

Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies

MELTEM MÜFTÜLER-BAC*

Department of Political Science, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

Introduction

TURKEY'S RELATIONS with the European Union entered a new phase with the European Council's decision at its Helsinki Summit of December 1999 to grant Turkey a candidate-country status. Until that moment, the EU had refrained from including Turkey in its enlargement process – which had encompassed most Central and East European countries, Cyprus, and Malta – even though it had noted Turkey's eligibility for membership and acknowledged its long (in fact, the longest among the candidate states) history of association.¹ The restructuring of European security after the end of the Cold War has generally been to Turkey's disadvantage. With the reduction of the level of military threat, Turkey was no longer recognized as European, so its claim to EU membership fell on deaf ears, despite its best efforts to put its economy in order and to be helpful to the Western partners, particularly in the Balkans.

This article proposes that an important reason behind the European Council decision to elevate Turkey's status to that of candidate country is the EU's evolving security role. In other words, the estimates of the potential benefits of Turkey's inclusion into the EU's Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) and the costs entailed by its exclusion essentially shape the EU's policies towards Turkey. This argument does not deny the existence of other motives, such as the EU's desire to influence Turkey's politics and to resolve the Cyprus problem. In addition, certain internal changes in the EU member-states, particularly the shift in Greek attitudes following the Turkish earthquake of August 1999 and the better understanding of Turkey's position shown by the Social Democratic/Green government in Germany, may have made the EU more open to and aware of the potential benefits of embracing Turkey.

There are three assets that make Turkey an indispensable actor in the European security system in the post-Cold War era: its membership in NATO, its military capabilities, and its geostrategic position. First, by exercising its vote in the North Atlantic Council, Turkey has an institutional lever which can affect the EU's defense aspirations. Second, Turkey's military capabilities are vital for operations in the expanded European security area. Third, Turkey controls a pivotal intersection between Southeastern Europe, the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, which allows it to qualify as a major player in all these regions.

On the other hand, Turkey's possible membership exposes the EU to new security challenges: Turkey's uneasy relations with the Arab states in general and its neighbors in particular, its direct involvement in the Cyprus problem and the remaining potential of a new escalation of tensions with Greece, Turkey's considerable stakes in Central Asia, and direct exposure to the instabilities in the Caucasus may bring new security headaches to the Union. There are also serious questions about Turkey's internal policy, the level of its economic development, and the sheer size of its population, as well as doubts about its Europeaness, which together form serious obstacles to its membership in the EU.

This dilemma lay at the root of the EU's prolonged rejection of the Turkish demands for accession. However, by the end of the 1990s, Turkey's role as a gatekeeper for Europe had acquired such importance that insisting on this rejection was no longer reasonable, while a definite positive answer was perhaps premature. The Helsinki decision to grant Turkey a candidacy status, which is not a guarantee of accession, seems to have solved the dilemma. Now the EU can keep channels of communication with Turkey open, temper the Turkish objections to the EU's new security arrangements, gain access to Turkish capabilities, and use effective tools to influence Turkey's policies.

The EU in the European Security System

Turkey's sustained efforts to be accepted as an EU candidate have taken place against the background of deep changes in the European security structures. Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952, an associate member of the EU since 1963, and an associate member of the WEU since 1992.² While NATO, with its operations in the Balkans and successful enlargement, has established itself as the central military-security institution, the EU has started to claim a larger role, gradually incorporating the WEU. This process developed throughout the 1990s, but had accelerated greatly by the end of the decade. In order to see how Turkey fits into this ongoing restructuring, we have to take a quick overview of the milestones.

The Treaty on the European Union (Treaty of Maastricht), signed in February 1992, created a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and proclaimed that the Union shall 'assert its identity on the international scene in particular through the implementation of a CFSP which shall include the eventual framing of a common defense policy'.³ The WEU was defined as 'an integral part of the development of the EU' and was requested to 'elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defense implications' (Treaty of Maastricht, Article J 4.2). The aim to develop the WEU as the defense arm of the EU and at the same time to strengthen the European pillar of NATO was clarified in the Petersberg Declaration of 19 June 1992. This declaration also defined the range of specific tasks for the WEU, which included humanitarian, rescue, and peacekeeping missions, as well as use of combat forces in crisis management (the so-called Petersberg tasks).

