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Rana Deep Islam

## The Accession of Turkey to the European Union

Security Implications for Transatlantic  
Relations

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## Abstract

Turkey plays an increasing role in the geostrategic considerations of the European Union and the United States of America. The following study will investigate the attempt to understand the security implications of a Turkish EU accession on transatlantic relations.

The first part of this paper is devoted to the debate of whether Turkey can be viewed as a Western country. It becomes clear that Turkey and the European Union are tied by a decade-long history of institutional relations. Furthermore Turkey itself maintains an identity, which explicitly stresses Western characteristics in its political, social and legal constitution. All together it appears to be legitimate to consider Turkey as a part of the Occidental hemisphere.

The second part endeavours to explain the strategic relations between Ankara and Washington. The foundation of their special partnership developed out of the context of the Cold War. Although some observers predicted a decline in importance of Turkey's strategic value to the United States after 1989/1990, the flow of events proved the opposite. The second Iraq war and especially the 9/11 terrorist attacks increased Turkey's prominence on the US strategic radar. This is the reason why the US supports a Turkish accession to the EU.

The European Union has also a considerable security and geostrategic interest in Turkey. In the Balkans Turkey is of crucial importance and is seen to be a stabilising factor throughout the region. Moreover Turkey is an energy hub and therefore can be seen as an asset in delivering oil and gas to the European Union. Turkey also plays a fundamental role as a bridge to the Muslim world. Due to its strong relationship with its Arab and Persian neighbours, Ankara can serve as a channel of communication. In turn this can improve the European capacity to affect human rights and the transition towards democracy in the region.

With regard to the transatlantic dimension two basic distinctions can be drawn. On the one hand there is a military implication of Turkish accession on US-European relations. Turkey with the sixth largest army in the world, can contribute to EU defence and military capabilities. This would free American assets which are currently bound in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. They could then be redeployed to other conflict areas like Afghanistan and Iraq, and be able to address the US' present day strategic interest.

On the other hand Turkish accession would incorporate a political component for transatlantic relations. Some political observers expect that this would have a negative impact, as Turkey's accession would make the EU stronger and more competitive. This paper argues differently. Enlargement has always been in the strategic interest of the US. Turkey's willingness to support the United States can even enhance future transatlantic relations. By these means Turkey can serve as a political link; it has the capacity to be a conduit between both sides of the Atlantic, especially at a time of problematic transatlantic communication.

## 1. Introduction

*As a model of a democratizing and secular Muslim state that has been a stalwart ally for more than 50 years, Turkey is of enormous strategic importance to the United States and Europe, especially at a time when the widening chasm between the West and the Islamic world looms as the greatest foreign policy challenge.* Steven A. Cook / Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall<sup>1</sup>

The above quoted statement given by Steven A. Cook and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, two fellows at the Council on Foreign Relations, makes clear, that Turkey plays a significant role in the strategic considerations of both sides of the Atlantic. At least since the so called Truman Doctrine from 1947 the United States maintains a special relationship with Turkey. The European Union as well considers the country as an important part of its evolving foreign and security policy, as shown by the role Turkey was attributed with, in the frame of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Hence many academic articles and books deal with the question in a bilateral way, emphasising implications of Turkish EU membership on either Turkish-European or Turkish-US relations.

However in the author's point of view the transatlantic perspective of a possible Turkish EU accession is not so exhaustively analysed in current literature. This makes the academic incentive for dealing with the question. The research topic could therefore be well suited for adding insights in and new facts on the strategic impact of Turkish EU membership on transatlantic relations. The relevant guiding questions are listed below:

- What is Turkey's strategic importance for the EU and the US?
- Does Turkey as a full-fledged member enable the European Union to play a more significant role in world politics?
- If so, will it be to the disadvantage of the US?

The main goal of the thesis is to testify three basic objectives. First of all a Turkish EU accession is in the strategic interest of the United States. Secondly it also contributes to a further strengthening of the European Union's role in shaping international politics. Finally it can be expected that its membership also strengthens transatlantic relations, as the country ties European and American interests and gives both sides the possibility to exert influence on each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Steven A. Cook / Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, "The U.S. and Turkey, Rebuilding a Fractured Alliance", *International Herald Tribune*, 3 July 2006.

The thesis will be approached in the following order: In an introducing step I would like to explain basic conditions which might be of importance for dealing with the research issue. The main purpose of this part is to reveal if Turkey is a Western country by looking at social, political and historical coordinates.

The next part of the work is devoted to the strategic importance of Turkey for US geopolitics. Especially 9/11 gave Turkey a growing importance for US political thinking. Turkey is so far the only Muslim country with a secular political order and simultaneously maintains in-depth relations to regional key players like Iran and Syria.

Following, the thesis deals with the European foreign policy interest in a Turkish EU accession. Already now the EU considers Turkey as an important factor, regarding its role on the Balkans and its function as a transit country for gas and oil. The paragraph shall finally answer the question, what role the country plays towards the Muslim world. Will a Turkish membership serve as a model for or a bridge to Islamic countries? And how will the EU benefit from Turkey's relationship to its Islamic neighbourhood?

The last chapter tries to combine the two previous ones by focusing on the transatlantic dimension of a Turkish EU accession. Such a perspective has to pick up recent transatlantic strains first, which erupted during and after the Iraq crisis. In this regard Turkey could eventually act as a unifying actor. If and under which circumstances shall be evaluated then. A conclusion shall sum up the results and give a brief outlook on future perspectives.

Many academic pieces of literature were used in the context of this work. The most important books were "Turkey's Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times" written by Kemal Kirişci, Heinz Kramer's work on "A Changing Turkey, The Challenge to Europe and the United States" and "Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe" by Meltem Müftüler-Bac. They all give useful insights into Turkey's relations to the West. The collection of articles in "Parameters of Partnership: The U.S. – Turkey – Europe" published by the Centre for European Integration Research gave a very fruitful view on the transatlantic perspective. The security dimension was mainly covered by various periodicals, entailing many articles on Turkey's geostrategic role. Particularly the contributions in *Security Dialogue*, *Foreign Affairs* and *Survival* were of special interest. Due to limited space all these articles cannot be mentioned at this time. However a detailed bibliography is given at the end.

## 2. Turkey – A Western Country?

*The European Union is a civilisation project and within this civilisation Turkey has no place.*

European People's Party<sup>2</sup>

It is essential to reflect Turkey's role in the wider context of European and Occidental identity. The European People's Party (EPP) unambiguously states, that it does not consider Turkey to be part of the Western hemisphere. The question if this assumption is true shall be emphasised as the central notion of this chapter.

### 2.1. Identity and the Universality of Norms

Many politicians and political observers reject a possible Turkish EU membership pointing out, that the country is not European. The main argument in this context refers to the Islamic background of Turkey, which cannot be brought into conformity with the Christian origins of the European continent.<sup>3</sup>

However in the context of this thesis the concept of identity is treated as phenomena in constant flux. Collective identities are created in the minds of people through the practice of common habits, traditions and history. Communities and collective identities are therefore imagined and underlie a process of construction.<sup>4</sup>

The European Union is a good example of the artificial nature of identity. Whereas European nation states fought against each other only sixty years ago, they now stress the notion of a common European identity.<sup>5</sup> Symbols play a very important role. The European citizenship, which every EU citizen keeps next to his or her national one and the common Euro currency are some of the tools in this process of construction.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently the question of whether Turkey shares a European and a Western identity has no simple answer. Instead it depends to a large extent on the political views of the observer, who deals with Turkey and its role relating to European identity building.

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<sup>2</sup> Meltem Müftüleri-Bac / Lauren M. McLaren, "Enlargement Preferences and Policy-Making in the European Union: Impacts on Turkey", *European Integration*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2003, pp. 17-30, here: p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Heinrich August Winkler, "Wir erweitern uns zu Tode", *Die Zeit*, 7 November 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London / New York: Verso, 1991. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der Verstehenden Soziologie*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Tübingen: Mohr, 1972, p. 237.

<sup>5</sup> European Union, *Treaty of Nice, Amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Certain Related Acts*, 2001/C 80/01, 10 March 2001, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> See also: Werner Gephart, „Zur Sozialen Konstruktion Europäischer Identität, Symbolische Defizite und Europäische Realitäten“, in: Werner Gephart / Karl-Heinz Saurwein (eds.), *Gebrochene Identitäten, Zur Kontroverse um Kollektive Identitäten in Deutschland, Israel, Südafrika, Europa und im Identitätskampf der Kulturen*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1999, pp. 143-168.



At the same time there are the so called Copenhagen Criteria, which form an elemental part of European self perception and make no reference to specific identities.<sup>7</sup> They express a European commitment towards common norms. On the following pages the EU is therefore not understood as a 'Christian club' but as a community whose constituent parts are tied to one another by universal values like human rights, democracy, rule of law and civil liberties.

This understanding seems to be even more urgent as currently more than twelve million Muslims live in member countries of the EU. Dwelling on the notion of a Christian Europe would consequently exclude this major part of European people. Furthermore there is no European country defining itself through its Christian belief, so why should the EU do so?<sup>8</sup> The EU is instead characterised by a huge religious and cultural heterogeneity. From Poland to Portugal and from Sweden to Italy – European integration has always been a project of unifying differences. This is why every European country which shares the very basis of universal values might be considered as a possible country of accession.

## 2.2. History of European-Turkish Relations

In dealing with the question of whether Turkey is part of the European value system, a look at historical developments also helps.

The Ottoman Empire was connected to European affairs for the last centuries. Until 1699 and the Treaty of Karlowitz Ottoman troops led several military campaigns in central and Western Europe, sometimes at the request of other European powers. France for instance asked the Ottomans several times for military assistance in fighting the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>9</sup> It is clear then that the Ottomans formed a central part of European power politics which in turn led to cultural and political exchange and participation.

Interestingly, the historic leverage plays again a crucial role in Turkey's current accession process. The Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottomans share a long and common history of a cultural, political and societal antagonism. These traditional conflict lines do still persist in the minds of the people, as is shown by the recent decision of the Austrian government to have a public voting on Turkey joining the EU.<sup>10</sup> As all EU member states have to agree on a country's accession, the Austrian position might very soon turn out to be an insurmountable hurdle for Ankara's EU per-

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission, *Accession Criteria*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement\\_process/accession\\_process/criteria/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/criteria/index_en.htm), date of consultation: 21. April 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Giacomo Luciani, "Die Türkei und der Islam, Hürde auf dem Weg nach Europa?", *Internationale Politik*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2002, pp. 27-31, here: p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Metin Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy", *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2005, pp. 33-44, here: pp. 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, France as well declared to have a referendum. The difference is that Vienna will vote only on Turkey and not on all coming accessions after 2007.

spective. This becomes clear while having a look on current polls. Only five percent of the Austrian population favours a European perspective for Ankara, whereas 87 percent are against.<sup>11</sup>

The institutional dimension of Turkish-European relations began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1963 Turkey was the first country signing an association agreement with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). This accord already mentioned the possibility of a future full fledged Turkish membership in the ECSC,<sup>12</sup> as emphasised by Walter Hallstein, then President of the European Commission, during the signing procedure.<sup>13</sup>

The ensuing story between the two can be best characterised in terms of hopes and fears and unfulfilled expectations. The additional protocol to the Ankara Treaty establishing a Customs Union Agreement (CUA) was surely a major step forward. However, first difficulties evolved when the EC decided to hold back granted financial aid because of human rights deficiencies in Turkey in the latter part of the 1960's. The relationship became even more problematic when Turkish military forces took power in 1980. That directly contravened the EU principle of having association agreements only with civilian governments.<sup>14</sup>

Turkey officially applied for EC membership in 1987 for the first time. The European Commission rejected this attempt as at this point of time it was still occupied with the integration of its new members Spain, Portugal and Greece.<sup>15</sup> In turn this decision led to a further disillusionment of Turkey's ambitions to become part of the EC.

