

FULL MEMBERSHIP - UTOPIA? PROBLEMS AND PROSPERITY IN TURCO-EUROPEAN RELATIONS

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Turkey's relationship with Western Europe goes back to the end of the Ottoman era when reformist Sultans tried to modernize the empire. These relations developed during and after the Cold War that began with the ending of the World War II. In this context Turkey as a parliamentary democracy became part of the European security policy and a NATO member as well as other political and economic organizations such as OECD and the European Council. Turkey, in this way, exposed its desire to be a full member of the European Economic Community in 1959 and signed, as a first step, an agreement to establish an associate membership that aimed at becoming full integration after a certain time. Concluding the customs union agreement in this new era has a special meaning for both parties. Not only security needs but also economic and political aims will be achieved by Turkey and the European Union through this new partnership. The basic purpose of this article is to investigate how important an issue Turkey's Western integration is as well as Turkey's importance to the West in this new post Cold War era.

By the end of the Cold War, which lasted fifty years, the geopolitics of Turkey and the value of NATO in Turkey's security policy as well as Turkey's strategic importance in the eyes of Turkey's Cold War Western allies began to be criticized. Most of the people in Turkey and outside thought that the developments following the collapse of the Soviet empire and the Eastern Bloc diminished Turkey's historically strategic value as a bar of the possible Soviet threat to the Middle East that has been very important for the industrialized West for oil of which they have been buying 50 % or more of their needs from this region.

This uncertain era began with the ending of the two bloc world systems got Saddam to solve his problems with Kuwait by using power instead of diplomatic

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tools. These also got the world to understand that this new world will not be as secure as was thought. Therefore, the invasion of Kuwait and Turkey's activist policy during the crisis showed the Western allies that, in this volatile region as an unstable and problem producing area, Turkey might be needed as a Western style democratic regime and market economy as well as being a stable country in the region. On the other hand, Turkey in this new era could limit the Iranian effect on Central Asia, because these countries are new markets and trading partners for the West as well as being Turkey's new strategic area with cultural and historical bonds.

In spite of this, Turkey had experienced serious problems in its alliance relationships -such as the conflict with Greece over Cyprus and the Aegean and the US arms embargo on military assistance to Turkey following the Cyprus crisis of 1974- there hasn't been a fairly strong domestic consensus about the necessity of NATO and Turkey's participation in it. Except for the minor political forces of the Marxist Left and Islamist Right, major political parties, the military, and business elite were generally supportive of Turkey's multilateral and bilateral security relations within the NATO framework¹.

As the Cold War wound down, Turkey's 'value' to the West began to be questioned in some circles and this created considerable anxiety among the Turkish political leaders. The 1990 Gulf crisis appeared at a juncture when these doubts were being openly discussed. Turkey's rapid and steadfast support of the Western position may have been in part influenced by these thoughts. Whatever the reason, Turkey once again regained its position as an indispensable ally and expectations began to rise in the country that a more central role might be given to Turkey on decisions involving the future shape of the Western alliance, or at least of the region. ... as the new Western Coalition takes shape and takes charge of security policies of a significant part of the world, Turkey's position in the region will be strengthened².

This is not only the Turkish view, there are also politicians and scientists from outside sharing the same idea. In this context, according to Philip Robins, "from the Atlantic strategic perspective Turkey has been one of the winners of the post-Cold War period. It is no longer a marginal player on the southern flank of NATO. Rather, it is regarded as being 'in the eye of the storm'. It has replaced the Federal Republic of Germany as the member state located the region of greatest uncertainty³. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, along with the frag-

1 See, Sabri Sayari, "Turkey: The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No.1 (Winter 1992), p. 10.

2 See, Ersin Onulduran, "The New Shape of Politics and Security in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean," *Foreign Policy*, Vol. XVII, No. 1-2 (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 1993), p. 23.

3 Philip Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue," *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 1993), p. 657.

mentation of the Soviet state, have left the Turks without a powerful communist adversary along their borders for the first time since the end of World War II⁴.

