the success of these reforms will be tested in the next ten years during the accession negotiations. More will be said on this matter in the next chapter. For now, however, implementation will be a key factor. There is considerable admiration in EU circles for what the AKP has managed to achieve, but there is also a sense that these drastic reforms remain on paper. For instance, the real test for the military's willingness to keep a lower profile and play a smaller political role would come if the AKP government decided to push forward with sensitive legislation in areas such as religious education or the wearing of headscarves, or if the security situation in southeastern Turkey were to deteriorate. This is why it is crucial for the AKP to avoid any confrontation with the secularist establishment. The EU will be watching carefully.

To summarize, this chapter has illustrated the changing paradigm in Turkish politics in the last ten years. The EU has been crucial in overcoming the impasse of the 1990s and paving the way for the AKP reforms. In that sense, the desire to carry Turkey into the EU has been the glue of a pro-reform alliance between the press, liberal intellectuals, segments of the civilian and military bureaucracy, and—perhaps most tellingly—moderate Islamists and Kurdish nationalists. To put it simply, the EU has united Turkey behind a national consensus. None of this would have been possible without the Helsinki summit, which put Turkey-EU relations back on track. The next chapters will analyze the German and American contributions to this correction of the 1997 Luxembourg decision and the logic for ongoing support to Turkey's EU quest in these two countries.

CHAPTER THREE
GERMANY: THE RELUCTANT AND INDISPENSABLE ALLY

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GERMANY: THE RELUCTANT AND INDISPENSABLE ALLY

The 1990s proved to be a difficult decade for Turkish-German relations. For Germany the post-Cold War era opened with a historic priority: national reunification. Additional "grand projects" such as the European Monetary Union and EU enlargement left no political capital and intellectual energy for a serious consideration of Turkey's EU membership. In any case, Turkey's domestic political problems and its failure to undertake necessary democratic reforms simplified matters. There was a European consensus that Ankara had failed to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria.

Yet the 1997 EU Luxembourg summit's decision to completely exclude Turkey from the enlargement process, without even acknowledging its candidate status, was overly discriminatory. The decision was met with the utmost frustration in Ankara. The situation deteriorated further when Prime Minister Yilmaz decided to end the political dialogue between Turkey and the EU and threatened to withdraw Ankara's application for membership. The source of Turkey's frustration lay with European Christian Democrats and especially the Kohl government in Germany. In March 1997, only a few months before the Luxembourg summit, the European Christian Democratic Union, the body representing all Christian Democratic political parties in western Europe, had declared that "the EU is in the process of building a civilization in which Turkey has no place."[3]

A few months later, in December 1997, the Luxembourg summit's "Agenda 2000" declared that the EU would place Turkey in a special category of its own, in the framework of a new "European strategy" for Ankara. This view reflected an uncompromising opposition to Turkey's full membership to the EU and was shared by Chancellor Kohl's CDU, one of the signatories of the European Christian Democratic Union declaration. It was therefore not surprising that Prime Minister Yilmaz, educated in Germany and fluent in German, singled out the Kohl government in his accusations.

During his visit to Washington in the immediate aftermath of Luxembourg, Yilmaz stated that the EU was discriminating against Turkey for religious reasons and argued that the German Chancellor in particular was determined to turn the EU into a Christian club. Several weeks thereafter, Prime Minister Yilmaz accused the Kohl government of following a policy of *Lebensraum*, with its open support of the EU's eastern enlargement. These bitter memories are important mainly because the German Christian Democrats have not changed their opposition to Turkey's full membership to the EU. The CDU, now under the leadership of Angela Merkel, argues for a "privileged partnership" with Turkey, a position very similar to the one put forward in the Luxembourg summit of 1997. This determination to maintain the same approach toward Turkey, coupled with the likely scenario of a CDU victory in the 2006 German elections, makes the analysis of CDU's Turkey policy all the more important. What is the logic of German Christian Democrats in keeping Turkey at arm's length?

Not surprisingly, for most Turks the CDU's rigid opposition to Turkey's full membership has to do with the

"Christian identity" of the party, which creates considerable frustration among EU enthusiasts in Turkey. It goes without saying that most Turks and particularly the AKP government believe that cultural discrimination has no place in a secular EU. Membership must be based on political and economic standards and common values. The CDU is therefore on firmer ground when it uses institutional and strategic arguments to justify its opposition to Turkey's full membership. Concerns about the EU over-extending itself and thus turning into a free-trade area usually fall in this category. In essence, such strategic and institutional reservations are primarily about the impossibility of "simultaneous widening and deepening" for the EU. Moreover, objection to Turkey along the lines of an EU "over-stretch" has the additional advantage of finding allies in the French political class.

Although German conservatives have recently adopted this more politically correct line of reasoning against Turkey, they still face major difficulties in convincing skeptics that their opposition to Turkey's membership is not based on cultural grounds. The way in which Turkey-EU relations changed after the Social Democratic Party (SPD)/Green coalition took power in 1998 only reinforces this point. An additional factor—often not taken into consideration in analyzing the "cultural factor" in the changing parameters of Turkish-German relations—is what can be called "citizenship politics." Turks, in Germany and Turkey, are keenly aware that it was the SPD/Green coalition, not the CDU during its sixteen years in power, that overhauled Germany's archaic citizenship code. This change in German politics was indeed revolutionary; it paved the way for a new definition of "Germanness" along civic rather than ethnic lines. The 2.7 million Turks, most of them having lived in Germany for two generations, became the main beneficiaries of the new citizenship code. The reluctant support of the CDU/CSU for the new law and their opposition to "dual citizenship" was not lost on hundreds of thousand of Turks who remained reluctant to apply for German citizenship for this very reason.

