

The EU and Turkey: Political Machinations in a Three-Level Game

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The possible commencement of negotiations on Turkey's membership of the European Union has, towards the end of 2004, charged to the top of the European political agenda. This is an intensely contested issue, comprising many sub-themes and multiple tangents. I adopt the conception of a three level game¹ to examine arguments, interests and influences circulating and interconnected to the core question of potential Turkish EU membership. This extends Robert Putnam's 'Two-Level Game',² represented here as activity within individual EU member-states (domestic level) and between EU and other states (international level), to include activity among EU states, institutions and other European actors (European level). The paper discusses economic, cultural, and security-strategic considerations, all of which are politicised by advocates and opponents alike.

Introduction

The outcome of the European Council summit in Copenhagen in December 2002 included the setting of a 'date for a date' at which a decision on commencing negotiations with Turkey would be made. On 17 December 2004 the Council will, following an assessment by the European Commission,³ undertake this. In the months before the Commission report appeared, politicians addressed the theme with greater frequency. Conservative circles, in Germany, France and Austria, in particular, sought to mobilise opposition, and governing parties, most pertinently in Germany, impressed support for opening negotiations.

Considered as advocates or opponents of Turkey joining EU, the major actors are the German Social Democratic (SPD)-Green government, led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder

¹Helmut Hubel 'The EU's Three-level Game in Dealing with Neighbours' *European Foreign Affairs Review* 9:3 2004 pp347-362.

²Robert Putnam 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games' *International Organization* 42:3 1988 pp427-460.

³European Commission *Regular Report on Turkey's Accession* (COM 656 final) (Brussels: 2004).

and Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer; their candidate (or *de facto* appointee) as Enlargement Commissioner, Günter Verheugen; the USA, which has for several years provided strong backing for Turkey; the UK, which confirms the American position and in which both government and opposition approve of opening negotiations; and Greece, which until a few years ago could be expected to veto any attempt by Turkey to join the EU. French President Jacques Chirac has, officially, also declared his support and is a key figure. His position is not as certain as some of his earlier statements may have indicated.

The principal opponents of full EU membership for Turkey are the Christian Democrat (CDU-CSU) parties in Germany; the French centre-right parties (and some politicians on the left); all Austrian parties; and several national publics wherein opposition ranges up to 80%. Political elites in the Netherlands are dubious without such strongly adversarial views. Several members of the former Prodi Commission, including those who held the Agriculture and Competition portfolios, Franz Fischler and Frits Bolkestein, had similar opinions. The European Parliament, largely due to the numerical strength of the conservative European People's Party, also contains a good deal of scepticism. There is also a neutral bloc, principally of smaller states, which will likely follow the Commission's recommendation. Beyond these are amorphous, less predictable, but highly influential factors of terrorism and instability.

Background

Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952 and exercised an important role on the alliance's southern flank during the Cold War. In this context it applied for Associate Membership of the then European Economic Community (EEC) and signed an agreement in 1963. In the next two decades Turkish foreign policy, most obviously through the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, and internal upheavals, such as the 1980 military coup, often did not assist the objective of joining the European Community (EC), for which Turkey applied in 1987. By 1996 the partnership had progressed to a Customs Union. In 1997 Turkey was rejected as a candidate for full membership by what had become the EU and subsequently broke off diplomatic relations. In a remarkable turnaround, Turkey was then accepted as candidate at the Helsinki summit in December 1999. Among other factors, this was influenced by the war against Serbia earlier that year and the important

peacemaking/keeping role had Turkey played. In December 2002 the EU locked itself into making a decision on membership negotiations two years hence.

This background indicates a degree of myopia among European states and institutions about the likelihood of Turkish accession. For most of the period outlined it was considered that Turkey had not approached the requirements to join the EU, or even if it did Greece could be counted on to apply a veto. Concurrently, however, a sense of obligation has been generated. This is not of the same order as could be argued the EU had towards the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).⁴ It is more of an expectation on the part of Turkey, but one that has steadily intensified. Strong pressure applied by the USA in support of Turkey's EU accession has encouraged this.

There is another influence on why Turkey's bid has progressed this far. In its day-to-day business the EU's ethos of 'community' and 'solidarity' influences voting procedures and outcomes. While all member-states pursue their own preferences and imperatives, none wants to be the sole rejecter of a proposition, particularly so for issues which have special impact on one current or applicant state.⁵ Although several may be of a negative opinion, veto-wielding members seek to avoid deploying theirs unless particular 'national interests' are considered vital enough and there is no apparent alternative. This might be applied to Turkey's accession bid wherein behind formal exteriors in favour there is widespread scepticism. All states and institutions concurrently emphasise that a 'EU perspective' for Turkey is needed, to promote and sustain a reformist course.

What is required of Turkey and what has it done?

Before negotiations can begin any candidate for membership must fulfil the political Copenhagen Criteria comprising the establishment and unhindered operation of democratic institutions and procedures, and the implementation and assurance of EU human rights standards. Before a candidate can accede it must also fulfil the economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to withstand competition. Additionally, a

⁴Cf. Frank Schimmelfennig *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003); Steve Wood *Germany and East-Central Europe: Political, Economic and Socio-Cultural Relations in the Era of EU Enlargement* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2004).