The end of the Cold War antagonism reduced Turkey's importance in the international system extensively.<sup>16</sup> Although the Customs Union Agreement was re-established in 1996, the 1997 Luxembourg Council significantly withdrew Turkey's eligibility for EU accession completely. However in the wake of the Kosovo War in 1999 the Helsinki Summit revoked this decision and granted Turkey an official status of candidacy.<sup>17</sup> Finally in October 2005 the European Union of-

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<sup>11</sup> However that does not mean necessarily that further negotiations between Ankara and Brussels do not make sense. When former French foreign minister Robert Schuman proposed to establish a *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC) he thought of assuring peace and terminating the enmity between France and Germany. The EU is build on German-French reconciliation. It shows that it is possible to overcome traditional rivalries. In this regard, continuing the accession process can also be considered as helpful appeasing traditional tensions between Ankara and Vienna. For the whole context see also: Matthias Belafi, *Eine Große Koalition gegen die Türkei, Der europapolitische Kurs der österreichischen Bundesregierung*, Study Report, München: Centrum für Angewandte Politikforschung, März 2007. European Stability Initiative (ESI), *Who is Who in the European Debate on Turkey, Austria*, Study Report, Berlin / Istanbul: ESI, September 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Müftüler-Bac / McLaren, "Enlargement Preferences", p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Oppermann (editor), *Hallstein – Europäische Reden*, Stuttgart: DVA, 1979, p. 439.

<sup>14</sup> Müftüler-Bac / McLaren, "Enlargement Preferences", pp. 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> A detailed analysis is given in: Meltem Müftüler-Bac, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> Gokhan Bacik / Bulent Aras, "Turkey's Inescapable Dilemma: America or Europe?", *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2004, pp. 56-71, here: pp. 56-60.

<sup>17</sup> Müftüler-Bac / McLaren, "Enlargement Preferences", p. 25.

officially commenced accession talks with Turkey, which represented a huge step forward in the relationship between the two.<sup>18</sup>

It becomes obvious that Turkey and Europe have undergone many ups and downs. In more general terms, this 'game' of rapprochement and alienation is also described by Buzan and Diez as: "apparent promises of full membership to Turkey by the European Community; strong commitment to, and expectation of, eventual membership by Turkey; slow implementation of their commitments by both sides."<sup>19</sup>

In any case we see that Turkey and Europe have reached a very sophisticated level of interaction. Hence it is possible to localise Turkey as a component within the European political and institutional set-up.

### 2.3. Atatürk's Heritage

The birth of modern Turkey is closely linked to the life of its first president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the name literally translates as 'father of the Turks'. It was during the downfall of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, when Atatürk succeeded in expelling foreign Western military forces out of the country.<sup>20</sup> By doing so he paved the way for the birth of a new state – the Turkish Republic. He cut off the Muslim tradition of the country by disestablishing the Ottoman caliphate and the rule of the sharia. He abandoned Muslim brotherhoods and eradicated the status of Islam as the official state religion. Instead he initiated significant changes according to Western thinking. He introduced the Gregorian calendar, switched the script from Arabic to Latin, established for the first time ever women's rights and changed the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday.<sup>21</sup> He furthermore pushed regulations restricting religion in public, meaning that Muslim schools, also known as madrasas, were closed and a Western style of clothing was imposed. Between 1934 and 1947 Atatürk even prohibited the pilgrimage to Mecca and Muslim theology was taken from university curricula.<sup>22</sup> Apart from that citizenship was not anymore linked to ideas of ethnicity or religion but to the concept of individuality. In general it can be said that Atatürk emphasized a Turkish orientation towards European enlightenment and adapted a strict application of a French way of secularism.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Gülnur Aybet, "Turkey and the EU After the First Year of Negotiations: Reconciling Internal and External Policy Challenges", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2006, pp. 529-549.

<sup>19</sup> Barry Buzan / Thomas Diez, "The European Union and Turkey", *Survival*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1999, pp. 41-57, here: p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 6, 2000, pp. 100-114, here: p. 102.

<sup>21</sup> Gareth Jenkins, "Muslim Democrats in Turkey?", *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2003, pp. 45-66, here: p. 46-47.

<sup>22</sup> Bekim Agai, "Islam und Kemalismus in der Türkei", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 33-34, 2004, pp. 18-24, here: p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Eric Rouleau, "Turkey: Beyond Atatürk", *Foreign Policy*, vol. 103, Summer, 1996, pp. 70-87, here: pp. 70-71.

Ataturk's radical changes then became a state ideology as codified in the Turkish constitution. This kind of *Kemalism* remains the guiding principle of Turkish social life. His picture can be seen in nearly every public venue, his grave is a famous place of pilgrimage, public holidays commemorate his legacy and his thoughts are an essential component of all educational stages.<sup>24</sup>

Of course this practice of *Kemalism* leaves space for discussion. Its role in current every day life comes close to a public substitute religion. However this state of affairs also assures a firm and sustainable standing of Western ideas in Turkish life. Although political Islam still plays a role in Turkish politics,<sup>25</sup> the overall orientation of the political elite towards occidental norms and values is not questioned. The 'father of the Turks' established a European Turkey and pushed the implementation of Western thoughts which still form part of past and present Turkish identity and which therefore embed the country in an occidental context.

#### 2.4. Non-European Performance: The Turkish Military

Ataturk would not have been able to pursue his whole agenda without the assistance of the military being from then on deeply anchored within Turkish society.<sup>26</sup> Its pivotal role also forms part of Turkey's constitution which establishes a National Security Council (NSC), a body of top generals and politicians. According to Article 118 of the constitution every civil government shall take NSC considerations into account especially for issues of national and foreign security.<sup>27</sup> What happens if Turkish politics does not comply with this article is shown by current affairs. The Turkish military has overthrown democratically elected governments in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 for being too Islamic or not conforming to *Kemalism*. At the latest in May 2007 the military threatened openly to remove the current government, if the next president, who normally stands in the tradition of secularism, will be a member of the AKP, which is supposed to be Islamic.<sup>28</sup> In all these cases the military's actions were publicly accepted, as it was supposed to be inevitable for the maintenance of order and stability.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jenkins, "Muslim Democrats", pp. 47-48.

<sup>25</sup> Agai, „Islam und Kemalismus“, pp. 20-21.

<sup>26</sup> Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy", p. 102.

<sup>27</sup> David L. Phillips, "Turkey's Dreams of Accession", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 5, 2004, 83, pp. 86-97, here: pp. 87-88.

<sup>28</sup> Steven A. Cook, "The EU, Erdogan and Turkey's generals", *International Herald Tribune*, 23 April 2007. "Secularism v democracy", *The Economist*, 5 May 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Patrick Gillis, *U.S.-Turkish Relations: The Road to Improving a Troubled Strategic Partnership*, Study Report, Carlisle: U.S. Army War College (USAWC), May 2004, p. 4. According to a survey being published by the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* in September 2005 the military is the most trusted institution of the country. See also: Ersel Aydinli / Nihat Ali Özcan / Dogan Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March Towards Europe", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 1, 2006, pp. 77-90, here: p. 78.

In addition the military apparatus maintains autonomous political and social patterns. The NSC has its own budget, not subject to parliamentary control.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore the military is in control of huge shares of Turkish economy. Many companies are military owned for instance Oyak, an industrial conglomerate and the country's fourth largest enterprise. Add to this high-ranking generals are omnipresent in important positions throughout society such as the boards of radio and television stations. Therefore it is legitimate to talk about the military as a state within a state.<sup>31</sup>

Of course this kind of influence completely contradicts European norms and values, which demand a strict civilian control of the military. However since Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in late 2003, the military sector underwent far reaching changes. The AKP pushed a policy of civilianisation. The NSC secretary general can nowadays be a civilian, and the number of civilian representatives on the NSC body was increased. The number of its meetings was reduced as well as the military's authority in controlling TV, radio and education.<sup>32</sup> However serious discrepancies remain and further reforms are needed, as stated by the latest progress report of the European Commission towards a Turkish accession.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.5. The Constitution, its Difficult Amendment and Human Rights

A look at the Turkish constitution is an appropriate indicator to measure Turkey's overall orientation towards European norms and values. As soon as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came to power in 1923, he put lots of effort into a complete and fundamental reform of Turkish constitutional key documents, being guided by Western European templates. Consequently Turkish criminal law was formulated according to the Italian one, civilian law is very similar to the Swiss model, whereas the commercial law was codified along German and Italian lines and finally the administrative patterns were adopted from the French.<sup>34</sup> All together Atatürk established a code of law which illustrates a Western understanding of statehood on the basis of enlightenment and the right of the individual.

However serious deficiencies should not remain unmentioned. Human and civil rights have a weak standing in Turkey's constitution, although the current government under Prime Minister Erdogan undertakes far reaching measures to bring the constitution into compliance with West-

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<sup>30</sup> Rana Deep Islam, *Turkey on its Way to Europe, Recent Developments in Turkish Reform Politics*, Study Report, Strasbourg: International Institute for Democracy (IID), March 2004, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy", pp. 108-110.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Gordon / Omer Taspinar, *Turkey's European Quest: The EU's Decision on Turkish Accession*, Study Report, Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, September 2004, pp. 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Commission of the European Communities (EC), *Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2006 Progress Report*, Brussels: EC, 8 November 2006, pp. 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> Günter Endrweit, "Turkey and the European Union: A Question of Cultural Difference?", *Perceptions – Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1998, pp. 54-70.

ern standards in this respect. Erdogan's administration recognises the need for further reform but loopholes still exist and make a consistent implementation of constitutional changes almost impossible.

One illuminating example is the case of the Turkish Migration and Humanitarian Assistance Foundation (GIYAV). In the recent past they were sued on the basis of Article 169 of the Turkish Criminal Code (TCC) incurring a penalty for aiding terrorist organisations. While this paragraph has been recently abolished by the government, GIYAV was then accused on the basis of Article 312 for 'glorifying a crime'.<sup>35</sup> It becomes clear that current reform practice is circumvented by using other articles of the penal code which remain unchanged.

Torture, ill-treatment and the state of the detention system also give serious cause for concern. Article 243 and 245 of the TCC were amended as in the past they served as a basis for stopping charges against civil servants who committed human rights violations. However, detainees still report being beaten, hosed with cold pressured water and deprived of sleep and food, as Ankara's regulation is simply not implemented in the lower levels of administration especially in countryside regions.<sup>36</sup>

Minority rights are as well far away from being in conformity with European standards. Especially the Kurdish population sees itself regularly exposed to intimidations and various forms of repressions by state authorities. Kurdish cultural centres are commonly closed and there are serious legislative hurdles for education, radio and television held in Kurdish language. The list of Turkey's deplorable human rights performance could be easily continued as women's rights, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the role of internally displaced persons remain seriously and negatively affected by state interference.<sup>37</sup>

Turkey's human rights record is therefore not sufficient to meet European criteria although the current government is trying to improve the situation. Many loopholes exist, which complicate a firm prosecution of human rights violations and a strict implementation of reform measures.<sup>38</sup>

The very question is, if this makes Turkey less European in principle?