The new German citizenship laws still managed to considerably extend the Turkish vote in Germany. There are now about 600,000 German-Turks, and their numbers are growing by about 100,000 each year thanks to ongoing naturalization and high birth rates. Although Germany is not prone to ethnic politics, a Turkish swing vote may already have had an impact in the very close 2002 German election. Not surprisingly, the newly enfranchised German-Turks overwhelmingly supported the SPD. In the next general election in 2006, SPD support for Turkey's EU membership will continue to ensure the loyalty of the growing Turkish vote.

But the meaning of the new citizenship law adopted in 2000 goes well beyond ethnic politics and electoral calculations. This new law—which significantly reduced hurdles to German citizenship and heralded a historic transition from *jus sanguinis* to *jus soli*—came to symbolize the friendlier and more tolerant face of Germany. In many ways, the country was finally coming to terms with its multicultural identity. Compared to the previous CDU/CSU era, during which Chancellor Kohl once famously declared that "Germany is not a country of immigration," the SPD/Green government's unprejudiced and liberal attitude was indeed a radical departure.

This new SPD/Green paradigm in German politics was not confined to domestic politics. It is not a coincidence that the new approach toward citizenship also spurred some constructive change in the government's "Turkey" policy. This positive change in German foreign policy helped produce a more forthcoming attitude toward Turkey at the 1999 Helsinki summit. Since the change in Germany's approach toward Ankara came in the general context of issues related to citizenship and multiculturalism, the situation only reinforced Turkey's impression that the CDU's opposition to Turkey had all along been on cultural and religious grounds. This may or may not be true, but perception often matters more than reality in international relations. Given the additional incentives presented at the Helsinki summit, the reform process in Turkey gained significant momentum, and Turkish-German relations continued to improve.

The implementation of democratic reforms in Turkey was crucial in changing Ankara's illiberal image in Europe and Germany, although one can argue that the more consequential event affecting Turkey's prospects of EU membership turned out to be the tragedy of September 11. The terrorist attacks turned

the implausible scenario of a "clash of civilizations" into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Suddenly, relations between Islam and the West became much more prone to symbolism and controversy. This situation put Turkey-EU relations under a new light. The September 11 attacks were a reaffirmation of Turkey's singularity as a secular, democratic, and pro-western country in the Islamic world. In a world where civilizational and cultural factors gained unprecedented importance, the EU now truly faced the risk of being labeled a "Christian club" if it rejected the membership of the most democratic and secular country in the Islamic world. These new dynamics, triggered by September 11, proved particularly influential on the thinking of German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who often admits that his opinion on Turkey changed after the terrorist attacks.

These factors—the arrival of the SPD to power, democratic reforms in Turkey, and September 11—all have had a major positive impact on the EU's approach to Turkey. The Copenhagen summit of 2002, which confirmed that accession negotiations would start "without delay" if Turkey fulfilled the membership criteria, and later the December 2004 Brussels summit's decision to open accession negotiations with Ankara in October 2005, clearly illustrate this point. However, as mentioned earlier, it would be a grave mistake to take Germany's support for granted. Turkey is still at the beginning of a long and challenging negotiation process, and three factors are likely to complicate German-Turkish relations.

First, a CDU victory in 2006 would significantly change the tone and pace of Turkey's accession negotiations. The new German government would do its best to derail the full membership negotiation process and push for a "privileged partnership." For the CDU, the most feasible and efficient way of keeping Turkey out would be to present its vision of Europe in the generic framework of a "variable geometry" for the EU. This would not only immunize the Turkey debate from cultural-religious elements, but it would also create a constructive way to address future relations with Ukraine, Belarus, and possibly Russia in a broader framework. Turkey will certainly continue to oppose any suggestion of a privileged partnership with the EU, and Turkish objections to "variable geometry" will likely center on the fact that any such arrangement needs the consent of Ankara. The second factor likely to complicate relations between Turkey and Germany is public opinion. German public opinion is far from supportive, with only 50 percent of the population supporting Turkey's bid for membership. Populist politicians from the SPD as well as CDU would not hesitate to exploit this situation. Turkey could easily be presented as a major problem exacerbating the democratic deficit within the EU. Such dynamics would in turn polarize Turkish public opinion and aggravate the feeling of being discriminated against. Turkey could rightly argue that public opinion should not be used as an excuse to delegitimize Turkey's bid for membership. Public opinion, after all, is not static—it can change, thanks to efficient Turkish public diplomacy and the German government's willingness to put Ankara's membership under a more positive light. Moreover, the German government has shown in the past that when "grand projects" such as the European Monetary Union are at stake, German public opposition did not present the greatest of obstacles.

