

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF EU ADMITTANCE
OF TURKEY ON TURKISH-EU RELATIONS
AND TURKISH-U.S. RELATIONS**

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 18 MAR 2005		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Implications of EU Admittance of Turkey on Turkish-EU Relations and Turkish-U.S. Relations				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Mehmet Kalin				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 38	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: LTC M. Yasin Kalin

TITLE: The Implications of the EU Admittance of Turkey on Turkish-EU Relations and Turkish-U.S. Relations

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2005 **PAGES:** 38 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Turkey has been waiting and working hard for accession to the EU for more than 40 years. The European Union Brussels Summit on December 17, 2004 finally gave Turkey what it has been seeking for over four decades. The EU decision to announce a starting date of October 3, 2005 for accession negotiations with Turkey opens a new era for Turkey and brings to an end the long waiting process. This decision represents one of the most significant and irrevocable steps on the road toward Turkey's goal of membership in the EU. It signals the start of a difficult and lengthy process of negotiations that will change both Turkey and the EU. Turkey's potential accession to the EU is not a matter of importance only within Europe. This is a crucial decision not only for the European Union and Turkey, but also for the United States and transatlantic relations. The United States has long had an exceptionally close security and foreign policy relationship with Turkey, as well as a very close partnership with the European Union. As Turkey moves nearer to EU membership, both of these relationships will change. Yet, how they change, and what the impact will be on Turkish-EU relations and Turkish-US relations, is far from clear.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF EU ADMITTANCE OF TURKEY ON TURKISH-EU RELATIONS AND TURKISH-U.S. RELATIONS

Turkish modernization processes began over two centuries ago and acquired new momentum with the founding of the Turkish Republic. The republican reforms undertaken by Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's founding President, and his colleagues aimed at creating a modern, secular state. The fundamental ambition of the new republic was the attainment of a level of "contemporary civilization," a formulation for European civilization. Therefore, the revolutionary regime in Ankara pursued the country's integration into the European political order since its inception.

The application to the European Economic Community (EEC) in the late 1950s was, therefore, part of the historically established process of seeking "Europeanness." In 1963 Turkey signed an association agreement with the EEC. The agreement held the promise of eventual membership for Turkey after conditions for such a development were fulfilled.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey joined the institutional framework of the Western alliance, becoming a member of the Council of Europe. It also joined all the organizations that helped shape the European order in the postwar period. In time, as the Cold War international system finally took shape, Turkey became part of the security architecture of the transatlantic alliance as a member of NATO. However, in my opinion, the end of the Cold War led the EU to turn its back on Turkey since the security dimension of the transatlantic alliance was no longer of primary importance.

With the painful experiences of September 11 the twenty-first century world order is being shaped over again. Turkey's significant role as a mediator of civilizations is now receiving increased attention. Therefore, Turkey's accession to the EU has acquired a complicated strategic dimension. The decision about the Turkish accession to the EU is of a strategic dimension both in security terms and in terms of fulfilling the promise of a multicultural Europe. This dimension of the strategic calculation suggests that the decision about Turkey now has an audience that is larger than just Turkey itself. The relevant audience now includes the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Turkey's accession would offer considerable benefits both to the EU and to Turkey. For the Union, the unique geopolitical position of Turkey at the crossroads of the Balkans, the wider Middle East, South Caucasus, Central Asia and beyond, its importance for the security of Europe's energy supplies and its political, economic and military weight would be great assets.

Moreover, as a large Muslim country firmly embedded in the EU, Turkey could play a significant role in Europe's relations with the Islamic world.¹

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities that would arise with Turkey's full membership of the EU, and the implications of Turkish membership for the future of both Turkey and Europe. It also addresses the implications of Turkish accession on Turkish-US relations, and how they would change.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

EU-Turkey relations have a long history and the discussion about Turkey's entry is not new. In fact, it goes all the way back to the early 1960s. In 1963, Turkey and the EEC entered into an Association Agreement containing a membership perspective.² In connection with an association agreement, Turkey was promised membership once the country met the criteria. Despite its geographic location, the EU considered Turkey part of Europe, mainly because the Cold War made Turkey a strategically important country. In 1987, Turkey kept the EU to its word and formally applied for membership. The EU Commission, however, assessed that, at that time, Turkey did not meet the membership criteria.³ Instead of accession negotiations, Turkey was offered a number of initiatives such as a customs union in order to prepare the country for entry. In 1995, a customs union was formed.

At the 1999 summit in Helsinki the EU decided that Turkey was a candidate for accession to the EU. The Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 concluded that "if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay".⁴ These conclusions were reaffirmed by the European Council in Brussels in June 2004.⁵

The positive signals from the EU to Turkey genuinely sped up the reform process in the country. In the years between 2001 and 2004, eight reform packages were introduced. On October 6, 2004, the European Commission made a clear recommendation to the Member States to open accession negotiations with Turkey, and announced that "In view of the overall progress of reforms attained, the Commission considers that Turkey sufficiently fulfils the political criteria and recommends that accession negotiations be opened."⁶ On the occasion of the progress report and recommendation of the Commission issued on 6 October, Mr. Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission said that "A Europe that is sure of itself, has a Constitution and strong institutions and policies, is returning to economic growth and is based

on a strong model of peace, prosperity and solidarity has nothing to fear from the integration of Turkey.”⁷

Turkey has been waiting and working hard to move closer to the EU for more than 40 years. On December 17, 2004 at the Brussels Summit, the European Council put an end to this waiting and decided that, “in the light of the Commission report and recommendation, Turkey sufficiently fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria to open accession negotiations.”⁸ The negotiations will start on 3 October 2005.

After waiting for more than four decades to open the door to the negotiating room, Turkey strongly welcomes the decision, yet it is far from satisfying the Turkish expectations. Moreover, for the first time in the enlargement history of the EU, it contains several “conditions”, so-called safeguards, which Turkey will not be able to accept. The December 17 decision states that “the shared objective of the negotiations is accession.” However, the European Council emphasizes that “these negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand. While taking account of all Copenhagen criteria, if the Candidate State (Turkey) is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that the Candidate State concerned is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond.”⁹

The decision also states that “Turkey must sign a customs accord extending to all EU members, including Greek Cyprus. The accord must be signed by the start of entry talks, proposed for October 2005. Turkey must continue with political and economic reforms. Some safeguards may remain over migration of workers from Turkey.”¹⁰ It will mean granting effective recognition to the Greek Cypriot government, but gives Turkey more time to sell the idea to its people. The internationally recognized southern part of Cyprus is an EU member, but Turkey had previously insisted it would not bow to demands to recognize the country, calling the issue a “red line”.

The ambiguous decision of the EU has caused intensive debates and unease in Turkish public opinion. While the government is exerting severe efforts to make public the details of that decision, many of Turkish elites describe the decision as “discrimination”. Mumtaz Soysal, independent member of the Turkish Parliament and political commentator writes, “The Commission has been discriminating in its evaluation of Turkey’s progress towards EU membership. It has not set the same criteria as for other candidate countries. They say it is not just for Turkey, but the new criteria begin with Turkey. And it is also clear it will be an unending process. If Europe wants to prolong the process that long, then Turkey might take its future into its own hands.”¹¹ In that case, negotiations will be slow, member-states will be reluctant to open

and close chapters including 31 main topics for the accession process, the process probably will take more than a decade, and the Turks will become extremely frustrated.