## 2.6. Is Turkey Western? Concluding Remarks

If Europe is defined as a community grounded on universal norms and values, the answer to the above mentioned question is surely two fold. On the one hand, Turkey and Europe are con-

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<sup>35</sup> Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, *Trial against the Turkish NGO GIYAV*. Available at: [http://www.fidh.org/article.php?id\\_article=2147](http://www.fidh.org/article.php?id_article=2147), 22 October 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Council of Europe, *Report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles (the Commissioner for Human Rights) on his Visit to Turkey*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003, p. 25, p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2007*, New York: Human Rights Watch, 2007, pp. 425-429.

<sup>38</sup> Islam, "Turkey on its Way to Europe", pp. 5-16.

nected through a century long common history. Especially the institutional set up, arranged by the Ankara Agreement in 1963, tied the two and turned Turkey into an active component of the European integration system. In addition the country itself defines itself in terms of Western political ideas. Secularism, an occidental way of life of Turkey's decision making elite and individual freedoms make Turkey an entity which shares European values and norms at least on paper. However a number of European standards are not fulfilled yet. The military has too much influence on state affairs and basic human and civil rights are lacking a proper foundation.

However could it not be argued that this deficiency is a further argument speaking in favour of a Turkish accession? Recent enlargement rounds have shown that countries like Spain and Portugal faced similar problems with highly militarised societies and a weak human rights implementation.<sup>39</sup> In the meantime they were able to transform their domestic conditions and to become a stable anchor for the Western value system. In this process the EC/EU served as an assisting and normative power as it put pressure on and gave incentives to these countries in order to undertake the necessary changes. Therefore Turkey's human rights record that leaves much to be desired is definitively a reason for rejecting a short term accession, but does not represent a qualitative argument against a membership in general.

Moreover it has to be added that Turkey's overall political pattern is Western oriented and the path towards Europe is a fundamental component of Turkish identity. From this perspective it therefore can be said, that Turkey is and will remain part of the Occidental hemisphere. If the country is simultaneously also part of the Muslim world and if it can therefore act as a bridge to or a model for Islamic states shall however be clarified at a later stage of the work.

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<sup>39</sup> A thorough discussion of their accession process is dealt with in a following chapter.

### 3. The Strategic Importance of Turkey for US Security

*Turkey had been an important ally of the United States throughout the Cold War era. With the end of the Cold War (...), Turkey's geostrategic importance came under increasing scrutiny. After a temporary interlude in the early 1990's, however, the strategic partnership between the two countries was restored on a new basis. Ziya Önis / Suhnaz Yilmaz<sup>40</sup>*

The quotation by Önis and Yilmaz, two political scientists, puts a significant light on Turkish-US relations, a question, which shall be further evaluated in this chapter. The United States and Turkey are tied by a decade-long history of special relations, which are mainly determined by security related issues. The view of Turkey as a pivotal state for US strategic considerations was furthermore reinforced by the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre in Washington and New York on September 11.<sup>41</sup> It is true that Islamist and anti-American ideologies already existed during the Cold War. However they were then covered by the Soviet-American antagonism, which has been the decisive determinant for international relations at that time. Nowadays the 9/11 attacks have caused a fundamental adjustment of US foreign policy, seeing radical Islam as the major threat for American and world wide stability.<sup>42</sup> From a US perspective Turkey plays an important role with its mainly Muslim population and its Western understanding of liberal values.

#### 3.1. A Retrospective: US-Turkish Relations during the Cold War

Turkish-American relations trace back to the immediate period after the end of World War II.<sup>43</sup> Joseph Stalin considered Turkey a weak and unstable country, which still suffered the consequences of the previous war. He therefore found it convenient to confront Turkey with far reaching territorial demands over areas which he supposed to be Georgian. This in turn did frighten “the Turks right into the open arms of the Americans”<sup>44</sup> whose relations to the USSR were getting increasingly strained against the backdrop of a rising ideological antagonism. As the Soviet-Turkish conflict deteriorated further in 1947, the United States under then president Harry S. Truman decided to adjust its foreign policy significantly. Due to the expanding exertion of Soviet influence on Turkey, Truman recognised the importance of preventing the USSR from any

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<sup>40</sup> Ziya Önis / Suhnaz Yilmaz, “The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?”, *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2005, pp. 265-284, here: p. 274-275.

<sup>41</sup> In the following also referred to as 9/11.

<sup>42</sup> The President of The United States of America, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, March 2006.

<sup>43</sup> For a more detailed overview see also: Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, Boston: Little Brown, 1974, pp. 295-296.



use or threat of force against Turkey, and other countries of the Western bloc, what then became known as the so called Truman Doctrine. The US president saw it vital to keep Turkey in the sphere of Western states. In order to fulfil this guarantee of protection the US was even ready to resort to the ultimate use of force. This finally led to the permanent deployment of the US Sixth Fleet near the Turkish coastline which has to be seen as a clear US commitment towards Turkey.<sup>45</sup>

In the light of the Korean War and a limited US defence budget Washington realised the urgency to admit Turkey as a full fledged NATO member state. Such a measure did not only guarantee a better and more equal burden sharing among the allies, it also represented a deterrent against a Soviet attack on Western Europe. In February 1952 Turkey finally became member of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>46</sup>

The United States did not perceive Turkey exclusively as a component of European security but also as a huge asset for exerting a stronger influence in the Middle East. Significantly Turkey entered the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which was the first military assistance treaty in the region. Next to Turkey, CENTO comprised Pakistan, Iraq, Iran and the United Kingdom. One of the reasons behind Cento was a greater US access to Turkish military facilities.<sup>47</sup>

In the wake of the 'Sputnik shock' in October 1957 and the Russian ability to develop intercontinental arms, the United States decided to deploy nuclear missiles in Europe in order to strengthen Washington's military loyalty towards the continent. However, most European NATO member states were averse to a deployment on their soil, fearing that their country might become a nuclear battle field. Turkey was not. In 1961 NATO started to install so called Jupiter nuclear missiles around Izmir. This again highlighted the elementary strategic importance of Turkey during the Cold War.<sup>48</sup>

The removal of these Jupiter weapons during the Cuban missile crisis made Turkey less important for US strategic planning. As a consequence, Turkish-Soviet relations improved gradually<sup>49</sup> even so far that Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit declared in 1978 that he perceives no threat from the USSR.<sup>50</sup> On the American side the so called 'Johnson Letter', criticising Turkey for its invasion in northern Cyprus in 1974 and a subsequent arms embargo against Ankara caused serious

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<sup>45</sup> Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West Since World War II", in: Vojtech Mastny / R. Craig Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West, New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996, p. 45-69, here: p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", pp. 48-50.

<sup>47</sup> Francis Powers, *Operation Overflight*, New York: Tower, 1970, p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", pp. 51-52.

<sup>49</sup> George Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971*, Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1972, 93-95.

<sup>50</sup> Bülent Ecevit, "Address to the International Institute of Strategic Studies", *Survival*, vol. 20, no. 5, 1978, pp. 203-208.

trouble between the two countries.<sup>51</sup> However, the ‘Second Cold War’ triggered by the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979 initiated a final US-Turkish rapprochement.

Altogether it is legitimate to state that in spite of some ups and downs, the relation between the United States and Turkey was of very high strategic intensity. Common objectives and a common threat perception were the basis for a deep Turkish-American partnership, which still affects their relation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 3.2. Changed Realities: The End of the Cold War and Turkey’s Importance in the Fight against Terrorism

Regarding the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the external Soviet threat, someone might have assumed a decline in US-Turkish strategic relations. And indeed various surveys and numbers seem to prove this assumption right. US reputation in Turkey has been rapidly decreasing and is now at its lowest since the end of World War II. *The Economist* significantly points out: “Iran is over twice as popular among Turks as America is.”<sup>52</sup> However such polls should not be overestimated. Even in Germany 48 percent perceive Iran as a less dangerous threat to world peace than the USA,<sup>53</sup> but on that basis no German political observer would seriously doubt the maintenance of the US-German partnership. Public surveys do not have much to do with strategic interests, which also entail long-term considerations, which might not be reflected by peoples’ minds. Moreover policy makers intend to look at the bigger picture.

Turkish-US relations in the post Cold War era can still be seen as crucial but under changed circumstances. In this context the Gulf War in 1991 has to be considered as a watershed, as it was ultimately showing Turkey’s seriousness to contribute militarily in case of war. The *New York Times* stated: Turkey was “the first nation in the region to denounce the invasion of Kuwait, first to support the UN sanctions and first to make the blockade count by shutting down Iraq’s pipeline.”<sup>54</sup> By this Turkey proved its new strategic importance – not anymore towards the USSR / Russia, but towards Eurasia and the greater Middle East region.<sup>55</sup>

As already mentioned the US perception of Turkey changed in the light of 9/11 and underscored the picture of an essential partner in the fight against international terrorism. Lieutenant Colonel Patrick F. Gillis from the US Army War College unequivocally states: “Turkey’s location, in a re-

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<sup>51</sup> Ian O. Lesser, “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics”, *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2006, pp. 83-96, here: p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> “Turkey, America and Europe, The awkward partners”, *The Economist*, 28 September 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Claus Christian Malzahn / Spiegel Online International, *Evil Americans, Poor Mullabs*. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,474636,00.html>, 29 March 2007.

<sup>54</sup> William Safire, “The Second Front”, *New York Times*, 1 November 1990.

<sup>55</sup> Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey, The Challenge to Europe and the United States*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 225.

gion home to many international terrorist groups, can provide the U.S. a platform for force projection and critical intelligence.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed Turkish-US relations reached a new high in the field of counter-terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11:

On the international scene, Turkey was one of the key countries demanding the formation of an international alliance against global terrorism. Significantly Turkey also played a very active role when the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1373, which draws up a schedule for international cooperation and common efforts in order to prevent and tackle universal terrorism.<sup>57</sup>

Turkish counter terrorism efforts also take place on a bilateral basis with the United States. Since 9/11 both countries are maintaining a regular dialogue on terrorism. The State Department appointed its own special envoy, Joseph Ralston,<sup>58</sup> dealing with issues of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). He is twinned by a Turkish counterpart in the Turkish foreign office, trying to organise and conduct political and legal relief for the US struggle against terrorism. With regard to Turkey's decade-long history of terrorism on its soil, mainly conducted by the Kurdish PKK, the country is in possession of a sophisticated internal anti-terrorism legislation. After September 11 that was a facilitating factor for Washington, helping to freeze bank accounts and financial assets of terrorist organisations and to prosecute suspected terrorists more efficiently.<sup>59</sup>

Finally Washington acknowledges Ankara as an ideological asset. Accordingly, Turkey with its Muslim population and its secular constitution could serve as a role model for the entire Arab and Muslim world.<sup>60</sup> *The Economist* therefore states: “As a mainly Muslim country that practices full secular democracy, it is a working refutation of the widespread belief that Islam and democracy are incompatible.”<sup>61</sup> The US idea behind this ideological thinking seems obvious: International terrorism is less likely to occur if countries, which are now known for supporting and funding terrorist activities, decide to transform their political constitution into a Turkish-like system.<sup>62</sup> At the same time the United States attaches high importance to Turkey because it helps Washington to avoid any suspicion which considers the US effort against terrorism as a covert Christian campaign against Islam.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Gillis, *U.S.-Turkish Relations*, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> Donald M. MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey for U.S. Security*, Study Report, Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, April 2002, p. 16.

<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile he stepped down.

<sup>59</sup> MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey*, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup> EurActiv, *EU-Turkey Relations*. Available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-turkey-relations/article-129678>, 23 September 2004.

<sup>61</sup> “The battle for Turkey's soul”, *The Economist*, 5 May 2007.