Finally, the third factor that is likely to complicate relations, even if the SPD stays in power, is the fact that Germany will probably place the most demands on Turkey for a perfect harmonization of Turkey's democratic and economic standards with Europe. In that sense Berlin will not approach membership negotiations as a technical formality but instead emphasize at each stage the importance of implementation. As the most important contributor to the EU budget and as the country that will be most affected by Turkish membership, Germany will be in a legitimate position to do so. An SPD victory in 2006 should not be dismissed as impossible. It is even plausible that the Schröder government may use Turkey as an important factor in the election campaign. Should relations with Washington remain tense—because of ongoing differences over Iraq and Iran—the Schröder campaign may once again try to capitalize on anti-Americanism in Germany by arguing that Germany's embrace of Turkey was a much more effective victory against Islamic terrorism than the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq.

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CHAPTER FOUR
THE UNITED STATES: STILL STRATEGIC PARTNERS?

THE UNITED STATES: STILL STRATEGIC PARTNERS?

For Germany, Turkey is a domestic issue, and Turkey's quest for EU membership is ultimately a matter of political and economic compatibility with European norms. The United States, on the other hand, views Turkey's European vocation from the considerably different angle of strategic interests, arguing with European countries that it is also in Europe's long-term interest to anchor Turkey to the West. There has been a considerable degree of continuity in America's strategic approach to Ankara. During the Cold War, Turkey served as a bulwark against Soviet expansion into the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. As the only NATO country that shared a border with the Soviet Union, Turkey's large army tied down some twenty-four Soviet divisions. For decades, despite considerable ups and downs—the downs being mostly related to Cyprus (the 1964 Johnson letter and the 1974 arms embargo), this security paradigm defined the positive tone in Turkish-American relations.

During the 1990s Turkey feared that the end of the Cold War would reduce the country's strategic importance for the United States. Such worries proved to be well placed regarding relations with Europe, though not with Washington. Indeed, Turkey's strategic importance has increased in U.S. eyes. Turkey remains a crucial ally for the United States because of growing regional instability in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Broader Middle East, and American officials see Turkey as a crucial strategic ally in these regions. Cooperation on energy issues is also important. The fact that Turkey became a useful counterweight to Russian influence in Central Asia and the Caspian region has been a strong driving force behind Washington's support for the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which has been a major strategic goal of successive Turkish governments.

As far as Turkey's difficult relations with the EU during the 1990s are concerned, Washington's support for Ankara had a major impact in two instances: the 1996 Customs Unions with the EU and the 1999 Helsinki summit that put Turkey-EU relations back on track. In both cases, the fact that transatlantic relations were in a much better state than they are today considerably helped the situation. Although the Europeans never appreciated being lectured by the United States about Turkey's strategic importance, they were willing to listen rather than react angrily, as Jacques Chirac did during the August 2004 NATO summit in Istanbul when he claimed that American meddling is "a bit like

if France told the United States how they should manage their relations with Mexico."[4]

Turkey's strategic importance reached an unprecedented level soon after September 11. The shocking acts of Islamic terrorism opened the eyes of many Americans to the worrying developments in the Islamic world. As the debate about "what went wrong" in the Islamic world unfolded, Turkey's secular and democratic political system stood out as a positive exception. Attention shifted from Turkey's geostrategic location to what Turkey represents. With the clash of civilizations turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Muslim, democratic, secular, and pro-western attributes of Turkey acquired greater relevance. The country's historic accomplishments therefore began to provide an encouraging "civilizational" dimension challenging a gloomy paradigm of confrontation on the horizon.

Equally important became Turkey's role in discrediting those with a tendency to equate Islam with political violence and radicalism. By illustrating that Islam could be perfectly compatible with democracy and secularism, Turkey has countered such extreme, yet occasionally vocal, viewpoints. As a result, Turkey's Muslim character has become an important factor, beyond Turkey's strategic significance. For instance, Turkey's active presence in the anti-terror alliance strengthened the claim that the American-led "war on terrorism" is not a crusade against Islam. This was also why the leadership Turkey provided in ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in Afghanistan had a major symbolic meaning.

In many ways, Ankara came to represent for the United States not only a crucial Muslim ally in the war against terrorism but also a unique example of secularism and democracy in the Islamic world. For many in the Bush administration, especially the neo-conservatives, Turkey turned into a poster child for the administration's effort to promote democracy in the Broader Middle East. Many saw in Turkey a model for the rest of the region that could be successfully emulated. The strongest and most persistent pro-Turkish voice in the Bush administration has been that of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. As a long-time admirer of Turkey, Wolfowitz served as speaker for the annual Turgut Ozal Lecture at the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy on March 15, 2002 and offered a compelling case for the Turkish model, arguing that "Turkey is a model for those in the Muslim world who have aspirations for democratic progress and prosperity."[5]

Enter Iraq

This rosy picture of Turkey was increasingly challenged as the Iraq war approached. Turkey's minimal support for the United States, after its Parliament narrowly voted down the opening of a northern front against Baghdad from Turkish territory, was an unexpected disappointment for American policymakers. However, such frustration with Turkey also provided a crucial litmus test for Washington's commitment to democratization in the Broader Middle East. The regional picture that emerged prior to the war in Iraq was rather disturbing. Most authoritarian Arab governments, whose populations were overwhelmingly opposed to a war in Iraq, had decided to silently cooperate with the American effort. In contrast, Turkey—the only Muslim democracy in the Broader Middle East—said no to the United States despite being offered billions of dollars. The irony of this situation was not lost on Washington.

