

“As long as Turkey’s desire for EU membership represented an abstract ideal . . . , Turkey’s military and civilian elite could avoid acknowledging the potential political costs of membership in the EU. And as long as the Europeans kept Turkey at arm’s length, that elite’s willingness to implement the domestic reforms necessary for EU membership was never put to the test. All this changed . . . with the EU’s decision to accept Turkey’s candidacy for membership.”

A Dream Become Nightmare? Turkey’s Entry into the European Union

ERSEL AYDINLI AND DOV WAXMAN

Engulfed in yet another economic crisis, and with a coalition government once again appearing decidedly shaky, little remains constant in the volatile world of Turkish politics. Turkey’s desire to become a member of the European Union—a consistent goal of Turkey’s political and military rulers and a driving force of Turkish foreign policy—has long remained an exception to this. Enjoying broad popular support (with the exception of small circles of radical nationalists and Islamists) and political consensus, the goal of EU membership has been pursued by successive governments despite their differing ideological compositions. It would perhaps be no exaggeration to describe integration into the EU as one of the cornerstones of Turkish politics, influencing both its domestic and foreign policies.

The main obstacle to Turkish membership in the EU long appeared to be the Europeans themselves. Whether out of political, economic, or security considerations, or as some argued, religious bias, the Europeans obstinately rebuffed Turkey’s advances. Although the rejection was rarely stated outright and was delivered with the delicacies of diplomatic language, it was keenly felt by the Turks. Like a scorned suitor, the Turks reacted to each European rejection with bitterness and wounded pride, only to ruefully return later pleading to be taken in; thus, Turkey’s unrequited love affair with Europe continued. Until recently, that is.

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To the surprise of many, in December 1999 at the EU summit meeting in Helsinki, the Europeans finally declared Turkey a suitable candidate for EU membership. European leaders gathered at the summit proudly described their decision to accept Turkey as a candidate for membership as “historic” and “monumental.” It was hailed as opening a new chapter in EU-Turkish relations, ending the growing antagonism that had marked the period since the 1997 EU summit in Luxembourg, when Turkey’s bid for membership was flatly rejected.

If they were expecting outpourings of warmth and gratitude from the Turks, however, European leaders were quickly disappointed. This time it was the Turks who were playing hard to get. Reacting to what they perceived had been the EU’s discriminatory approach toward their application for membership, they demanded equal treatment and strongly objected to the attachment of any special conditions. When, at the insistence of Greece, such conditions were attached, it seemed for a moment that the unthinkable might happen: the Turks might actually reject the Europeans. The Europeans, clearly sensing that this was indeed a possibility, quickly dispatched their foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, to Ankara to meet with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. At the end of their meeting, Ecevit emerged, declaring that Turkey would accept the offer of candidacy, and Solana beamed with satisfaction, having averted a potentially awkward and embarrassing situation.

The Turkish reaction to the announcement that Turkey had been accepted as a candidate for EU membership initially appears quite perplexing. Was it simply a display of national pride—an attempt not to seem too eager or too desperate? Develop-

ments within Turkey since the Helsinki summit indicate that something deeper and more serious was behind the lukewarm Turkish response. These developments suggest that the long-standing domestic political consensus over EU membership has begun to collapse and in its place new and competing political coalitions have arisen, coalitions that have the potential to dramatically reconfigure Turkey's domestic political map.

WAKING FROM THE DREAM

For centuries the Turks have dreamed of Europe. Ever since the first Ottoman ambassador was sent to Paris in 1719 with the instruction to "make a thorough study of the means of civilization and education, and report on those capable of application" in the Ottoman Empire, the idea of "civilization," in the guise of Europe, has acted as a powerful magnet for Ottoman and later Turkish elites. Just under 200 years later, in 1913, a Turkish journalist wrote: "There is no second civilization. . . . Civilization means European civilization, and it must be imported with both its roses and its thorns." Similarly, Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the Turkish Republic and its first president, declared in 1924: "The Turks are the friends of all civilized nations. Countries vary, but civilization is one, and for a nation to progress it must take part in this single civilization." Insofar as Europe was identified with "civilization," this desire for progress and modernization effectively entailed "Europeanization."