<sup>62</sup> If Turkey can be seen as a role model for or a bridge to the Muslim world is a question to be addressed at a later stage.

<sup>63</sup> MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey*, p. 16.

### 3.3. US Interests in Central Asia / Caucasus: A Role for Turkey?

Washington and Ankara have an extensive commonality of interests in their policy towards Central Asia and the Caucasus. Both countries officially enhance the establishment of democratic and Western oriented regimes in the region. Furthermore it is their political objective to counter the emergence of a new Russian imperialism, which could affect the geostrategic balance in the entire area.<sup>64</sup>

Turkey itself is deeply embedded in this part of its neighbourhood because of a common cultural, linguistic and political heritage,<sup>65</sup> which enables Ankara to exert a high degree of influence on its surrounding countries. During the last years Turkey opened cultural centres and schools, promoted scientific interchange and extended Turkish TV transmissions in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Furthermore Turkey and Georgia created the South Caucasus Stability Pact. It comprises Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, the EU and the United States. Its stated goal is the economic and political development of its members. However, between the lines the pact aims at a rapprochement and inclusion of those countries into a Western and transatlantic framework, illustrated by the fact, that the US is an active member of the organisation. Washington is therefore strongly supporting Turkey's involvement in this context as it fosters the democratization and the spread of Western norms and values without requiring direct US action in field, which might cause strained relations with Russia.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover it is the United States' objective to expand its military presence in all these so called 'Stan' countries in the framework of Washington's fight against terrorism.<sup>67</sup> Turkey and its in-depth relations to these states might be very helpful fostering and fortifying this kind of US military engagement.

Finally Turkey's role in Afghanistan is also seen by the Americans in a positive light, producing relief for the limited and overstretched American engagement in the country. Both, the Turkish government and its people backed the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001. Ankara opened its air space for the US air strike campaign and provided the United States with crucial intelligence, which Turkey itself obtained from its sophisticated contacts to the Northern Alliance. The country also deployed 267 troops in Afghanistan under the umbrella of the NATO ISAF mission (In-

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<sup>64</sup> Kemal, Kirişci, "U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership", in: Barry Rubin / Kemal, Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics, An Emerging Multiregional Power*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2001, pp. 129-149, here: pp. 132-133.

<sup>65</sup> Bacik / Aras, "Turkey's Inescapable Dilemma", p. 62.

<sup>66</sup> MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>67</sup> Bradley Thayer, "US Grand Strategic Interests in the Middle East after September 11", in: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) (ed.), *Turkey-Israel-US Dialogue*, Ramat Gan: BESA, 2003, pp. 1-6, here: p. 3.

ternational Security Assistance Force) and trains Afghan security forces.<sup>68</sup> Even the former NATO chief civilian representative in Kabul, Hikmet Çetin, was Turkish and illustrates Ankara's commitment towards the country and the whole region.<sup>69</sup>

### 3.4. US Interests in Turkey for its Middle East Policy

Turkey's regional relevance towards the Middle East became clear during NATO's Istanbul conference in 2004. Turkey was one of the driving forces behind the summit's outcome in form of the so called Istanbul Initiative. It puts a focus on issues like Security Sector Reform (SRR), fight against international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The programme is open to all countries of the broader Middle East and represents a promising instrument for pacifying and becalming one of the most troubled regions of the world.<sup>70</sup>

Ankara's extraordinary role in the Middle East is fundamentally connected to its positive relations with Israel.<sup>71</sup> Turkey was the first Muslim country accepting Israel's right of existence. The scope of their current partnership is primarily dominated by the military dimension. In 1996 the two signed a military cooperation agreement which entails a mutual assistance clause and consultancy in nearly all security related areas.<sup>72</sup>

For the United States this cooperation is of high significance. Right now Turkey is the only country diplomatically and politically accepted by Israel and by the Palestinian Authority, handing Turkey a key role for any future peace initiative between the two parties.<sup>73</sup> In case of a sustainable Israeli-Arab peace agreement Turkey as a relatively well developed country could also act as a provider for regional development and economical progress.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore Washington sees the Israeli-Turkish-American cooperation as a future gamete for a broader security regime with participation of other pro-Western countries like Jordan.<sup>75</sup> However the most significant asset of their relation is the opportunity to exert pressure on countries like Iran and Syria:

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<sup>68</sup> Carol Migdalovitz, *Turkey: Issues for U.S. Policy*, Report for Congress, Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 22 May 2002, pp. 8-9.

<sup>69</sup> Kemal, Kirişçi, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2006, p. 79.

<sup>70</sup> Kirişçi, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, p. 80. NATO, *Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), Reaching out to the broader Middle East*. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/issues/ici/index.html>, 8 March 2007.

<sup>71</sup> See also: Bülent Aras, *Turkey and the Greater Middle East*, Istanbul: TASAM Publications, 2004, pp. 49-65.

<sup>72</sup> Kramer, *A Changing Turkey*, p. 131.

<sup>73</sup> M. Yasin Kalin, *The Implications of EU Admittance of Turkey on Turkish-EU Relations and Turkish-U.S. Relations*, Study Report, Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, March 2005, p.5.

<sup>74</sup> Ian O. Lesser, "Western Interests in a Changing Turkey", in: Zalmay Khalilzad / Ian O. Lesser / F. Stephen Larabee (eds.), *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000, pp. 1-26, here: p. 14.

<sup>75</sup> MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey for U.S. Security*, p. 11.

Turkey and the USA have a very similar position towards Syria as both intend to follow a policy of strength. Many conflict lines burden Turkish-Syrian relations.<sup>76</sup> One contentious issue is the ongoing disagreement over water shares in the Euphrates and Tigris basin.<sup>77</sup> Besides, both countries struggle over the territorial status of the Turkish province of Hatay, which Damascus considers to be Syrian.<sup>78</sup> Another very sensible issue is Syria's alleged support for the Kurdish separation movement PKK. This almost led to the outbreak of an interstate war between the two in 1998.<sup>79</sup> At this point the above mentioned Israeli-Turkish military alliance came into play. Syria backed down, as in case of war Damascus would have had to face two battle fronts. Some analysts even argue that Israeli-Turkish pressure moved Syria to start peace negotiations with Israel after the crisis.<sup>80</sup> The United States, which still suspects Damascus of funding international terrorism, has therefore a strong interest in Turkey and in the maintenance of Turkish-Israeli relations. They represent an appropriate tool for the United States of exerting influence on and control over Syria.

This triangular relation applies in a very similar way to the case of Iran as well. The Turkish-Israeli axis might serve again as a political bargaining chip towards the Teheran regime,<sup>81</sup> and indeed relations between Ankara and Teheran do not look very promising. Besides the fact that Turkey accuses its Iranian neighbour of supporting the PKK,<sup>82</sup> both of them are divided by a differing world view, regarding their understanding of the political role of Islam. For a long time relations between Teheran and Ankara were dominated by mistrust and scepticism.<sup>83</sup> However, in the last years Turkey and Iran have learnt to conduct a pragmatic policy, which tries to leave out the ideological antagonism, as illustrated by well working communication channels between Ankara and Teheran on a ministerial and bureaucratic level. This rapprochement is in the interest of US decision makers. Ankara can serve as a channel of communication transmitting political messages from Teheran to the Western community and vice versa. This concept of Turkey being a

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<sup>76</sup> See also: Aras, *Turkey and the Greater Middle East*, pp. 87-100.

<sup>77</sup> For a more detailed analysis on the resource situation in the Euphrates-Tigris area see also: Nurit Kliot, *Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East*, London / New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 100-172.

<sup>78</sup> MacWillie, *The Increasing Importance of Turkey for U.S. Security*, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> Kemal, Kirişci, "The Future of Turkish Policy Toward the Middle East", in: Rubin / Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics*, pp. 93-113, here: p. 96.

<sup>80</sup> Alan Makovsky, "U.S. Policy Toward Turkey: Progress and Problems", in: Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Foreign Policy*, New York: The Century Press, 2000, pp. 219-266, here: pp. 238-239.

<sup>81</sup> For Turkish-Iranian-Israeli relations see also: Aras, *Turkey and the Greater Middle East*, pp. 31-47.

<sup>82</sup> Kirişci, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>83</sup> Tschanguiz H. Pahlavan, "Turkish-Iranian Relations: An Iranian View", in: Henri Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996, pp. 71-91, here: p. 76.

'letter box' could turn out to be beneficial for the ongoing nuclear crisis between the two sides which often lacks the right management of dialogue.<sup>84</sup>

With respect to Iraq many observers consider Turkish non-participation during the invasion, and especially its rejection of a US request to use Turkish soil as a military staging area, to have caused a structural rift in the relations between the two.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless this decision should not be over-estimated. The concerned resolution of the Turkish parliament was very close, even entailing an internal split within the ruling AK party.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore the parliament's decision goes back to pure national interests rather than anti-American sentiments. Ankara simply feared the possibility of PKK fighters using Northern Iraq in a post war situation as a safe retreat area. Furthermore Turkey maintained sophisticated trade relations with Iraq and would have been economically affected by any kind of combat situation on Iraqi territory.<sup>87</sup> Apart from that nearly half of all European countries disagreed with the American war campaign. Turkey might have been of greater strategic importance for the invasion than other European states, but in the end the country acted like many others as well. Finally Germany has shown that it is possible to ease the relation to the US in spite of diverging positions towards Iraq.<sup>88</sup> Therefore the Turkish-US dispute has to be seen as an episode rather than a long term split. Significantly *The Economist* says that "Turkey is also the largest supplier of non-combat equipment to American forces in Iraq"<sup>89</sup> which clearly indicates that relations are already normalising.

### 3.5. US Attitude towards a Potential Turkish Accession to the EU

As seen above the United States has an extensive strategic interest in Turkey. Consequently US governments have always been pushing Turkey's accession to the European Union. The underlying thought is obvious: EU membership would anchor Turkey in a Western context and prevent its drifting towards other key players in the region like Russia, Syria and Iran. In this case, Turkey and its geostrategic assets, which have been mentioned above, would get lost. In turn this could lead to a decrease of Western influence on the whole region.

It is therefore not surprising that the Clinton administration was one of the driving forces behind the ratification of the Customs Union Agreement between the European Union and Turkey in

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<sup>84</sup> Significantly EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana met Ali Larijani, the Iranian chief diplomat for the nuclear program, in Ankara in April 2007, illustrating the importance of Turkey as a mediator between the parties. See also: Daniel Dombey, "New EU Sanctions Raise Pressure on Iran", *Financial Times*, 24 April 2007.

<sup>85</sup> Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics", pp. 83-96.

<sup>86</sup> Önis / Yilmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle", pp. 274-275.

<sup>87</sup> Migdalovitz, *Turkey*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>88</sup> Spiegel Online, *Bush lobt Merkels Weisheit*. Available at:

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,457903,00.html>, 5 January 2007.

<sup>89</sup> "Turkey, America and Europe, The awkward partners", *The Economist*, 28 September 2006.