The easy trap for the United States would have been to react strongly against Turkey. Such an outcome would certainly have confirmed the skeptics' viewpoint that Washington's support for democracies and democratization is always contingent upon pro-American outcomes and would have dealt a serious blow to America's already negative image in the region. Washington's reaction, however, was measured and sensible. Turkey was a democracy, and its Parliament had to be respected. Not doing so would certainly have been self-defeating for the project the United States was about to embark on in Iraq and for the pro-democracy message intended for the Broader Middle East. Despite its minimal cooperation, Turkey still qualified for $1 billion in economic aid in the president's supplementary war budget. Moreover, Secretary Powell's wartime visit to Ankara, where he again described Turkey as a model for a future Iraq, helped repair damaged relations. For its part Turkey, shortly after the war, offered to send Turkish peace-

keepers—a proposal that was rejected by Kurdish and Arab forces in Iraq.

It would still be naïve to think that the geo-strategic dimension of Turkey-U.S. relations did not suffer a heavy blow because of Iraq. Yet, it is telling that the American disappointment appears to be more with the Turkish military than with Turkish democracy. This point was clearly conveyed in early May 2003, when Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz gave an interview to the Turkish press. After emphasizing that "Turkey, with a Muslim majority and a strong democratic tradition, remains an important model for a part of the world where the U.S. is trying to move in a positive direction," Wolfowitz singled out an unexpected institution to express his dissatisfaction with Turkey: "For whatever reason, the Turkish military did not play the strong leadership role we would have expected."[6]

The U.S. invasion of Iraq has seriously complicated Turkish-American relations and given the Kurdish issue a new dimension. The United States traditionally has seen the Kurdish question in Turkey largely as an issue of terrorism. Throughout the 1990s Washington supported the Turkish government's campaign against the PKK and played a crucial role in the capture of Abdullah Öcalan by providing intelligence to Turkish authorities. Today, however, the Kurdish question has turned into the most important problem in Turkish-American relations. The United States is in an extremely difficult position in northern Iraq, where it has to tread a fine line between supporting Kurdish demands for autonomy and maintaining good relations with Turkey.

The Turkish establishment and public opinion remains highly suspicious of U.S. policy goals in Iraq. The American military's unwillingness and inability to effectively pursue remaining PKK terrorists in northern Iraq exacerbates Ankara's concerns. Overall, the Turkish military also fears that U.S. policy will strengthen Kurdish influence in Iraq—a process that could lead to the creation of an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's border, exacerbating separatist pressures by the Kurds in Turkey. These concerns are not new. They have haunted Turkish policymakers since the end of the first Gulf War, but the invasion of Iraq and the resulting post-conflict instability have given them greater resonance.

In Washington the malaise in relations with Turkey on the Kurdish front is compensated by considerable cooperation with Turkey in the framework of the Bush administration's Broader Middle East and North Africa democratization project. The fact that despite serious strategic problems on the Kurdish question Turkey is still perceived as a model in the region appears to confirm a new way of thinking about Turkey. The Kurdish question will probably remain the most critical issue complicating Turkish-American relations in the near future. But perhaps the most important changing parameter in Turkish-American relations is that a relative decline in Turkey's geo-strategic indispensability for the United States is now more than compensated for by the appeal of its democratic and secular political system. In that sense, it is the tendency to perceive Turkey as source of inspiration for Middle East democratization that is likely to become the "new" dimension of Turkey's importance for Washington. Not surprisingly, such a change in the parameters of Turkish-American relations was further reinforced after the arrival of the AKP to power.

From Ally to Model?

The arrival of the AKP to power was important for many reasons. It was this development, perhaps more than anything else, which brought a sense of credibility to the debate of a Turkish model in the eyes of the Muslim world. This is an important point that requires a historical and political analysis. Turkey's American friends need to understand that pious Muslims, particularly in the Arab world, traditionally have been unimpressed by Turkish modernization. In other words, the model the Americans would like to promote has a problem connecting with its target audience in the Broader Middle East.

In the eyes of many Muslims in the Broader Middle East, the problem lies with Turkey's "authoritarian secularism." Where Americans see Turkey as the only Muslim, democratic, secular, and pro-western country in the region, Arab countries see a former colonial master that turned its back on Islam. There is a widely shared feeling among Arabs that Turkey's radical cultural revolution under Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, came at the expense of the country's Islamic identity. According to this point of view, Turkish secularism lacks democratic

legitimacy because its survival depends on the vigilance of the military. Most of the Arab intellectuals, let alone pious Muslim masses, are therefore unimpressed by the idea of following a Turkish path to modernity.

A more acceptable Turkish model for the Broader Middle East thus depends on better domestic harmony between Muslim traditions and secularism. This is why the Justice and Development Party's assumption of power presents a crucial opportunity for reconciling Turkey's Muslim roots with secular democracy. Today, the Arab world is watching the AKP very carefully and with increasing appreciation. To the dismay of the United States, Turkey's potential as a model for the Arab world appears to be strongly linked to its potential to stand up to the United States. Growing admiration for Turkey in the Arab world after the Turkish Parliament refused American troops is a case in point. Equally troubling for Washington is the fact that the Erdogan government is gaining popularity in the Arab world each time it criticizes Israel.