It took five years to take the next big step, in the form of the Treaty of Amsterdam (signed in October 1997), which on the one hand furthered the CFSP by placing stronger emphasis on projecting the EU's values and interests and establishing the post of the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy; on the other hand, the Treaty of Amsterdam strengthened the ties between the EU and the WEU and increased the EU's responsibilities for peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks by incorporating the Petersberg tasks. Peter Ludlow argued that 'as Petersberg tasks were over 95% of the post Cold war security agenda, this change allows for an active EU role through the WEU in virtually every crisis that may arise'.⁴

At the December 1998 Saint-Malo Summit, France and the United Kingdom decided to push the EU's defense role further and questioned the need for the existence of the WEU as an independent institution, partly because of their frustration over the Kosovo crisis.⁵ This initiative paved the way for the European Council's decision (at its Cologne Summit of June 1999) to merge the WEU and the EU. In November 1999, Javier Solana, the first High Representative for the CFSP, also took on the duties of the Secretary General of the WEU, thus taking a bureaucratically important step towards EU-WEU integration.

At the December 1999 Helsinki Summit, the European Council adopted a number of measures to advance the CESDP, stating its 'determination to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crisis'.⁶ The EU members agreed to build, by 2003 and through voluntary contributions, a military force of about 50,000–60,000 troops capable of performing and sustaining the full range of Petersberg tasks. Even though this force is not put forward as a European army, it will de facto act as such. New institutions – the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee, and the Military Staff – were created on 1 March 2000 for managing the EU's evolving defense role.

As far as NATO is concerned, it endorsed the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) as the European pillar of the Alliance at its 1996 Berlin Summit and reiterated this endorsement at its 1999 Washington Summit. The Berlin Communiqué stated that the guideline principle was to act together through NATO whenever possible; but when some of the allies choose not to participate in a specific operation, there should be a common decision on whether NATO or the WEU would lead an operation. The declaration adopted at the June 1999 meeting of the EU and the USA in Bonn stated: 'We welcome the enhancement of European capacity to respond to crises';⁷ it was also confirmed that NATO fully supports the development of the ESDI within the Alliance by making available its assets and capabilities to the WEU. An important development in NATO-WEU-EU relations was the creation of Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF); this has enabled the WEU to utilize NATO forces and equipment for objectives defined in the EU's CFSP. The rationale behind the CJTF was to avoid duplication by creating 'separable but not separate capabilities', but NATO has firmly insisted on its 'first right of refusal' in crisis management.⁸

Overall, the EU has become an important actor in the restructuring of the European security system, advancing the ESDI with the aim of strengthening the European pillar of NATO and ensuring that it has the capability to act on its own when NATO chooses not to act.⁹ This process had not advanced that far before the Kosovo crisis, which revealed weakness in the European Union's defense capabilities. As J. A. C. Lewis argued, 'Many believe that Kosovo has done more for the cause of a European defense identity in the past six months than the previous six years of deliberation.'¹⁰ Seeing the need not just to make another step forward in taking responsibility for European security but to advance in a revolutionary way, the European Council at its June 2000 Feira Summit identified 'principles and modalities for arrangements to allow non-EU European NATO members and other EU accession candidates to contribute to EU military crisis management'.¹¹ It was settled that if the European Council decides to launch an operation, non-EU European NATO members (i.e. Turkey, Norway, and Iceland) might participate if the operation uses NATO capabilities, and they would be invited to participate in operations that do not use NATO capabilities. In summer 2000, making the first step in implementing the Feira decisions, the EU approached NATO and proposed the establishment of four ad hoc working groups composed of representatives of member-states of both organizations, seeking primarily to benefit from the Alliance's force-planning expertise at the military level. According to George Robertson, NATO Secretary General, 'we can make European security real or it can break us. Everyone here realizes that we need to be part of a much sharper, a much more focused set of institutions'.¹²

It is within this context that Turkey's incorporation into the EU becomes essential. Exclusion of such an integral actor from the European security struc-

tures would carry significant risks, while its inclusion would enhance European military capabilities and allow the EU to exploit Turkey's geopolitical value. For example, since any EU operation can be implemented – according to NATO Washington Summit decisions – only after NATO Council approval, including Turkey's vote, the EU has in each case to find a way to accommodate Turkey.

