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IS TURKEY EUROPEAN? A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the history of interactions between Turkey and Europe since the late nineteenth century. It argues that despite the numerous economic benefits that Turkey and the European Union could gain from Turkish accession, difficult, unresolved issues make it unlikely that full accession will ever be achieved. These issues include the military's influence over civil society, human rights violations, and the tension between Islamists and secularists. Finally, major points of conflict in the Europe-Turkey relationship since 1987 rests upon an analysis of the European Union's reports on Turkey's possible accession, and the Turkish Republic's response to those documents.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There is nowhere on earth quite like the Republic of Turkey. This uniqueness manifests in the numerous questions regarding the identity of a Turkish citizen. Is the average Turk a denizen of Europe, of the Middle East, or of Asia? What about ethnicity? Are citizens of the Republic of Turkey Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Georgian or Albanian? Or perhaps they are a mixture of any of these? Is the Turk a secularist, a moderate Muslim or a religious fundamentalist? Is he/she a member of a rapidly expanding economy or a culture of widespread poverty? Does the Turk live under a secular democracy, a populist Muslim republic, a military police-state, or some combination of all three? All these questions remain open, making examination of the country fascinating.

Since the inception of organized civilization in Asia Minor, the role of the military has been inextricably linked with effective rule. The Republic of Turkey's governing constitution is, not surprisingly, guaranteed and protected by the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). The political dominance of this body stretches back to the Kemalist era, encompassing the time around the founding of the Republic by Ataturk. The fall of the Ottoman Empire, precipitated by a long period of decay and its eventual disintegration caused by World War I, was followed by the Young Turks, a modernizing group of reformers consisting of former officers. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk emerged out of the chaos of the Turkish War for Independence, founding a state based on secular, western-style democracy, with a strong military defender. Allegations of an overpowered military have plagued the country for decades. Indeed, the military has had a history

of removing prime ministers from power, carrying out extrajudicial killings against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and generally pursuing its own agenda with limited civilian input.

The Armenian Genocide represents another legacy of the fall of the Ottoman Empire. During the Great War, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were slain by the Turkish government, on the thin pretext of trying to prevent Armenian defection to Russia. To this day, the Turkish government refuses to accept responsibility for these events, preferring to blame the Ottoman government or denying that a genocide even occurred. Meanwhile, the vast majority of professional historians have found conclusive evidence to support the definition of events as genocide, with a vocal segment committed to pressuring the Turkish government to take responsibility. The Armenian question continues to plague Turkey's foreign relations to this day, and is symptomatic of Turkey's problems in dealing with minorities.

Turkey's government was designed to remove any explicit tie between political governance and religious ideology. For decades, it was one of the only successful secular democracies in the Middle East. For this reason, it has been closely watched by other burgeoning democracies in the region as a test case. Only recently has that changed, with the Islamist Justice and Development (AKP) party's ascension to power in 2002. Iraq has taken special interest in this development. With a Shiite governmental system, influenced by fundamentalist leanings, war-torn Iraq increasingly looks to its neighbor Turkey for an example of an effective Islamist democracy.¹

What can be gained from Turkish accession?

The EU has what one might call a 'bipolar' relationship with the Republic of Turkey. Sometimes encouraging, sometimes threatening, and never ready to accept Turkey as a full

¹ Arthur Goldschmidt Jr. and Lawrence Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 10th edition, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2013), 403.

member, the EU has sent a series of confusing signals over the long and so far, fruitless accession process. The organization cannot decide whether it wants to take on the many structural shortcomings inherent in Turkey in exchange for the many potential benefits its membership might bring. And indeed, the current economic and political failings of the EU exposed by the 2008 recession make Turkish accession an even more doubtful prospect, and one that both Europeans and many Turks now have less interest in than formerly. Still, there are a host of reasons why each side might find a full-fledged relationship advantageous.

From Europe's perspective, Turkey continues to be a nation with an expanding economy that is still in the process of fully modernizing. The EU could provide some of the financial regulation, technological savvy, and market access needed to help Turkey become a first-rate economic power. If Turkey's obvious economic capabilities could be fully harnessed, this would provide vital assistance to a cash-strapped European Union dealing with its crushing debt burden. Such an arrangement could be mutually beneficial.

Turkey's exploding population rate is also an appealing factor for the EU. For years, the growth rates of many of Europe's nations have been in decline, putting extreme stress on many already overburdened social welfare states. Access to the Schengen Area, the single international immigration zone without border controls, might encourage more Turks to move to other EU states in a search for employment opportunities. This, in turn, might help alleviate the pressure on young members of EU states to pay for the expensive health needs of their elderly compatriots. Since 67.4% of Turkey's population is between the ages of 15 and 64, significantly higher than many EU member states, the demographic argument seems compelling.² By comparison, France, a state with massive state welfare programs, only holds 63.8% of its population between these age

² *Turkey*, 2012-2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>, (accessed on 11 Oct. 2012).

ranges, meaning a heavier burden falls on a smaller segment.³ Historically, large influxes of Turkish workers into countries like Germany helped spark a postwar recovery and economic boom, so by opening up the borders, history could repeat itself.

For years, the EU has been derisively referred to as a club of white, western, Christian countries by its critics. Some believe that the EU will never accept a nation of over 70 million Muslims into its midst.⁴ Accepting Turkey into the mix, the organization would constitute a historical achievement. By accepting a nation with demographics outside the traditional definitions of 'European', the EU could use this as a launching point to expand its reach into the Middle East, Asia, Africa, or elsewhere, which would bring new economic and political vitality. Specifically, by making Turkey a full member, the EU would gain credibility in the Middle East, perhaps leading to a greater European presence in the region. This enhanced presence could establish new trading partners on both sides, leading to positive outcomes for both the EU and the Middle East. Strategically, Europe would gain a bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab world.⁵

Despite the human rights controversies surrounding the TAF, Turkey maintains the strongest military and security forces in the region. In addition, Turkey's armed contributions to NATO rank only after the U.S. and the U.K. Not only does the country have a pool of around 35 million able-bodied men and women to draw from in case of conflict, but it also spends 5.3% of its GDP on defense spending, which is a higher percentage than many of the world's military powers.⁶ Although the EU is mainly an economic institution, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) would certainly encourage the addition of a democracy of Turkey's potency to the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gamze Avci, "Turkey's Slow EU Candidacy," in *Turkey and the European Union*, Ed. Ali Carkoglu and Barry Rubin, (London: Cass Publishing, 2003), 150.