Yet one should not miss the larger picture. Ultimately, much of the relevance of the "Turkish model" for the Broader Middle East will depend on how Turkish democracy evolves. The relationship between the moderately Islamic AKP and the staunchly secularist military will provide a litmus test of democratic maturity for the Turkish model. Since the success of Turkey's political experiment will have much larger implications hinging on the compatibility of Islam and democracy, the United States and the EU have a common interest in seeing Turkey grow into a source of inspiration for reforms in the Arab world. The EU is at the heart of Turkey's democratization process, but the United States can also help strengthen Turkish democracy by helping on a number of issues.

For instance, in order to clearly illustrate its commitment to democracy, the United States should avoid giving the impression to Turkey that it is being punished for not having fully cooperated with Washington in Iraq. A good place to start would be to show more sensitivity to Turkish concerns about the PKK's presence in northern Iraq. In return, the United States should hold Ankara up to European standards of liberal democracy and human rights. In that sense, Washington should support Turkey's bid to join the EU by synchronizing its democratization agenda for Turkey with the EU. Such an effort would also correct Ankara's impression that the United States represents a politically less demanding alternative to the EU when it comes to anchoring Turkey to the West.

If the United States is serious about spreading democracy to the Broader Middle East, it should also be supportive of Turkey's new experiment in balancing its Muslim, democratic, and secular identity. American policymakers should play a subtle role in reminding Turkey's secularist establishment that the current government is perceived as a litmus test of democratic maturity. A functioning government with no intervention by the Turkish military would show the world that Islam and democracy are compatible. Such friendly advice may help Turkey focus on its potential to provide a truly popular model and prevent unnecessary polarization on issues such as headscarves.

To improve the image of the Turkish model in the Arab world, the United States should also give Turkey an opportunity to play a constructive role as a partner in broader initiatives, such as the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and even the regional peace process. As the only country in the region with good relations with Israel and improving ties with the Arab world, a secular, democratic, Muslim, and pro-western Turkey can become the ideal platform to launch a new "Istanbul Peace Process" in the Broader Middle East. Such efforts would underscore that American praise for a Muslim democracy is more than just rhetoric.

05

CHAPTER FIVE
THE ROAD AHEAD

THE ROAD AHEAD: TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP AND TRANSATLANTIC TENSIONS

As far as the new parameters in U.S.-German-Turkish relations are concerned two issues are of crucial importance. These are Turkey's membership negotiations with the EU and transatlantic relations. Depending on evolving dynamics in these two areas, Turkey, Germany, and the United States will either maximize their cooperation or experience significant problems in working together.

Turkey's Membership Negotiations

Although Turkey has shown an impressive ability to transform itself, the upcoming negotiations with the EU will present the real test of Turkey's democratic maturity and political stability. This new stage in Turkey's relations with the EU will also require a different kind of Turkish approach to the idea of EU membership. The Turkish political elite has traditionally perceived its membership to Europe as an "identity" question. In that sense the EU is perceived as a "civilizational litmus test" and the ultimate prize for a century-long westernization process. Such an identity-based perception often fails to recognize a crucial dimension of the EU—the fact that the Union is about sharing and often relinquishing political sovereignty.

This can be particularly hard for countries with imperial traditions such as Britain. Turkey, with her own deeply rooted imperial state tradition, strong sense of sovereignty, national pride, and alarmist attitude against foreign manipulation, is no exception. Such an argument should not contradict the significance of recent Turkish political reforms. However, it is important to note that Turkey is just at the beginning of its transformation and that the road ahead will be particularly bumpy. It is also somewhat troubling that the pace and scope of these reforms are ultimately the product of a political party that sees in EU membership its own political survival. Without its pro-EU agenda and the EU cover for its reforms, the AKP's fate in power would probably have resembled those of its more Islamic predecessors. There is no political party in Turkey whose political survival is so intimately linked to the EU process. In that sense, any Turkish political party other than the AKP would probably have shown more hesitation about the reform process necessary to join the EU.

This situation is potentially problematic for two reasons. First, it illustrates that there may still be important reservations within Turkey's powerful secular establishment about the real intentions of the AKP and its enthusiastic embrace of the EU. This is likely to turn into an increasingly important problem during the accession negotiations. Domestic tensions between a politically more confident AKP and the nationalist-secularist establishment could easily escalate. Such tensions would further polarize the Turkish political establishment's concerns about relinquishing political sovereignty to the EU. Second, the AKP itself may grow disappointed with the EU. This would be particularly the case if the AKP, as its critics argue, has all along conceptualized EU membership as a more feasible and subtle way of challenging Turkey's secularist norms and establishment. On the issue of headscarves, for instance, the AKP has already experienced a mini-shock in August 2004, when the

European Court of Human Rights ruled that banning headscarves at universities is not against religious freedom or human rights.