This is not to deny that Turkey has serious problems that pose obstacles to its accession to the EU. Turkey has a dubious human rights record, structural deficiencies in its democracy pertaining to the political role of the military through such institutions as the National Security Council, and serious problems related to the Kurdish issue, not to mention economic weaknesses such as relatively high rates of inflation and unemployment. Also, Turkey's accession might bring a whole range of new security risks to the EU, such as direct exposure to fundamentalist Islam, transborder tensions with such unstable states as Syria, Iraq, and Iran and ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus. Incorporating such a protracted conflict as that of Cyprus into the Union's domain does not guarantee its resolution, while making traditional Turkish-Greek tensions into a domestic issue for the EU might seriously complicate the CESDP. Nevertheless, a formula for Turkey's incorporation into the EU orbit has to be found.

Turkey's Concerns and Reservations

The institutional changes analyzed in the previous section raise three interconnected questions about Turkey's role in European security. First, to what extent can Turkey affect the EU's CESDP through its vote in the NATO Council? Second, to what extent could Turkey be relied upon to provide its military assets to EU operations if it has no say in the decisionmaking process leading to such operations? It does not take much insight to see that making NATO's assets and capabilities available to EU operations without consultation with Turkey (or, preferably, Turkey's participation in decisionmaking) may lead to complications. Third, would strengthening the European pillar of NATO leave Turkey (as a non-member of the EU for years to come) relatively alone?

Prior to the Helsinki breakthrough, these questions had been fuelling Turkey's concerns about losing its ability to influence military decisions. For example, as an associate member of the WEU, Turkey was able to participate in its decisionmaking processes – but that would be lost when the WEU merges with the EU, because the political direction of the WEU would then come directly from the European Council. That is why Turkey insisted, before and at the NATO Washington Summit of April 1999, that a EU security decision that would be implemented using NATO capabilities should be subject to

the North Atlantic Council's approval, thus giving NATO members the final vote on any possible EU operations. In addition, Turkey tried to influence the NATO Council not to grant the EU automatic access to NATO assets, insisting that EU requests from NATO should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The USA supported the Turkish position and argued that the ESDI should not discriminate against non-EU members or duplicate NATO defense structures. According to Alexander Vershbow, the US ambassador to NATO, 'a European operation will have the greatest chance of success if it has the political and practical support of non-EU allies, not the least of all Turkey'.¹³ The US administration made a convincing argument about how it would be costly for the EU to exclude Turkey.

The EU leaders gradually realized that Turkey's concerns could not be alleviated by statements like 'We are going to make sure that Turkey continues to feel it has influence over European defense'.¹⁴ One scenario for Turkey's integration without membership that was considered in EU circles was to include this non-member in the CFSP, the second pillar of the EU, which should allow for Turkish participation in operations that implement CFSP decisions and should guarantee Turkey's approval in NATO Council decisions. As the EU – responding to the US urge to incorporate Turkey – was moving closer to issuing Ankara an invitation, Turkey also increased its pressure, particularly at the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels in December 1999. Turkish Defense Minister Sabahattin Cakmakoglu presented his argument quite bluntly: 'We are a member of NATO. In NATO decisions are adopted unanimously'.¹⁵

The EU's Helsinki decisions did not alleviate Turkey's concerns that it might be discriminated against in the CESDP. On 13 December 1999, the Turkish foreign ministry summarized this attitude as follows: 'The report regarding the ESDI, approved at Helsinki Summit, showed that the dominant understanding in the EU was already far away from satisfying Turkey'.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that when it seemed like Turkey was about to reject the Helsinki offer, it was Javier Solana, High Representative for the CFSP and Secretary General of the WEU, who flew to Ankara to convince the Turkish leaders to accept the EU's invitation. Accepting the candidate-country status, Turkey still took a rather firm position:

Turkey must participate on a regular basis in the day-to-day consultations of European security. It should also participate fully and equally in decision-making on all EU-led operations using NATO assets. And on the other hand, in EU operations not using NATO assets, it must participate in the decision shaping and the implementation of such operations if it decided to join them.¹⁷

At the NATO ministerial meeting in Florence in May 2000, Turkey again expressed its strong opposition to the ESDI; so, two weeks before the Feira Summit, Solana paid another visit to Ankara with every reassurance that Turkey would not be left out of this process. Following the Feira Summit,

Turkey sent a diplomatic note to all NATO members summarizing its views on the CESDP:

European Security and Defence policies and their repercussions for NATO will be followed closely, Turkey's contribution to the process will be proportional to its participation. Turkey will evaluate CESDP in the light of her national interests, while bearing in mind her responsibilities as a candidate for accession to the EU. Turkey's main objection is that the EU is trying to elaborate its relations with Turkey in the framework of CESDP solely on the basis of crisis management overlooking the previous decisions regarding the preservation of WEU acquis.¹⁸