Turkey's National Security Council, which has been transformed into a civilian think tank, called on the European Union not to impose any conditions on Ankara when it starts membership talks with the bloc next year. "The council notes the importance of carrying out negotiations without any discrimination or conditions against Turkey," it said in a statement.¹² The National Security Council welcomed the firm date set by European leaders for the start of accession talks, but underlined that the summit conclusions also contained some "negative elements".

In reality, the decision is an expression of a balancing act in which the Commission attempts to maintain the reform momentum in Turkey while at the same time avoiding alienating the public opinion in the member states. Nevertheless what really matters is what happens afterwards. It would only be the starting point for a long process, and will not automatically lead to accession. The objective would be Turkey becoming a full member of the EU, but reaching that goal will depend on the efforts made by Turkey and by the EU. And there is still much to be done.

IMPLICATIONS OF TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP ON TURKISH-EU RELATIONS

Turkey's accession to the EU will present both the Union and Turkey itself not only with serious challenges, but also with considerable opportunities and benefits. The necessary preparations for accession will last well into the next decade. The EU will evolve over this period, and Turkey should change even more radically.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

There can be no doubt that Turkey's accession to the EU presents both the Union and Turkey itself not only with serious challenges, but also with considerable opportunities and benefits. Moreover, the costs of rejecting Turkey's request to join the Union and other negative consequences must also be taken into consideration.

Global Politics

The advantages of Turkey's membership for the EU are closely related to the future vision of the EU, which remain a matter of intense debate within the Union. At a time when the European Union is set to assume greater responsibility in world politics, Turkish accession will considerably strengthen the Union's capabilities as a foreign policy actor. Turkey's membership will contribute not only to the maintenance of stability and peace in the wider Europe, but also to

the spread of European values to the region and beyond. Turkey's entry to the EU will open new horizons in the foreign relations of the EU and help provide solutions. Turkey's membership will give fresh impetus to the EU's relations with the countries of the Middle East and Caucasian regions, which have not always been easy. The addition of Turkey will give "continental weight" and greater strategic depth to the EU's foreign policy through greater political, economic, diplomatic and military clout.

Regional Stability and Peace

Its location at the centre of the "Eurasian" geography makes Turkey a key strategic ally. Its close historic ties and more recent experience in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East, provide Turkey with an historical and cultural resource, which, together with its strategic location and influence have already enabled it to make positive contributions to the shaping of the EU policies towards these sensitive regions. For example, Russia is today among the biggest trade partners of Turkey, and thanks to its linguistic and cultural ties with the five Turkic Republics of Central Asia, Turkey has been able to access that region first and most easily at both political and economic levels.

In the Middle East, an area of special interest to Europe both for historical reasons and because of its impact on European security, the EU has much to gain in profile and status. Turkey has enjoyed close and special relations with Israel since its foundation. Relations with the Arab countries, with whom Turkey shares the same religion and a history of over 500 years, have improved even further since the end of the Cold War. Turkey is the only country in which both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides have equally placed their trust in the Middle Eastern conflict. The recent war in Iraq and Turkey's balanced attitude in the face of developments has once again demonstrated Turkey's strategic importance to the EU, even when the EU itself was divided.

Turkey has as much experience in the reconstruction of the crisis regions as it has in the prevention of regional conflicts. Turkish officials have taken part in every international peacekeeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, the Middle East and Georgia. Turkey took over the command of ISAF in Afghanistan from Britain and successfully carried out this difficult task. A former Foreign Minister of Turkey is currently NATO's civilian representative in Afghanistan. With its entry to the EU, the stabilizing role Turkey has been playing in these regions will be further strengthened, and help the EU to deploy greater "soft" as well as "hard" power.

Security

For the emerging European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), Turkey's considerable military capabilities and the country's potential as a forward base would be important and much-needed assets. Turkey, as a full member of the EU, will significantly contribute to enhance the operational capabilities of the ESDP. The geographical proximity, historical and cultural ties of Turkey with the countries in the Balkans, Middle East and Caucasasia will make major contributions to prevention of the probable conflicts that occur in these regions and threat on European security and stability. Accession of Turkey, as a NATO member, to the EU and ESDP, will strengthen European security, reinforcing the unity of transatlantic alliance. Turkey in the EU reduces NATO-EU command and control issues. Turkish military, with its high operational capability, will provide ESDP with significant defense capacity, and at the same time, will relieve the liability of the U.S. for European defense.

As a reliable NATO ally, Turkey's membership of the EU would contribute to both the military and the civilian aspects of its Common Foreign and Security Policy. A European Union including Turkey would be more effective in tackling issues such as threats from undemocratic regimes, terrorism, illegal immigration and trafficking in drugs, arms, and human beings. According to NATO's new strategic concept, Turkey is surrounded by 13 of 16 probable conflict and crisis-prone areas. This could be used as an argument by circles that do not wish to see Turkey in the EU. One cannot deny, however, that a stable Turkey, as a member of the EU would certainly contribute positively to peace and stability in these regions.

It is to be expected that Turkish accession would lead to stronger EU policies on the South, adding to the "Northern Dimension" initiated by Finland a new and powerful "Southern Dimension". This should not be seen as a danger, but rather as an opportunity. The argument sometimes heard that Turkish membership would draw Europe into the conflicts of the Middle East is unconvincing. Developments in this turbulent region already have profound repercussions on Europe's stability and security, whether or not the EU has direct borders with countries like Iraq, Iran and Syria. Turkey, with its pivotal position at the heart of the Eurasian region and as a western pillar of the wider Middle East, can be of indisputable benefit to European action in this area.¹³ In the words of German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, "Europe's security, for many years to come, will be decided in the relationship with the Middle East and the Arab World. Will we succeed in avoiding the clashes of civilizations between the Western and Islamic worlds that many have predicted since September 11?"¹⁴

The significance of Turkey as a bridge between Europe and Asia due to its strategically important location can hardly be overestimated. In order to realize the European Common

Foreign and Security policy (CFSP) and for the EU to maintain the security of its adjoining regions, Turkey's membership is indispensable. The development of a common European security policy would definitely be facilitated; if Turkey did not sit between the "transatlantic chairs" as a NATO-member without EU affiliation, Turkey's integration to the EU would primarily mean a fortification of the European position in the transatlantic pact. Also Turkey, as the only secular and democratic Islamic country in the region, can contribute to the conflict against international terrorism.