I. Turkish-European Relations: An Overview

Turkey's determination to become an integral part of Europe is not recent. As mentioned at the beginning, the Ottoman Empire was itself a European power by virtue of vast possessions on the Continent, and as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the reformist sultans sought to modernize the empire by adopting the structures, behaviors and customs of its more developed Western neighbors. It has been a national consensus that could seem strange in a Muslim country. According to Rouleau, Atatürk and the following politicians have neglected nothing to achieve the objective of a European-style modernized country. They brought Turkey into NATO, the European Economic Community (as an associate member), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Council of Europe, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Western European Union (likewise as an associate). Turkey also adhered to a whole range of European conventions. Two thirds of Turkey's exports go to the OECD countries, half to members of the European Community alone. Investment capital, technology transfers, remittances from millions of "guest workers," and equally considerable tourism revenues all flow from Europe⁵.

As we know, on July 31, 1959, Turkey applied for associate membership of the Community to become a full member in the future, a year later from which the European Community was established with the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957. By September of 1963, an association treaty was signed in Ankara. The Ankara Treaty of 1963 and the complementing protocols perceived the Turkish path to full membership to comprise three stages: a preparatory stage, a transitional stage, and a final stage. So, by signing the Ankara Treaty, Turkey explained its willingness to be a member of the European Community and finally in 1987 applied for full membership, and has been accepted into the customs union with effect from January of 1996.

For the first time in Turkish history, all major Turkish political parties, for different reasons, are unanimously agreed that Turkey should work towards becoming a full member of the Community. Some feel that the European connection would enhance the sustenance of a political democracy. Others feel that it would provide in-

4 See, Sayarı, op. cit., p. 10.

5 Eric Rouleau, "The Challenges to Turkey", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (Nov/Dec 1993), p. 115-116.

surance for the growth and the entrenchment of a free enterprise system. All (except the Welfare Party) express that a Turkey outside of Europe cannot even be thought of⁶.

"There is basic political consensus in the country that it will be a good thing to become a member with the notable exception of the conservative religious Welfare Party. It is agreed that the policy followed by the government on full membership is the correct one"⁷, because, "the long term linkage with Western Europe and the United States has affected closely the vision of what both the Turkish people and their governments have about what type of society and what type of a future they would like to have. This vision includes a modern political democracy characterized by high levels of economic prosperity"⁸.

To sum up, historical experience, economic relationships, perception of the world political system, the resulting defense needs, and the visions of the future have come together so that Turkey has come to view itself as a part of Europe, and it has persistently followed policies to achieve higher levels of integration with Western European countries and organizations. Although there are viewpoints and organizations in Turkey which challenge the European connection, they have never constituted the mainstream of Turkish political life or thought⁹.

II. The Customs Union Process

Turkey and the European Union concluded a historic accord on March 6, 1995 to establish a customs union between themselves with a view to further economic integration in line with the stipulations of the Ankara agreement of 1963. After three documents adopted by the Turkey-EU Association Council, Foreign Minister Murat Karayalçın said he welcomed the outcome of the Association Council. On the other hand, Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, said that the signing of the customs union would not only lift customs barriers but also pave the way for political and financial integration with Europe¹⁰. Besides, according to Tansu Çiller, "fundamentalism is only going to be a threat if Turkey is left out of Europe." In this context, "Turkey is not in need of Europe. In fact, Europe is more in need of Turkey"¹¹.

6 İler Turan, "Turkey and the European Community: Toward the Year 2000," *Turkey in the Year 2000* (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1989), 38.

7 Onulduran, op. cit., p. 26.

8 Turan, op. cit., p. s. 40.

9 Ibid.

10 See *Turkish Daily News*, March 7, 1995.

11 See, James M. Dorsey, "Impending Vote on European-Turkish Customs Union Will Shape History" *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (June 1995), p. 56.

Finally, the European Parliament voted on Dec. 13 by a majority to favor the customs union with Turkey with effect from January 1, 1996. 343 Deputies of the Parliament voted in favor while 149 voted against and 36 abstained. The agreement envisaged the abolition of trade barriers on industrial goods, implementation of similar customs policies and approximation of laws on competition, taxation and industrial, intellectual and commercial properties. The European Union (EU) and Turkey will also impose joint tariffs on imports from third countries. As soon as the agreement takes effect, Turkey will remove its customs tariffs on imports of industrial goods from the EU. Customs tariffs average 14 percent in Turkey and in certain sectors they range from 20 to 40 per cent. The European Commission estimates that this will lead to a doubling of EU exports to Turkey over the next five years. With the notable exception of textiles, the EU has already done away with most customs duties and quotas on industrial imports from Turkey.