⁵ Q&A: *Turkey and the EU*, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3682828.stm>, (accessed 23 April 2013).

⁶ *Turkey*, 2012-2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>, (accessed on 11 Oct. 2012).

alliance. This could help increase the EU's profile and effectiveness in conflict resolution during international crises, and promote further interstate cooperation.

The EU is not the only potential benefactor in accession. Turkey stands to gain many advantages if it ever becomes a full-time member. First and foremost, membership in the EU would provide increased oversight and regulation regarding human rights. An established history of European-led oversight on allegations of Turkish human rights violations already exists. For example, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), both institutions under the aegis of the Council of Europe, led a relatively successful joint operation to condemn the pattern of torture in early 1990s Turkey.⁷ EU membership could only increase the transparency of Turkish actions, leading to improved treatment for political prisoners and historically mistreated minorities like the Kurds. This would also benefit the Turkish majority in that media outlets would be granted greater access and leeway, providing a better picture of events to the populace.

The psychological boost granted by full accession is not to be underestimated. The status of becoming a member of such a respected organization could lead to greater Turkish influence in the international arena. In 2012, the EU won a Nobel Peace Prize for, "six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe."⁸ This award shows both international regard for the EU (lessened by the current economic crisis), as well as its historical record of the promotion of democracy and human rights, both of which are highly salient to Turkey and its citizens. Becoming the first nation from the Middle East to be accepted in the EU would give Turkey even more prestige in the region.

⁷ Jonathan Sugden, "Human rights and Turkey's candidacy," in *Turkey and European Integration: Accession prospects and issues*, Ed. Nergis Canefe and Mehmet Ugur, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 247.

⁸ 2012 Peace Prize Laureate, 2012, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/, (accessed on 8 Dec. 2012).

Foreign direct investment, access to European markets, and economic development would all be likely to increase with Turkey's accession to the EU. For example, the relatively new member states of Central and Eastern Europe have enjoyed enormous economic benefits since their accession, despite the structural problems revealed by the recession.⁹ Joining with the EU would realize the already considerable potential of Turkey's economy by introducing a common market, reduced tariff barriers, and possibly a common currency. In this way, the Turkish consumer would also benefit from the improved working conditions and enhanced product and safety standards that membership in the EU mandates.

In summation, accession presents clear advantages to both sides. On the surface, the Turkish candidacy looks like an open and shut case. However, by exploring specific key events in the relationship since formal negotiations began in 1987, I will illustrate why Turkey's candidacy has so far been a failure.

⁹ Daniel Daianu, "Fiscal Consolidation in the EU's New Member States," *CASE Network E-briefs*, 2 (2011); *Proquest*, Online (accessed on 6 Oct. 2012).

Chapter 2

Origins

Before attempting to answer such complicated and controversial topics as why Turkey has been shut out of the EU for over twenty years, we must first answer three questions. First, who are the Turks? Second, where did they come from? Finally, why do many Europeans fear them?

The Turks actually originate from eastern Asia. Their homeland encompassed the area of what is now known as China. In fact, the Turks even set up a semi-organized confederation of tribes called Gokturk, which extended from present-day Mongolia to Ukraine from the mid-6th to mid-8th centuries.¹⁰ Through the rise and fall of the confederation, the Turks were exposed, for the first time, to established states like Byzantium, Persia, China and India.¹¹ It is amazing to think that even at this early stage, the Turks were exposed to a spinning centrifuge of conflict and culture, and even some proto-European influences.

The Turks were a loosely-defined tribal group pushed out of familiar homelands by a stronger force. Groups like the early Mongols and the Chinese forced the Turks to leave their lands and to seek greener pastures for themselves and their flocks. The Turks were nomads on horseback who tended flocks of domesticated animals. Sheep, goats, horses, and camels all combined to provide food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other necessities for the Turks. In return, these animals required plentiful space to graze as well as a region with enough vegetation to live off of. The constant quest for suitable pasture land gradually drove the Turks westward, farther from China and closer to Asia Minor.

¹⁰ Goldschmidt Jr. and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Although they encountered different religions and cultures, the vast majority of Turks gradually became Islamized by invading Arab armies. Islam held a special attraction for the Turks because it was perceived as a religion for nomads. Those who practice Islam do not require elaborate ceremonies in lavishly decorated buildings for every religious service; rather, all a Muslim needs is his or her prayer mat, and a sense of direction to find Mecca. For this reason, Islam can be seen as portable, which is a must for a nomadic people. In addition, the Arabs who practiced Islam and forcibly brought it to the Turks were a strong, influential people. Islam at that time was the faith of conquerors. Finally, elements of Muslim mysticism, or Sufism, merged seamlessly with some Turkish pre-Islamic beliefs and practices.¹²

Having lived their entire lives on horseback in an unforgiving land, the Turks knew how to handle themselves in battle, which Arab dynasties like the Abbasids used for their own advantage.¹³ Although they probably began as slaves, many Turkic warriors became completely immersed in Islam, and fought their way through the ranks by sheer force of will; that is, until they were respected enough to be hired en masse for soldiering.¹⁴ Eventually, substantial tracts of lands were given to some Turkic tribes in exchange for loyal military service, and the Turks became an important part of various Arab empires.

Important dynasties formed during this time period, such as the Ghaznavids, who controlled Persia from 975-1186. However the most significant dynasty, in terms of future implications, was the Seljuk Empire. These fierce warriors turned *iqtas* (gifts of land) given by the Ghaznavids into grazing land for their animals, as other Turkic tribes that flocked to their banner.¹⁵ Eventually, the Seljuks turned these isolated gifts of land into a power base that extended over part of Anatolia, and all of Persia and Iraq, utilizing the draw of Islam to unite

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 81.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 83.

many Turks.¹⁶ Later, they took over vast swathes of Byzantine land following victory at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, a victory abetted by Byzantine infighting. The Seljuks Islamized and Turkified the region, developing the *madrassa* (mosque school) for training in Islamic law, as well as the spread of Persian culture (which was held in great esteem by the Seljuks).¹⁷

How does all of this information answer the original problem? The historical roots of Turkish interactions with Europe are deep and must be addressed. One can see that the deep connection between the military and ruling elite begins at the start of the Turks' recorded history. Indeed, many powerful Turkic tribes posited the simple question: "If we can fight, why can't we rule?" Dynasties such as the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks proved that their fighting prowess did translate to political power. The Turkish language itself betrays the deep undercurrent running between the two groups. The word *askeri* roughly translates as 'the ruling group' in English. However, the technical definition of the term is steeped in martial origins. Despite the connection between the political and military elite, this does not mean that every early Turk was a warlike barbarian. Yet, the tradition of the nomad warrior on horseback as the basic unit of Turkish political, cultural, and military existence can be seen in the later Ottoman Empire.