⁵An inverse instance of this was the concerted attempt of other EU states to isolate Austria over the composition of its government in 2000.

candidate must demonstrate that it can assume the *acquis communautaire* and meet the specificities of its 31 chapters. Less accentuated is the condition that the EU itself must possess the ‘capacity to integrate new members’.⁶

In its pursuance of these requirements, Turkey has introduced some major legal reforms. The system of State Security Courts has been terminated and five of the National Security Council’s nine members, including its chief, are now civilian. The influence of the military has reduced, certainly in formal terms, though how much substantially is not clearly quantifiable. The death penalty was abolished in the wake of EU pressure with the standout example being Kurdish independence fighter/terrorist, Abdullah Ocalan, who had his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment. Minority rights have been extended and the over 12 million Turkish citizens of Kurdish ethnicity can now experience media broadcasts in the Kurdish language. The legal position and protection of women has improved and so-called ‘honour killings’ are subject to increased scrutiny and punishment.

Table 1: Political Rights and Civil Freedoms 2003/2004

	Political Rights	Civil Freedoms	Together	Trend	Classification
EU-15	1.0	1.0	1.0	Positive	Free
CEE Round 1	1.0	1.8	1.4	Stable	Free
CEE Round 2	1.5	2.0	1.8	Positive	Free
Turkey	3.0	4.0	3.5	Positive	Partially Free
Ukraine	4.0	4.0	4.0	Stable	Partially Free

Note: 1 represents the best and 7 the worst evaluation. 1 to 3 classified ‘free’, 3 to 5.5 ‘partly free’ and over 5.5 ‘not free’. Ratings reflect global events from 1 January 2003 to 30 November 2003. *Source:* Freedom House cited in Quaisser and Wood *EU Member Turkey?*

The emotive issue of torture has been confronted with a ‘zero tolerance policy’. Nonetheless, independent agencies and the Commission itself have reported on numerous instances. The Turkish Human Rights Organisation stated there were around 600 in the past year; Hughes notes a ‘big fall in the severest forms of torture (to around 20 cases).’⁷ A

⁶For an extensive discussion see Wolfgang Quaisser and Steve Wood *EU Member Turkey? Preconditions, Consequences and Integration Alternatives* (München: Forost 2004).

⁷Amnesty International ‘Turkey: Fear for safety/death threats/risk of torture and ill-treatment’ 44/031/2004, 4 August 2004 and ‘Turkey: Torture and ill-treatment’ 44/030/2004, 20 July at web.amnesty.org; Andreas Middel ‘Foltervorwürfe überschatten Verheugens Türkei-Besuch’ *Die Welt* 9 September 2004 p7; ‘Die EU

critical question here is whether these actions did or do involve any form of systemic participation or neglect by state organs. In September 2004 the introduction of a new penal code, urged by EU states, the US and the Commission, was almost foiled. The Turkish government scored a political own goal when it hesitated about including adultery in the reform. This was incorporated, and thereby decriminalised, almost at the last minute.

Table 2: Selected Indices on Socio-Political Conditions

	Public Institution Index		Contracts and Law Sub-index		Corruption Sub-index	
	Ranking	Score	Ranking	Score	Ranking	Score
EU-15	19	5.65	20	5.36	20	6.07
Finland	12	6.01	1	6.35	4	6.68
Greece	42	4.71	37	4.63	52	4.79
CEEC-Round 1	40	4.85	48	4.28	36	5.46
Estonia	28	5.36	32	4.85	27	5.85
Poland	58	4.17	66	3.59	53	4.75
CEEC-Round-2	74	3.69	87	2.84	62	4.54
Bulgaria	62	4.10	92	2.72	35	5.50
Rumania	86	3.27	83	2.97	90	3.58
Turkey	63	4.07	52	4.03	69	4.12

Note: For Rankings 1 = best country, 102 = worst country. Scores range from 1 (worst possible evaluation) to 7 (best possible evaluation). *Source:* World Economic Forum cited in Quaisser and Wood *EU Member Turkey?*

The Turkish Economy

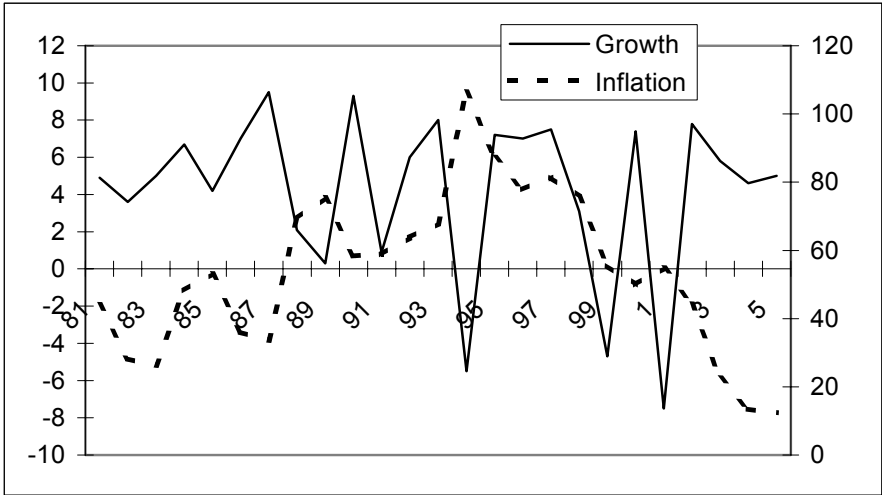
An examination of the Turkish economy indicates that both the EU and Turkey would be confronted by huge challenges if negotiations on membership begin. Turkey's per capita income is about 23% of the EU-15 and 27.5% of the EU-25 measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). In exchange rate terms it is about 12.3% and 13.8%. Even if a relatively successfully convergence process of 3% extra growth (above the EU-15) per year occurred,