Turkish officials forecast that the customs union would initially cost Ankara over \$3 billion a year in loss of import duties. However, they state that the loss will be offset partly by EU grants and loans in the short run, and hope that the agreement will spark new foreign investments in Turkey which will benefit the country in the long run. Shifting towards more technology intensive production and the collapse of firms which fail to compete may initially raise Turkey's unemployment rate, now at around 9 percent. However, increased foreign investments may also create new opportunities, economists say. Turkey will also be given more access to the European Investment Bank funds made available under the new Mediterranean policy and new bank loans to improve the competitiveness of the Turkish economy. The European Union may also grant exceptional medium-term macro-economic financial assistance at Turkey's request¹².

In reality both Turkey and Europe have important stakes in using the customs union as a political, social and economic link between Turkey and the West. This bond is all the more important now that Turkey's other major Western tie-NATO-is less relevant following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In economic terms, Mrs. Çiller's assessment that Europe needs Turkey makes sense. Turkey is a market of 60 million people that serves as a gateway to the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. The customs union initially benefits European more than Turkish Companies¹³.

Although economic in essence the decision to conclude the customs union was expected by officials from both sides to have wide ranging political and social ram-

12 *Turkish Panorama* (Washington, D.C.: ATAA, 1995) Vol. 1 Issue 6 December 14 1995.

13 See, Dorsey, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

ifications as well. For the Turkish side this means new steps in the direction of political integration with the West and realization of full membership in the Union. For the EU side, on the other hand, there was a lucrative economic aspect as represented by the large market and the young and dynamic population of Turkey, all promising net benefits for European investors and businessmen¹⁴.

As mentioned above, the customs union that came into force in January 1996 is also expected to help double EU exports to Turkey over five years as well as increasing foreign investment in Turkey. In this context, Abel Matutes, Chairman of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said after the vote that, "there will be an increase of investor confidence" and he added, "if you remove all the tariffs and non-tariff barriers to exports that will lead to a great increase of trade in Turkey... this will help sales, it will help jobs on both sides"¹⁵.

Moreover, Gijs de Vries, the leader of the liberal bloc in the European Parliament, said prior to the vote that "apart from Greece and Israel, Turkey is the only democratic country in the Eastern region of the Mediterranean... Turkey is a NATO partner with a market economy and a secular tradition in an unstable part of the world." Another important point stressed by Wilfred Martens, leader of the European People's Party, that even if Turkey is on the EU's borders, it is part of a very complex region. I am thinking of countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and a list of former Soviet republics"¹⁶.

As a result, under the accord, both sides will remove tariffs on each other's industrial products. Turkey's textile exports, the country's top foreign currency earner along with tourism, are expected to double from the current \$5 billion a year. However, such protected sectors as car makers and domestic goods' producers may have to lay off workers in the face of stiff foreign competition¹⁷.

The Custom Union will also benefit the US. David Rothkopf, Undersecretary of Commerce, welcomed the European Parliament's approval of a customs union with Turkey and said that the lowering tariffs will also benefit US industrial exports. Rothkopf also stated that the Customs Union would increase investment and a demand for coastal equipment in Turkey as companies sought to use it as a base for entering into the European market¹⁸.

14 See, *Turkish Daily News*, March 7, 1995.

15 *International Herald Tribune*, December 14, 1995.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Turkish Panorama*, op. cit.

Alexander M. Haig Jr., Former Secretary of State, in a commentary in the *Wall Street Journal*, the day before the final vote of the European Parliament, agreed that Turkey's accession to the Customs Union would be a statement on whether to integrate Turkey into Europe at a critical time in Europe's post-Cold War era. He stated that it was time for Europe's leaders to step forward and take a decision to accept Turkey for what it is a reliable friend in war and a huge emerging market. Haig said that the decision to bring Turkey into the customs union would be a timely message of friendship and cooperation from Turkey's western friends¹⁹.

III. Turkey's Full Membership: Problems and Prospects

There are real obstacles for Turkey's gaining full membership of the EU. Some of them stem from Turkey itself as well as some stemming from themselves, not to adopt Turkey as a full member in the short run. Let us look at those economic and political reasons. Some of these are, EU officials stressed, the relatively underdeveloped state of the Turkish economy, the rapid growth of the country's population and Turkey's record of democratic failures and human rights violations. Besides these objections and obstacles, Turkey's Islamic identity and Greece's policy against Turkey would be major problems concerning Turkey's full integration into the EU.