The Legacy of the Ottomans:

The Ottomans began as ghazis, or frontier Muslim warriors who fought waged jihad against the Christian Byzantines.¹⁸ Rising from the ashes of the Seljuks, the first Ottoman leader Osman assaulted and took the Byzantine stronghold of Bursa after years of siege.¹⁹ Osman died as his troops took the city, and it became the first capital of the Ottomans in 1326.²⁰ Originally, the sultan of the Ottomans commanded the army in the field of battle, again demonstrating that

¹⁶ Jason T. Roche, "In the Wake of Manzikert: The First Crusade and the Alexian Reconquest of Western Anatolia," *History*, 94.314 (2009): 136-137, *Wiley Online Library*, Online (accessed on 10 Nov. 2013).

¹⁷ Goldschmidt Jr. and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 83.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

looked sure to come under Ottoman dominion, and only victories such as that at Vienna in 1683 kept the Ottomans from expanding further to the West. During this period, as Eastern Europe chafed under Turkish control, and Western European monarchs feared further Ottoman expansion, contempt for the Ottoman Turks developed, albeit unevenly, across Europe. To some, the very idea of Europe as a unified body originated in response to an Islamic threat posed by the Ottomans.²¹ In other words, one of the reasons for the EEC's later development had to do with the existential threat posed on Europe's border, which caused European empires to reemphasize their shared Christian heritage in opposition to Islam.

As Constantinople slowly morphed from a Byzantine seat of Christian power to an Ottoman center of Islamic power, so too did the character of the Empire change. No more did sultans ride out in front of the troops, rallying them to victory. As the Empire became increasingly complex, the sultans left more and more responsibility to regional governors and the powerful viziers, or high-ranking ministers. Slowly, after centuries of wielding power in the Middle East, the empire started to crumble and fell behind the West technologically.

Historian Mirela Bogdani has described the unique relationship between Turkey and Europe by writing that "Turkey's unique experiment with Westernization (modernization and Europeanization), has consisted of a 200-year love and hate relationship with the West."²² Her description is the most accurate and succinct regarding the relationship during late Ottoman period and up to the present day. Turkey has constantly swung between Westernizing reforms and a rejection of anything originating from Europe. The Tanzimat reforms (1826-1876) provide a perfect case study of how Turkey's attitudes towards Europe have been, for better or worse, in constant flux.

²¹ Stephanos Pasmazoglou, "Islam: Western Modes of Use and Abuse," in *Perceptions of Islam in Europe*, Ed. Hakan Yilmaz and Cagla Aykac (London: Tauris, 2012), 37.

²² Mirela Bogdani, *Turkey and the Dilemma of EU Accession: When Religion Meets Politics*, (London: Tauris, 2011), 19.

Sultan Mahmud II, reigning from 1807-1839, was the initiator of these famed reorganizations. His goal was to fight the growing European threat, fed by the increasing military and naval power of Great Britain and Russia in the late 19th century, by adopting European-style reforms. These reforms provided legal equality for all subjects of the Empire, which included such varied peoples as Berbers, Arabs, Egyptians, Syrians, and Greeks.²³ The reformers addressed the inadequate educational system as well as the inefficient bureaucracy.²⁴ But the most important reform of all, the one reform without which all the rest would not have happened, was restructuring the military. Because the military class was inextricably tied to the identity of the Empire itself, there was simply no way that a major reform could take place without touching the army and navy. The Ottoman government adopted standardized, Western-style uniforms and European methods of troop organization. The sultan brought in advisors from Europe as well as the United States to show Ottoman engineers how to properly cast cannon and how to build a stronger navy. He abolished the Janissaries, a corps of slave-soldiers originally consisting of converts from Christianity. In place of the Janissaries, he established modern military academies. However, his decision to use military schools enabled the politicization and eventual insubordination of the once loyal military.²⁵

In 1876, the military helped initiate a constitutional revolution aimed at curbing the already waning power of the sultan.²⁶ Deep rivalries between old-school officers and academy-trained officers emerged, fueling discontent that inspired further change in the 20th century. The Young Turks, a group of former officers who wanted to strengthen the government, capitalized on the Tanzimat reforms when they came to power in 1908.²⁷ However, they attempted to put

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Begum Burak, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: To Guard Whom and From What?" *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies*, 4.1 (2008), 147, Online (accessed on 8 Nov. 2012).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Bogdani, *Turkey and the Dilemma of EU Accession*, 20.

their own spin on the measures. They favored limited modernization of administration, justice, and education, while remaining committed to Muslim values and institutions. In other words, they opposed Western ideals of individualism and viewed Western and Ottoman civilization as “totally incompatible” with each other.²⁸

The contest between westernization and traditional Islam did another about-face under the postwar leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the Turkish Republic. Under this administration, European institutions were emulated as model examples of how modernization could increase effectiveness and efficiency.²⁹ Ataturk was adamant about the need to separate religion from the new state, creating a new secularist, militarist populist republic that no longer identified itself as Islamic but as Turkish.³⁰ The Ottoman, Islamic identity was completely rejected as incompatible with the modernizing agenda Ataturk set for Turkey’s future.

Even this brief summary illustrates how one solitary set of reforms went through three different iterations. In this case, different responses to the European question manifested as different approaches to reform, even though they were bound together by the common thread of originating from the same legal document. One of the key implications from this example is that Turkey’s relationship with the West stands as a lens through which Turkey examines its own domestic challenges. In other words, when Turkey embraces Westernizing reforms, such as the Ataturk iteration of the Tanzimat reforms, Europe (as represented by the EEC) becomes increasingly interested in including Turkey. From this point onwards, a roller-coaster pattern of Westernization inside Turkey occurred, from complete acceptance to total rejection, and all positions in between. The variable state of Westernizing reform inside the country closely mirrors the volatility of relations with the EEC, showing high correlation.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 21.