Few countries can claim to have pursued a goal with such single-minded purpose and dedication as Turkey has with its desire to become European. Despite numerous ups and downs in its relations with Europe, and a turbulent domestic politics involving four coups in as many decades (the latest coming in 1997 with the "soft coup" against the allegedly Islamist-led government), the ship of state has continued to sail in the direction of Europe. At its helm has been Turkey's state elite, the self-appointed captain, ensuring that nobody grabs the wheel and lurches the country off course. These bureaucrats and generals are largely responsible for the stability in the midst of instability that has char-

acterized Turkish foreign policy. The policy of Europeanization, first launched in the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century and continued and intensified in its successor, the Turkish republic, in the twentieth century, was drawn up and implemented by the state elite, at times in the face of popular resistance. As one Turkish writer put it, "the conflicting interests and aspirations within Turkish society have been constrained by the almighty Turkish state, with the army as its iron fist."¹ No doubt, the bureaucrats and generals sincerely believed that the interests of the man on the street could only be furthered by making him a European. But it was the interests of the state that they were naturally preoccupied with since, unlike their political counterparts, their boss was the state, not the electorate.

For the past two centuries, Europeanization undeniably was good for the state. In their nineteenth-century heyday with their empires spanning the globe, the European nations appeared invincible, both economically and militarily. Although weakened and humbled by two world wars, the European nations still emerged prosperous and powerful, albeit in the shadow of the new superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. For the Turkish state elite, the attraction of Europe remained undiminished. As Europe began reorganizing itself into a common market, the Turkish state elite translated their goal of Europeanization into the policy of integrating Turkey into this new European structure.

In 1959, two years after the establishment of the European Economic Community, Turkey applied for membership, becoming an associate member with the signing of the Ankara Agreement in 1963. According to the agreement, Turkey was scheduled to become a full member in 1995 after completing a preparatory stage followed by a lengthy transition period during which tariff barriers were to be significantly reduced on both sides. This agreement provided the Turks with the apparently solid expectation that full membership would eventually occur and laid out what they needed to do to become a member. Essentially, it involved continued development of the economy so it could withstand open competition with the advanced industrial economies of Western Europe. Ever since, Turkey's approach to Europe has been shaped according to this understanding. As far as Turkey's state elite was concerned, continued economic development would pave the

European policymakers should understand that they cannot extend one hand to Turkey while pushing it away with the other.

¹Berdal Aral, "Turkey's Insecure Identity from the Perspective of Nationalism," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Winter 1997, p. 80.

way into Europe. Although it might take time and involve some painful adjustments along the way, European riches beckoned.

The bureaucrats and generals, however, failed to appreciate the inherent dynamism of the European integration project. The European Economic Community became the European Community and was then transformed again into its present configuration, the European Union. These changes were not just semantic. They indicated the changing agenda and rationale of the European integration project as politics increasingly came to rival, if not supersede, economics. Since the 1980s, European integration steadily shifted from being a primarily economic to a political project. Turkey's state elite were largely blind to this dramatic change, a blindness that has cost Turkey dearly. Members of the elite continued to insist on the implementation of the provisions of the Ankara Agreement, and emphasized the economic progress Turkey had made. When the bureaucrats in Brussels pointed out Turkey's deficiencies in democracy and human rights, the elite took offense and regarded it as illegitimate interference in Turkey's domestic affairs. They failed to realize that if they aspired to become members of the EU, Turkey's domestic affairs were of legitimate interest to a Europe whose identity was coming to be defined in terms of democracy and respect for human rights and minority rights.

Many of the harsh exchanges between Turkey and the EU over the past two decades stemmed from this misunderstanding on the part of Turkish policymakers (coupled with no small amount of insensitivity on the part of European policymakers). Until recently, Turkish policymakers have viewed integration into the EU mainly in economic terms, without fully recognizing its profound political implications. This evasion—willful or otherwise—of the extensive domestic political repercussions of EU membership enabled the consensus about the desirability of EU membership to prevail for so long among Turkish officials. The Turkish goal of EU membership became something of a dogma, and the pursuit of it almost a ritual. As if entranced, members of the Turkish civil and military elite repeated ad nauseam the mantra that Turkey rightfully belonged in the European family of nations. They never seemed to ask themselves whether they were prepared to pay the price for admission into this exclusive club. To be sure, since the prospect of admission appeared remote for so long, such a question would have been premature, if not presumptuous. This is no longer the case, and thus for the first time, Turkish policymakers can no

longer ignore the political implications of integration into the EU. As they are forced to come to terms with these implications, Turkey's European dream is fast becoming a nightmare for some within the Turkish civilian and military elite.