What made this statement even stronger was the decision of the North Atlantic Council that had been taken the day before. NATO decided to allow its experts to contribute to the EU's planning activities solely by giving advice of a restricted nature on technical/military matters. Even more importantly, it established that any EU request would be taken up by a specific Council resolution, and that the decisions taken at the working groups would be implemented only after the Council's approval. These decisions have certainly increased Turkey's impact on possible EU operations and are interpreted in Ankara as a measure of the success of Turkey's diplomatic endeavors.¹⁹

Therefore, the EU, estimating the substantial benefits of Turkey's inclusion into the EU orbit, must also invest more efforts in alleviating Ankara's concerns and overcoming its serious reservations.

Turkey's Potential Contributions to the CESDP

Turkey's institutional role in the Union's common foreign and security policies, its significant military capabilities, and its pivotal geographical position determine Turkey's strategic importance for the EU in the post-Cold War era. As Richard Holbrooke has put it, 'Turkey stands at the crossroads of almost every issue of importance on the European continent – including NATO, the Balkans, Cyprus, the Aegean, Iraq sanctions, Russian relations in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and transit routes for Caspian oil and gas.'²⁰

First of all, Turkey's participation in the EU's possible military operations could contribute significantly to their success and, maybe, could determine their feasibility. Indeed, looking at the preliminary blueprints and force planning for these operations, we can easily see gaps and deficits.

The EU's declared goal of being able to deploy 60,000 soldiers – the kind of force that could serve as peacekeepers in hot spots like Bosnia and Kosovo – will require up to 200,000 soldiers because of rotation needs. Yet the European allies, with 2 million soldiers on paper, had trouble fielding 40,000 for peacekeeping in the Balkans. And the allies lack the huge transport planes required to project military power beyond their borders.²¹

This situation, despite all the post-Kosovo plans for a European army, is not going to change in the near future. According to Lord Robertson, 'Kosovo was only an alarm call. The simple, but brutal message was: we made promises that we could not keep.'²² The EU will have either to rely on the USA (which is seen as undesirable) or to involve a European power which is capable of sustained military effort and has a large standing army – Turkey. Indeed, Turkey spends 4.4% of its GNP on defense. 'Meanwhile, defense budgets have been falling across much of Europe. Germany plans to reduce military spending by \$10 billion over the next four years and already devotes only 1.4 percent of its GNP to defense, a lower percentage than any NATO country except Luxembourg, with Britain and France spending 2.8 and 2.6 percent of their GNP on defense.'²³ Turkey has the sixth largest standing army in the world (after China, the USA, Russia, India, and North Korea) and in 1994–99 was consistently ranked as the third major recipient of major conventional weapons (after Taiwan and Saudi Arabia).²⁴ As an indication of its willingness to contribute to the EU's rapid deployment force, Turkey offered in February 2000 to provide a brigade-size unit supported by air and naval components.²⁵

As far as the Turkey's geographic value for European security is concerned, four specific aspects can be identified. The first one involves Iraq, and the key reference point here is certainly the 1990–91 Gulf War, which has shown how much the security of Europe could be harmed by turmoil in the Gulf area. Turkey's participation in the allied coalition against Iraq was crucial for the victory, first of all because of the high value of the Incirlik air base for conducting the air campaign. One may remember Turkey's participation in the embargo against Iraq and, more significantly, its role in maintaining the 'no-fly zone' in Northern Iraq since 1991. Incirlik has been the main base for the fighter squadrons that patrol this zone in the Northern Watch Operation.²⁶ In 1998 and 1999, as the crisis between Iraq and the UN over the issue of monitoring the elimination of weapons of mass destruction escalated, Turkey's position was vital again, much the same way as in 1991. Without access to Incirlik, it would have been much more difficult for the USA and the UK to launch a new series of airstrikes, so it is not a far-fetched claim that access to Turkey's military bases (as well as Turkish participation) would be crucial for the success of any possible NATO/EU operation in the Middle East.