Founding of the Republic:

The years after its defeat in World War I were difficult for Turkey, to say the least. By aligning with the Central Powers, Turkey had clearly picked the wrong side. For decades before, the Ottoman Empire had been referred to as the “Sick Man of Europe”, a term coined by Czar Nicholas I to legitimize the Russian seizure of Ottoman territory. The term designated Turkey as being “of Europe” by acknowledging the Balkan European presence of the Empire. Yet this was clearly not a complimentary term. The Ottomans had been losing ground to the Russians and other expanding Western powers long before World War I. Attempts at modernization like the Tanzimat reforms had fallen short. Many in Turkey feared that the victorious allies would not only divide the Empire’s non-Turkish possessions, but Asia Minor itself. It was against this backdrop that Ataturk, himself a military and militarily-supported man, came to the fore. On May 19, 1919, emerging from the credibility gained through his leadership role at the successful battle of Gallipoli, he began his campaign to unite the disparate elements of Turkish resistance to Allied and Greek occupation under his banner.³¹ Ataturk seemed like the perfect choice to correct the political blunders of the past. He had a vision to build a new republic for the future, all the while fending off Western attempts to colonize Turkey’s land.

One cannot begin to understand Turkey without knowing about Ataturk. He was firmly committed to creating a secular republic where the military was the ultimate safeguard of the constitution. He had to contend with numerous restless political groups, revolutionaries, and minorities, all while building a country that had never existed before (at least not in the form Ataturk envisioned). Relying on the military was a completely logical response to deal with the overwhelming turmoil caused by the threat of subordination to the victorious Allies. Simply put, the Republic of Turkey would not exist on the map if not for Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and his strong, drastic action.

³¹ Andrew Mango, *Ataturk*, (New York: Overlook Press, 1999), 221.

Ataturk's social policies were often enigmatic. For example, he held progressive ideas about women's place in society, advocating changes in Islamic dress that would not prevent women from fully participating in social, economic, and academic pursuits.³² The increased role of women in public life serves to illuminate the divide between Islamists and secularists once more, with secularists generally in favor and Islamists generally against it for most of the Republic's history.

However, Ataturk's occasional disregard for human life is also evident. He employed drastic measures to quell rebellion in the tumultuous postwar years. In particular, the high-ranking Commander Nurettin Pasa often killed, tortured, and robbed rebellious Greeks and Kurds, yet when some demanded that he face trial, Ataturk intervened on his behalf.³³ Ataturk justified his action by claiming to defend the new nation from harm. The historic interconnectedness of the military and the upper echelons of political power, a common theme in every period of Turkish history, continued uncontested.

The attempts at modernization that were carried out in Ataturk's reign profoundly changed the new society, and their effects can still be felt today. The desire of some Turks for secular, Western-style democracy often conflicts with the desire of others for an Islamist republic. Ataturk created a strong republic, yet religious sentiments are undeniably strong, especially in light of recent rise of the Islamist AK party. For example, the 1950s pogrom on the Greeks in Istanbul was known by the Republic to have been fomented by Muslim troublemakers but wasn't stopped. This demonstrated how Islamic fundamentalist elements could influence government action. The tension between Kemalist ideology and Muslim political thought shapes much of the current discussion today, yet its roots reach far into the past.

³² Ibid., 381.

³³ Ibid., 329-330.

Yet although the Kemalists were fully intent on modernization, this did not always seamlessly intertwine with Westernization. For example, although Kemalists have been committed to reforms aimed at increased secularization and a functioning free market economy, they have shown a tendency to be much less in favor of improving the human rights record and increasing the degree of democracy.³⁴ The disconnect between modernization and Westernization within Turkey has plagued the Turkish relationship with Europe since the beginning of the Republic.

Changes after Ataturk:

Following Ataturk's death in 1938, Ismet Inonu was elected unanimously to serve as Turkey's new president. Inonu had been one of Ataturk's most trusted confidants, and had played an important political role as prime minister in the early days of the Republic. The Republican People's Party, the party of Ataturk, stood as the only viable political organization inside Turkey. In a special convention in December of 1938, the party gave Ataturk the honorific title of Eternal Leader, reflecting his status as the country's national hero.³⁵ At this same convention, Inonu was named the party's leader for life, and was given the title National Leader.

Inonu, largely through his monopoly of power granted by the one-party system, played a difficult high wire act throughout World War II, maintaining armed neutrality. Inonu's government safeguarded the accomplishments of the nascent republic. While Turkey saved face in the international arena by eventually siding with the Allies, it did so without committing itself militarily, even fending off the advances of Winston Churchill.³⁶ Nevertheless, Allied victory

³⁴ Burhanettin Duran, "Islamist redefinition of identity," in *Turkey and European Integration: Accession prospects and issues*, Ed. Nergis Canefe and Mehmet Ugur, (New York: Routledge Press, 2004) 132.

³⁵ Mango, *Ataturk*, 529.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 530.

wrought substantive changes for the Turkish political structure, illuminating an example of Western impact on the Republic.

With the initiation of the Cold War, the Western powers looked for democratic partners in their struggle against the Soviet Union. This external pressure, coupled with the union of cultural conservatives and supporters of greater economic and political liberty, combined to open up the single-party system.³⁷ 1946 saw the formation of the opposition Democrat Party. Legitimately free elections were held for the first time in 1950, resulting in a majority for the Democrat Party, and the beginning of the end for the Republican People's party.

The new government stuck firmly to Kemalist ideology of a secular republic while allowing incremental religious freedoms for the people.³⁸ However, the party badly mishandled Turkey's economic development, which angered the populace and led to the first of many military coups in 1960.³⁹ Here, one can see the first tangible sign of the military's zealous dedication to the preservation of a secular Kemalist republic; a republic (in the eyes of the military) threatened by self-serving politicians. From 1950-1980, a pattern of pluralistic politics, military coups, and authoritarian intervals emerged, eventually culminating in military rule from 1980-1983. During this period, the tiny island of Cyprus served as a flashpoint for Greek-Turkish tensions, later becoming a major obstacle for Turkey's accession to the EU.

Cyprus:

The island of Cyprus, less than a hundred miles off the coast of southern Turkey, has long been the battleground for Greco-Turkish rivalry. Ethnic Greeks and Turks comprise large portions of the Cypriot population. During the previous centuries, Cyprus had first been settled by the Greeks, then became a colony of the Ottoman Empire, and finally came under British control

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 531.