Turkey is one of the guarantors of the stability of the Black Sea region, balances Russia in the Caucasus, controls the strategically important connection from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and is still the pillar of NATO's south east defense system. Ultimately the countries surrounding Turkey supply 60 percent of the natural gas and petroleum demand of Europe. The importance of Turkey, with regard to security and defense policy, has been apparent in several crisis situations such as the September 11 attacks and the Iraq war. In consideration of the new political objective and the security concerns of the EU, Turkey is vital in terms of providing stability in the regions of the Eastern-Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Caucasus. Turkey's role as a bridge to the Islamic World is also noteworthy.

Multi-culturalism

Certain circles believe September 11 was the harbinger of a "clash of civilizations." But inter-religious conflict is not inevitable; the real conflict is already under way between those who have adopted universal values and those who are against them. Just as there are Muslims, Christians, and Jews among those who have adopted universal values, there will also be members of these religions who oppose them. The EU membership of Turkey, which has a predominantly Muslim population, will contribute greatly to the establishment of a necessary bridge between the West and Islam. Turkey's membership would enhance the EU's multicultural structure. It would refute the scenario of the "clash of civilizations" and further prove that the EU is a union built on common values.

Turkey's membership will prove both that cultural differences can indeed coexist and that Islam and modernity can be compatible, and constitute an effective answer from the West to the concept of a Christian-Muslim conflict. Turkish accession will show that Christians and Muslims can live together under the same European roof, within the same political and economic union. Turkey's membership will end criticism that the EU is a "Christian Club", and accusations of racism and thus enhance the Union's own Charter of Fundamental Rights, now enshrined in

Part II of the draft Constitutional Treaty.¹⁵ Beyond the borders of an enlarged EU Turkish membership will also have a positive impact on views in the Islamic world.

Turkey's membership will help reassure and guide the Muslim community in Europe to a modern, democratic interpretation of Islam. Protecting this population from the radical tendencies of Islamic fundamentalism is possible only if they are offered a model in which Islam and modernity can coexist. Turkish membership will provide this invaluable opportunity to reinforce Europe's universal values among its Muslim population. A democratic and modern Turkey would have a positive impact on the fourteen million Muslims who are already living in the EU today. It would be a valuable contribution to the development of a European Islam that would be in full accordance with democratic and European values. It would also be a contribution to Christian-Muslim dialogue in the world.

Economy

In addition to enhancing the Union's role in the political and security field, Turkey could add in no small way to Europe's economic weight in the world. The country is large and has substantial resources. Turkey's population is young and dynamic, and its economy is the fastest-growing on the continent. Europe faces severe problems in the coming decades unless it can produce more dynamic growth, and replenish its declining population. With a population more than seventy million at present, and its purchasing power expected steadily to increase, Turkey's potential as a market for goods from EU member states will gain in importance.

The construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline following the emergence of the Caspian basin as one of the world's largest sources of oil and natural gas highlights Turkey's role as a key transit country for energy supplies. Moreover, Turkey's geopolitical position and close links with tens of millions of Turkic people in neighboring countries could help secure European access to the enormous wealth of resources in Central Asia and regions of Siberia, making Turkey a vital factor for Europe's security of energy supplies coming from the Middle East, the Caspian Sea and Russia. In this context, Turkey's decisive importance for the water supply of neighboring countries in the Middle East would be of considerable additional value.

THE CHALLENGES

When the question of Turkish membership to the EU is discussed, these factors turn into a major challenge, raising anxieties and resistance in many parts of Europe. Turkey is big, poor, not European enough, and its borders to Iran, Iraq and Syria are dangerous to be borders of the EU. All these concerns are negligible when considering Turkey's potential membership in

the EU. Instead, the beginning of negotiations for EU accession will provide a lot of chances for both Turkey and Europe.

The impact of Turkey's size

The first classical argument against Turkish membership is the size of the country. Critics argue that, with more than 70 million people Turkey will put the EU labor market under an unacceptable pressure; with its large population Turkey will dominate the work in the EU institutions, and alter decision-making mechanisms fundamentally.

With its large population, will Turkey dominate the work force in the EU? It is correct that Turkey will be the biggest country in the EU, but Turkey's large population does not constitute as big a problem as has been claimed. Already nearly 71 million, it will reach 82 million in 2015 and stabilize at that level. Turkey's birth rate has sharply fallen over the years. The total fertility rate (average children per woman) stands at 2.5, down from 3.5 in the 1970s, and is expected to decline further as economic prosperity increases. This trend is also supported by Turkey's population growth rate which has fallen to 1.4% according to the latest UN figures.¹⁶

For the EU, whose population will have reached almost to 570 million with the entry of the Balkan countries, a population of 71 million will amount only to a minority of slightly over 14 per cent on accession. When the new Constitutional Treaty is adopted, a majority in the Council will require that at least 50 per cent of the member countries vote in favor of a proposition, and that these countries constitute 60 per cent of the EU's total population.¹⁷ This means that Turkey will have no greater weight than Denmark in the first case, while population-wise it will have the same significance as Germany.¹⁸

It is misleading to argue that Turkey will alone affect the decision-making mechanisms of the EU when well over 80 per cent of decisions are made by compromise and where qualified majority voting has largely replaced unanimity.¹⁹ Current problems in decision-making in the EU must be solved even if Turkey does not join the Union. In this respect, it will be easier for Turkey to take its place in an EU with a new and fair system of voting.

With 71 million people, will Turkey put the EU labor market under an unacceptable pressure? This view, frequently used by those anti-Turkey circles in order to create fear and anxiety about Turkey's EU membership, is not based in any way on any research or scientific study. Although the country has lived through considerable population growth, the situation is not radically different since the EU made the membership promise in 1963. In other words: The argument cannot suddenly justify a policy shift.

There is a populist argument that too many Turks would emigrate to Germany and other EU countries. A study by the European Commission on the migration from Spain, Portugal, and Greece shows that the will to leave the home country is not affected by the right of free movement in the EU.²⁰ However, given the current socio-economic conditions in Turkey, especially the wealth gap between the east and the west parts of the country, this argument may be seen as reasonable. In the first decade of full membership it can be expected that there will be some low-income people immigrations to Europe from the eastern part of Turkey. But there will be agreements to restrict free-movement for an initial period after accession —similar to those with Poland. In this initial period Turkey must take the required economic and social precautions and the EU should contribute to Turkey in tackling this issue. Nobody likes to leave the home country if they see a perspective for a better future at home.

Independent European Think Tanks assess that only between 2.5 and 3.0 million will leave their country during the first 15 years of eventual Turkish membership of the EU.²¹ These figures correspond to some 0.5 per cent of the EU's total population in 2025. Even with free access, this will hardly create a flood. In parallel with Turkey's success in stabilizing its economy in its harmonization process with the EU and increasing the living standards of its citizens, the probability of immigration abroad can be expected to decline further.