A. Economic Reasons

The level of development of the Turkish economy is not sufficient and has important problems to be solved possibly before integration as a member of the European Union. Turkey's levels of industrialization and economic development are significantly below the Western European average. Similarly Turkey's inflation and unemployment figures compare unfavorably with even the least-advanced EU members. Acceptance of Turkey as a full member of the EU is not realistic with 60 billion dollars foreign debt, 70 percent inflation rate (twenty times the EU average), a high rate of population (roughly 2.5 percent growth annually, ten times the EU average) and 20 percent unemployment rate (five times the EU average). Constant unemployment, the losses of purchasing power of wage earners and the erosion of the currency have already led some five million Turks to seek employment in Europe. Given the current unemployment situation in the EU countries, Turkey's admission to the organization, which would involve the lifting of all restrictions on population movement, would result in an intolerable situation for the European member states²⁰.

19 Ibid.

20 See, Rouleau, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Turkey's population is much the same as the combined populations of Greece, Portugal and Spain. Given Turkey's level of development and population size, free labor mobility constitutes a very sensitive issue from the perspective of the Union, and probably constitutes the single most important barrier to full membership of Turkey. In this context, with its high birth rate, Turkey has a very different age structure to Europe, with a very high proportion of young people ready to enter the labor market. European concerns are with mass immigration as well as the disproportionate demands that Turkish membership, given Turkey's very different stage of development, would place on the EU's regional funds and budgetary resources. The degree of budgetary transfers needed to bring Turkey up to the level of an average member of the EU would create a tremendous burden on the EU's finances. Such considerations are likely to prove decisive in resisting Turkey's attempts to gain full membership²¹.

B. Socio-Politic and Cultural Reasons

Besides economic deficiencies stated above, in the eyes of Western politicians, Turkey has a number of political problems that, left unresolved, stand in the way of its EU admission. The first of these is democratization, which have to be achieved before Turkey can join. The members of the European Union appear to be agreed that Turkey has been moving in the direction of more, not less, democracy. At the moment, progress is not deemed to be sufficient. In fact, "it should be noted that Turkey has achieved significant and rapid progress despite three military coups d'etat since 1960. The multiparty system and an elected parliament both quite satisfactory and many of the public freedoms, particularly of the press, are to a great extent respected²².

In this context, first, the Kurdish issue affecting all Turkey's foreign relations should be resolved or kept under control. This problem increasingly dominates domestic politics. It undermines the credibility and stability of the government²³.

Apart from economic considerations, it should be remembered that the EU is ultimately a political project. What the EU's founders desired was an eventual political union among states that shared similar cultures, ideals and institutions. It is also important to emphasize that EU members are states with predominantly Christian populations²⁴. There is a growing perception in western Europe that Turkey's Islamist

21 See, Ziya Öniş "Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era: In Search of Identity," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Winter 1995), p. 54.

22 Rouleau, op. cit., p. 118-119.

23 Ibid, ibid, p. 122.

24 See, Öniş, op. cit., p. 54.

Identity -made more visible by an increase of Islamist activities in Turkey and among members of the large Turkish migrant worker community in Europe- would be a major problem regarding Turkey's cultural integration into the EU²⁵. According to a western observer, "the fundamental issue for many Europeans is whether Europe can or should embrace an Islamic country of 57 million. Significantly, the issue is being posed at a time of mounting intolerance and xenophobia in Western Europe, much of it was directed against Muslim immigrants from the Maghreb and Turkey"²⁶. As Rouleau also noted "Westerners are often misled by erroneous comparisons with Khomeinist Iran, confusing Islam with fundamentalism and failing to distinguish between a practising Muslim and a partisan of an Islamic state governed by the Sharia"²⁷. In the same way, Professor Dodd, a leading British expert on Turkey, sees fundamentalist Islam as becoming a vital issue blocking Turkey's EU membership. According to him, a view that is mostly stressed in Turkey-that because of religion, the EU does not want Turkey be a member-is to some extent right. Although it is not said publicly, unfortunately, it is correct²⁸. Whereas in Turkey, decision-makers insist that religion should not affect political decisions or Turkey's membership of the EU and WEU²⁹. Moreover,

The Turkish relationships with European countries have naturally been not one-sided. As the Ottoman Empire expanded into Europe, the Turks were first seen as a threat to the European way of life. Later, as Turkish military power slowly declined, it became to be perceived as the 'sick man of Europe'. The sick man was important enough, however, that at the Paris Peace Conference following the Crimean war, in 1856, the Ottoman Empire was recognized as a member of the European community of nations³⁰. However, "in contrast to Turkish orientations of pursuing integration with Western Europe, one cannot escape the impression that Western Europeans have