1995.<sup>90</sup> And when Brussels officially assigned Turkey the status of candidacy during the Helsinki European Council in 1999, the US government made no secret of its endorsement. President Clinton sent a letter of congratulation to then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, underlining once more that he sees Turkey as a future full-fledged member of the European Union. Alan Makovsky, political analyst and expert on Turkey, comes even to the conclusion that “U.S. diplomacy was crucial to the process of Turkey achieving candidate status.”<sup>91</sup>

The current Bush administration, which has been in power since 2001, is also very open towards the issue of Turkey and its possible EU future.<sup>92</sup> Especially former Under Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz and former Under Secretary at the State Department Marc Grossman were well known for their distinguished stance on Turkey.<sup>93</sup> US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was even engaged in the concrete wording of the framework of accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey, showing undoubtedly the current dimension of US involvement in Turkey’s ambitions towards Brussels.<sup>94</sup>

The American call for Turkish EU membership also has to be seen in the context of international terrorism. Seeing that many of the 9/11 hijackers were either educated or lived in Europe undiscovered for a longer period of time, US decision makers think that American security is extensively affected by the way how Europeans treat their Muslim population.<sup>95</sup> What then would the consequence be if Turkey’s attempt to join the European Union would ultimately be rejected? Generally speaking political observers fear, that such a case will cause an anti-Western backlash among Muslims in Turkey and all over Europe. They reckon that Turkish Islamists might then see themselves reaffirmed in their view of an incompatibility of their country with the West, supporting instead political Islam and growing ties with the Arab world.<sup>96</sup> Such a rebound would push the view of Europe being a ‘Christian club’ and radicalise parts of European Muslim communities which would project their anger on the United States. Accordingly US attempts to promote a Turkish EU accession have to be understood as preventive action for improving Ameri-

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<sup>90</sup> Kirişci, “U.S.-Turkish Relations”, in: Rubin / Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics*, p. 134.

<sup>91</sup> Alan Makovsky / The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Turkey: Europe-Bound?*. Available at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1307>, 15 December 1999.

<sup>92</sup> See also: Michael A. Fletcher, “Bush Backs Turkey’s Entry to E.U.”, *Washington Post*, 3 October 2006.

<sup>93</sup> Mark R. Parris, “On the Future of US-Turkish Relations”, in: Michael Lake (ed.), *The EU & Turkey, A Glittering Prize or a Millstone?* London: Federal Trust for Education and Research, 2005, pp. 141-150, here: p. 143.

<sup>94</sup> Kirişci, *Turkey’s foreign policy in turbulent times*, p. 84.

<sup>95</sup> Significantly US embassies in European countries are increasingly engaged in addressing Muslim populations. Last year the US ambassador in Germany William R. Timken Jr. launched the ‘Windows on America’ program. Ten Berlin pupils with migration background were invited for a ten day study trip to the US in order to get a real and in-field picture of America and its society and politics. See also: Ranty Islam / The Christian Science Monitor, *German Muslims laud US diplomat’s style*. Available at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1103/p07s01-woeu.html>, 3 November 2006.

<sup>96</sup> Birol A. Yesilada, “The Worsening EU-Turkey Relations”, *S AIS Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1999, pp. 144-161, here: p. 150.



can homeland security. Finally it would be highly contradictory to declare the fight against terrorism to the primary goal of Western security considerations, but to enhance radical breeding grounds at the same time.

The United States can afford to support Turkey's EU prospect so heavily, as it does not entail any financial commitment from Washington. On the other side the European Union has to consider serious issues like budgetary transfers, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and decision making procedures, which might imply huge financial costs.<sup>97</sup> Consequently the US promotion of a Turkish EU accession already caused diplomatic strains with several member states of the European Union.<sup>98</sup> These divergences broke through during the Copenhagen Summit in late 2002. The Bush administration exerted high diplomatic pressure on European capitals to grant Turkey a preferable early date for starting accession negotiations. This manoeuvre ultimately backfired and caused discontent on the part of some EU member states.<sup>99</sup> They perceived the American involvement as an illegitimate interference in internal EU affairs. Since the Copenhagen Summit the US administration realized that it must lobby a Turkish accession more carefully. The US still maintains its efforts, but more behind closed doors than in public. And indeed, the EU decision to suspend some of the negotiation topics with Turkey end of 2006 was much less commented on by the US than expected. Significantly political observers propose that "Instead of conducting diplomacy in European capitals for Turkey's EU membership, the U.S. should provide assistance to prepare Turkey to become a reliable and contributing member of the EU."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Önis / Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle", p. 272.

<sup>98</sup> Kirişci, "U.S.-Turkish Relations", in: Rubin / Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics*, p. 134.

<sup>99</sup> Önis / Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle", p. 273.

<sup>100</sup> Gillis, *U.S.-Turkish Relations*, p.12.

## 4. Turkey and European Foreign and Security Policy

*At a time when the European Union is set to assume greater responsibility in world politics, Turkish accession would considerably strengthen the Union's capabilities as foreign policy actor.* Independent Commission on Turkey<sup>101</sup>

The Independent Commission on Turkey, a working group headed by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, clearly underlines that a future admittance of Turkey into the European Union is deeply connected with security and foreign policy considerations. These issues form the focus of this chapter. First we will look at the general framework of EU enlargement policy and its security and foreign policy dimension. This is followed by a chapter on Turkey's security relevance for the EU. The final part shall evaluate if Turkey is a bridge to or a model for the Arab and Islamic world and if this might help to increase EU's role in international relations.

### 4.1. Strategic Implications of Former Accession Rounds

To the extent that there is a European identity, it also comprises a strong security and external policy dimension.<sup>102</sup> Various rounds of enlargement, which followed the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, have always been connected to strategic aspects which were of key importance for the European Community at that time.

In 1969 the EC decided to admit the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland, as full-fledged member states. Significantly the decisive summit in The Hague also agreed on a further attempt to enhance the political dimension of European integration. The outcome was the set up of the European Political Cooperation (EPC), a policy instrument coordinating national foreign policy in a European context.<sup>103</sup> The interrelation between these two areas is obvious: Member states recognised that a UK membership would automatically increase Europe's economic and political weight in world affairs. The EPC was therefore an appropriate tool to channel this redefined foreign policy dimension of the EC onto an institutional track. The accession of the United Kingdom is consequently to be seen as a crucial turning point, which brought far-reaching implications for the EC's role in international relations.

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<sup>101</sup> Martti Ahtisaari / Anthony Giddens / Albert Rohan a.o., *Turkey in Europe: More than a Promise?*, Brussels: Independent Commission on Turkey, September 2004, p. 17.

<sup>102</sup> See also: Tarik Oğuzlu, "An Analysis of Turkey's Prospective Membership in the European Union from a 'Security' Perspective", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2003, pp. 285-299, here: pp. 286-290.

<sup>103</sup> Helen Wallace / William Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 464-466.

Robert Cooper, Director-General for External and Political-Military Affairs of the EU once said that enlargement was and is Europe's most successful instrument of spreading democracy in its near neighbourhood.<sup>104</sup> A statement not without merit, considering the following examples:

In the middle of the 1970's Spain and Portugal were in the midst of change. The countries transformed from military and single party regimes into market oriented and liberal democracies. During this process they were assisted by the EC, helping the countries to implement the necessary changes and preventing any relapse to past times of authoritarianism.<sup>105</sup> Spain and Portugal were finally granted membership in 1986. This also brought an enlargement of the EC/EU's scope of influence at its new North African peripheries. Referring to this, Franco Algieri argues in a similar vein: "The Southern Enlargement (...) had effects on the 'Twelve's capacity to act and raise their international performance."<sup>106</sup>

Similarly is the case of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) which entered the Union in 2004. After the break-down of the Soviet Union, the EU reacted immediately and introduced a sophisticated system of economic and political assistance for CEEC states. The EU was well aware of its responsibility to help its Eastern neighbours during its transformation process.<sup>107</sup> Brussels' objective was to avoid a political vacuum in Eastern Europe which would have raised the prospect of political turmoil and long-term instability.

Both, the Southern and the Eastern enlargement have to be considered as a fundamental component of EU/EC foreign policy and its security discourse.<sup>108</sup> Democracy, human rights and the rule of law belong to the core values of European integration and form an integral part of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The process of accession countries moving towards EU legislation and the related internalisation of European norms and values thus contributes not only to a progressive and long term democratisation but it is also proof of every day CFSP action.

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<sup>104</sup> Robert Cooper, *How Foreign Policy Happens: Could Europe become a great Power?*, lecture given at the College of Europe, Bruges, 4 April 2007.

<sup>105</sup> See also: António Costa Pinto / Nuno Severiano Teixeira, "From Atlantic Past to European Destiny: Portugal", in: Wolfram Kaiser / Jürgen Elvert, *European Union Enlargement, A Comparative History*, Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 112-130. Ricardo Martín De La Guardia, "In Search of Lost Europe: Spain", in: Kaiser / Elvert, *European Union Enlargement*, pp. 93-111.

<sup>106</sup> Franco Algieri, "Spain and Portugal in EPC and CFSP: Transformation and Correlation", in: Franco Algieri / Elfriede Regelsberger (eds.), *Synergy at Work: Spain and Portugal in European Foreign Policy*, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1996, pp. 11-35, here: p. 23-24.

<sup>107</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Process of Enlargement: Problems, Interests, and Norms", in: Jeremy Richardson (ed.), *European Union, Power and Policy-Making*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 207-224, here: pp. 211-213.

<sup>108</sup> Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Basingstoke / New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, pp. 67-68.

## 4.2. European Balkan Policy and Turkey's Regional Relevance

In the light of the above mentioned arguments it is imperative to also view a possible Turkish accession in a security and foreign policy context. Meltem Müftüler-Bac significantly argues, that “an important reason behind the European Council decision to elevate Turkey's status to that of candidate country is the EU's evolving security role.”<sup>109</sup> And indeed various issues of consideration can be distinguished.

The Kosovo War in 1999 has to be seen as a watershed for the European security architecture. European inability to handle crisis situations in its near neighbourhood was dramatically revealed as well as its dependency on US-military forces. Especially the United Kingdom finally realised, that the European Union is therefore in need of autonomous defence capabilities and instruments of crisis resolution. The outcome was the Franco-British declaration of St. Malo and thereupon the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).<sup>110</sup>

By these means the EU at least showed itself willing to take more responsibility in neighbouring crisis situations particularly in the Balkans. However, such a commitment could not ignore the crucial role of Turkey in this area. Heinz Kramer writes: “lasting stability in the Balkans cannot be reached without Turkey (...).”<sup>111</sup>

The country has always played a fundamental role for Balkan politics. Some even argue that geography, history, culture and politics make Turkey part of the Balkans.<sup>112</sup> One fifth of the Turkish population traces its ethnic origin to the Balkans making an interest in the region also a high priority in Turkish every day life.<sup>113</sup> Beyond this, Ankara established a regular political dialogue with the region on a bilateral basis accompanied by a progressive development of multilateral free trade agreements between Turkey and its Balkan neighbours.<sup>114</sup> In this context Turkey can therefore be seen as an indispensable actor.

It was against this backdrop that Brussels decided to include Turkey into the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – “the first serious attempt by the international community to replace the previous, reactive crisis intervention policy in South Eastern Europe with a comprehensive, long-

<sup>109</sup> Meltem Müftüler-Bac, “Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies”, *Security Dialogue*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2000, pp. 489-502, here: p. 489.

<sup>110</sup> Roberto Francia / Miguel Angel Medina Abellán, “Striving for a Common Foreign Policy, A brief History”, in: Dieter Mahncke / A. Ambos / C. Reynolds (eds.), *European Foreign Policy: From Rhetoric to Reality*, Brussels: P.I.E. – Peter Lang, 2004, pp. 117-164, here: p. 149.

<sup>111</sup> Kramer, *A Changing Turkey*, p. 148.

<sup>112</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, “Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkan and Black Sea Region”, in: Mastny / Nation, *Turkey between East and West*, pp. 71-95, here: p. 81.

<sup>113</sup> İlhan Uzgel, “The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role”, in: Rubin / Kirişçi (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics*, pp. 49-69, here: p. 49.