muss der Türkei helfen' *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 11-12 September 2004 p9; Kirsty Hughes *Turkey and the European Union: Just Another Enlargement? Exploring the Implications of Turkish Accession* Friends of Europe Working Paper (Brussels: 2004) p3.

it would take 50 years for Turkish and EU-15 income levels to equalise. The IMF is the more important institution for macro-economic assistance. Turkey is its largest debtor, presently in receipt of \$US23 billion, approximately one quarter of the Fund's total loans.

Turkey has regional disparities greater than any current EU member. Around 80% of national wealth (value added) is produced in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and other large cities. The richest region has an average income of about 46% of the EU-25 average, roughly equivalent to Slovakia. The poorest region earns 8% of the EU-25 average. The agricultural sector employs about 33% of the workforce, compared with about 5% of the EU-25. This would represent an enormous burden on EU budgets if major reform of the CAP were not enforced. Turkish unemployment is currently around 11% and there is huge shadow economy estimated to be 30% to 100% of the 'real economy'. Corruption is a major problem, though less so than in Rumania and not much worse than Poland or Greece.

Chart 1: Growth and Inflation in Turkey 1981-2005



Source: Quaisser and Wood *EU Member Turkey?* (Left axis growth, right axis inflation. Changes in %)

In 2003 the Turkish budget deficit was 8.8% and debt about 80% of GDP. Inflation was 25% in 2003 and reduced to single figures in 2004. Projected growth of real GDP for 2004 is 7% with 5% forecast for 2005. Even with relative success recently, the past two decades are featured by massive fluctuations. It will take some years before evidence of effective monetary and fiscal management and a sustainable growth path could be demonstrated.

Arguments for and against the opening of negotiations on Turkey's EU Membership

Apart from opposition based on Turkey not having fulfilled the political Copenhagen Criteria because of human rights transgressions, there are several other arguments being made against opening negotiations on EU membership. Firstly, opponents claim that the EU is already overextended. It requires all available resources and energy to successfully integrate the ten new member-states that joined in May 2004. Additionally, it must complete important 'deepening' projects and cope with a growing array of demands in the area of security and defence. This comes at a time when some member-states are having serious difficulties adhering to the 'stability pact', primarily the 3% of GDP deficit criterion. Continued 'widening' to take in new and poorer members will effectively rescind the goal of political union. Practical considerations are, in some instances, linked to a Euro-idealism that perceives a Turkish entry as all but ending this ideal.

By contrast advocates of Turkish membership claim that the EU will be enhanced through a resulting larger economy of scale. Turkey offers new investment opportunities for business, a younger labour force and has growth levels over the current EU average. The 'economic potential' that Turkey would bring to the EU is, however, hard to substantiate. Projections suggest Turkey's accession would add around 0.1% to the current EU-25's GDP. Certainly Turkey itself could expect a much greater boost, somewhere in the region of 3% to 6% per year. But clear economic benefit for the EU is not supportable. The Customs Union has already liberalised trade to a great extent and additional volume beyond that because of Turkey's entry to the single market is presently assessed as minimal.⁸

Because evidence of substantial economic gain for the present EU is sparse, arguments in favour of Turkey's accession focus elsewhere, principally on the security-strategic dimension. With its large army and high level of defence spending Turkey could strengthen the EU's nascent military component and capacity for force projection. Some claim that with Turkey the EU will become a global power.⁹ In this event, the pursuance of cohesive and consistent policies in the foreign, security and defence areas would not be easy. Even outside the EU Turkey can exert some influence on the Common Foreign and Security

⁸Quaisser and Wood *EU Member Turkey?*

⁹Mesut Yilmaz 'Der Eintritt der Türkei in die EU aus türkischer Sicht' *Zeitschrift für Politik* 51:2 2004 pp194-200.

Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Dispute over the EU's use of NATO assets, which Turkey previously prevented,¹⁰ and its vetoing of participation by Cyprus and Malta in NATO/EU joint meetings, demonstrate that it can be 'extremely difficult'.¹¹ If Turkey joins the EU the heterogeneity of interests in it will further increase. Future imperatives faced by Turkey and how it decides to deal with them may not align with some or all other members. The opposite may also apply. Though Turkey may add military muscle, it borders on several crisis regions. These borders - with Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Caucasus - will become those of the EU.