MANAGING MODERNIZATION

As long as Turkey's desire for EU membership represented an abstract ideal rather than a concrete political program, Turkey's military and civilian elite could avoid acknowledging the potential political costs of membership in the EU. And as long as the Europeans kept Turkey at arm's length, their willingness to implement the domestic reforms necessary for EU membership was never put to the test. All this changed in December 1999 with the EU's decision to accept Turkey's candidacy for membership. Suddenly the ball was in Turkey's court. For the first time, the opportunity to become a member of the EU was presented before Turkey's politicians and generals, albeit with strings attached. The conditions that Turkey had to meet to attain EU membership were later spelled out in the Accession Partnership Document that was finally agreed upon in December 2000 by the European Council of Ministers in Nice after much haggling both in Brussels and between Brussels and Ankara. The EU's Accession Partnership Document contains three areas in which reforms are to be implemented. The first aligns Turkish and EU laws and practices, the *Acquis Communautaire* in Brussels jargon. The second comprises a list of economic reforms, basically a continuation and consolidation of the neoliberal economic reforms first introduced in Turkey by President Turgut Özal's government in the 1980s. The third set of criteria for EU membership, and the most problematic for Turkey, is the political conditions. The political component of the Accession Partnership Document is by far the most controversial, since it involves the rights of Turkey's Kurdish minority and the Cyprus issue, both highly sensitive concerns within Turkey. Turkey has to further democratize, improve its human rights record, allow greater autonomy and cultural rights for the Kurds, resolve its territorial disputes with Greece, and find an internationally acceptable settlement to Cyprus (which remains divided between the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north since the Turkish army occupied the north in 1974 in the name of defending the rights of the Turkish minority there). These demands amount to nothing less than a complete upheaval of Turkish foreign and domestic policies. They also challenge some fundamental principles of Kemalism, the ide-

ology named after the founder of the Turkish Republic that continues to guide Turkish modernization to this day. Given the scope of the EU's demands, it is no surprise that a heated debate quickly erupted in Turkey over the contents of the EU's Accession Partnership Document. In this ongoing debate, two opposing camps have emerged: the "integralists" and the "gradualists."² The former advocate a rapid implementation of the EU's required reforms in their entirety, while the latter, although supporting EU accession, oppose some conditions attached to EU membership and favor a lengthier process of adaptation to EU norms and standards.

Faced with the concrete offer of future EU membership, the various actors in Turkish politics have been forced to articulate their positions on the issue. These stances are ultimately shaped by differing views concerning the modernization process in Turkey. Until now, the traditional military-civilian elite instigating Turkey's modernization and developmental project have adopted a gradualist strategy, aimed at avoiding the destabilization that they fear could result from too quickly reducing strong central state control. The

general idea behind the gradualist strategy is to wait until Turkish society has sufficiently matured for a "real" democracy. During this gradual, strictly state-controlled process—which could last for an unknown period of time—society will learn to cope with democracy without falling to pieces. (One prominent Turkish observer asked a member of the Turkish General Staff when Turks would be allowed the full rights of a liberal democracy and received as a response the following question: "If you had a 13-year-old daughter, would you comfortably send her out alone at night?") Following this line of thinking, the gradualists have staunchly opposed numerous proposed legal changes designed to restrict the military's political power.

Other Turkish political elites and intellectuals, however, have increasingly begun advocating a more rapid and complete modernization process through integration with the EU. These groups generally seek rapid and total democratization, inspired by the momentum and stimulus of EU

membership (this group is sometimes joined by various Islamist and Kurdish groups seeking EU integration to strengthen their own positions against the military-political elites, who are as yet unwilling to totally share power). Two main points must be made concerning these "integralists": first, they tend to see external pressure on Turkey as the only way to accelerate the democratization and modernization process. Second, they seem to differ from the gradualists in thinking that Turkey, with the overall experience of 70 years since its inception as a republic and with 55 years' experience of multiparty politics—albeit with four military interventions—has sufficiently matured to face the ultimate challenges of modernization, that is, the democratic reconfiguration of political power within a liberal democracy. To them, the young girl, who has been protected all these years by an iron fist, is now grown and not only can but must experience life on her own if she is to learn to survive and be successful.