25 See, Sayarı, op. cit., p. 12.

26 Ian O. Lesser, "Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War," in Fuller et. al. ed., 1993 p. 105.

27 Rouleau, op. cit., p. 119.

28 According to Dodd, thirty years ago Turkey's image in Europe was of a modernizing, Atatürkist state. No one then thought of Turkey as a Muslim state. But the country suffered not only from what is called a revival of Islam in Turkey but also from the revival in the Middle East. And this view has changed in recent years. Particularly the importance in politics of fundamentalist Islam is giving the impression to Europe that any one who is Muslim must be a fundamentalist. This view also influences the admitting Turkey into the EU. See, *Turkish Daily News*, Friday, January 27 1995.

29 Özal hinted that at the risks inherent in allowing religion to drive political decisions in Europe's institutions, asserting that if Islam emerges as an overt bar to Turkey's membership in the EC and or the WEU, this might drive Turkey into a closer relationship with the Middle East, encourage the spread of fundamentalism, and "send a wrong message to the rest of the Arab world." Lesser, *ibid.*, p. 11.

30 Turan, op. cit., p. 40.

had ambivalent feelings about how European Turkey really is. Such ambivalence derives both from historical-cultural sources and concrete matters of political and economic interest. The historical-cultural dimension owes much to religious differences, and a sense of geographical distance which easily translates into psychological distance³¹.

The sense of exclusion from economic and political institutions of the new Europe felt by many Turks in the late 1980s was compounded by the perception that Turkey might also become marginalized in European security affairs³². It is very disturbing that it is being attempted to exclude Turkey from the efforts to construct a European defense identity around the WEU (by giving a non-voting, associate status in the organization). Uncertainty about the future role and significance of NATO will reinforce Turkish interests in emerging European defense arrangements. Turkish exclusion from full participation in these arrangements would be understood in Ankara as a demonstration of Europe's unwillingness to grant Turkey a legitimate security role on the continent. Also, Turkey's concerns about its role in future European defense arrangements have been of two sorts: the broader fear of a security future cast largely in extra-European terms; and the narrower concern that the European security umbrella would be extended to Greece but exclude Turkey, with serious implications for stability in the Aegean³³. Whereas, both, in the overall NATO defense and in the more specific European defense, Turkey still occupies a strategic position as discussed above. While a mutual threat exists to both Turkey and European countries themselves, they didn't give enough military aid to remodernize and reconstruct Turkey's defense structure. It is not realistic to think that they give necessary support after dramatic developments which have changed threat and security perceptions in the post-Cold War era.

C. Turko-Greek Relations

Another problem stems from the relationship between Turkey and Greece. The problem is multi-dimensional, such as the Cyprus problem, the delimitation of territorial waters, air space and the continental shelf in the Aegean, the marking of the borders of the Flight Information Region, and fortification of Greek islands in the Dodecanese and eastern Aegean. Beyond these issues, the separate but related questions are the status and treatment of minorities: the residual Greek Orthodox population of Istanbul; and the more substantial Muslim (and predominantly Turkish) mi-

31 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

32 See, Sayari, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

33 See, Lesser, *op. cit.*, pp. 106 and 108.

nority in Greek Thrace³⁴. Because of this fact, other members of the Community express their fears that Turkish-Greek problems should not become an internal problem of the Community and that problems should be cleared before Turkish membership is considered. From the perspective of EU, the Greco-Turkish conflict should not jeopardize the integrity or interrupt the decision-making mechanism of the Organization.

Above all, Turkish relations with the West have been most seriously affected by the continuing dispute over Cyprus. In this context, according to EU countries, the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus by Turkey and the presence of Turkish troops on the island are two outstanding issues that could be settled³⁵. From the Turkish perspective these questions could only be solved by integral dialogue between the two communities. Internal settlement achieved between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities could create a lasting peace in the island³⁶.

Greece consistently opposed any progress on Turkey-EU relations, and it succeeded in forging an explicit linkage between Turkey's membership and the Cyprus issue. As a result of Greece's diplomatic initiatives and lobbying, the EU came to the position that progress on the Cyprus problem is a prerequisite for improvement in Turkish-EU relations. But, Turks are reluctant to pay this admission price, arguing instead that the Cyprus dispute would have a better chance of resolution within the EU's institutional structure after Turkey becomes a full member³⁷.