Proponents emphasise the forty-plus year association Turkey has had with the EU and its predecessors and that the persistence it has shown translates into obligations. It can also be pointed out that others have jumped the queue. This has been noted in regard to Bulgaria and Rumania, *vis-à-vis* both of whom Turkey has several better indicators, including higher per capita income and in the area of contracts and law. Viewed from another angle, neither Bulgaria nor Rumania would be a benchmark for any form of total EU standard setting. The EU must also consider that if Turkey is admitted, the pressure from, and perhaps numbers of, other states demanding to join will increase. How could Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Belarus and even Russia then be refused if they applied and met the Copenhagen Criteria (unless these or the treaties are in some way modified)?

More controversial are issues of culture, religion and identity. In the Rome Treaty of 1957 it is stated that any 'European state may apply to join' the then EEC and now EU. It is not defined what a 'European' state is; that is, what cultural or geographic considerations, if any, may be involved. Some commentators assert that Turkey is not a European state or society; that its history and cultural-religious tradition and mores make it incompatible for full integration with the EU-25. Several notable personalities, including former French president, Valery Giscard d'Estaing and former German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, have maintained this.¹² Others contend that these factors are inapplicable; they are not specified

¹⁰Antonio Missiroli 'EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management: no Turkish delight for ESDP' *Security Dialogue* 33:1 2002 pp9-26. An agreement on the use of NATO assets was later reached; see *ESDP: Implementation of the Nice Provisions by non-EU NATO Allies* (Brussels: 24-25 October 2002).

¹¹Interview with the author, General Secretariat, Council of the European Union, Brussels, November 2004. By tolerating vetoes for both states the EU maintained an unwritten rule of not isolating only one.

¹²'Europe: pour ou contre le Turquie' *Le Monde* 9 November 2002; Hans Arnold *Wie viel Einigung braucht Europa?* (Düsseldorf: Droste 2004) pp138-147.

in the Copenhagen Criteria, which should be the sole basis of an assessment on a country's readiness to begin negotiations.

Regarding references to religion and geography, there is nothing that Turkey can do about these factors, since it cannot change its cultural identity or its geographical location. Such references are culturalist and any decision about Turkey and its place in Europe that has been taken on the basis of religion and geography would not say as much about Turkey as it would about the EU and a culturally essentialist orientation¹³

This is a plausible claim. When the arguments of most proponents of Turkey's EU accession are dissected, however, the critical factors used to espouse it are: geography and culture-religion. These are deployed in an inverted manner to support a geo-strategic reasoning dominated by issues of international security: terrorism and insurgency, a crisis region with antagonistic-unpredictable regimes, possible refugee flows, and Turkey's potential role/s as a democratic model for the Muslim world or a bridge to it. Political actors in major EU member states, along with American diplomacy and the Commission have applied this. So have many scholars. According to Hughes:

Turkey's strategic geographical location, and its large Muslim population also have implications for the EU. It is in the EU's strategic interests that Turkey is democratic, stable and prosperous and a friendly ally. Turkish EU membership can – as with earlier enlargements – contribute to these strategic goals.¹⁴

One of Turkey's heavyweight advocates, German Foreign Minister Fischer, took this line of argument to a new echelon when he declared a Turkish EU membership to be as important for Europe as the Normandy invasion in 1944. Fischer argued that 'Europe needs to bring in Turkey and use its influence to make the country secular...Turkish membership was a key way to liberate Europe from the threat of insecurity from the Middle East and "terrorist ideas"'. Turkey's entry would be 'strategic in the long-term' and that 'to modernise an Islamic country based on the shared values of Europe would be almost a D-

¹³Senem Aydin and E. Fuat Keyman *European Integration and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy* EU-Turkey Working Paper 2 (Brussels: CEPS 2004) p1.

¹⁴Hughes 'Turkey and the European Union' p.ii.

Day for Europe in the war against terror...It would be the greatest positive challenge for these totalitarian and terrorist ideas.¹⁵

Geo-strategic or security factors are not specified in the Copenhagen Criteria; either as grounds to admit or reject a candidate. Emerson and Tocci, who also portray geography as a principal reason why Turkey would make a positive contribution to the CFSP/ESDP (and that this is then an important rationale for membership) state nonetheless:

A danger would arise if, on the other hand, the Union were to accept Turkey as a full member on laxer conditions than those specified by the accession process. Indeed, in the past, conservative elements within the Turkish establishment (often spurred by the US) have argued that Turkey should be admitted to the Union on different conditions given its geo-strategic importance...Turkey's accession in violation of EU conditions would set a dangerous precedent. This appears particularly relevant with regard to the EU's involvement in the Middle East. Were Turkey's own accession to be accomplished in violation of predetermined conditions, a bad example could be set for other potential candidates or close associates in the European Neighbourhood.¹⁶

Is Turkey's accession, or the promise of it, a strategic necessity? If it were, this could potentially overrule the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria, as, for example, US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, suggested to the EU External Affairs Commissioner, Chris Patten, in a 'confidential letter' in late 2002.¹⁷ Everyone insists that a 'EU perspective' is essential though exactly what this should or must entail is disputed. For some NATO is sufficient to deal with security-strategic issues and could be buttressed by a 'privileged partnership' between Turkey and the EU.