Leaving such gloomy yet realistic scenarios aside, sovereignty issues and false expectations nevertheless have the potential to create major problems in Turkey-EU relations. For the time being, however, the most pressing issue facing Turkey is to lower public expectations about a fast-track to EU membership. As previously noted, it would be a grave mistake for Ankara to view accession negotiations as just a technical formality. The road ahead will be full of political challenges. The EU's well-established screening process and accession criteria will be interpreted particularly strictly in Turkey's case. Problems the EU experienced in previous enlargements have taught the Union that it is not enough for a candidate country to change its legislation. Legislation without proper implementation and enforcement is simply meaningless.

Such concerns will put Turkey under additional political scrutiny because of its size and its potential to impact the rule of law and institutional balances within the EU. Turkey will therefore have to prove that it is able to enforce the relevant EU laws before it can close each round of negotiations. To the dismay of Ankara, the requirement from Turkey to provide evidence of implementation will substantially slow down the process. Turkey will have to complete 31 "chapters" covering every area of EU policy from fisheries to environmental and defense issues. It will also have to write 80,000 pages of EU rules into national law.

Germany's Role

Many European states would prefer to see an extremely slow progress in Turkey's membership negotiations. Germany will be no exception, especially if a CDU/CSU government comes to power in 2006. While unable to re-negotiate Turkey's terms of accession, one can argue that the German Christian Democrats—together with France, potentially under the presidency of Nicholas Sarkozy—will do their best to slow Turkey's membership process. They would also probably continue to lobby within the EU for a "privileged partnership" with Ankara. This may be legally impossible but politically feasible, particularly if Turkey fails to implement and enforce its new laws. Needless to say the best way for Turkey to avoid such frustrating scenarios will be to give no political and economic ammunition to German and French conservatives. This will require political stability, economic growth, and no hint of military-civilian tension in Turkey. The AKP will therefore have to refrain from challenging the secular establishment on issues such as headscarves and religious education.

Even if Turkey provides no excuses to the EU to slow, derail, or change the terms of its membership process, a CDU/CSU government may still try to revitalize a policy debate on Turkey under the guise of a question about the future borders of Europe. This could be presented in the framework of a vision of Europe with a federalist "core" (*noyaux dur*) while allowing flexibility for "variable geometry" on the periphery. As previously mentioned, such a vision would kill two birds with one stone. First, it would launch a technocratic debate questioning whether Turkey qualifies for the federalist core, without any reference to Turkey's religious identity. Second, it would dilute the impression of discriminating against Turkey by putting EU relations with Ukraine, the Caucasus, and even Russia in the same category. Ankara would no doubt react very negatively to such attempts to marginalize Turkey into the periphery.

If the SPD wins the 2006 elections, complacency and a tendency to take ongoing German support for granted would be tempting for Ankara. This would be a wrong and dangerous attitude. There is a real risk of complacency in Ankara because the Schröder government may indeed use Turkey as a positive factor in its election campaign against the CDU. In the case of ongoing transatlantic tensions the SPD may not hesitate to once again capitalize on anti-Americanism by arguing that the Americans fueled the clash of civilizations by needlessly invading Iraq while Berlin managed to bridge civilizations by supporting Turkey's EU membership.

Yet, once the SPD is back in power, the reality of a German public reluctant to support Turkey's eventual membership will not change. In many ways, the SPD

could even become more demanding during Turkey's membership negotiations. As unwavering supporters of Turkey, the German Social Democrats would be in a very legitimate position to hold Ankara up to the highest standards of democratic and economic harmonization with the EU. In any case, it is Berlin, more than any other European capital, that is likely to set the pace and tone of Turkey's membership negotiations because of Turkish demographics in Germany, the scope of economic and political relations between the two countries, and Germany's economic weight within the EU.

In the likely case of low public support for Turkey's EU membership in Germany, German officials will need to make a stronger case for Turkey's full membership to the EU. This, of course, will demand Ankara's full political collaboration in terms of implementing democratic reforms and applying EU standards in all aspects of life. A German public opinion campaign on Turkey's EU membership should not center solely on presenting Turkey as a strategic asset. This would fail to capture the imagination of average Germans and Europeans who rarely think of the EU as a strategic actor in world affairs. Although presenting Turkey as Europe's and Germany's answer to the "clash of civilizations" has merits, a truly efficient public opinion campaign should focus on issues that will affect the daily lives of citizens.

This is why a positive public opinion campaign about Turkey in Germany should present Turkey as the catalyst for structural reforms in the German economy and in the functioning of the EU. In that sense, the argument that the EU has been a major catalyst for Turkish reform can be reversed by arguing that Turkey's prospective membership to the EU should speed up the German and European structural reforms in two major areas: labor markets and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Addressing Turkey's membership in the framework of necessary labor market reforms will put the question of German unemployment at the heart of the debate. Many Germans are opposed to Turkey's entry not because they fear Turkish Islam but because they are concerned about cohorts of unemployed Turks coming to Germany, while Germany itself suffers from double-digit unemployment. Of course such a Turkish migration is not likely to happen overnight. Turkey's membership is likely to take ten years, and even when Turkey becomes a full member restrictions on free movement of Turkish labor will remain in place.