The EU's offer of membership is largely viewed as a clever ploy designed to disguise Europe's continued rejection of Turkey.

The split between Turkey's elite regarding the speed and management of the country's modernization process is also evident in the

recent debate between Turkey's "Republicans" and "Democrats." Republicans represent the long-time supporters of the Kemalist modernization project and its state-led, top-down management style. They tend to stress Turkey's unique security concerns, and find the Democrats' antistate rhetoric both dangerous and subversive to state security—if not treasonous. Democrats argue that the elitist and statist nature of Kemalist modernization has become the major obstacle to the final phase of modernization: liberal democratization. In the words of the outspoken chief justice of Turkey's High Appeals Court, Sami Selcuk: "The Turkish state has become a taboo and sacred subject. . . . I want a republic in which democracy administers free thoughts and beliefs, not the state. I want a democratic republic." Similar sentiments have also been expressed by more conservative thinkers, such as the prominent Turkish columnist Mehmet Ali Birand: "We must finally accept that the methods used to govern Turkey are outdated. The world has changed and Turkey has changed right along with it. We no longer have a society that impassively obeys every order. On the contrary, we have a community that voices its demands openly and gets its way. In contrast to this we are still faced with a state system that sees the

²Other labels, such as pro- or anti-Europeans, or reformists and traditionalists, are misleading since both camps accept the need for further integration into the EU and both portray themselves as supporters of Turkey's continued modernization.

people as sheep. Those that run the state do not look as if they have been able to accept that they can no longer simply issue orders like they used to.”

The conflict is also one between management styles. The Republicans urge modernization under the direction of a strong centralized power source, while the Democrats appear to want a more decentralized state apparatus supported by a societal consensus, and incorporating previously excluded segments of society.

How, then, do these gradualists and integralists wage their battles? Gradualists do not, at least publicly, emphasize the argument that Turks are not yet mature enough for democracy; instead, they make use of a security rationale. This involves the claim that Turkey's security needs justify certain limitations to the country's democratic reforms. Consequently, security becomes the primary criterion when assessing the feasibility of any major political project, and any speedy reshuffling of domestic power is considered extremely risky since the country is besieged by internal and external enemies.³ Thus, gradualist and anti-EU circles alike were able to single out from the EU's Accession Partnership Document those articles concerning the Kurdish issue, thereby overshadowing many more important issues concerning political reforms. Due to this over-concentration on Kurdish rights, the Turkish public debate was locked for a lengthy period into a discussion over Europe's sincerity concerning Turkey's territorial integrity, rather than debating the mechanics of the required internal political changes as set forth in the document. Conversely, integralists, recognizing the inherent appeal of the security argument, stress the nonsecurity-related benefits of EU membership, such as the economic jump-start and democratic standards it would provide, while simultaneously issuing subtle criticisms of an overly exclusive reliance on the security argument.

Exactly who are the integralists and gradualists? At first glance, certain institutions and organizations can be seen taking sides along the divide. For example, traditional gradualists include the armed forces and the right-wing Nationalist Action Party, while integralists are generally associated with more centrist political parties, the media, the foreign ministry, and the business world as represented by groups such as the Turkish Industrialists' and Busi-

nessmen's Association (TUSIAD) and even the more conservative, Islamically oriented Individual Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD). On closer examination, however, we find that the fault lines actually run much deeper—perhaps to the individual level. Thus, for example, while the mainstream media is largely integralist, some prominent columnists promote a more gradualist stance. The Turkish judiciary, while largely integralist, includes such diverse figures as the strongly integralist chief justice, Sami Selcuk, and the equally strong gradualist, Vural Savas, who, as the former chief prosecutor of the same court, equates liberalization rhetoric and its supporters with traitors to the country. Even the armed forces are not unified in their stance. While the Turkish General Staff is obviously gradualist in its approach to the question of EU membership, some individual members hold integralist positions.