For others, before all the Turkish political elite, nothing less than full EU membership is acceptable. Turkish diplomacy has adhered to this maximalist strategy. The Turkish example is a variant on a phenomenon that has proliferated in the Cold War and post-Cold War contexts. The West's broader interests in stabilising Turkey lend it the motivation and leverage to manipulate its own actual or potential weakness to acquire political or financial

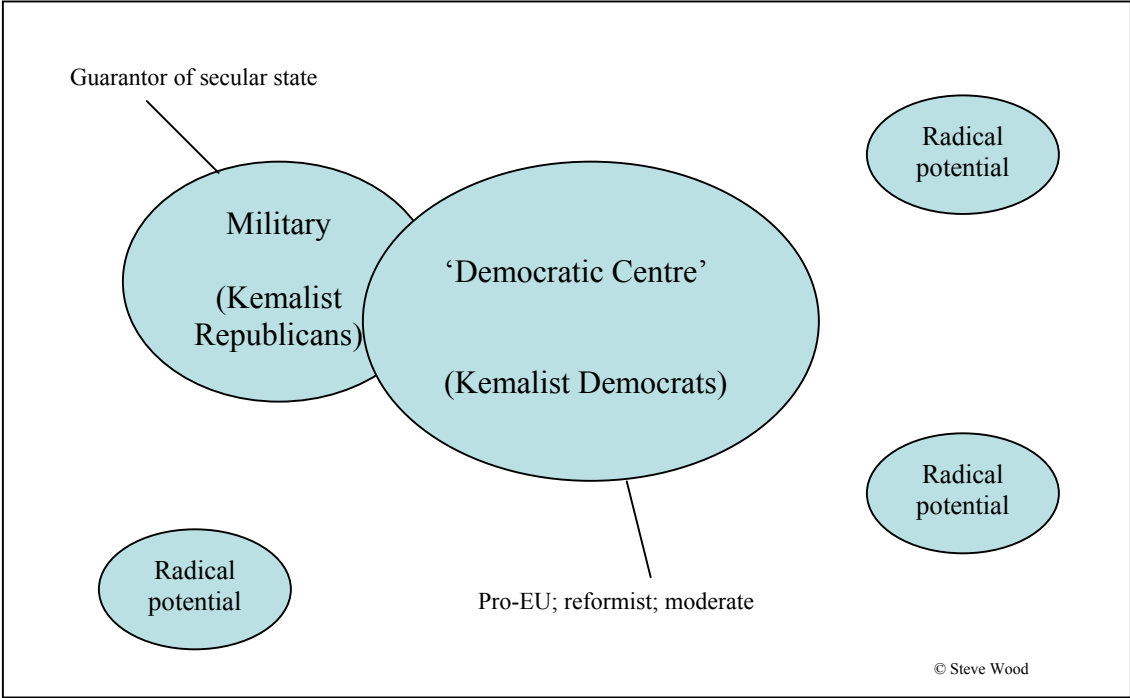
¹⁵Turkey EU entry as big as "D-Day" 20 October 2004 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/europe/3758592.stm>

¹⁶Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci *Turkey as a Bridgehead and Spearhead: Integrating EU and Turkish Foreign Policy* EU-Turkey Working Paper 1 (Brussels: CEPS August 2004) p9.

¹⁷Judy Dempsey 'US presses Brussels on Turkey' *Financial Times* 12 December 2002 p1.

credits. Turkey’s most valuable bargaining chip is its perceived geo-strategic importance. For this it demands ‘strategic rents’,¹⁸ now also in the form of EU accession. Advocates posit it as a polity that can demonstrate the peaceful coexistence of democratic values and institutions with a largely Muslim society. Maintaining the feasibility of a ‘democratic centre’ in Turkish politics is a major objective of the EU and the US. This will remain so even if it means tacit collusion with a military that is still the ultimate internal arbiter.

Chart 2: Turkish Political Constellation



Behind the arguments discussed above are also other reasons for supporting or rejecting Turkey as a EU member. The first is money. If eligible, Turkey stands to benefit greatly from generous redistributive mechanisms, before all community agricultural and structural policies. Many current members are averse to this prospect. According to Commission calculations, in a status quo scenario Turkey would be a net receiver of almost €28 billion (at 2004 prices) in 2025 after a nominal entry date of 2015.¹⁹ It is, however, unlikely that these policies and other financial aspects would not be subject to extensive reform before this. The EU is already overstretched in these areas and a Turkey of (then) about 80 million

¹⁸Soli Ozel ‘After the Tsunami’ *Journal of Democracy* 14:2 2003 pp80-94

people joining an unreformed Union would precipitate a meltdown. This is at the core of concerns about integrative capacities in policy terms: can both the EU and Turkey cope? Then there is the challenge of social integration. Some resistance reflects anxieties about immigration, cultural compatibility and demographic trends that show the Turkish population increasing and that of many other EU states decreasing.