Table 1 contains a projection of demographic developments in Turkey and selected EU countries. The figures suggest that in view of decreasing populations in European countries, the relatively modest immigration expected from Turkey would not only be sustainable – it could constitute one of the positive economic impacts of Turkish accession.²²

Table 1: Total Population 2003, 2015, 2025, 2050 (thousands)

	2003	2015	2025	2050
Turkey	71 325	82 150	88 995	97 759
Germany	82 467	82 497	81 959	79 145
France	60 144	62 841	64 165	64 230
UK	59 251	61 275	63 287	66 166
Italy	57 423	55 507	52 939	44 875
Spain	41 06	41 167	40 369	37 336
Poland	38 587	38 173	37 337	33 004
Romania	22 33	21 649	20 806	18 063
Netherlands	16 149	16 791	17 123	16 954
EU 25	454 187	456 876	454 422	431 241
EU 28 (incl.Turkey)	555 743	567 842	570 832	552 318
Turkey as % of EU 28	12%	14.4%	15.5%	17.7%

Source: UN Population Division, World Population Prospects: the 2002 Revision

As for the resident Turkish population in Europe, the overwhelming majority of the Turks living in European countries today went there upon invitation, as guest workers and as a result of bilateral agreements. Many such workers and their families have since returned to their homeland from those European countries after preparing the necessary economic conditions for themselves in Turkey. From Germany alone, 40 thousand Turkish citizens return to their homeland annually. It is estimated that the number of those who have returned to their homeland so far is equal to the number of those currently living there, or to 2.5 millions.²³ It is a historical fact that Turks traditionally prefer to live in their homeland and do not immigrate to places where foreigners are a majority unless they are forced to or invited. It is not rational to expect an average Turkish citizen to emigrate if there is a good minimum standard of living.

On the other hand, the need for Turkish workers might well emerge once again to close the workforce gap as in the past, as a result of the demographic developments in Europe. Turkey will have a big advantage over other member states due to its young and continually better-educated population. At the time of a Turkish accession to the EU, Germany and other EU states will begin to feel their demographic over-aging more drastically. Young Turkish employees will then be more than welcome in these states to replace demographic losses in the workforce.

The impact of Turkey's poorness

The second argument is that Turkey is too poor. When compared to European member-state's standards, Turkey is still a poor country, and 35 per cent of the population is employed in agriculture. In addition, the country is characterized by a major wealth gap, - especially in the east, where the GDP per capita is not more than 10 percent of the income in the rich regions in the west of the country. Therefore, it must be a priority for Turkey to narrow the economic divide between its regions. It is expected that the opening of negotiations will give a strong boost to the Turkish economy, improving the country's comparative position with EU countries and in particular with the new members. Nonetheless, the fear that a Turkish membership would become too expensive for the EU is not justified. Calculations show that Turkey will not receive more EU assistance per capita as the ten new EU members are receiving today.²⁴

By the time of accession to the EU it is estimated that per capita national income will have exceeded USD 10,000.²⁵ So Turkey will take its place inside Europe as a young, dynamic, rapidly developing and large market well able to stand on its own feet. This large market will have become much more prosperous, it will have adapted its infrastructure to that of the EU and

it should have enjoyed a much increased flow of foreign investment. Its membership will bring substantial added value and boost the economic power of the European Union in the world.

Trade is the common foundation of the European economy. Turkey's membership will immediately add a population of about 70 millions to the EU with high consumption of contemporary goods and services, a direct advantage to existing EU exporters as many have already discovered within the EU-Turkey customs union. As a full participant in the EU's internal market, with all its advantages and obligations, Turkey will be a prize asset.

Turkey's economic contribution to the EU will encompass the entire region. Turkey is located at a key focal point for the increasingly important energy, transportation, and communication networks that link the East to Europe. Aiming for leadership in foreign trade within its natural geographic zone, Turkey has developed extensive trade relations with the countries of Central Asia, the 13-nation Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization. Turkey will thus be able to contribute both to the EU's access to these markets and to the procurement of raw materials and inputs that are of vital importance for the European economy.

Not European enough

The third argument is that Turkey is not European enough. Some European critics assert that cultural differences are an obstacle for Turkey's EU membership. This view, which discriminates between Turkish and European cultures, and argues that it is impossible to reconcile the two, contradicts the fundamental philosophy of the EU, which seeks integration around common, modern values. Moreover, such an argument against Turkey where modern culture and lifestyle has been adopted and practiced for 80 years does not correspond to the facts, and is even offensive.

Laurent Joffrin, editorial director of *Nouvel Observateur* magazine made a bold contribution to the debate whether Turkey is European, "Of course Turkey does not belong in Europe, if you still hold to a rather outmoded view of what Europe is supposed to be, basically a projection on a continent-wide scale of the traditional national model, with a homogeneous culture, a common religious heritage, fixed frontiers justified in their placement by geography and/or history, and unity of the population generally." He then makes a different but real perspective about what Europe means. "Europe is, above all, a political construction." As he shortly puts it another way: "Nations are not born European. They become it." He also points out, "After all, apparently the EU's "founding fathers" thought this was possible, as they were

by-and-large still around back in 1959 when Turkey was first acknowledged as a candidate for EEC membership.²⁶

“It is too late to debate whether Turkey is European or not. Forget that Turkey has been a long-standing member of NATO, of the OSCE, or of the Council of Europe. European leaders conceded as far back as 1963 that Turkey was sufficiently European to be a candidate one day.”²⁷ With the beginning of the reform process Turkey has undergone profound changes. It has fulfilled the political Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. The security trials were dissolved, the role of the military was restrained and Turkey finally played a constructive role during the negotiations over Cyprus. Minority rights were also significantly strengthened. It is now possible to watch TV programs in the Kurdish, Arabic, Bosnian, and Tcherkessian language.

Located on the Mediterranean rim, Turkey occupies a reconciliatory stance between Muslim and European societies and reflects this reconciliatory structure through centuries of inherent versatility. The characteristic of Turkey in being both a Muslim and a European culture has been strongly established throughout the centuries, making it impossible today to make a black and white choice between the two. The existence of both of these elements in Turkish culture increases its potential to be a bridge between the two worlds of cultural life. Thus, with Islam being the second largest religion in Europe after Christianity today, Turkey’s full-membership should help to reconcile religious and cultural differences by sharing and demonstrating complementary identities.

In the new world order where the idea of a “clash of civilizations” is intensely debated, Turkey’s membership of the EU will demonstrate to the rest of the world that states uniting within the framework of common values are able to melt their cultural differences in the same pot and reinforce cultural plurality. This fact is compatible with the principle of “union in diversity” stated in the preamble of the Constitutional Treaty for Europe.

The impact of Turkey’s geographical location

The fourth argument is, with its geographical location, whether Turkey at all is a part of Europe. If Turkey becomes a member, the EU will become neighbors with Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Since Turkey has not changed its place on the map since 1963, geography cannot be used as a credible “no argument” in 2004. From a geographical perspective, in addition to having no clear eastern border, neither can Europe’s southern borders be defined in definite terms. Some of the failure to define these borders is based on fear of the financial cost. After all, the EU has always determined the borders of the EU on the basis of politics, not geography. The countries

that meet the criteria can join. In addition, Turkey is already a member of a range of European organizations, from NATO to the Council of Europe.