<sup>114</sup> Kramer, *A Changing Turkey*, p. 148.

term conflict prevention strategy.”<sup>115</sup> However the EU not only decided to include Turkey as a key partner in the framework of this pact, but also to upgrade its status to an official EU candidate country. In so doing Brussels wanted to enhance Turkey’s stabilising role in the region and to win the country as a long-term ally in the EU’s effort to democratise and rebuild the Balkans.<sup>116</sup> Integrating Turkey as a full fledged member state of the EU would consequently strengthen this EU-Turkish interrelation and finally improve the EU’s influence in its Balkan backyard.

### 4.3. Turkey’s Role in the Context of EU Energy Supply

An EU view on Turkey from a geostrategic and security perspective cannot exclude the crucial role of energy considerations. This question becomes even more important with regard to the Kremlin’s last year decision to interrupt its oil and gas supplies to Belarus, causing an energy disruption to several EU member countries for several days.<sup>117</sup>

Turkey seems to be a promising option for decreasing EU’s dependency on Russia as it would help to diversify Europe’s energy supply. The country represents a key energy hub and maintains a sophisticated energy infrastructure, for instance the Bosphorus-, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan- and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipelines. At the same time Europe could get easily connected to these routes by its already existent or planned energy transportation facilities in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria.<sup>118</sup> Moreover Turkey is expected to become EU’s fourth largest provider for natural gas in the next years.

However, cooperation between the EU and Turkey in the field of oil and gas business is far from sufficient. One forum of possible improvement would be the Energy Community. This international organisation, residing in Vienna and being mainly funded by the European Union, aims at a convergence of national Balkan energy politics according to EU standards and criteria. Turkey acts as an observer on this institution and it would be a future option to upgrade Turkey’s position to an active member, as this would provide the opportunity to further strengthen Turkey-EU energy ties.

Ultimately a permanent and long-term energy supply from Turkey will remain dependent on the country’s overall stability and domestic situation. At the moment sources of insecurity still persist,

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<sup>115</sup> Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, *About the Stability Pact*. Available at:

<http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp>, date of consultation: 9 April 2007.

<sup>116</sup> Lykke Friis / Anna Murphy, “Turbo-charged negotiations: the EU and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 7, no. 5, 2000, pp. 767-786, here: p. 782.

<sup>117</sup> David Gow, “Russia risks losing EU contracts for energy supply”, *The Guardian*, 12 January 2007.

<sup>118</sup> Henri J. Barkey / Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, “The Strategic Implications of Turkey’s Integration in the European Union”, in: Esther Brimmer / Stefan Fröhlich (eds.), *The Strategic Implications of EU Enlargement*, Washington DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005, pp. 127-150, here: p. 144.

such as the ongoing struggle between Ankara and the PKK movement. If the EU wants to deepen its energy cooperation with Turkey it must therefore have a natural interest in maintaining the current Turkish reform process which also stabilises the country domestically. At the same time it is very likely that a slowdown or even a suspension of accession talks between the two parties would be a serious setback for Turkish reform measures and could create political and civil unrest within Turkey. Keeping the country on its path to Europe and its final integration in the EU is thus of high level importance for the European Union from this energy perspective.<sup>119</sup>

#### 4.4. Turkey: Asset or Hurdle for the EU's Middle East Policy?

The European Security Strategy (ESS) comprises lots of references to the complex of problem resolution in the Middle East. At least on paper the ESS displays European willingness to exert more influence in this region.<sup>120</sup> This chapter attempts to address the question if Turkey can play a beneficial role in fostering the EU's ability to comply with its own objective of a stronger involvement in Middle Eastern affairs.

In this context many political observers fear that a Turkish EU membership would cause an import of insecurity rather than an export of stability.<sup>121</sup> Indeed Ankara's accession to the European Union would bring the EU into much closer proximity to one of the most problematic regions in the world. Brussels would then have to manage a common borderline with countries like Syria and Iran. Now already the EU suffers huge difficulties in handling crisis situations in its near neighbourhood like the Balkans – how then is it supposed to deal with conflict areas in the Middle East, which are much more troubling and which simply exceed the EU's crisis management capabilities? Accordingly, supporters of this camp see Turkey's location as a serious argument speaking against its full EU membership status.

Such a view is definitively not common sense and indeed it can be questioned, if this argument adequately accounts for the profile of current conflict sources. The ESS significantly points out that “In an era of globalisation, distant threats may be as much a concern as those that are near at hand.”<sup>122</sup> International terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and regional conflicts - agenda issues which all can be found in the Middle East - will consequently affect European security, no matter if Turkey is a member of the EU or not.

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<sup>119</sup> Kirişci, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a better World, European Security Strategy*, Paris: The European Union Institute for Security Studies (ISS), December 2003.

<sup>121</sup> Graham E. Fuller, “The EU and Turkey's Eurasian Foreign Policy: The New Challenge”, in: Hüseyin Bağcı / Jackson Janes / Ludger Kühnhardt (eds.), *Parameters of Partnership: The U.S. – Turkey – Europe*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999, pp. 161-175, here: p. 161.

<sup>122</sup> Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a better World*, p. 11.

However, this does not automatically mean, that a Turkish accession would inevitably boost EU's capability to affect Middle Eastern politics. Such a consideration has to deal with the very nature of the Turkish republic. The question is: Can Ankara be seen as a model for or a bridge to the Muslim world? And in how far does it affect European foreign policy?

In the following, the concept of Turkey being a model for Muslim countries is primarily understood in its missionary dimension. In this regard, the Islamic world is expected to become like Turkey while not leaving any space for alternative options. The 'bridge notion' is mainly focused on the aspect of intercultural communication and gentle transformation. It respects the differences and heterogeneity among Muslim states and stresses therefore the primary importance of constructive dialogue. It favours a spread of Western values, without necessarily demanding Islamic countries to adjust their path of development according to Turkish politics.

To begin with, it is legitimate to ask, if Turkey really provides any preferential relations to the Middle East, as Turkish history is dominated by its struggle to become Western while explicitly cutting its Islamic heritage and its ties to Muslim countries.

And even if Turkey maintains a special relation to the Muslim world this would be overshadowed by Ankara's poor reputation among its Arab and Persian neighbours. Too current is the reminiscence of former Ottoman suppression, many political entities in the Middle East had to suffer. Still, the image of the 'terrible Turk' persists in the minds of many people in the region.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, Ankara's policy of strict secularism represents a huge source of criticism for conservative political decision makers in Muslim countries, who favour a guidance of public affairs alongside the principles of the Koran.<sup>124</sup> Finally Turkey's in-depth relations with Israel contradict the political agenda of many leaders in the Arab world. Turkey was the first Muslim country acknowledging Israel's diplomatic credentials and in 1996, as already mentioned above, both countries signed a military cooperation agreement.<sup>125</sup> All this casts doubt on the current myth of Turkey being a model for the entire Muslim world. The Turkish system of Muslim secularism cannot be easily transferred to and would most likely not be accepted by other Islamic regions. The country is just too distinct, due to its unique and incomparable history, culture and politics.<sup>126</sup>

However, this paper argues that it seems to be much more appropriate to perceive Turkey more as a bridge to rather than a model for the Muslim world. First of all it has to be said, that the coming to power of the Islam oriented AK party during the last Turkish parliamentary elections in November 2003 changed Turkey's reputation in its Middle Eastern neighbourhood signifi-

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<sup>123</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 73-77.

<sup>124</sup> Jenkins, "Muslim Democrats in Turkey?", pp. 45-46.

<sup>125</sup> David Ivry, "Concluding Remarks on the US-Turkish-Israeli Cooperation", in: The Begin-Sadat-Center For Strategic Studies (ed.), *Turkey-Israel-US Dialogue*, pp. 45-47, here: p. 45.

<sup>126</sup> Ahtisaari / Giddens / Rohan a.o., *Turkey in Europe*, pp. 16-17.

cantly. Especially the AKP's and its Prime Minister Erdogan's way of bringing on its way domestic reform raised the attention of many Arab capitals.<sup>127</sup> Particularly relations to Damascus are gradually improving as shown by the signing of a free trade agreement between the two in December 2004.<sup>128</sup> Relations to Iran are as well increasingly warming up under Prime Minister Erdogan, illustrated by several visits of Turkish high ranking politicians to Iran and vice versa.<sup>129</sup>

Turkey also appears on the international stage as an inter-civilisational interlocutor. Ankara, together with Spain, initiated the creation of the Alliance of Civilisations under the umbrella of the UN. This forum tries to establish a permanent political dialogue between the Muslim and the Western world, while fostering mutual understanding, human rights and dignity.<sup>130</sup>

Much more striking is a look at Turkey's current performance in the multilateral framework of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). During its meeting in June 2004 Turkey's foreign minister Abdullah Gül successfully pushed the OIC to pass the so called Istanbul Declaration. It explicitly mentions the need for human rights, democracy, good governance and women's rights in the entire Muslim world.<sup>131</sup>

All this makes clear, that Turkey represents a civilisational bridge, addressing the Muslim world and serving as a hub of political communication. Ankara in this context is not only to be seen as a letter box, transmitting messages from Europe to countries like Iran and Syria and vice versa. More than that, the European Union could use Turkey as a channel to foster the spread of the EU's core values in the long run. And indeed Turkey's OIC performance shows, that the country is able to exert influence on human rights policy in Muslim states.

The European Union progressively develops its self-conception and its international relations in the direction of a normative power.<sup>132</sup> Turkey as an EU member state matches this foreign policy profile of the EU and can contribute to an increase of geopolitical importance of the European Union. In the view of EU Commissioner Günter Verheugen, "the question is not if Turkey needs Europe, but if Europe needs Turkey."<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Kirişci, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, p. 88. Interview with Riccardo Serri.

<sup>128</sup> Meliha Benli Altunişik / Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2006, pp. 229-248, here: p. 242.

<sup>129</sup> K. Gajendra Singh / South Asia Analysis Group, *Turkey & Iran Coming Closer*. Available at: <http://www.saag.org/%5Cpapers11%5Cpaper1077.html>, 3 August 2004.

<sup>130</sup> Matthew Tempest, "Blair welcomes 'alliance of civilisations' plan", *The Guardian*, 27 July 2005.

<sup>131</sup> Kirişci, *Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>132</sup> See also: Helene Sjursen, "The EU as a 'Normative Power': How can this Be?", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2006, pp. 235-251. Simon Lightfoot / Jon Burchell, "The European Union and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Normative Power Europe in Action?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2005, pp. 75-95.

<sup>133</sup> Günter Verheugen, *The Role of Europe in the World of Tomorrow*, lecture given at the College of Europe, Bruges, 29 January 2007.



## 5. Security Implications of Turkish EU Membership on Transatlantic Relations

*Turkey's inclusion in the EU causes real trouble for the United States, because it makes a permanent rift between Europe and the United States (...), much more likely.* Ian Bremmer<sup>134</sup>

The crucial question to be addressed in the following section is to ask whether Turkey, becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union, will improve or harm the relations between Washington and Brussels. Regarding the above quoted statement from Ian Bremmer, political analyst, it is clear that the issue is a fiercely debated topic of the European integration discourse.

In a first step it is essential to illustrate recent transatlantic troubles. In the following two basic distinctions have to be drawn. On the one hand a Turkish EU accession entails far reaching implications for transatlantic matters related to defence and the military. On the other hand Ankara joining the European Union comprises a considerable political dimension.