³⁹ Ibid., 532.

in 1878. Yet since the early 19th century, the Greek Cypriot majority had agitated for *enosis*, or union with Greece, which was often furthered by Greek propaganda originating from the mainland. Cyprus' colonial status changed in 1959 with the signing of the Zurich Agreements. This document, signed by the UK, Greece, and Turkey, set up the founding principles of the new Republic of Cyprus.⁴⁰

However, within a few years, tensions between ethnic Turks and Greeks would bubble to the surface, disturbing the fragile peace of the newly formed state. The events of December 21, 1963, known as “Bloody Christmas”, represented the boiling point. With the passage of thirteen constitutional amendments unfavorable to the Turkish minority, intercommunal violence broke out. These amendments aimed at centralizing authority to increase governmental efficiency, yet they had the potential to trample upon the protections of the Turkish Cypriot minority laid out in the Zurich Agreements. By the end of the day, two Turkish Cypriots lay dead due to the actions of Greek Cypriot policemen.⁴¹ In protest to the amendments, as well as the violence that followed, Turkish Cypriots quit their posts in the parliament and the administration of President (and Greek Orthodox Archbishop) Makarios.⁴²

For the next decade, the violence partially subsided, thanks in large part to a United Nations peacekeeping force sent in 1964. This peace came at a price for the Turkish Cypriots: the UN resolution marked the first instance of the recognition of the Greek Cypriot administration as Cyprus' legal government.⁴³ In other words, the international community had recognized an administration completely devoid of Turkish Cypriots as the rightful government of Cyprus, which angered both the Turkish minority as well as the Republic of Turkey itself. This stance was further solidified by an Association Agreement signed between the EEC and the Republic of

⁴⁰ Semin Suvarierol, “The Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey’s Road to Membership in the European Union,” in *Turkey and the European Union*, Ed. Ali Carkoglu and Barry Rubin, (London: Cass Publishing, 2003), 72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Cyprus in 1972, which established the groundwork for economic and diplomatic interaction. The EEC agreement with Cyprus inflamed Turkish opinion even more. One final provocation was all it took to send the situation spiraling out of control.

On July 15, 1974, the military junta in charge of Greece initiated a coup on the island in order to depose Makarios and realize the long-standing dream of *enosis*.⁴⁴ A Greek Cypriot guerilla organization, called the EOKA-B, carried out the junta's orders on the ground. In response, the TAF landed an invasion force in order to prevent *enosis*, stop ethnic violence, and save the Turkish Cypriots.⁴⁵ Yet Turkey held more than just humanitarian motivations for their invasion. Cyprus represented a strategic military concern, as well as the fear of the encirclement of Anatolia by Greek islands (a potentially crippling psychological blow).⁴⁶ In essence, Cyprus was and continues to be of vital national interest to Turkey.

The TAF was not content with merely preventing Greek dominance of the island. In a second offensive on August 16, the Turks invaded and occupied 37% of the northern section of the island, which led to a revision of Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities.⁴⁷ The north, which had already been a stronghold of the Turkish Cypriots, now became almost exclusively Turkish in composition. For about a decade, the north remained a quasi-protectorate of Turkey. On November 15, 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) declared its independence from the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), signifying the formal division between the Turkish Cypriot north and the Greek Cypriot south (along with other minorities like Maronites and Armenians).⁴⁸ In terms of international acceptance, only the Republic of Turkey recognizes the TRNC.⁴⁹

1980 Military Coup:

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bogdani, *Turkey and the Dilemma of EU Accession*, 26.

Turkey underwent fundamental alterations in the 1980s. Social unrest, political violence, and economic stagnation had all contributed to parliamentary instability in the late 1970s. The coup of September 12, 1980 was the third in a series of such military takeovers that had reoccurred over the previous few decades. However, unlike the previous upheavals, the Turkish Armed Forces did not set a specific timetable for the return of a democratic system, opening the door for a longer and more austere period of armed rule. Indeed, the generals believed that the only way to save the democracy was to purge the political system, which was dominated by corrupt politicians.⁵⁰ In this way, their motivations were similar to those of their predecessors in the 1960 coup. Yet the way that the general staff went about this purge would entail much more dramatic changes for Turkish society.

Not only were political parties abolished and parliament suspended (as in previous coups), but now all mayors and municipal councils were also dismissed.⁵¹ The National Security Council (NSC) consolidated all power in the hands of General Kenan Evran, the chief of staff. The NSC formed a twenty-seven member parliament filled with bureaucrats and military officials, but it largely served as a rubber stamp for Evran and the NSC.⁵² Since the NSC had declared martial law, the regional commanders of the armed forces assumed the role of filling the power vacuum left by the departing municipal governments. These commanders had great leeway to maintain order. They frequently closed down newspapers and arrested editors and journalists, even shutting down the Atatürk-instigated *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) for a time.⁵³ Subjugation of the free press reached its apogee with the 1981 prohibition on all public discussion of political matters. Even in the present-day, the Turkish press experiences occasional repression.

⁵⁰ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: Tauris, 1993), 292.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The NSC also enforced its rule through wide-scale arrests, with over 120,000 occurring in the first year alone.⁵⁴ Although the arrests did put many dangerous organized criminals and political terrorists behind bars, the social cost was high. Any publically expressed leftist or Islamist views became the pretext for the detention of trade unionists, professors, lawyers, and journalists. In addition, the NSC targeted entire groups, such as the Kurdish PKK and left-wingers *Devrimci Sol*.⁵⁵ Once imprisoned, the detainees often endured torture: a standard protocol during interrogation. In some cases, the torture was so severe that it led to severe mental and physical ailments, or death. Allegations of torture would later come to characterize a major stumbling block in the accession process.

Harsh yet effective, these measures halted much of the political violence that had overwhelmed Turkey in the 1970s. In late 1982, the NSC began the transition back to a civilian government. In the new constitution, power relocated to the executive, with the president and the NSC gaining new abilities. In addition, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and rights of the individual were all either curtailed or subject to suspension based upon national security considerations.⁵⁶ The carefully planned referendum for the new constitution left nothing to chance: criticism of the constitution's articles was banned and voting made compulsory. Passing with a massive majority, the referendum made Evren president for seven years, and made political reconstruction possible. Still, the NSC did not give free rein to the civilians, banning students and professors from party membership and approving of the formation of only three new political parties that were limited from most societal engagement.⁵⁷ Turgat Ozal, founder of the Motherland Party (MP), became the face of the new civilian government through his party's success in the first post-coup elections. Ozal would eventually reignite negotiations with the EEC.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 294.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 295.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 296.