Yet, the issue of Turkish migration still needs to be addressed. This is why an honest German public opinion campaign on Turkey should also speak about the demographic realities of Germany, in terms of its aging population and looming pension crisis. A public relations campaign about Turkish migration should emphasize the following two points: (1) Turkish migration to Germany will not be massive, not only because of legal restrictions but because EU membership is the best way of improving Turkish economic standards and keeping most Turks employed at home; (2) Germany needs to replenish its working age population to keep its welfare state alive. Thus, a certain increase in skilled Turkish labor should be welcomed. But Germany first needs to reform its rigid labor market system. Such an approach focusing on the viability of the German welfare state and labor market reforms would have more credibility in the eyes of average Germans who have a hard time understanding why Germany would need more Turkish labor at a time when there is high unemployment in the country. In that sense, it should be explained that the real problem is the rigidity of the German system, and Turkey's entry should be presented as an incentive for labor market reform.

As far as the EU's CAP is concerned, a similar line of argument can be made about Turkey's membership—the CAP will have to be drastically reformed before Turkey's full membership to the EU is accomplished. As in the case of labor market reforms, this is a politically sensitive issue that most politicians prefer not to get involved in for electoral reasons. Yet Turkey's membership presents an important opportunity to engage in structural reforms in the CAP. The CAP creates tremendous productivity losses and continues to absorb about half of the EU budget. Excluding Turkey from CAP subsidies in order to keep the system intact would be a wasted opportunity for serious structural reforms. A public relations campaign in this area should emphasize that CAP reforms would benefit all EU members, Turkey, and

the developing world surrounding Europe's southern and eastern borders, where unemployment fuels Islamic radicalism.

To summarize, the ambivalence reflected in German and EU public opinion on Turkey could be addressed through a traditional public relations campaign with more cultural exchanges (students, academics, journalists, etc.) but also by contending with the difficult economic questions that are usually avoided. To gain credibility, Turkey can and should be presented as an asset for Germany and the EU in these areas as well. A similar line of creative thinking is needed in order to analyze in what ways Turkey can help find lasting solutions to the problems between the United States and Europe.

The Transatlantic Rift and Turkey's Role

There is an understandable debate in Europe and Germany about whether the current divergence between Europe and the United States is a product of major structural and cultural factors—such as the end of the Cold War, the growing asymmetry of military power, the change in the threat perception (ramifications of September 11), way of life (role of religion, environmental factors etc.)—or simply a clash based on the leadership style of the Bush administration.

The Kaganesque debate about Europeans being from Venus and Americans from Mars, or alternatively that this whole tension between Europe and the United States is the fault of President Bush goes beyond the analysis of this paper. Yet what can be argued with more certainty is that a substantial part of the transatlantic rift is related to the Broader Middle East. This is a region where Turkey can play a major role in bridging some of the problems between the EU and the United States.

It is perhaps even more important to emphasize that the Turkish government under the AKP leadership wants and needs to play such a constructive role. It is deeply disturbing for Ankara to see that its relations with the EU are at an all time high while transatlantic relations are going through arguably their most difficult phase. Turkey is in the immediate geographic vicinity of almost all countries and issues that polarize Europe and the United States. Iraq, Iran, and Syria are Turkey's neighbors, and the Arab-Israeli conflict presents another major challenge for the AKP government.

The divergence between the American and Franco-German approach to these problems in the Broader Middle East is obvious. This tension between the core countries of the EU and Washington presents an unprecedented dilemma for Turkish foreign policy at a time when Ankara's EU membership is gaining serious momentum. Probably for the first time in Turkish diplomatic history, the EU and the United States face the risk of becoming mutually exclusive alternatives. Unless the transatlantic rift proves temporary, Ankara may find itself in the undesirable position of having to choose between the United States and the EU. There is already the impression among certain neo-conservative circles in Washington that Turkey has adopted a more European line of thinking about Iraq and the Broader Middle East at the expense of relations with Washington and Tel Aviv.

With the potential for further chaos and even civil war in Iraq, an even grimmer scenario may arise. This would be the case in which Turkey opts for unilateral action to stop large-scale ethnic violence between Turcoman, Kurdish, and Arab communities in the Kirkuk and Mosul areas of northern Iraq. A unilateral Turkish intervention in northern Iraq, even if presented as a legitimate attempt to prevent further bloodshed, would present a doomsday scenario for Turkish foreign policy. Such an intervention would amount to a potential confrontation with the United States, and probably end Turkey's hope of joining the EU, since Turkey would be perceived as invading a sovereign country. In Turkey, anger, isolationism, and probably economic collapse would follow.

Such dreadful scenarios illustrate why it is in Turkey's strongest national interest to see the establishment of a stable Iraq, by means of U.S. and European cooperation. Such transatlantic collaboration would not only maximize the chances for a successful transition to stability and democracy in Iraq but also create non-military alternatives for dealing with Syria and Iran. As the only NATO member with borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria, and as a country that will soon begin membership negotiations with the EU, Turkey can

help improve transatlantic cooperation in the Broader Middle East in three major areas.