THE KURDISH QUESTION

The split among the Turkish elite can perhaps be most clearly delineated by looking at the domestic political treatment of the Kurds within the EU membership process. In general, Turkey has traditionally mistrusted European goals regarding the Kurdish issue. When Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the Kurdish guerrilla organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), makes proposals for a “democratic struggle strategy” concentrating on cultural rights that seem to be directly in line with what the Europeans are currently demanding, immediate suspicions arise that this synchronization may not be coincidental. Some Turkish analyses have in fact suggested that the roadmap for full EU membership might actually point toward a political solution to the Kurdish question, and that Europe is using the EU membership “carrot” to facilitate such a move.

Now that the Europeans have made clear their demands for minority (presumed Kurdish) language and cultural rights in the Accession Partnership Document, the divide between the integralists and gradualists has become increasingly evident. The integralists, holding tight to the justification of entering the EU, have declared the need to recognize at least some Kurdish rights. The gradualists, although favoring EU accession, have refused to back down from their negative position on this sensitive issue. Leading the latter, the military has declared on several occasions that it is against the recognition of Kurdish cultural rights. The military's opposition has been vocal and public and has at times placed the government in difficult positions. When Prime Min-

³This is best expressed in Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's response to Justice Selcuk's passionate demands for democratic reforms: “These demands for further democracy are nice but Turkey's special geopolitical conditions require a special type of democracy.” *Hurriyet*, September 7, 1999.

ister Ecevit was attending the EU summit in Nice last December in an effort to convince European leaders of Turkey's determination to become a member of the EU, the army leaked a report to the Turkish media describing the demands for television and education in Kurdish as the "second dimension of separatist terrorism" and the "revival and restructuring of the separatist movement through political means." The military chief of staff then paid a visit to the prime minister on his return and reiterated the army's opposition to any Kurdish cultural rights. Subsequently, in an apparent concession to the military, Ecevit stated that he supported the army's position that the PKK's politicization process constituted a genuine security concern for Turkey, particularly in light of the support being given to the process by the Europeans. Three weeks later, at a National Security Council meeting, the army repeated the argument that Kurdish cultural rights constituted a tactic of separatist terrorism.

The army's main ally has been the right-wing Nationalist Action Party (MHP), whose leader, Devlet Bahçeli, has expressed his clear opposition to Kurdish cultural rights, asserting that granting these rights would only encourage further separatism and conflict.

The speaker of parliament, also an MHP member, even went so far as to declare that the demands for Kurdish rights in the Accession Partnership Document would be more damaging than the Sèvres Treaty, which sought to divide Ottoman lands at the end of World War I. Another MHP politician curtly stated that his party would not allow the use of state resources to "artificially create a language and a nation." This emerging alliance between the military and the MHP could have major domestic political repercussions if the MHP succeeds in gaining the military's tacit support. Having ridden the nationalist wave—generated as a result of 15 years of bloody struggle in the southeast and the capture of Abdullah Öcalan—all the way to its surprising electoral success in 1999 to become the second-largest party (winning 130 seats in parliament and more than doubling its share of the vote from the 8.5 percent obtained in the 1995 election to 18.6 percent), the MHP now seems to be ensuring its political survival by wooing the generals. In asserting its opposition to the EU's demands for minority cultural rights, the MHP also appears to be capitalizing on widespread public mistrust toward the EU. As with

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the military, however, this opposition is framed in terms of Turkey's security needs. During last December's party convention, for example, Bahçeli stated that risks were associated with democratization because of Turkey's "unique vulnerabilities." He advocated introducing some type of "cautious democracy," thereby combining the party's nationalist stance with support for democratization. This seems to be part of a shrewd political strategy by the party leadership aimed at moving the MHP to a new center-right position, allowing it to increase its electoral support as well as benefit from establishing a positive relationship with the military. But this strategy is likely to encounter resistance from the party's grassroots who, unlike the leadership, continue to favor a brand of radical right-wing nationalism (the so-called Gray Wolf movement of the 1970s, which gave the party its radical ultra-right wing bent, still constitutes the core of the party, and seems resistant to any change).