Greece tries to use its relationships with the members of EU as a bargaining point in the settlement of its disputes with Turkey. In this context, Greece has been trying to use her membership as an instrument in influencing Turkish behavior. As long as Greece feels that it can use the potential of the Community in affecting Turkish behavior, and as long as other members of the Community insist that Turco-Greek problems should be settled before the consideration of Turkish accession, there is no reason why Greece should try to reach a compromise on any of the many problems which it has with Turkey³⁸.

34 For more details see, Şükrü Gürel, *Tarihsel Boyut İçinde Türk Yunan İlişkileri, 1821-1993* (Turkish-Greek Relations in the Historical Context, 1821-1993) (Ankara: Ümit, 1993), passim.

35 Professor Dodd, a Western academician, noted that the Cyprus problem has always appeared as a major reason why Turkey cannot get in. Certainly the Greeks feel very strongly about that. Soon, a decision will be made about the entry of Greek Cyprus into the EU. If that happens, I think it will be a disaster as far as Turkish and EU relations are concerned. It means that Turkey will be considered as a foreign occupier in Cyprus." Orya Sultan Halisdemir, Interview with Professor Clement Dodd, *Turkish Daily News*, Section two, Friday, January 27, 1995.

36 But from the Turkish side, the view that is stressed by the political scientists in the West, that resolution of the Cyprus problem would transform the overall climate of Greek-Turkish relation and facilitate the settlement of more practical questions concerning air and sea space and resources in the Aegean, is not convincing.

37 See, Sayarı, op. cit., p. 12.

38 Turan, op. cit., p. 43.

Conclusion

The Gulf crisis of 1990-91 demonstrated that, even if the superpower conflict has ended, some areas are still a prime source of global instability. So during last five years, as mentioned above, Turkey has also emerged as an important actor in the politics of Transcaucasia, Central Asia, the Black Sea region and the Balkans.

The disintegration of the USSR has radically enhanced Turkey's strategic security, but it has not altered its fundamentally pro-Western orientation. There is broad sympathy in Turkey for the peoples of the Muslim republics of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, but the idea of a pan-Turkish union is still only a distant dream in the minds of some ultra-nationalist politicians in Turkey. For the time being, Turkey is adopting a cautious policy towards the Commonwealth of the Independent States, balancing its relations with Muslims and Slavs, and concentrating on building up economic and cultural links with Muslim republics. Hence, Turkey's political interests will probably remain focused on its relations with the Western powers, as the main component of a broad regional strategy³⁹.

However, the suggestion that resolution of these problems would guarantee EU membership, rests on faulty analysis. Given the long-term structural factors earlier identified, to single out, for example, the Cyprus issue as a key obstacle to Turkey's admittance as full member is a mistake. Similarly, further democratization and an improved human rights record are central objectives in their own right. To argue, however, that further democratization in Turkey will automatically secure full membership envisions yet another simplistic scenario.

According to Lesser, a political scientist, "as NATO moves through a period of uncertainty, the idea that Turkish involvement in the EC could serve to anchor and stabilize Turkish-Greek relations, widely discussed in moderate circles in Athens and Ankara, may gain momentum. Members of the business community in both countries are among the strongest advocates of Aegean détente as a means of improving relations with the EC and as a source of opportunity in its own right"⁴⁰. In this context, Couloumbis and Yannas, Greek political scientists, stressed that "following a potential grand settlement, both Greece and Turkey will increase significantly (...) their trade, tourism, investment and joint ventures at home and abroad. Greece will also abandon its policy of 'conditionally' regarding Turkey's entry. Simply, a European Union can and will, in fact, seek to facilitate Turkey's entry. Simply, a European Turkey

39 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis," *International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (October 1992), p. 680.

40 Lesser, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

will be for Greece a much easier neighbor to live with than an alienated, fundamentalist and militaristic Turkey⁴¹. Also Turkish political scientists, such as Onulduran see that "Turkey and Greece are two countries whose destinies are linked by a common geography and whose national interests will be infinitely better served if the rivalry between them is converted into a cooperative partnership"⁴².

41 T.A. Coulourbis and Prodrinos Yannas, "Greek Security Challenges in the 1990s," *Balkans: A Mirror of The New International Order* (Istanbul: Eren Yay., 1995), p. 212.

42 Onulduran, *op. cit.*, p. 26. According to Onulduran, The reasons for this rivalry and confrontation should be the subject of a different and longer treatise.