The Founding of the European Economic Community:

By the end of World War II, most of Europe lay in ruins, both in a literal and metaphorical sense. Not only did the war exact a heavy price on life and limb, but it also took a toll on the consciousness of Europeans from Great Britain to Greece. In order to avoid further devastation, European political leaders decided to revolutionize their political structures.

The European Union had humble beginnings. Initially, it was known as the European Coal and Steel Community. The Union's purpose was to create a pool of these shared resources in order to eliminate tariffs and enhance economic cooperation. This organization was dreamt up by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, whose May 9, 1950 declaration set the stage for cooperation.⁵⁸ In the declaration, Schuman proposed collaboration between France and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), with a view towards granting membership to other European nations. Cold War calculations also played an important role, as France tried to ensure that the western zones of what became the Federal Republic of Germany were tied to the west and would not be absorbed into the Soviet bloc.

Even though the ECSC appeared to have modest aims, the simple start represented a conscious strategy. The architects of the organization realized that an instant repudiation of the nation-state system would have ended in disaster. They also understood that economic cooperation, could lead, via the tangible benefits of increased efficiency for both parties, to eventual political union. With an economic cornerstone in place, European participants could gradually build a more comprehensive system that simultaneously respected the cultures of each member while building a political consensus that prevented large-scale conflict.

Membership in the ECSC eventually expanded to include the so-called Benelux bloc (Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg). This first expansion of a European community

⁵⁸ "Schumann's Declaration," (9 May 1950), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 20 Feb. 2013).

would herald continued expansions into the future. The ECSC treaty provided for a High Authority (executive), a Common Assembly (legislative) and a Court of Justice (judicial).⁵⁹ In these rudimentary beginnings, it is possible to see a conscious effort to separate governmental powers to ensure democracy, although the existence of a fifty year time limit on the treaty illustrates the uncertainty of the member states.

The next key stage for European integration occurred with the signing of the Rome Treaty on March 25, 1957. The European Economic Community (EEC) that was formed by this treaty's ratification can be characterized as a general common market with a customs union based on the free movement of goods, persons, and services from member state to member state.⁶⁰ For the first time, a European organization provided a center for cooperative policymaking, especially in the areas of agriculture and transport.⁶¹ During the 1960s and 70s, influential new members such as the United Kingdom joined the EEC in the first enlargement. Newly formed democracies like Spain and Portugal followed in the 1980s. However, while membership widened, it would take a landmark treaty to deepen the integration of the organization.

The 1986 Single European Act (SEA) changed everything. First, it jumpstarted the stagnant process of economic integration. By setting the ambitious goal of establishing a single market by 1993, the twelve member states of the EEC essentially agreed to build off the successes of the common market. The common market had been an important first step, yet the single market would remove physical borders, internal tariffs, and technical barriers to the greatest possible extent. The SEA set the stage for the later establishment of the Schengen Area; a zone guaranteeing free movement to EU citizens.

In addition, the SEA expanded the purview of the organization from mostly economic into greater social and political roles. The European Council, an ad-hoc group comprised of

⁵⁹ "The Beginnings of the ECSC," *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 10 Feb. 2013).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

heads-of-state within the EEC, had pushed for greater domestic and foreign policy cooperation in order to solve agricultural and budgetary crises.⁶² Gradually, member states began to realize that a purely economic organization did not possess the capabilities necessary to solve the fundamental problems facing a Europe in the midst of a Cold War and an economic downturn. The SEA represented the culmination of this realization, and significantly expanded the powers and responsibilities of the Community while reforming outdated institutions. In particular, the SEA would lead to the creation of institutions like the European Commission, a body of technocrats gathered from each member state that created the regulation necessary to solve complex issues. In short, without the SEA, the EEC would never have transformed into the European Union of its current form.

First Contact between European Organizations and Turkey:

The EEC was not the first European organization to begin a relationship with the Republic of Turkey. The EEC was preceded by the Council of Europe. This organization, while it mainly functions through the distribution of reports and recommendations, nevertheless contributed to some of the most significant events in the history of Turkish-European interaction. Indeed, Turkey, is considered a founding member of the Council, and today remains one of the Council's most influential members. Furthermore, Turkey joined NATO in 1952, solidifying its position in alliance with the West against the Soviet bloc. It quickly became an important part of NATO, contributing many soldiers to its ranks as well as providing a vitally strategic geographic location.

Although Turkey joined the Council of Europe in 1949, fourteen more years would pass before the EEC approached Turkey. On September 12 1963, the Republic of Turkey signed the so-called Ankara Agreement of 1963 with the EEC, marking the first instance of formal

⁶² "Single European Act," *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 15 Feb. 2013).

interaction. This treaty laid the groundwork for future cooperation between the two entities. In particular, its goal was to, "...promote the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Parties, while taking full account of the need to ensure an accelerated development of the Turkish economy and to improve the level of employment and the living conditions of the Turkish people."⁶³

In order to accomplish these lofty aims, the treaty planned to gradually establish a customs union, initiated by a preparatory stage of five years.⁶⁴ In addition, the Agreement provided for the free movement of workers and the application of the EEC's rules on competition. These two provisions aimed at helping Turkey join the ranks of other developed economies. Significantly, however, the Ankara Agreement contained no reference to Turkey's accession to full membership status.

Even at this early juncture, one can see evidence of western European hesitation regarding Turkish participation. France, under the stewardship of the legendary Charles de Gaulle, did not want to sign the agreement. The French had pushed for a common foreign policy of the six existing EEC member states named the Union of States, and were therefore more focused on consolidating western European decision-making rather than expanding to the east.⁶⁵ Even when the proposed Union of States failed, France still needed convincing. Only when Germany accepted a plan to extend similar Association Agreements to the French-dominated African States and Madagascar did France give in.⁶⁶

In 1970, Turkey and the EEC moved closer together with the ratification of the Brussels Protocol, an extension of the earlier Ankara Agreement. Here, the relationship moved from a preparatory stage to a transitional one. The Protocol again emphasized the establishment of free

⁶³ "Association Agreement with the EEC/Ankara Agreement," (12 Sept. 1963), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 22 Feb. 2013).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ "The Case of Turkey," *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 22 Feb. 2013).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

movement of goods as well as the elimination of customs duties as vital objectives. However, the Protocol also introduced new stipulations that moved the relationship forward.