The idea that the EU will be affected more by regional instability when it becomes neighbors with the Middle East is groundless. In a globalizing world, incidents in all regions — whether distant or near— already have an impact on Europe. And essentially, Europe has long been neighbors with the region through Turkey's longstanding membership of NATO, which includes the obligation of immediate NATO intervention in the case of an attack on a member country. Such a continuing and dramatic guarantee would be neither exceeded nor weakened by membership of the EU.

Turkey's membership will politically draw the EU closer to the region, free from the imperial legacy of some of its member states, and facilitating the Union's contributions to peace and stability in the region. The security risk that the developments in the Middle East might pose to Europe will thus be reduced, not increased. Turkey's accession to the EU is an unprecedented chance both for the country to fulfill its potential as a successful modern democracy in the Muslim world and for the West to strengthen a precious ally in the fight against terrorism, deepen its commitment to diversity, and foster liberalization in the Islamic world.²⁸

This region is the birthplace of civilizations, the nursery of agriculture and trade, geographically the cradle of the three monotheistic religions including Christianity, and contains the most critical energy resources of the world. Taking into account the democratic, social and economic development which the region's countries should achieve during the next two or three decades with the help of Turkey's contribution thanks to its unique identity and position, Europe's direct involvement through neighborhood of the region will be one of the most important benefits of Turkish accession for the EU.

IMPLICATIONS OF TURKISH MEMBERSHIP TO THE EU ON TURKISH-US RELATIONS

America believes that as a European power, Turkey belongs in the European Union. Your membership would also be a crucial advance in relations between the Muslim world and the West, because you are part of both. Including Turkey in the EU would prove that Europe is not the exclusive club of a single religion; it would expose the "clash of civilizations" as a passing myth of history.²⁹

— George W. Bush

On December 17, 2004, the European Union finally decided to begin accession negotiations with Turkey, on October, 3, 2005. This decision represents one of the most

significant and irrevocable steps on the road toward Turkey's goal of membership in the EU. It is signal the start of a difficult and lengthy process of negotiations that will change both Turkey and the EU. This is a crucial decision not only for the EU and Turkey, but also for the United States and transatlantic relations. "Washington views the decision about accession as a strategic choice that will affect the future political orientation of Turkey and the EU as well as broader U.S. strategic interests in the Greater Middle East and Black Sea region."³⁰ The United States has long had an exceptionally close security and foreign policy relationship with Turkey, as well as a very close partnership with the European Union. As Turkey moves nearer to EU membership, both of these relationships will change. Yet, how they change, and what the implications of Turkish membership to the EU will be on Turkish-US relations, is far from clear.

In this context, finding an answer to the question "whether Turkish-American relations are well placed to face current challenges and benefit from the opportunities of this temporary complexity" is important. The best answer lies in the history of Turkish-American partnership. Therefore, this part of the paper points out the background of the Turkish-American relationship, namely strategic partnership, with emphasis on recent developments, and attests that this partnership has a lot to offer in terms of building a safer and better future for Turkey, the United States, the EU, the transatlantic community and beyond.

OUTLINES OF TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Diplomatic history indicates that the beginning of Turkish-American relations dates back to early 19th century. Although there was a trade agreement, dated 1830, between the Ottoman Empire and the United States, relations in the 19th century and even in the early 20th century remained largely confined to the activities of American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire as well as to limited trade largely in tobacco and currant.³¹

The future course of the relationship between Turkey and the United States would largely be the result of the developments in the relationship between Turkey and the Soviet Union during the early years of the Cold War. The Soviet Union emerged from the Second World War not only as a victor, but also as an imperialist power intending to extend its influence well beyond its existing borders. It was this Soviet threat that literally moved Turkey into siding with the United States. Extending protection to Turkey was something which suited U.S. interests as well. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan came about under these circumstances.

The arrival of the U.S. ship Missouri in Istanbul in 1946 laid the foundation of the U.S.-Turkish close relationship based on security ties.³² The relationship was cemented with the Turkish military's participation in the Korean conflict and was completed with Turkey's full

membership in NATO. The 1950s saw an excellent U.S.-Turkish cooperation to the extent that Turkey supported all U.S. stances in the international arena and opened its territory to the American use without any limitations.

The Cyprus Issue and the Johnson Letter were the key issues of the Turkish-American relations in the 1950s and even in the early 1960s. Turkish Cypriots were harassed and massacred in the name of Enosis (annexation of Cyprus by Greece). When Turkey decided to intervene, then, in 1964 came the Johnson letter.³³ It was reminded by the U.S. President Johnson that it should think twice before doing so, for if the Turkish intervention triggered a Russian involvement, the U.S. and its allies might not be willing to come to the assistance of Turkey. Johnson's letter compelled the Turkish government and the Turkish public to take a closer look at the very nature of the Turkish-American relations. It triggered a widespread resentment in the Turkish public opinion throughout the 1960s. Following the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974, the United States imposed an arms embargo on Turkey in 1975, which lasted until 1978 and caused considerable damage to Turkish-US relations.³⁴ The damage was repaired during the Özal period (the 1980s) and the close Turkish cooperation with the USA during the Gulf Crisis in 1990-1991 marked the beginning of the strategic partnership between the two allies.

In the late 1980s and with the onset of 1990s, a new era started for both countries. The world entered the post-Cold War era. With the end of the Cold War and the absence of the Soviet threat, Turkey's geo-strategic importance came under increasing scrutiny. Many strategists speculated that the strategic importance of the Turkish-American partnership diminished. After a temporary interval in the early 1990s, however, the strategic partnership between the two countries was restored on novel grounds.

In the late 1990s, the mutual visits by Turkish President and Prime Minister respectively to the U.S. and then the official state visit by the U.S. President to Turkey, made preparations for further enhancement and deepening of Turkish-U.S. relations. The visits consolidated the strategic nature of the relationship, which has been termed as "strategic partnership" as of September 1999.³⁵ That upper grade of relations meant that the strategic cooperation is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, involving a wide range of overlapping interests in Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. The most important contribution of strategic partnership to Turkey was the inclusion of its name on the list of EU candidate countries at the EU's Helsinki Summit.

September 11 attacks and the launch of the war on terror reinforced traditional Turkish and American strategic ties. With statements of solidarity, Turkey opened its airbases, offered

troop support, and assumed responsibility over International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from July 2002 to January 2003.³⁶ This close relationship between two allies brought Turkey a precious chance for its prospects of EU membership. "The Copenhagen Summit of December 2002, however, clearly displayed the limits of American power."³⁷ The support provided by the US for Turkish membership was clearly motivated by American security priorities. With the impending War on Iraq, the Bush Administration placed considerable diplomatic pressure in European capitals to generate an early accession date for Turkey. But as the U.S. administration began to expand its war on terror to the neighbors of Turkey, especially Iraq, an important gap arose between American and Turkish bilateral relations.