The political party most identified with the integralists is the Motherland Party (ANAP), founded by the late Turgut Özal. Party leader Mesut Yılmaz,

for instance, made headlines when he stated that the "road to the EU goes through Diyarbakir"—the largest city in the

Kurdish-dominated southeastern region of Turkey. Another staunch integralist has been Volkan Vural, director of the newly established EU General Secretariat in Ankara, who has stressed that minority cultural rights are not something up for debate, but rather are a clear EU demand that must be met. Outside ANAP, Prime Minister Ecevit has also implied a generally positive attitude toward allowing some education in Kurdish. Also within the ranks of the integralists is the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Mustafa Bumin, who has declared that "some amount of Kurdish TV" could be allowed, and the Foreign Ministry, under the leadership of Ismail Cem, which has long supported liberal reforms in order to meet EU standards. Somewhat surprisingly, at the end of 2000 the director of the National Intelligence Organization came out in support of the integralists when he announced that Kurdish television and education might help the state better manage problems in Turkey's southeast, since more than half of all Kurdish mothers in the region do not know Turkish. At the same time another surprising voice for the integralists, a former navy commander, stated pub-

lily that broadcasting in Kurdish would not create a problem for Turkey.

TORN BETWEEN SECURITY AND LIBERALIZATION

During the first few months of 2001, Turkey's "National Program" was drawn up by the coalition government to spell out exactly how it plans to meet the demands made in the EU's Accession Partnership Document. While it was always emphasized that a public debate would occur to make the program truly "national," preparation of the program occurred entirely behind closed doors. The secrecy surrounding the program's preparation can be read as a clear indication of the continuing struggle among the Turkish elite over the EU membership issue.

On March 19, 2001, the National Program was finally released. Although it was introduced as a document based on a consensus among the coalition parties and the security bureaucracy within the National Security Council, a true consensus clearly was not achieved in terms of full commitment to the required reforms. Regarding the most important and controversial criteria of the Accession Partnership Document—cultural rights and rights for broadcasting and education in languages other than the official language, redesigning the role of the National Security Council, and abolition of capital punishment—the National Program responds with such ambiguous phrasing that it suggests a great deal of hesitation and indecisiveness. For example, regarding the use of unofficial languages, the document states that "Turkish citizens can freely use different languages, though Turkish is the official language," but this is promptly followed by a national security reservation that, "this freedom cannot be used for separatist or divisive activities."

Similar qualifications concerning national security appear alongside other significant commitments to larger freedoms, suggesting its role as a kind of emergency shelter or safety net to fall back on in times of

need. In the introduction to the program, for example, following an explanation of Turkey's long devotion to liberal democracy, the document states that the country "has experienced separatist terror since 1984 and this has cost the country socially, economically, and politically [in terms of] democratization." The lack of an end date to this sentence suggests that separatist terror remains a threat and therefore implies that this threat's limiting potential on democratization will also continue. In the program's political criteria section, under the subtitle of "freedom of thought and expression," the first sentence expresses the "priority" given by the Turkish government to improving the quality of this type of freedom as based on EU standards. The very next sentence, however, draws limits on this freedom should it affect territorial integrity or national security. Clearly, the integralists' ideas, represented by general statements of commitment to EU requirements and demands, are being balanced by the security-related rhetoric of the gradualists among the Turkish elite. As such, the document represents the tenuous nature of the "consensus" reached during its preparation.

LEFT AT THE PLATFORM?

As a statement of intent, Turkey's National Program is hardly unequivocal. According to Mesut Yilmaz, the deputy prime minister and minister in charge of Turkey's relations with the EU, it can be revised and Turkey can take more risks.⁵ But for this to happen, the gradualists need to be convinced that the risks entailed in accession to the EU are minimal and worth taking. To do this, two different but complementary strategies must be adopted by supporters of future Turkish membership in the EU. The first involves providing the Turkish military and other security-oriented gradualists with assurances that Turkey's security and territorial integrity will not be compromised by the political reforms necessary for EU membership. A significant measure in this regard would be the inclusion of Turkey within the formal decision-making structure of the emerging European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI, the body charged with realizing the EU's aims of formulating and implementing a common foreign and security policy). Turkish policymakers strongly object to their exclusion from an organization whose mandate will involve tackling problems in many areas in which Turkey's national interests are directly implicated.