The second aspect of Turkey's place and role in the Middle East that carries implications for the European Union involves its closeness to and alliance-building with Israel. Since 1993, Turkey has been engaged in extensive cooperation with Israel, formalized in a range of agreements stretching from cultural to military matters. These latter are certainly of particular importance since the agreements on military cooperation brought Turkey and Israel together as security partners in the Middle East. More recently, Turkey furthered its ties with Egypt, signing an agreement on deepening cooperation and coordination between the two nations' security and police agencies on 21

May 2000. Turkey has already played an important role in the multilateral track of the Middle East Peace Process and is able to act as a mediator between Palestine and Israel, as illustrated by its diplomatic endeavors in August 2000, when Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Sholomo Ben Ami, and Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak visited Turkey one after another. With these assets, Turkey can play an important role in the EU's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (or the Barcelona Process), which has three main purposes: (1) to ensure economic development in the Mediterranean region; (2) to eliminate the economic and political causes of immigration from North Africa to the EU; and (3) to promote peace in the Middle East between the Israelis and the Arabs. Turkey's developing secular democracy and dynamic economy may serve as a model to other Islamic countries and promote the first two of these goals, while its close ties with Israel can help in achieving the third one. Therefore, Turkey's role in the Barcelona Process would help the EU to deal with such security challenges as ethnic conflict, the rise of political Islam, immigration, and instability in the Middle East. One should note that Turkey has to deal with similar security challenges itself, so in fact its role cuts both ways: it may contribute to the EU's Mediterranean goals, but at the same time it may increase the security problems the EU faces, especially with respect to ethnicity and religion.

The third aspect of Turkey's geostrategic weight is related to its role in Southeast Europe and the Balkans, the region that in the 1990s posed the most serious challenges to European security and stability. Turkey's role in the Balkans is highlighted by its participation in resolving the Bosnian crisis of 1992–95 and the Kosovo crisis of 1998–99. In both cases, Turkey provided massive humanitarian relief, its troops served under UN command, and it accommodated many thousands of refugees. Turkey has contributed an infantry battalion group (1,300 officers and soldiers) to NATO's Implementation/Stabilization Force (IFOR/SFOR) in Bosnia, as well as 26 police officers to the UN Mission in Bosnia (UNMIBH); its mechanized battalion (940 officers and soldiers) is deployed in Kosovo as part of the KFOR multinational brigade South (Prizren) under German command.²⁷ As the EU – with its Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – shifts the emphasis on economic development aid as a means to discharge security challenges, Turkey can capitalize on its active economic role in the Balkans. As Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem emphasized earlier this year:

Turkish private investment in the region is about \$1.2 billion. Taking into account the joint ventures that are implemented by Turkish and Greek companies, the total Turkish investments to the Balkans will exceed the level of \$2 billion by the end of 2000. The trade volume between Turkey and the Balkan countries (except Greece) is about \$1.5 billion. The trade with Greece was \$700 million in 1999, it is estimated to reach \$5 billion in 2005.²⁸

Thus, Turkey has great potential for contributing militarily, politically, and economically to the EU's Balkan policies. Its ties with the peoples of South-

eastern Europe are historical, cultural, ethnic, and – in the case of Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians – religious. On the other hand, one should note that these ties might well increase the EU's security problems, because they make Turkey a party to Balkan politics. As for the Cyprus problem, this definitely constitutes a special case, but if the EU were able to pressure Turkey towards a resolution of this problem, using the additional leverage of Turkey's candidacy, this would increase stability in Southeastern Europe.

The fourth aspect of Turkey's potential geopolitical contribution to European security is related to its role in the Caspian region. Turkey has for years played the role of an energy corridor for Europe, as some of the oil from the Middle East is transported through its territory. This role will increase massively when the energy resources of the Caspian area reach the world markets. These resources are of such a scale that whoever controls them would hold the key to strategic balances for the 21st century, so Turkey's position will shape key regional balances. For the transportation of Caspian oil and natural gas, an East–West corridor (Eurasian Transportation Corridor) will be established, with a system of pipelines from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan across and around the Caspian Sea towards Novorossiisk and Baku, and from the latter through Georgia and into Turkey towards Ceyhan. On 18 November 1999, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia signed a deal on the creation of the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline, scheduled to be completed by 2004, that transforms Turkey into a major energy corridor for Europe. Building on this role, in summer 2000 Turkey suggested forming a Caucasus Stability Pact that would increase the EU's involvement in the region and make Turkey instrumental for this process. Turkey also believes that wider participation of Central Asian republics in the Euro–Atlantic community will contribute to the enhancement of Eurasian peace and stability. To that end, it signed nearly 400 agreements with the Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan on economic, cultural, educational, communications, transportation, and technical assistance matters. Delivering on these agreements, Turkish companies are involved in investment projects in Central Asia and Azerbaijan worth \$6.5 billion.²⁹