Turkish-American relations came under severe challenge during the early months of 2003 in the context of the War on Iraq, following the failure of the Turkish Parliament on March 1 to authorize the deployment of US troops to Iraq via Turkish territory. The rather unexpected decision of the Turkish Parliament caused a major stalemate in Turkish-American relations. It also had different effects on Turkey's relations with the European Union and the U.S. On the other hand, the Iraq War has resulted in a massive rift in the transatlantic alliance as well as generating deep divisions within the 'European Union' itself. The developments concerning Iraq, which set the Turkish-American relations on a troubled path, ironically brought Turkey closer to the EU. First of all, they enabled the political leadership in Turkey to give impetus to the reform process by underscoring the importance of Turkey's European orientation. Second, they indicated that the democratic system worked in Turkey even under heavy US pressure. Finally, they made it harder to justify the arguments often heard in the policy circles particularly in France and Germany that Turkey is too pro-American and could serve as a US 'Trojan horse'³⁸ if it enters the EU.

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

On December 17, 2004 at the Brussels Summit, the European Council decided that, "in the light of the Commission report and recommendation, Turkey sufficiently fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria to open accession negotiations."³⁹ The negotiations will start on 3 October 2005.

The European Union gave Turkey a definite date for accession negotiations; however, it did not provide a definite membership perspective. This issue, which was overshadowed by the Cyprus debates, may cause trouble for the EU process in the medium run. Turkey will be able to begin negotiations in October after the Additional Protocol, to include the 10 new member states, is enforced.

Some articles pushed Turkey's membership into uncertainty. One of them was that the "Negotiations by their nature are an open-ended process, whose outcome cannot be guaranteed beforehand," in spite of the emphasis that the common purpose is full membership. The expression, "It should be ensured that candidate states are fully bound to European structures as much as possible," is another issue, which attracted attention. Those annotations, so far, have only referred to Turkey. For instance, it was not used for Croatia, which obtained a date along with Turkey, at the Brussels Summit.⁴⁰

Secondly, it is said that for Turkey, before membership, "Long transition processes, derogations, original amendments and permanent safeguards, in other words, maintaining permanent conditions to form a basis for protection measures, may be considered."⁴¹ Such issues should in deed be dealt with during the negotiations. Mentioning "permanent safeguards" in issues such as free movement, agriculture and regional funding is equivalent to not treating Turkey as an equal member. If uncertainties grow, they might make Turkey lose its desire in the reform process and prevent it from taking bold steps towards change.

Given the Brussels Resolution, It is obvious that a date to begin accession talks is not the same as a date for membership. Agreement to begin accession talks carries with it the presumption that the talks will be successful and the results will be ratified by all existing (25) members. Turkey is likely to experience a lengthy and perhaps contentious negotiation. French President Jacques Chirac, for example, has predicted a process that could be "as long as 20 years" while Dutch Foreign Minister Bernard Bot suggested after the summit that it was "possible that Turkey would never achieve accession."⁴² Nevertheless, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan states that the collapse of the EU effort is "not the end of the world" and that Turkey could continue with its reform process by "redesigning" the EU's Copenhagen criteria as "the Ankara criteria,"

Considering the ambiguity of the accession process Turkey will surely find time and energy to balance its deepening commitment to the EU with its important strategic relationship with the United States. The tensions, which have recently arisen in the US-Turkish relationship while Turkey was focusing on the EU summit, have not undermined the fundamental basis of the bilateral relationship. "However, it remains to be seen whether Ankara will be able to utilize the declarations of continued US support for Turkish accession to the EU to build a new and stable triangular relationship involving Brussels and Washington at the core of its future foreign policy and security framework."⁴³ This task is likely to prove particularly difficult in view of the current strains in the transatlantic relationship.

Cyprus Issue

The most important impediment for starting the negotiations looks like Greek Cypriots who will technically be able to exercise their veto at the beginning and end of each section of the negotiations. Despite the Greek Cypriots saying “no” in the April 24 referendum and using their veto power to block packages aimed at ending the isolation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), the EU has remained silent so far. Besides its silence, the EU has also linked the start of negotiations with Turkey on October 3 to the condition of a de facto recognition of Greek Cyprus. Brussels now takes Ankara's concerns lightly with the answer, “but the Greek Cypriots are already part of our family.”⁴⁴

The EU's Cyprus policy, since April 24, has not given hope for the upcoming process. Considering the Greek Cypriots being included in the EU family, and Greece and some countries that object to Turkey's membership rallying around Papadopoulos, it thus appears that Washington should play a major role in this critical process. The greatest part of the persuasion process, in which the EU should also take part, will be left to the United States. In the thorny path towards the resolution of this dispute, the US has a critical role to play. “The United States should push the Greek Cypriots not to hold Turkey hostage to the Cyprus issue and to make clear that their opposition to the U.N. settlement plan in the April referendum was not indicative of any broader unwillingness to reach an agreement with the Turkish Cypriots.”⁴⁵ One of the most effective measures that would persuade the Greek Cypriots, who have embarked upon strengthening their position, would be a signal from the U. S. on TRNC recognition. Despite the harsh objections from Athens, Washington recognized Macedonia with its constitutional name. Only a clear and definite attitude from the United States would set Papadopoulos into action.

The PKK Issue

The continued PKK presence in northern Iraq is an embarrassment to the United States, which declared a global war against all kind of terror at the aftermath of September 11. The United States assumed legal responsibility as occupying power for the territory of Iraq. “That a terrorist group — listed as such by the State Department since such designations were first made — operated with impunity from an area under U.S. responsibility undercuts the moral authority of the White House in waging the global war on terrorism.”⁴⁶ While even Iran, allegedly a rogue state, has declared the PKK a terrorist organization and shut them down, it is very hard to understand why the U.S. takes no action against that bloody tyrant organization.⁴⁷

U.S. toleration of the PKK threatens to worsen its relationship with Turkey, which is already on a bad course. “Since the PKK ended its ceasefire on June 1, 2004, southeastern

Turkey has suffered a renewed wave of terrorist attacks. The organization has sent an estimated 1,200 of its militants from northern Iraq into Turkey.”⁴⁸ The PKK is still able to create disorder in Turkey’s southeast, and thus has the ability to create an unsafe environment with which it can manipulate Turkey’s EU accession negotiations, block the integration of Kurds into Turkish society, and create discord in Turkish-Iraqi/Kurdish and Turkish-U.S. relations.

An increase in PKK-led violence in Turkey, creating political chaos that would stop the country’s EU accession process, would be a serious threat to Turkey’s stability. Besides, since the PKK’s main bases are in northern Iraq, most Turks would blame the United States and the Iraqi Kurds for any PKK-led violence. Washington’s reluctance in taking action against the PKK has already created much distrust toward the United States among Turkish policymakers; especially the security action against the PKK, such as capturing the organization’s remaining leaders would help the United States establish bridges with Turkey’s military security elite, with whom relations have been hampered since the Iraq war. Such a step would also allow Washington to establish a more positive image within the Turkish public, among whom anti-Americanism has become a potent force since 2002. Action against the PKK would be a first and necessary step in rebuilding U.S.-Turkish relations in the post-Iraq war environment.