This document not only expanded the trade agreement, but also attached financial considerations. For example, the protocol set Turkey on the path to joining the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a cornerstone of EEC policy.⁶⁷ The CAP provides significant subsidies to member states' crop and livestock products, and makes agriculture one of the most heavily protected industries within the organization. The CAP represents one of the most important arms of the EEC/EU, both practically and symbolically. By extending the invitation to Turkey, the Brussels Protocol gave those in favor of Turkish accession legitimate hope.

What Do the Origins of Turkey and the EEC Mean for Their Relationship?

The Turks' origins have a great deal of impact on the later relationship with the EEC. First, the tie between the military and political elite, a tie that originates within the Gokturk confederation, has been a fundamental characteristic of Turkish government for thousands of years. From the rise of the Turks within Arab dynasties, facilitated mainly by military prowess, to the military coup of 1980, the Turkish military has had a crucial role to play in governance. Furthermore, this civil-military linkage, although vital to Turkish sovereignty, has negatively impacted Turkish-European relations. Many EEC criticisms, including human rights violations and the Cyprus issue, can be traced back to this linkage. Without the military's dominant role in Turkish civil society, the accession process likely would have seen much less controversy.

In addition, the tension between Islam, adopted by the Turks shortly after their origins, and a secular government, adopted in the founding of the Republic, has played a major role in

⁶⁷ "Brussels Protocol to the Association Agreement," (13 Nov. 1970), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 23 Feb. 2013).

deciding Turkey's course towards Westernization. For example, the degree of Westernization contained in each subsequent iteration of the Tanzimat reforms was largely determined by whether the late Ottoman government pursued more of a secularist or Islamist policy. Since Atatürk founded the Republic in 1923, Islamists and secularists have vehemently disagreed on their policies towards Europe, with the Islamists rejecting many European principles and the secularists embracing them. The deep roots of both secularism and Islamism play a part in explaining this tension. Finally, the conflict between the two ideologies serves as a rough dividing line between those in favor of EU accession (secularists), and those opposed (Islamists), up until the AKP government of 2002.

On the other hand, past European experiences with the Ottoman Empire colored EEC perceptions of Turkey. Centuries of Ottoman dominance in Southeastern Europe, as well as the threat of continued expansion to the West, led to a European reimagining as a Christian, Western entity arrayed against an Islamic, Eastern threat. These ideas provide the pretext for presence of Islamophobia in Europe, as well as a fear of the Turks, the people that had once ruled the Ottoman Empire. These historical legacies have not helped Turkey's EU candidacy, and only grew more visible in the wake of anti-Islamic sentiment in the West engendered by 9/11.⁶⁸

In addition, the founding of the ECSC/EEC and its early years help explain why the Turkish-EEC relationship has still not produced a final resolution to Turkey's long candidacy. At its beginning, the ECSC was meant to lead to lasting peace between France and West Germany, as well as a tool to fend off Soviet Communism from West Germany. Adding a new member like Turkey, with all of the problems it posed, would have ranked far down the list of EEC priorities, especially considering Turkey's peripheral position on the edge of Europe. For these reasons, the

⁶⁸ Cagla Aykac, "Introduction," in *Perceptions of Islam in Europe*, Ed. Hakan Yilmaz and Cagla Aykac (London: Tauris, 2012), 5.

EEC's progress in relations with Turkey was sporadic until Turkey's formal application for membership in 1987.

Chapter 3

1987-1997

On April 14, 1987, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal formally requested admission into the EEC, signaling the initiation of a brand new era in Turkish-European relations. Finally, the relationship that had begun at Ankara in 1963 could achieve full fruition. However, just because Turkey submitted an application did not mean Europe had to accept it. Many previous tensions now came to the fore during this two year period. Soon, it was clear that the accession process would drag on indefinitely, characterized by stop-start negotiations. How could such a seemingly hopeful beginning turn cynical and counterproductive? A combination of factors would set the talks off on the wrong foot.

The Balfe Report:

In order to fully understand the atmosphere surrounding EEC-Turkish relations, one must go back to 1985. In this year, a member of the European Parliament named Richard Balfe published an influential report on the human rights situation inside Turkey. This European preoccupation with human rights conditions can be explained by both the proximity of Turkey as well as the large numbers of ethnic Turks living inside Europe.⁶⁹ In other words, European attention was highly attuned to potential violations, especially when Turkish political refugees added their grievances. In addition, Turkey's checkered history in its treatment of minorities was also a concern, a concern reignited by the Cyprus crisis of the previous decade.

⁶⁹ Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 315.

This document hearkens back to the numerous allegations of human rights abuse during the years following the 1980 coup, and attempts to determine whether any improvement had coincided with the reestablishment of civilian rule. In addition, the report demands either explanation or concrete action for various resolutions having to do with human rights violations inside the country; in essence, it combines these resolutions into one document. These resolutions range from an inquiry into the detainment, torture, and death of the mayor of Faksa, Turkey to an indictment of the treatment of Kurdish prisoners.

In its conclusion, Balfe's report opines that, "... the respect for human rights in Turkey is still a long way short of complying with the most elementary standards."⁷⁰ Based on the research of the report, Balfe recommended against the restoration of normal relations between the Turkish Grand National Assembly and European Parliament; relations that had ceased with the coup.⁷¹ Balfe concludes the report with a startling figure: "[The Turkish Parliament] continues to represent only a limited number of political parties and excludes two which, between them, obtained nearly 40% of the total vote in the most recent elections."⁷²

The report's conclusions must be digested with a grain of salt. After all, the EEC's harsh attitude on the subject was heavily influenced by officials close with the last civilian administration before the coup, and by an unfriendly Greek contingent.⁷³ However, this fact does not mean the lack of any problem at all. Clearly, Turkey had a history of human rights violations, characterized by atrocities against Armenian, Greek, and Kurdish ethnic groups.

Importantly, although the report contained motions relating to the Kurdish problem, EP did not address the Kurdish dimension to the human rights violations in the main body of the report. The fact that it omitted any formal resolution regarding the Kurds demonstrates the EP's

⁷⁰ "Balfe Report on human rights situation in Turkey," (9 Oct. 1985), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 25 Feb. 2013).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 316.

indecision over how to broach the issue with Turkey.⁷⁴ Finally, the report fails to put any teeth into its conclusions beyond a refusal to resume normal relations. The EEC's inability to use legitimate punishments like diplomatic sanctions or economic embargo in order to change Turkey's behavior is a common theme in the relationship. However, it must be noted that any EEC action had the potential to result in reprisals against minorities inside Turkey. Turkey's arbitrary discrimination, displayed by the closure of the last Greek Orthodox seminary on the island of Turkish-held island Halki in 1971, was feared by minorities within Anatolia. These minorities warned the EEC against harsh punishments, lest they bear the brunt of Turkish anger.