A chief factor – some impress it as the most critical - behind Turkey’s progress this far is intense American pressure on EU members. Recently this has coincided with the desire of the US and EU to rebuild their relationship. Alignment on Turkey would take some attention away from the transatlantic catastrophe over Iraq and be viewed as positive. Reaching consensus at this international level and at the European level is hindered by developments at the domestic level in several EU states. Turkish EU membership is a partisan issue and is being exploited for electoral and other political purposes.

Attitudes to and policy on Turkish EU Membership

Germany

Probably no state will be more affected by Turkish EU membership, or by a preceding debate, than Germany. In economic terms Turkey is more closely integrated with it than with any other EU state. 14% of Turkish imports and 16% of its exports are traded with Germany and about 2.5 million people of Turkish origin live there. Polls indicate, however, that 65% or more of the German population currently opposes a Turkish EU membership.²⁰

In electoral terms, citizens of Turkish origin favour the SPD and Green parties. A simplistic formula that it will thereby acquire an advantage provides a logic for the SPD-Green government to support commencing membership negotiations with Turkey.²¹ The CDU-CSU opposition perceives it will gain few votes from this demographic group. It proposes a ‘privileged partnership’ in place of full EU membership and has organised a petition against this. Given the SPD-Green parties very marginal victory in the 2002 federal

¹⁹European Commission *Issues Arising from Turkey’s Membership Perspective* (Brussels: 2004).

²⁰Renate Kocher ‘Bekommenheit vor dem historischen Schritt’ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 April 2004.

²¹Andreas Wüst ‘Das Wahlverhalten eingebürgerter Personen in Deutschland’ *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B52 2003 pp29-38. Cf. Hubel ‘The EU’s Three-level Game’ pp359-360.

election a guaranteed bloc vote would be desirable. Yet various sources indicate that some SPD, and perhaps also Green voters, are among those opposed to a Turkish EU entry. They would vote no if there were a referendum on this. Restricting access to the German labour market after the 2004 enlargement was a response by the SPD to its union-worker constituency. The same can be expected regarding Turkey and the SPD may actually lose votes by supporting its EU accession. A division along party or government/opposition lines is also not straightforward. Prominent SPD members (Peter Glotz, Helmut Schmidt, Egon Bahr) are sceptical. Greens have also expressed concerns. On the other hand, some CDU figures, including former Defence Minister, Volker R  he, are in favour.

This is set against a background whereby the CDU-CSU has generally adopted the US lead in foreign policy issues. The SDP and Greens have somewhat less, with the most spectacular division being over Iraq in 2002-3. When the US attempted to ‘transform’ the Middle-East region the SPD-Green government, with France, opposed it.²² A year or so

Figure 1: Policy Preferences/Alignments on Iraq and Turkey

<p>For Iraq intervention</p> <p>USA GERMAN RIGHT</p>	<p>Against Iraq intervention</p> <p>FRANCE GERMAN LEFT</p>
<p>USA GERMAN LEFT</p> <p>For Turkey EU entry</p>	<p>FRANCE GERMAN RIGHT</p> <p>Against Turkey EU entry</p>

Source: Author’s Conception

later a neo-conservative US administration is in alignment with the same German government on Turkey joining the EU. The CDU-CSU, which have impressed the strategic

and geopolitical aspects of international relations, in a manner that usually privileges the US position and often criticises the SPD and/or Green view as ‘unrealistic’, now responds to the SPD-Green, and US, pro-Turkey position with ‘cultural’, ‘excessive financial burden’, and EU ‘institutional deficit’ arguments. In this regard it is allied with most of the French political establishment. The SPD-Greens, meanwhile, have become ‘geo-strategists’. On these two foreign policy issues, a reversal of alignments by the German Left and Right with Germany’s two most important international partners has occurred.

France

In light of France’s European policy over the past half-century, the reasons behind President Chirac’s support for Turkey’s accession to the EU, to the extent of terming it ‘irreversible’,²³ are not so clear. On the surface, this will (further) dilute the French vision for the EU. There is little obvious benefit in the immediate or longer-term despite inducements in the form of Turkey’s offer to purchase Airbus planes and nuclear technology. On the other hand there will be more outgoings for France and less benefits for constituencies that have done very well from community policies, primarily agricultural interests. French bureaucratic predominance in Brussels, already under pressure, will recede further. The Turkey issue is caught up in manoeuvrings before the next presidential election and other internal politics. As others, most dynamically Nicholas Sarkozy, grasped the initiative and called for a referendum on the EU constitutional treaty and/or Turkish EU membership directly, Chirac has searched for an exit strategy from his declared strong support. A more accurate representation emerged in November with reports that a ‘special partnership’ or ‘fallback option’ was being considered.²⁴

²²Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen ‘Gulf War: The German Resistance’ *Survival* 45:1 2003 pp99-116.

²³‘Chirac: Weg der Türkei in die Union unumkehrbar’ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 June 2004 p2; ‘Irreversibel und wünschenswert’ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 September 2004 p1.

²⁴Daniel Dombey, John O’Doherty and Vincent Boland ‘France Urges EU ‘fallback’ on Turkey’ *Financial Times* 9 November 2004 p2.