Over the time, a change of attitude is evident in the US approach to Turkey, resulting in a calming down of the tense atmosphere that prevailed in the aftermath of the Iraqi War. The recent trilateral meeting with the Turkish, the U.S. and Iraqi sides to discuss measures to end the presence of the PKK militants from northern Iraq clearly reflects a change in this direction.⁴⁹

TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP: TURKEY-THE U.S.-THE EU

The U.S. advocacy of Turkish membership in the EU is aimed at anchoring Turkey in the West and strengthening the Atlanticist nature of the EU. “For strategic reasons, the United States has long been a strong advocate of Turkish accession to the EU, in the belief that membership is in the long-term interests of all the parties.”⁵⁰ The accession of Turkey to the EU will change its relations with the U.S. and the EU, and these changes will not always be easy for the United States, Europe, or Turkey to manage. It is a fact that the sense of rivalry has emerged between Brussels and Washington with Iraq being only the first major rift. Yet, Turkey is not a part of this divergence and should not be compelled to make some difficult choices between these two so-called rivals. Some American elite claim that in the coming decades there will be a sharp divergence between the U.S. and EU strategic interests. However, this perception is likely to be the end of the Atlantic Alliance, and causes unpredictable risks for the global stability and peace.

Over the course of 2003, particularly due to the differences over the developments in Iraq, the US' relations have been seriously damaged, not only with Turkey but also with a number of its key European allies. This sparked an unprecedented debate both within the US and Europe about the changing structure and the future course of Transatlantic relations. Despite the Iraq War's deepening effect on the transatlantic rift and the major setback in Turkish-American relations, there is room for optimism about the reconstitution of the Turkey-EU-US triangle and this triangle could be based on more secure foundations as Turkey moves closer to EU membership.

The future of the Turkey-EU-US trilateral relationship is likely to be characterized by an overlapping of reciprocal interests. From a Turkish perspective, pursuing a single-minded emphasis on developing relations either with the US or the EU will not be a rational approach. In fact, developing close relations among these major entities is likely to have positive profits for each side respectively. Turkey's membership in the EU is not incompatible with simultaneously close relations with the United States. It is important to recall that Turkish accession would be an indispensable opportunity for trilateral alliance to overcome the instability in the region. Turkey's geopolitical situation still encourages maintaining its strategic ties with the United States, however, its economic ties will grow stronger with the EU.

This trilateral relationship will inherently experience a significant transformation. Deepening relations with the EU requires a parallel deepening of the reform process. American support is not likely to generate smooth progress towards EU membership in the absence of radical commitment and implementation of economic and political reforms. Deepening relations with the EU, in turn, will offer Turkey the prospect of reconstituting its relations with the United States, which will be more in line with its national interests and which will also enable it to play a more constructive role in the broader Middle East.

Turkish accession is beneficial for the larger transatlantic relationship, the United States, Europe Union, and Turkey itself. The U.S. and the EU both should avoid viewing this as an issue of "losing or gaining Turkey". Although the integration of Turkey into the EU encompasses some complexities, the strategic advantages of accession should not to be neglected, both for Turkey and the broader Middle East region, as well as for the U.S. and the EU. "Of all the states in the broad region, from the southern Balkans to the Middle East and the Caucasus, Turkey is making the greatest progress and evolving more satisfactorily and soundly in its growing democracy, improving relations with neighbors, economic development, and dealings with political Islam."⁶¹

It is a critical time when there are new road maps emerging for shaping the future of the Middle East, Eurasia, and particularly the Transatlantic relations. What is really needed is to critically assess the aspects of continuity and radical transformation in the international context and to try to strike a delicate balance in the Turkey-EU-US triangle. On the Turkish side, there should be a simultaneous and pro-active effort to enhance the relations with both sides, not at the expense of each other, but in a mutually re-enforcing way. At the same time, it is also essential for Turkey's American and European allies to realize that it would be too costly for either side to alienate and isolate Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey could play a significant role as a predominantly Muslim, yet secular country in a volatile region vital for both American and European interests. Indeed, as a member of a broader entity such as the EU, rather than an isolated middle power in itself, and acting in co-operation with the United States, Turkey is more likely to play a constructive role in this respect.

CONCLUSION

The threats to peace and security in our world are becoming increasingly more sophisticated and unpredictable. Hidden, asymmetric threats are forcing the world's nations to re-evaluate their strategies for defending themselves. Among them, terrorism stands out as the most destructive and menacing evil. In the post-September 11 world, humankind is trying to defend itself and its values against the sources of terror. In such a volatile environment, Europe can not sustain its tranquility as such without taking bold steps. It has to move forward in its creative endeavors to bring greater stability and peace to other parts of the world. Increased momentum towards regional cooperation and integration is of crucial importance. In this task Turkey has a crucial importance with its deep hinterland and unique web of relations in the heart of Eurasia.

As a candidate country Turkey has been particularly careful to conduct a foreign policy compatible with EU positions. This was acknowledged by the European Commission in its Progress Report 2003, which states that "Turkey has continued to position its foreign and security policy in line with that of the European Union" and that it "has played a constructive role within the framework of the CFSP". Turkey could have the strongest impact, strengthening the Union's focus on regions in its southeast neighborhood included in the Union's new Wider Europe concept because of their vital importance for Europe's security.

As a member, Turkey would play a prominent role in the efforts of the EU to become a global actor through a robust Common Foreign, and Security Policy particularly in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Turkey's close historical and cultural ties with the

countries of the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East serve to facilitate its constructive role towards contributing to stability and conciliation in these regions. Consequently, stability in the Balkans, the peace process and reform in the context of the broader Middle East, developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Azeri-Armenian dispute are among many issues that dominate Turkey's foreign policy considerations. Turkey can bring an important insight to policies to be formulated by the EU towards these regions.

Turkey will be instrumental in contributing to the objectives of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since it has land and sea borders, as well as close cultural, economic and historical ties with a great many of the ENP partner countries. This is particularly valid for the implementation of the ENP in the Southern Caucasus. Turkey can also contribute to the EU policies as a strong advocate of reform and transformation for greater political and economic participation, democratization, good governance, accountability and gender equality in the context of the Mediterranean and Middle East region. Turkey's membership in the EU will also be a symbol of the convergence of dynamic trends, embracing aspirations for the harmonious co-existence of civilizations, enriching the cultural fabric of the EU. With the realization of Turkey's membership, the European Union will be the ideal paradigm for unity in diversity.

Linking Europe and Asia through energy corridors and the creation of new dynamics for regional cooperation are the main tenets of Turkey's Eurasian vision. With the completion next year of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) crude oil pipeline and other similar projects, Turkey is destined to become an important energy hub at the juncture of Europe and Asia. The BTC will provide Europe with a sound and cost-effective energy supply diversification.

Turkey's efforts to build better relations with all its neighbors and to promote closer political and economic ties in its region shows that the European values of conciliation and cooperation are also values that Turkey shares. The improvement in relations and cooperation with neighbors such as Greece and Syria, as well as the constructive approach towards a just and lasting solution of the Cyprus problem are cases in point.