As in Washington, the development of the ESDI arouses concerns in Ankara about the future role of NATO, the organization that has long formed the cen-

⁵Under the shadow of an imminent EU report detailing Turkey's progress in meeting the demands for EU membership, the Turkish parliament in mid-2001 passed a major constitutional-reform package. The package, which is still awaiting presidential confirmation, includes lifting the ban on the use of other languages (implicitly Kurdish) and abolishes capital punishment—except in cases of war, near-war, or terror (thereby implicitly reserving the right to execute Abdullah Ocalan). The parliament, however, on the grounds of defending Turkey's sovereignty, rejected a proposal that international agreements signed by Turkey should have precedence over domestic laws. The reform package indicates both the strength of the stimulus of EU membership as well as the continuing reservations held by some within the Turkish political elite.

terpiece of Turkey's pro-Western security and foreign policy. The fact that the Europeans (led by the French) have so far refused to grant Turkey's request to be included in the decision-making channels of the ESDI appears to many Turks as further confirmation of Europe's disregard for Turkish security. Given Turkey's invaluable contribution to European security throughout the cold war, the Europeans' attitude also strikes many Turks as ungrateful. Such perceptions stir resentment and hostility toward Europe at a time when the EU ostensibly seeks to improve its relations with Turkey. European policymakers should understand that they cannot extend one hand to Turkey while pushing it away with the other. If the Europeans are sincere in their willingness to admit Turkey into the EU, then including it in the ESDI from the beginning would concretely demonstrate this. It would certainly help alleviate the prevalent sense of distrust toward European intentions in Turkey. The United States should continue to encourage the Europeans to include Turkey within the ESDI.

Full participation in the new European security architecture will only partially reassure Turkey's security-oriented gradualists. It can bolster Turkey's sense of external security, but internal security fears lie at the heart of the opposition to the reforms required by the EU. These fears are deeply rooted, a product of recent history and past traumas. In the case of the Kurdish issue, the capture of Abdullah Ocalan and the Turkish armed forces' resounding military success against the PKK have clearly not yet eased Turkish anxieties about "Kurdish separatism." Short of the complete cessation of Kurdish political activism, both in Turkey and in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe (an unlikely prospect), these anxieties will not disappear any time soon. Does this mean, then, that the internal security concerns evoked by the Kurdish issue will ultimately prevent Turkey from undertaking the reforms necessary for EU membership?

Although this is a major obstacle to overcome, Turkish membership in the EU need not be held hostage to the Kurdish issue. If Turkish policymakers and the Turkish public generally are sufficiently impressed by the expected gains from EU membership, fears of Kurdish separatism can be overridden. For the vast majority of Turks, the need to put bread on the table is their most pressing concern. If they believe that they will be materially better off with Turkey in the EU, they will continue to support the goal of future EU membership as they have done in the past. The Turks are a pragmatic and industrious people and the opportunity to make money and

improve their living standards is enough incentive to support the reforms necessary for EU membership. The problem is that despite the EU's official acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for membership, many doubt that Turkey could ever become a full member of the EU. Indeed, the EU's offer of membership is largely viewed as a clever ploy designed to disguise Europe's continued rejection of Turkey. The Europeans, so the argument goes, have no real intention of ever accepting Turkey as a full member, but they simply can no longer say so outright. The perception of the EU as a "Christian club" to which Turkey as a Muslim country is barred continues to linger in the public imagination. Thus, the second strategy that should be adopted by supporters of future Turkish membership in the EU is to convince the Turks that EU membership is a real possibility.

Once again, the Europeans have the most important role. They can underline their sincerity by consistently emphasizing their desire to include Turkey in the EU and by providing it with the necessary financial and political support while Turkey undergoes the difficult reform process. Withholding funds due to Turkey, as the EU has done until now, does not send a positive signal to Ankara. At the same time, Turkish policymakers must realize that the opportunity for Turkey to become a member of the EU may not last. If the balance of political power in Europe changes from center-left to center-right (as it did previously from center-right to center-left), the Turks could once again find themselves left out in the cold. Similarly, once the first stage of EU enlargement is completed, it may become harder for Turkey to join and gain the benefits currently on offer. The EU is a moving train, and the Turks had better jump on before they are stranded at the platform. ■

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