Greece

A long history of conflict between Greece and Turkey continued after Greece's entry to the EC in 1981. Greece tried to utilise its membership to exert pressure on Turkey regarding a range of political and territorial issues. It was an obstructor behind whose veto others could hide. Although all problems are not resolved, the relationship changed dramatically after earthquakes hit both countries in 1999. Mutual sympathies and assistance and better diplomatic contacts led to a dramatic improvement in bilateral affairs. Good personal relations between Prime Ministers Karamanlis and Erdogan, and 'incentives' for both states from the EU and US enhanced this. Multilateral interests in resolving the Cyprus issue have been significant and Greece's desire not to have the Athens Olympics overshadowed by disputes with Turkey may have also influenced its now consistent support.

Cyprus

Cyprus has been militarily divided since the Turkish invasion in 1974. Some 30,000 Turkish troops are still in the northern part of the island, which only Turkey recognises, and are technically occupying a EU state. EU negotiations were made conditional on a resolution of the problem. Turkey has accepted a UN plan and been an accommodating partner but neither it nor Greece has complete control over rival ethnic factions. In referendums on the creation of a unified state, which would enable both regions to join the EU, 65% of Turkish Cypriots voted in favour and 75% of Greek Cypriots voted against. Given Turkey's concessions and the positive attitude of most Turkish Cypriots towards reunification and collective EU membership, the Greek Cypriots are now generally considered as the main hindrance to a solution.

Austria

After Greece's shift from disapproval of Turkey joining the EU, Austria has signalled that it may assume a blocking role. The governing conservative ÖVP, the opposition SPÖ, the FPÖ and up to 80% of the population oppose Turkey's membership. Diplomatic circles, think-tanks and other opinion-shapers are also sceptical. Contrary to the rest of his party,

Jörg Haider supports an entry of Turkey to the EU, and is one of few prominent figures that do. Although many expect that Chancellor Schüssel will avoid being the single voice to officially oppose Turkey, Austria may yet vote no. Schüssel's appointment as coordinator of the European Peoples Party's position probably increased the chances of this happening.

United Kingdom

For the UK, promoting Turkish entry maintains political and strategic alignment with the US, especially in the context of the battle against terrorism. It also supports the view that the UK prefers to extend rather than deepen the EU. On the other hand, it would be among the net-payers from who more would be required to fund the large net-receiver Turkey and might also face some immigration pressure. For the Blair government these considerations are outweighed by other factors. In November 2003, Foreign Minister Jack Straw declared Turkey should join the EU 'as soon as possible' and termed it a 'great democracy'. In May 2004 Tony Blair made the first visit to Turkey by a British Prime Minister in 14 years, during which he and Erdogan launched a bilateral 'action plan' of cooperation.²⁵

United States

American flexibility of interpretation in foreign affairs is reflected in the different mental maps - security, economic, cultural, religious, geographic, and political – it has of Europe.²⁶ Presently, US interests require that Turkey be given a definitive EU perspective with a clear promise of accession. It is assessed as a 'purely strategic issue'²⁷ wherein the formula reads: geography + religion + terrorism. The US promotes the concept of Turkey as a 'model' for the Islamic world to which it can (in the interim) exercise a 'bridge' function. A stable Turkey also logistically assists American objectives in the region.

While the US is a critical 'external' actor influencing Turkey-EU relations, whether Turkey does or does not join the EU has, in contrast to the situation faced by European

²⁵'Solidarität mit Ankara: "EU-Beitritt so schnell wie möglich"' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 22 November 2003 p1; Vincent Boland and Ben Hall 'Blair Challenges Countries Opposed to Turkey's Membership of EU' *Financial Times* 18 May 2004.

²⁶Martin Walker "Variable Geography: America's Mental Maps of a Greater Europe" *International Affairs* 76:3 2003 pp459-474.

policy-makers, no resonance domestically. The US must not pay for Turkey's EU membership, there is only minor knowledge or interest among the population or business, it plays scarcely any role in American political debate, and normative considerations carry minimal weight. On the other hand, if Turkey has no (current or potential) effect on the US internally, why such stress on the security aspects related to its EU accession? Some observers assert that Turkey's entry is one means by which the US wants to weaken the political unity of the EU. Given their close strategic relationship, and a political sponsorship of Turkey's bid for accession, if this occurs it will mean more US influence in Europe. Although they experienced serious tensions over Iraq, the US is Turkey's most critical international ally. One analyst observed that when Turkish diplomats discussed foreign policy matters it was almost as if the Americans were in the room with them.²⁸

Turkey

Although Turkey has been undergoing a process of 'Westernisation' for eighty or even two hundred years, an extensive reform agenda began after the economic crisis of 2001. It coincided with a radical transformation in the global security situation. The AKP (Justice and Development Party) has focused determinedly on a goal of EU accession backed by a 'convergence in favour' by 'almost all sections of Turkish society'. According to one observer, 'the vast majority of Turkey's population has appropriated the culture of democracy. The "mentality revolution" needed for the full implementation of democratic reforms, concerns not the Turkish society but the state and the bureaucracy.'²⁹ Whatever direction Prime Minister Erdogan pursues he has to deal with opponents on the immoderate Muslim and military-secular sides of politics that EU politicians do not.³⁰ While a majority are in favour of joining the EU, there is an internal debate 'on the concessions that will have to be made by Turkey', and that there will be 'losers as well as winners'. This means that the EU has 'become a convenient "scapegoat" for Turkish politicians'

²⁷Interview with the author, US Consulate, Munich, August 2004.