Ankara's potential role as a mediator between the West and the problematic duo of Tehran and Damascus is one of these areas. On the Syrian and Iranian front, Turkey has already taken an active role in improving bilateral relations. Yet, there is a sense in the West that Ankara's growing ties with Damascus and Tehran are in no small part motivated by an attempt to establish a platform against a potential Kurdish state that may emerge in northern Iraq. It is therefore important for the AKP government to prove that Turkey's improving economic and political relations with these two countries go beyond narrow calculations on the Kurdish question. The best way of doing so for Turkey is to play an active role as a mediator on issues that are at the heart of transatlantic problems, such as nuclear proliferation in Iran. As far as Syria is concerned, Turkey's major contribution can be to help revitalize the "road map" for the Middle East Peace Process.

Arab-Israeli peace is in fact the second area where Turkey can play an active role. Needless to say, an important part of the transatlantic rift is related to this question. Turkey, in many ways, is in a unique position to help. Right after the foundation of Israel in 1947, Turkey became the first country in the Muslim world to officially recognize Tel Aviv. Ankara, moreover, has a military partnership agreement with Israel that was signed in 1996. Despite recent strains in the relationship, due to the second intifada and the end of the peace process, the recent visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to Tel Aviv indicates that the military, economic, and political partnership between Ankara and Tel Aviv continue at the highest level.

As a country that enjoys good relations with Israel and a much improved image in the Arab world since the AKP took power, Turkey is truly in an exceptional position to play the role of a facilitator, or even mediator, in the Arab-Israeli conflict. With the passing of Yasser Arafat, Israel's intention to continue with its withdrawal from Gaza, and the emergence of a moderate and democratic Palestinian leadership, the time is ripe for such a role in the framework of an international conference in Istanbul. With American, British, and German support, (especially since Germany is the only continental European country Israel takes seriously) Turkey could eventually be the host of a long term "Istanbul Peace Process" that would hopefully fare better than the Oslo Peace Process.

Needless to say, the United States will have to take a lead in any such initiative supporting a Turkish role. There may be hope, since the Bush administration appears unwilling to engage in the revitalization of the peace process within the framework of high-profile American summits, as was the case during the Clinton administration. Regional summits, such as one in Istanbul, could therefore turn into more feasible alternatives. Such American support for a Turkish role in the Middle East Peace Process would not only significantly ease transatlantic tensions but also show that Washington's praise for democracy in the Islamic world is more than just rhetoric.

Finally, the third area in which Turkey can play a positive role in easing transatlantic tensions is in the framework of democratization in the Broader Middle East. Turkey is already an important partner of the United States in the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative launched at the G-8 Summit of Sea Island in the summer of 2004. Turkey's own democratization, as argued in this paper, is strongly related to the incentives provided by EU membership. It may indeed prove very useful for the United States to take a closer look at what the EU has accomplished in Turkey in terms of democratization. In that sense, Turkey-EU relations, more than the "Turkish model" itself, can become a model for thinking about the transformation of the Broader Middle East.

It is obvious that the EU cannot offer the incentive of EU membership to countries in the Broader Middle East. However, what the EU-Turkey model of democratization illustrates is that incentives combined with strong conditions can work. In Turkey's case the carrot was membership negotiations and the stick was exclusion from the process of EU enlargement. Europe, Turkey, and the United States can certainly work together to provide stronger political and economic incentives for reform in the Broader Middle East. Europe is already spending substantially more than the United States for civil society assistance in the Arab world in the framework of its MEDA funds and the Barcelona Process. Yet such funds have so

far failed to produce genuine democratization in the Arab world.

In fact authoritarian regimes often adopt cosmetic liberalization, mostly by multiplying the number of inefficient civil society organizations that remain divided and easily co-opted by the repressive regimes. Genuine constitutional change allowing for multiparty elections with legislative reforms guaranteeing freedom of speech, assembly, and press remain elusive. Many countries in the Broader Middle East receive democratization assistance but remain recklessly authoritarian because no serious conditions or measurement of successful democratization have been established. Countries that fail to reform their authoritarian system simply continue to receive aid because of their geo-strategic importance or their willingness to make peace with Israel. This is where the EU-Turkey model can teach an important lesson. Both the EU and the United States can prove that they are serious about democratization if they clearly state that democratic assistance will be conditional on democratic performance with measurements comparable to a "softer" version of the Copenhagen criteria. In that sense, rather than Turkey itself, it is the democratic and economic progress Turkey made thanks to EU incentives that should become the real model for transforming the Broader Middle East. Free trade agreements with the region, the United States, and the EU, as well as more economic and democratic assistance with much tougher conditions, would be steps in the right direction.

NOTES

1 EU Commission's Regular Report on Turkey's Progress toward accession: 2004, p.29. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2004/pdf/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf

2 EU Commission's Regular Report on Turkey's Progress toward accession: 2004, p.33. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2004/pdf/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf

3 Quoted in "European Christian Democrats against Turkey" *Financial Times*, 22 March 1997, p.2.

4 Joshua Chaffin, "EU Anger as Bush calls for Turkish Membership" *Financial Times*, 30 June 2004.

5 Turgut Ozal Memorial Lecture delivered by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz on 15 March 2002, http://www.washingtonfile.net/2002/March/March14/EUR405.HTM.

6 Transcript of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz's 6 May 2003 interview with CNN Turkey. See http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030506-depsecdef0156.html.

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