### 5.1. Recent Transatlantic Strains

The transatlantic partnership stands at a turning point. Recent developments in the relation between European capitals and the United States illustrate, that it is not only about temporary divergences across the Atlantic. Instead there are serious and structural changes in the coordinate system of Western politics, putting a bleak light on a further continuation of European-US cooperation. The list of transatlantic issues of disagreement is as long as never before.<sup>135</sup>

A presentation of these conflicts has to start with the dispute over the US led invasion of Iraq. Americans and Europeans opposed each other publicly in an intensity never seen before. In 2003 then US Defence Minister Donald Rumsfeld made a much disputed distinction between 'old' and 'new' Europe.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand France criticised the Bush administration for its war campaign without any regard to usual transatlantic information and consultation mechanisms.<sup>137</sup> Gerhard Schröder, German Chancellor at that time, did as well, making his opposition even a fundamental part of his own electoral campaign in 2002.<sup>138</sup> In other words: It was fashionable in

<sup>134</sup> Bremmer, Ian, "Redefining Europe, Would Turkey split the EU and the U.S.?", *International Herald Tribune*, 22 October 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Rana Deep Islam, "The Transatlantic Partnership, The Need for Rethinking an Old Security Alliance", in: Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES) (ed.), *Euronvisionen, Junge Menschen schreiben über Europa*, Berlin: FES, 2006, pp. 148-168, here: pp. 153-159.

<sup>136</sup> Deutsche Welle, *Rumsfeld repeats "Old" Europe Comments*. Available at: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,890806,00.html>, 11 June 2003.

<sup>137</sup> CNN, *Chirac lashes out at 'new Europe'*. Available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/02/18/sprj.irq.chirac/>, 18 February 2003.

<sup>138</sup> John Hooper, "German leader says no to Iraq war", *The Guardian*, 6 August 2002.

certain European states and in the US to conduct a populist policy at the expense of transatlantic relations.

However it would be misleading to reduce these tensions only to a dispute over the Iraq crisis. Europeans and Americans are deeply divided over many other issues of international politics. Both of them differ with regard to their environmental policy, being illustrated by the disagreement on the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>139</sup> The International Criminal Court (ICC) also belongs to the agenda of transatlantic dissent.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore it is known that the US intelligence agency CIA has run a system of covert prison facilities, so called *black sites*, in Eastern Europe, which barely comply with international law<sup>141</sup> and which prove to be a continuous affair of US-EU disfavour.

The list of transatlantic dissent could be continued easily. Issues like threat perception, strategic outlook, deployment of new US missiles in Europe, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict etc. cannot be addressed due to limited space. However, all these conflicts together made Robert Kagan declare: “It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On the all important question of power – the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power – the American and European perspectives are diverging.”<sup>142</sup>

## 5.2. Turkey, NATO and ESDP

At the same time, there is no doubt, that “The West would only be at an end if the transatlantic community were to have no future due to a lack of common interests (...).”<sup>143</sup> With regard to current hot spots in the world, it is self-evident, that challenges will be coped with only by a firm and decisive transatlantic partnership.<sup>144</sup> However the agenda of transatlantic conflicts cannot be ignored.

In this context Turkey's role has to be seen as crucial. The country is a member of NATO and associated with ESDP. During the last years these two institutions gave reason for continuous debates over the future of the security partnership between Europeans and the US. Since the end of the Cold War, the geostrategic role of NATO has changed immensely. While it was originally supposed to protect its member states from a territorial attack from the outside, it is now en-

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<sup>139</sup> See also Bush's rejection of the protocol: George W. Bush, *Text of a Letter from the President to Senators Hagel, Helms, Craig and Roberts*. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010314.html>, 13 March 2001.

<sup>140</sup> See also: John R. Bolton, “The Risks and Weaknesses of the International Criminal Court from America's Perspective”, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2001, pp. 167-180.

<sup>141</sup> Sam Cage, “U.N. Urges Closure of Detention Centers”, *The Guardian*, 28 June 2006.

<sup>142</sup> Robert Kagan, *Power and Paradise: America and Europe in the New World Order*, London: Atlantic Books, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> Joschka Fischer, *Europe and the Future of the Transatlantic Relations*, ERF Paper Series No. 2, London: European Research Forum, January 2005, p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> Taskforce of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership*, New York: CFR, 2004.

gaged as a global actor in various regions of the world.<sup>145</sup> This development is furthermore emphasised by the fact that Washington constantly withdraws its troops from Western Europe and maintains a policy of redeployment especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>146</sup> If these two considerations are combined, it seems to be likely, that European security needs are increasingly seen as less important in Washington's political establishment, which continuously adjusts its policy towards other crisis zones in the world. Turkey as a full-fledged member state of the EU might turn out to be a useful tool to stop this development of NATO's 'de-Europeanization'. According to NATO's global threat assessment, Turkey is surrounded by thirteen out of sixteen probable conflict and crisis-prone areas. The country's location will therefore – if Turkey joins the EU – enlarge the European scope of influence in the concerned regions,<sup>147</sup> so that European foreign policy interests within NATO cannot be as easily ignored as it might have been the case during the recent past. In other words: "(...) the NATO framework can be expected to strengthen even further with Turkey's EU membership."<sup>148</sup>

Moreover Turkey can help to fill Europe's military and defence gap, which is increasingly perceived by US officials as a stumbling bloc for EU-US cooperation. The *Washington Post* points out: "The EU's declared goal of being able to deploy 60,000 soldiers (...) will require 200,000 soldiers because of rotation needs. Yet the European allies, with 2 million soldiers on paper, had trouble fielding 40,000 for peacekeeping in the Balkans."<sup>149</sup> In this regard Turkey has to be considered as a huge asset for military capabilities. Ankara spends much more on defence, 4.4 percent of its GNP, compared to EU member states. Furthermore it has the sixth largest standing army in the world, the second largest within NATO, and is the world wide biggest purchaser of conventional arms technology.<sup>150</sup> Turkey as an EU member country can therefore be expected to be a crucial contributor to European military efforts in terms of personnel, equipment and logistics.<sup>151</sup> Having Turkey within ESDP as a full-fledged member can only strengthen EU military missions.

An enhanced European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) would also be in compliance with the United States' interests. A strong ESDP would be better suited to get the EU involved more vigorously in the Balkans. In turn this would free American capabilities which are currently still

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<sup>145</sup> Harald Müller, *Supermacht in der Sackgasse? Die Weltordnung nach dem 11. September*, Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2003. pp. 54.

<sup>146</sup> Tim Kane / The Heritage Foundation, *Global U.S. Troop Deployment 1950-2003*. Available at: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/cda04-11.cfm>, 27 October 2004.

<sup>147</sup> Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>148</sup> Sedat Laçiner / Mehmet Özcan / İhsan Bal, *European Union With Turkey, The Possible Impact of Turkey's Membership on the European Union*, Ankara: ISRO Publication, 2005, p. 71.

<sup>149</sup> William Drozdiak, "U.S. Tepid On European Defense Plan: EU Leaders Dismiss Worry About NATO", *Washington Post*, 7 March 2000.

<sup>150</sup> Müftüleri-Bac, "Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies", p. 496.

<sup>151</sup> Barkey / Le Gloannec, "The Strategic Implications of Turkey's Integration", pp. 135-136.

bound in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. These assets could then be redeployed to other conflict areas like Afghanistan and Iraq, being of more significance for US strategic interest at the moment.<sup>152</sup>

On the other hand it is clear, that Washington is only willing to accept progressive European defence and military structures, as long as they do not prove to be too independent from the Atlantic framework. At the end of the 1990's the official US position was used to stress the importance of the so called 'three D's'. Madeleine Albright, then US Secretary of State, was calling Brussels for preventing any kind of duplication of assets, discrimination toward NATO states, which are not member of the EU and decoupling from the United States.<sup>153</sup> The outcome was the Berlin Plus Agreement being signed in 2003.<sup>154</sup> It gives access for EU led military operations to NATO assets. At the same time it grants the US via its NATO veto power much influence on the development of such ESDP missions, as NATO keeps the right of first review. In other words: First it is up to NATO to decide whether it wants to get involved in a conflict or not. If it does not, the EU is free to take the lead. In this regard 'Berlin-Plus' represents an appropriate tool reconciling the thin line between emancipation of and control over Europe – at least on paper.

From the start the agreement was seriously affected by the ongoing Turkish-Greek disagreement over Cyprus. The Aegean island represents a constant factor of tension and strains between the two countries,<sup>155</sup> which are tied by a decade-long history of enmity. Cyprus itself is divided into a Northern Turkish and a Southern Greek part. Recent attempts to reunify the country according to a plan issued by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2004, were dismissed by the Southerners.<sup>156</sup>

The actual adoption of 'Berlin-Plus' in 2003 was in the first instance rejected by both countries. Ankara, being member state of NATO, feared the contractual possibility of ESDP being exploited by Greece and used against Turkey.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, Athens, in its role as EU country, saw 'Berlin-Plus' as too complacent towards its neighbour, which might have affected

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<sup>152</sup> The President of The United States of America, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>153</sup> Antonio Missiroli, "EU-NATO Cooperation in Crisis Management: No Turkish Delight for ESDP", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2002, pp. 9-26, here: p. 14.

<sup>154</sup> Paul Cornish, "NATO: The Practice and Politics of Transformation", *International Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 1, 2004, pp. 63-74.

<sup>155</sup> Pauline Green / Ray Collins, *Embracing Cyprus, The Path to Unity in the New Europe*, London: Tauris, 2003. Susanne Baier-Allen, *Exploring the Linkage between EU Accession and Conflict Resolution, The Cyprus Case*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004.

<sup>156</sup> Furthermore the EU's decision to suspend some of the accession chapters being currently negotiated with Turkey was taken against the background of a Turkish refusal to open its ports for Cypriot vessels. See also: Mark Tran, "Cyprus Conundrum Stalls Ankara Accession", *The Guardian*, 29 November 2006. Kirsty Hughes, "Erdoğan gives, now he wants to receive", *European Voice*, 14-20 December 2006.

<sup>157</sup> For a further analysis of the Turkish position see also: Esra Çayhan, "Towards a European Security and Defense Policy: With or Without Turkey?", in: Ali Çarkoğlu / Barry Rubin (eds.), *Turkey and the European Union, Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*, London / Portland: Frank Cass, 2003, pp. 35-54, here: pp. 45-48.

Greece' military assistance duty towards the Cyprus Republic. Only under huge diplomatic pressure an agreement could be reached.<sup>158</sup>

However, the 'Berlin-Plus' instrument itself is currently far from working well, as Turkey still refuses an enhanced cooperation and coordination between NATO and ESDP. By this Ankara follows a clear strategic objective. It uses its NATO membership in order to exert more pressure on the European Union and to make its policy more compliant in the frame of the ongoing accession talks.

In the long run it is very likely that the United States will object to further Turkish resistance towards the 'Berlin-Plus' mechanism as it might cause confusion in the management of ESDP-NATO relations. Sooner or later, and that is what Washington fears, such a situation could lead to a break away of the European Union, establishing its own and independent security instruments, which circumvent any institutional conflicts related to NATO. The US influence on European security affairs would then decrease significantly.<sup>159</sup> Therefore the United States favours a Turkish accession to the EU, as it might help to reach a sustainable settlement of Greek-Turkish aversions,<sup>160</sup> especially with regard to the Cyprus issue.<sup>161</sup> In the end, Turkish membership could be useful in order to help fulfil two US objectives: First, pacified relations between Greece and Turkey would improve NATO's internal cohesion, as both countries are pivotal member states of the North Atlantic Alliance. Secondly Turkey as a full-fledged member of the EU would have no more reason to block 'Berlin Plus'. The creation of independent EU security structures could be forestalled and the strong American influence on European security matters would persist.