²⁸Conversation with the author, Institute for Security Studies, Paris, September 2004.

²⁹Sahin Alpay 'Can Turkey Digest Reforms?' *Zaman Daily* 9 July 2004 at <http://www.zaman.org/?bl=columnists&trh=20040925&hn=10209>

³⁰David L Phillips 'Turkey's Dreams of Accession' *Foreign Affairs* 83:5 2004 pp 86-97.

enabling them to shift the blame for the negative consequences of reform by claiming that these were forced upon Turkey by EU membership requirements...the period since the beginning of candidacy status has seen a marked politicization of the debate on Turkish EU membership, not so much about whether or not the country should join *per se* but more concerning the actual terms of accession.³¹

The domestic political discussion occurs within a regional environment containing neighbours that are not especially friendly. The Turkish military and its American allies, in particular, are attentive to the prospect of one or more of these neighbours exploiting any weaknesses in the Turkish political system.

EU Institutions

Formally the European Commission is a technocratic, ‘non-political’ actor concerned largely with research, management and advisory tasks. Enlargement Commissioner Verheugen stated that ‘The task of the Commission is restricted to determining whether Turkey fulfils the political conditions for the commencement of negotiations’.³² He tested the boundaries implied here, as political aspects of his role were impressed. His views contrasted sharply with other opinions in the institution where five or six Commissioners had misgivings about presenting a positive recommendation. The European Parliament, on the other hand, is a designated political forum, one whose members are keen to acquire more status and power in the European context. Through declarations and other lobbying various groups attempted to influence the outcome on 17 December.³³ The Council will then take the next major decision when all 25 states must approve, and later ratify the subsequent treaty, before negotiations with Turkey can commence. Within several states there is aversion to this among the population and political elite.

³¹Gamze Avic ‘Turkey’s Slow EU Candidacy: Insurmountable Hurdles to Membership or Simple Euro-skepticism?’ *Turkish Studies* 3:1 2003 pp149-170, p157.

³²‘Neue Debatte über EU-Mitgliedschaft der Türkei’ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 10 April 2004 pp1-2

³³Emma Bonino, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Bronislaw Geremek, João de Deus Pinheiro and Michel Rocard ‘Written Declaration on the decision to be taken by the European Council in December 2004 on the opening of negotiations with Turkey’ Doc 40/2004 (European Parliament: 13 October 2004); Committee on Foreign Affairs ‘Draft Report on the 2004 regular report and the recommendation of the European Commission on Turkey’s progress towards accession’ Doc 2004/2182 (INI) (European Parliament: 21 October 2004)

Apart from political parties, publics and European institutions, several media outlets have engaged themselves, some in a partisan fashion. The most conspicuously opposed to opening negotiations with Turkey is the Berlin daily newspaper, *Die Welt*. Less overt, but also sceptical, is the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. British and American publications such as the *Economist*,³⁴ *Financial Times* and *Wall Street Journal* are supportive.

Possible Outcomes

A range of possible scenarios are linked to the theme of Turkish EU accession. The decision made by the European Council on 17 December 2004 may not be a definitive path-determining conclusion. Briefly, some of these potential outcomes include, firstly, that Turkey is accepted as candidate by the Council and the negotiation process, in concert with an internal reform agenda, proceeds relatively smoothly; secondly, Turkey is accepted and the negotiation process is protracted, perhaps as a deliberate strategy on the part of the EU; thirdly, Turkey is accepted but difficulties in adaptation or political problems emerge and the negotiation process is suspended; fourth, one (or more) member state rejects Turkey's candidature; fifth, the European Parliament rejects Turkey; sixth, the public in one or more EU states reject Turkey's accession in a referendum; if scenarios four, five or six, or even three, occur Turkey may turn away from the EU. What could happen then is entirely open. A seventh possibility is that Turkey ends up with some form of 'privileged partnership' or 'Extended Associate Membership'.³⁵

Conclusions

Turkey's bid to join the EU entwines at least three levels of politics. It comprises many competing interests and potential veto players and has also resulted in new, if temporary political alliances. Apart from states and international institutions, transnational lobbies and networks are involved. The 'geopolitical' or 'security' argument supports commencing negotiations with Turkey. It corresponds to the international level and has held prominence

³⁴'Why Europe must say yes to Turkey' and 'The impossibility of saying no' *The Economist* 18 September 2004 p13 and pp32-34.

³⁵Quaisser and Wood *EU Member Turkey?*

for much of the period since Turkey became a candidate in 1999. In recent months mobilisation against Turkey's accession has accelerated and political, intellectual, media and social forces have exerted a stronger counter influence from the domestic level within several member states. The European level, at which, in theory, the ultimate decisions will be taken, was wedged between vigorous pressures from the international, primarily in favour of Turkish EU accession, and the domestic, primarily opposed.