In short, Turkey's inclusion into the EU orbit brings numerous benefits for the Union's foreign and security policies through Turkey's capabilities and its ties in the regions around it. At the same time, its exclusion would be problematic and even risky due to Turkey's ability to influence EU military operations and decisions through its vote in the NATO Council. While the European Union may be acting on such considerations in its policies towards Turkey, Turkey is motivated by its desire to belong to 'Europe'. Since the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey's foreign policy has revolved around the ultimate goal of gaining acceptance as European. The perception in Turkey is that inclusion into the European Union endorses one's European identity. That is why many Turks believe that if Turkey becomes a member of the EU, its century-old dream of being part of Europe will finally be realized. This

does not mean that the economic and political advantages of membership are not considered, but only that for the Turks recognition as part of Europe is an additional and powerful incentive.

The perceived cultural differences between Turkey and the EU raise question marks regarding Turkey's Europeanness and its eligibility to become a member of the EU. The underlying issue is perception of Turkish culture as different from European culture. This view was best reflected by the European People's Party declaration of March 1997: 'The European Union is a civilization project and within this civilization project, Turkey has no place.'³⁰ Nicole Fontaine, the President of the European Parliament, more recently summarized this view:

The application by Turkey presents the dilemma in simple terms.... If the answer were in the end to be negative, Turkey, its long-standing patience exhausted, could only look to other avenues for the future, entailing considerable geopolitical risks. If on the other hand it were one day to join the Union, after undergoing the process of economic and democratic development which is being urged upon it, its accession would of course be to the Union's advantage economically and politically, but it would not be possible to evade the problem of cultural integration.³¹

It should be noted here that the perceived cultural differences between Turkey and the EU may complicate their relationship in the foreseeable future, but it is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate on this aspect. One should certainly keep in mind that questions related to Turkey's European credentials would continue to have an impact on advancement of the negotiations on Turkish membership in the EU.

Conclusion

This article argues that Turkey's incorporation into the European Union is important for the EU's security role. The estimates of the probable geopolitical and security risks that Turkey's exclusion entails for the EU and the potential benefits its inclusion would bring prompted the EU's decision to grant Turkey a candidate-country status. Turkey's contribution to the EU's CESDP is derived from its military capabilities and its role in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Caspian area, while its ability to affect EU operations through its vote in the NATO Council (which has the final say) cannot be underestimated. Turkey is an important player in the changing European security arena, and, without its participation, EU-led operations (whether the WEU format is used or not) may stand less chance of success. According to Lord Robertson, 'Turkey's attitude is closely linked to its relationship with the EU. They want to participate in EU-led operations and they have the feeling that they might be left alone. Turkey will be wanted and needed if we want to

have a credible European force'.³² Turkey's role – in both of its 'pillars' (geographical position and military capabilities) – is certainly different from the one that Turkey played during the Cold War, but it is no less vital. Turkey's integration into the EU carries therefore an additional advantage that the Central and Eastern European countries cannot match. Thus, to grant Turkey a candidate status was a proper step for the EU to take in the Helsinki Summit, just as not doing so was viewed as a strategic mistake in the Luxembourg Summit of 1997.

A possible scenario for Turkish–EU relations in the near future is the integration of Turkey most closely into the CESDP, the 'second pillar' of the EU, thereby guaranteeing its role in security policymaking. This scenario fits into the complex 'concentric circles' and 'variable geometry' structure of European integration, where Turkey would act as a full member in certain issues (first of all security) but not in others. However, any scenario short of full membership would not be very welcome in Turkey. According to the former Turkish president Suleyman Demirel, 'The delicate issue here is whether we are part of Europe, Europe must make a fundamental decision. It cannot be half-hearted.'³³ The Helsinki decisions, while certainly marking a turning-point in Turkish–EU relations, can also be seen as a compromise which ensures Turkey an associate status in the EU's developing security role. The other part of this compromise is that Turkey still has a long way to go in its political and economic development. What lie ahead are Turkey's internal reforms, a solution to the Kurdish issue, resolution of conflicts with Greece, and a political settlement in Cyprus – all gigantic tasks. But as US President Clinton reflected, 'I think it is very important that we do everything reasonable to anchor Turkey to the West. If you look at the size of the country, what it can block and what it can open doors to, it is terribly important.'³⁴

NOTES AND REFERENCES

* Meltem Müftüler-Bac is Associate Professor of Political Science at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.

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