The European Union is at the threshold of achieving the dreams of its founders and of reuniting the continent in peace, democracy and prosperity. Turkey wants to be a part of this dream; a free, fair and open community of values. Turkey can and will add to those values and our world today desperately needs such a significant contribution. Only then can Europe be a stronger international force for stability, for promoting European interests and European values.

Turkey's membership, in a unique geopolitical position and with strong interests in regions like Central Asia, South Caucasus and the Middle East, will alter the EU's profile and influence

its foreign policy orientation. Belonging to the West and having strong ties with the Islamic world at the same time and being a democratic, secular and social state based on the rule of law, Turkey stands as a model and a source of inspiration for all the countries aspiring for modernization.

The role of the United States in promoting closer links between Turkey and the EU has indeed been critical. The fact that short-term dynamics appear to favor closer relations between Turkey and the EU, should not lead to the misleading interpretation that Turkey will be able to achieve smooth and rapid progress towards EU membership in the absence of US support. The temporary setback in Turkey-US relations can be restored, and the triangular relationship involving Turkey, the EU and the US can be reconstituted on a stronger basis.

However, the security-based strategy which depends solely on the alliance with the United States and its diplomatic influence on Europe will not necessarily create the desired outcome for Turkish accession to the EU. Turkey should undertake and properly implement the required reforms as cited in Copenhagen criteria. In other words, American help could not act as a substitute for reforms in the context of Turkey-EU relations.

Although the EU gave Turkey a definite date to begin negotiations to enter the European Union, there is still considerable uncertainty in certain circles in Europe concerning Turkish membership. An isolated Turkey without American backing may find itself confronted with further delays in its quest to become an EU member. The US influence may also ultimately be critical in resolving the Cyprus dispute, which constitutes the single most important barrier on Turkey's path to EU membership. Furthermore, failure to reconstitute the strategic relationship with the US may prevent Turkey from playing an active role in the reconstruction of Iraq in particular and shaping developments in broader Middle East in general. Thus, while giving priority to its European quest, it is also critical for Turkey to mend its ties with the US.

WORD COUNT = 10417

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²⁷ Kyle Scott, "U.S. Mission to the European Union, on Turkish accession to the EU," Speech presented at the International Colloquium at Lessius Hogeschoole. Amsterdam: 18 November 2004.

²⁸ David L. Phillips, "Turkey's Dreams of Accession," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 83 • Number 5, September/October 2004 [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040901faessay83508/david-l-phillips/turkey-s-dreams-of-accession.html>>; Internet ; accessed 22 December 2004,

²⁹ George W. Bush, Remarks at Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Turkey 29 June 2004.

³⁰ F. Stephen Larrabee, "American Perspectives on Turkey and Turkish-EU Relations," The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 30 September 2004; available from <http://www.aicgs.org/c/larrabee_turkey.shtml>; Internet ; accessed 11 December 2004.

³¹ Turkish Embassy at Washington DC., "Turkish - U.S. Relations," available from <<http://www.turkishembassy.org/governmentpolitics/regionsnorthamerica.htm>>; Internet; accessed 11 December 2004.

³² Nasuh Uslu, "The Turkish-American Relationship Between 1947 and 2003: The History of a Distinctive Alliance," 2003; available from < <http://www.novapublishers.com/detailedsearch.asp?id=1-59033-832-4>>; Internet; accessed 16 September 2004.

³³ Yalim Eralp, "An Insider's View of Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its American Connection" in *The United States and Turkey: Allies in need*, ed. Morton Abramovitz, (The Century Foundation Press, New York 2003),110

³⁴ Sabri Sayari, "Turkey and the United States: Changing Dynamics of an Enduring Alliance" in *Turkey's Foreign Policy in 21st Century*, eds. Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydin (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 29

³⁵ Philip H Gordon, " Post Helsinki: Turkey, Greece and the European Union," The Strategic Regional Report. February 2000; available from < <http://www.brookingsinstitution.org/dybdocroot/views/articles/gordon/20000231.htm>>; Internet; accessed 23 December 2004.

³⁶ Turkey again is preparing to take over the command of the NATO-led peacekeeping force ISAF. Turkey will command the multinational force for six months starting from Feb. 11, 2005 with a total of 1,600 troops.

³⁷ Ziya Önis and Suhanaz Yilmaz, "Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?" October 2003; available from <<http://home.ku.edu.tr/~zonis/ONIS-YILMAZ-TURKEY-EU-US%20TRIANGLE.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 12 December 2004.

³⁸ It is an ordinary argument used by some skeptics who are against Turkish accession to the EU. They assert that Turkey is a Trojan horse that would give rise to the destruction of the EU and to the increased influence of the USA into it. There are two important facts behind this argument, first one is that Turkey is a close ally of the USA and the second one is the ongoing competition between the USA and the EU.

³⁹ Brussels European Council, Presidency Conclusions. Brussels, 17 December 2004.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bulent Aliriza, Seda Ciftci; "Turkey and the EU: Starting the Long Last Chapter" in Turkey Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 21 December 2004; available from <<http://www.csis.org/turkey/TU041221.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 28 December 2004.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Selcuk Gultasli, "Cyprus Problem and October 3" *Zaman Daily*, 29 December 2004 [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.zaman.com/?bl=columnists&alt=&trh=20050106&hn=15120>>; Internet; accessed 06 January 2005.

⁴⁵ Morton Abramowitz and Richard Burt, "High Stakes for Turkey and the West," *The Washington Post*, 20 August 2004; Page A19, [journal on-line]; available from <<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/680817531.html>>; Internet; accessed 12 December 2004.

⁴⁶ Michael Rubin, "The PKK Factor, Another critical enemy front in the war on terror." 05 August 2004; available from <<http://www.nationalreview.com/script/printpage.asp?ref=/rubin/rubin200408051220.asp>>; Internet; accessed 15 January 2005.

⁴⁷ During Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Tehran on July 29, 2004, Iran declared that it was putting the PKK on its list of terrorist organizations. The Iranian government enjoyed the diplomatic rewards, despite the fact that the Islamic Republic does not actually have such a list. While the State Department has listed the PKK as a terrorist organization since it started designating such groups, it seems at present that Tehran understands Turkish sensitivities better than Washington. See also *Hürriyet Daily* "PKK terorist gereken yapilir," 29 July 2004 [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/haber/447093,00.asp>>; Internet; accessed 9 January 2005.

⁴⁸ Soner Cagaptay and Emrullah Uslu. "Is the PKK Still a Threat to the United States and Turkey?" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policywatch Number 940. 10 January 2005; available from <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/index.htm>>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2005.

⁴⁹ *Turkish Daily News*, "Turkey, Iraq, US discuss PKK" 12 January 2005 [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=3529>>; Internet; accessed 9 January 2005.

⁵⁰ The Atlantic Council, "Turkey on the Threshold: Europe's Decision and U.S. Interests" Policy Paper August 2004; available from <<http://www.acus.org/TransatlanticRelations/Turkey%20on%20the%20Threshold.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 12 October 2004.

⁵¹ Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities," *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2004; available from <http://www.cfr.org/reg_index.php?>; Internet; accessed: 24 October 2004.

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