### 5.3. The Political Dimension: Turkey as a Factor of bringing Europe and the US together?

From a military and geostrategic perspective it became clear, that a Turkish EU membership would foster transatlantic relations and diminish many current conflict lines. The question to be addressed in this paragraph asks if the same applies also with regard to the political dimension of a Turkish EU accession.

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<sup>158</sup> Jolyon Howorth, "ESDP and NATO, Wedlock or Deadlock?", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2003, pp. 235-254, here: p. 248. Dieter Mahncke, "Instability and Crises, Risks and Challenges for European Security", in: Dieter Mahncke / Wyn Rees / Wayne C. Thompson (eds.), *Redefining Transatlantic Security Relations, The Challenge of Change*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, pp. 24-51, here: pp. 40-41.

<sup>159</sup> Ramazan Gözen, *Turkey's Delicate Position Between NATO and the ESDP*, Ankara: Atılım University, 2003, pp. 56-57.

<sup>160</sup> Tarik Oğuzlu, "The Latest Turkish-Greek Détente: Instrumentalist Play for EU Membership, or Long-Term Institutional Cooperation?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2004, pp. 337-354, here: p. 350.

<sup>161</sup> See also: Aylın Güney, "The USA's Role in Mediating the Cyprus Conflict: A Story of Success or Failure?", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2004, pp. 27-42.

Robert Cooper reckons that Ankara joining the European Union will relativize the EU's relations to the United States. He thinks that Brussels will then become even more difficult to handle for US decision makers, which already now have problems to understand the European decision making process. Furthermore Cooper believes, that Turkey as a part of the European integration project will inevitably be more European and less American. As an example he refers to the already mentioned refusal of the Turkish parliament to act as a staging area for the US led invasion in Iraq.<sup>162</sup> Moreover it is very likely that Turkey will pursue a harmonization of its foreign policy towards Brussels and reduce its commitment towards American external politics. Accordingly Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan declared his willingness to sign and ratify the Rome Statute to the ICC.<sup>163</sup> An article in the Turkish daily *Radikal* concludes significantly: "From now on we [the Turks] should save ourselves from our obsession with the US and direct our course towards the EU."<sup>164</sup> Turkey cutting its ties with the US and contributing at the same time to the world-wide political weight of the EU will have negative consequences for transatlantic relations.<sup>165</sup> However, this paper argues that a Turkish EU membership will improve the relations across the Atlantic for a number of reasons.

As seen above it can be stated that Ankara's accession has always been in the strategic interest of the United States. Washington always tried to push the EU in the direction of a more favourable policy towards Turkey. A Turkish accession will finally comply with this American demand and take another past issue of transatlantic disagreement off the agenda.<sup>166</sup>

Moreover EU enlargement will contribute positively to the US led fight against international terrorism.<sup>167</sup> Current efforts of cooperation between the European Union and the US are dominated by frictions over the scope of anti-terrorism measures and legislation.<sup>168</sup> Turkey however has far-reaching experience in the field of tackling terrorist activities, due to its struggle against the PKK. The EU could gain from this record which could eventually help turn Brussels to a more active and more coherent partner for any transatlantic efforts against terrorism.

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<sup>162</sup> Cooper, *How Foreign Policy Happens*.

<sup>163</sup> This development is even more striking seeing that a few years ago Ankara tended to be more affiliated with US rather than European foreign policy. See also: Morton Abramowitz / Century Foundation, *An American Perspective on Turkey and the EU*. Available at: <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=NC&pubid=811>, 13 December 2004. Parris, "On the Future of US-Turkish Relations", p148.

<sup>164</sup> "Rota Avrupa'ya Dönmeli" (to be translated as: "Turkey Should Direct Its Course to Europe"), *Radikal*, 7 August 2003. Taken from: Önis / Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle", pp 283.

<sup>165</sup> Ian Bremmer, "Redefining Europe, Would Turkey split the EU and the U.S.?"

<sup>166</sup> Quite the opposite it can be expected that Turkey's non-membership will cause further transatlantic constraints as Washington engages so vigorously in favour of an EU admittance of the country. See also: Esther Brimmer, "EU Enlargement and Transatlantic Relations", in: Brimmer / Fröhlich (eds.), *The Strategic Implications of EU Enlargement*, pp. 225-239, here: p. 231. Telephone interview with Günter Verheugen.

<sup>167</sup> Brimmer, "EU Enlargement and Transatlantic Relations", here: p. 238.

<sup>168</sup> Wyn Rees, *Transatlantic Counter-Terrorism Cooperation: The New Imperative*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 85-90.

Importance also has to be attached to the notion of Turkey being an American 'Trojan horse'. With regard to Cooper's above mentioned argument, it is true that many political observers doubt such a Turkish role within the EU as Turkey seems to get emancipated from Washington's parameters.<sup>169</sup> However Turkish officials regularly declare that their relations to the United States are as important as their relations to the European Union. And it has already been mentioned, that current Turkish-American tensions are merely to be seen as a temporary matter rather than a tectonic change in the relation between Ankara and Washington.

Does that consequently mean that the concept of Turkey being a 'Trojan horse' turns out to be true? Terminology plays a crucial role. Whereas the metaphor evokes Greece' siege of Troy and will always be associated with deceitfulness and intrigue, it might be more appropriate and less negative to talk about Turkey being a simple caretaker of American interests in Europe. The two countries are tied by a huge commonality of mutual objectives. Like Great Britain, Turkey will promote American concerns and help US decision makers to let their voice be heard in Brussels.<sup>170</sup> And indeed this can contribute to prevent a further alienation between the two parts of the Atlantic. First of all recent US-European conflicts have shown a huge lack of communication. Dialogue did not take place and messages were overheard, be it on purpose or not. Turkey as a member of the EU will help to facilitate the communication between the US and the EU. The country can serve as a letter box and message centre in times of transatlantic crises. Moreover France always tried to build up the European Union as a counter weight to Washington's dominant world political role. Turkey as an obvious follower of American policy might therefore prevent this from happening as it strengthens the pro-American phalanx within the EU. With regard to the fact, that 21<sup>st</sup> century's challenges require common and decisive transatlantic action, Turkey's membership will serve as a crucial asset for enabling a partnership which is as important as never before.

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<sup>169</sup> Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Security Implications of Turkey's March Towards EU Membership", in: Joseph S. Joseph (ed.), *Turkey and the European Union, Internal Dynamics and External Challenges*, London / New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, pp. 178-190, here: pp. 182 and 186. Önis / Yilmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle", pp 273-279. Laçiner / Özcan / Bal, *European Union With Turkey*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>170</sup> Barkey / Le Gloannec, "The Strategic Implications of Turkey's Integration", p. 150.

## 6. Conclusion

The paper's endeavour was to answer three basic questions: First of all, it had to be analysed whether a Turkish EU accession is in the strategic interest of the United States. Secondly the work evaluated if a Turkish membership also contributes to a further strengthening of the European Union's role in shaping international politics. Finally it tried to discuss if Turkey, being member of the EU, would strengthen or strain transatlantic relations. The following conclusion can be drawn.

Ankara joining the European Union would be in conformity with American strategic thinking. The very foundation of their intense relation was laid during the Cold War. After the fall of the Berlin wall Turkey persisted to be a highly important country for Washington's foreign and security policy but under changed circumstances. During the Gulf War in 1991 Turkey showed its ultimate seriousness to contribute militarily in case of war as it joined the US led war campaign against Baghdad and it played a crucial role during its conduct. Turkey's importance was further underscored after the terrorist attacks on September 11. On the one hand the country works together with the United States very effectively on matters related to international terrorism. On the other hand, Turkey with its mainly Muslim population helps Washington to avoid any suspicion which considers the US effort against terrorism a thinly veiled 'Christian campaign' against Islam. Moreover Turkey represents a huge asset for the US to address various political problems in the Caucasus, Central Asia and in the Middle East. Turkey's pivotal membership in the South Caucasus Stability Pact makes it a gate keeper for American strategic interests in the region. Furthermore Ankara is variously engaged in Afghanistan and is therefore to be seen as a country providing relief for the overstretched US military presence in Afghanistan. Ankara's sophisticated partnership with Israel is also of interest to US political decision makers. It is a tool for exerting pressure on Syria and Iran; two countries the United States has troubled relations with. Regarding all this it is not surprising that Washington always favoured a Turkish accession to the EU as it represents another institutional set up to tie the country within a Western framework and to prevent its political drifting towards other key players in the region.

The relations between Turkey and the European Union are also characterised by strategic considerations. The country is highly connected to Balkan politics and economy. The EU attaches a lot of foreign political attention to this region. Giving Turkey official membership status would enhance Europe's influence on and control over the stabilisation and recovery process in the Balkans. Furthermore Turkey is a considerable factor in the context of the EU energy supply. Already now the country is one of the largest sources for European gas and oil demand. In times of scarce energy resources, Turkey joining the European Union would decrease Europe's dependency on exporting countries like Russia. With respect to the Middle Eastern dimension it can be



said, that Europe's ability to shape the political conditions in this region will grow by fulfilling Turkey's European aspirations. Ankara maintains sophisticated relations to its Arab and Persian neighbours and plays a very productive role in the framework of the OIC. All together it makes it legitimate to talk about Turkey as a bridge to the Islamic world. The EU could benefit from this as it allows Brussels to exert smooth and gentle influence on the whole region. In general Turkey would increase the European Union's standing in international affairs and underscore its role as a world actor.

With regard to the transatlantic dimension it can be expected, that a Turkish EU membership would strengthen the relationship between the two sides of the Atlantic. Turkey has a strong army and could contribute to Brussels' military and defence capabilities. This would also be in the interest of the US, as a military stronger Europe would allow more European responsibility in the field of crisis management especially in the Balkans. At the same time it would free American troops which could then be launched in other conflict areas. This win-win situation would consequently contribute to a more effective and better coordinated military burden sharing. In spite of various doubts, Turkey would also improve transatlantic relations on the political level. Turkey joining the EU has always been in the interest of the United States. From this pragmatic point of view, Washington would then have one reason less to criticise the EU, as in former times, EU's hesitant stance towards the Turkey issue often led to conflicts between Brussels and Washington. However, much more important is the notion of Turkey being a caretaker of US interests within European institutions. Turkish officials regularly declare that their relations to the EU are as important as their relations to the US. And indeed, both, Washington and Brussels, maintain in-depth and thorough contacts to Ankara. This makes Turkey a potential factor of linkage, bringing the US and the EU together.

During the Iraq crisis one could witness, that transatlantic strains were often due to a lack of working communication between the two. Turkey however could serve as an agent of dialogue. In case of accession it would then serve as a broker of US interests in Europe and promoting EU positions among the political establishment in Washington at the same time. In this regard, Turkey is a considerable help fostering a political partnership, which is crucial, seeing the huge agenda of common challenges to world peace and security. Turkey fulfils strategic considerations for the EU as well as for the US. Transatlantic security relations will also improve against the backdrop of a Turkish accession. Seeing that all parties involved will benefit from this three-level game, it must be imperative making Ankara to a full-fledged member of the European integration project.

## 7. Annex

### 7.1. Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CUA	Customs Union Agreement
EC	European Communities
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESS	European Security Strategy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
GIYAV	Migration and Humanitarian Assistance Foundation
ICC	International Criminal Court
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA	National Security Council
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TCC	Turkish Criminal Code
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US/USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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