Yet, despite its problems, the Balfe report constitutes an important landmark for the relationship between these entities. It marks the first instance of a specific EEC recommendation directed towards Turkey. In 1982, the Council of Europe's harsh condemnation of Turkish human rights violations had persuaded the EEC to halt relations with Ankara. The Balfe report concluded that normal relations should not be reestablished until the Turkish government restored human rights. It would be into this poisoned atmosphere that Ozal would submit the formal request for Turkish accession.

Reemergence of the Armenian Genocide and EEC Rejection:

The effect of Europe's attention on questions of human rights in Turkey manifested itself just months after the formal accession bid was launched. On June 18, 1987, the EP asked the Ozal government to officially recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915-17. Although this controversial event had occurred some seventy years prior, debates over what actually took place still rage to this day. Beginning in the late 19th century, popular violence against Anatolian

⁷⁴ Marlies Casier, "The Politics of Solidarity: The Kurdish Question in the European Parliament," in *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish issue*, Ed. Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 6, *Academia.edu Database*, Online, (accessed 2 March 2013).

Armenians swept through the Ottoman state, with estimates of ranging between 20,000 and 80,000 casualties.⁷⁵ The Young Turk-led Committee of Unity and Progress “deported the Armenians en masse from eastern Anatolia to the Syrian desert and elsewhere in 1915-16,” killing over one million through starvation and disease by some estimates.⁷⁶ While Armenians clamor for the Turkish government to accept responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of thousands, many Turks reject claims that it was indeed genocide. Instead, Turkish authorities blame a combination of civil war, disease, and famine all brought on by World War I as the true culprit. This reasoning is rejected by a majority of Western and Turkish historians. They point to state-sponsored civilian killings by the Turkish government in order to combat the large number of Armenian volunteers in the Russian army during the Great War.

No matter what actually happened in the controversial Armenian incident, this EP request functioned as a diplomatic slap in the face to Turkey. By bringing up a sore subject so soon after the Turkish accession request was launched, the EEC visibly demonstrated its misgivings about Turkey’s chances of becoming a free, open, and tolerant democracy. Turkey’s repeated human rights abuses, brought into focus by the Cyprus crisis and discrimination against the Greeks, came to diminish its chances for EU accession.

In addition, the EP resolution served as a platform from which they could criticize Turkey for, “its reluctance to apply the principles of international law to its differences of opinion with Greece, the maintenance of Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and the denial of existence of the Kurdish question, together with the lack of true parliamentary democracy and the failure to

⁷⁵ Mango, *Ataturk*, 15.

⁷⁶ *Armenian genocide dispute*, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16352745>, (accessed on 23 March 2013).

respect individual and collective freedoms...”.⁷⁷ Clearly, the EEC held deep reservations about Turkey’s candidacy, and was not afraid to let Turkey know about it.

The EP resolution on Armenia constituted the first instance of direct EEC condemnation of the Kurdish problem.⁷⁸ In effect, the EP linked past troubles with the Armenian minority to present issues with the Kurdish one. This linkage painted a picture of repeated human rights violations against ethnic minorities. The resolution also works as a window onto other EEC concerns about Turkey in this time period, particularly regarding democracy, civil liberties, and the dispute with Greece over Cyprus.

On December 20, 1989, the Commission of the EEC (the increasingly powerful group of technocrats responsible for much EEC policy) delivered their final opinion on Turkey’s request for admission. The official opinion was conveyed as a rejection, but an encouragement to reapply at a later date. The Commission cited various reasons for their denial of Turkey, with some having to do with Turkey’s political and economic issues, and others based on the position of the EEC at that specific point in time.

The first reason given by the Commission made reference to momentous changes within the EEC: “Since its third enlargement and the entry into force of the Single Act, the Community has been in a state of flux... This reason alone is sufficient for the Commission to consider that it would be unwise... to envisage the Community becoming involved in new accession negotiations before 1993 at the earliest.”⁷⁹ During this period, the EEC had only just embarked upon the quest of fulfilling the Single European Act, which would eventually end in its reformation into the European Union. The challenges involved in attaining a single market, an economic and monetary union, and political unity were extensive. Accepting a country as complex as Turkey

⁷⁷ “European Parliament resolution to the Armenian question,” (18 June 1987), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed 10 Feb 2013).

⁷⁸ Casier, “The Politics of Solidarity,” 6.

⁷⁹ “Commission opinion on Turkey’s request for accession to the Community,” (20 December 1989), 2, *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 24 Feb. 2013).

into this already overwhelming process seemed, to quote the Commission, “unwise”. In addition, the EEC had recently accepted the new Southern European democracies of Greece, Portugal, and Spain in the early 1980’s. Helping these three nations transition from dictatorship would be hard enough, not to mention the difficulties involved in bringing them into line with the SEA.

Yet EEC turmoil was not the only reason for the rejection of Turkey. Turkey’s massive geographic area, huge and growing population, and relatively low level of development all appeared to the Commission grounds for serious concern.⁸⁰ Turkey’s accession would have made it the largest state within the EEC, both in terms of size and population. This would have required an extensive restructuring of the EEC governmental system, which was already occurring due to the SEA. Nevertheless, the Commission did acknowledge the significant progress that Turkey had made in the previous ten years: “GDP has increased by 5.2% a year, compared with 2.0% a year for the [countries of the EEC].”⁸¹ The Commissioners also praised the increase of Turkish exports (particularly manufactured goods) as well as the improvement of Turkish infrastructure.⁸² Still, economic problems were evident in the form of low per capita GDP, high unemployment, and rampant inflation.⁸³

With regard to political issues of governance and minority rights, the EEC expressed its findings in a tone of cautious optimism. Specifically, the Commission acknowledged Turkey’s movement towards a parliamentary democracy more along the lines of Western Europe. However, it expressed concern at the extremely gradual pace at which respect for minorities and freedom for trade unions and political parties was progressing.⁸⁴ Finally, the EEC counted Turkey’s poor relations with Greece and the standoff on Cyprus as marks against its candidacy.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

The opinion's conclusion, although it ultimately rejected Turkish accession, ends with a reaffirmation of the importance of Turkey. "The Community (EEC) has a fundamental interest in intensifying its relations with Turkey and helping it to complete as soon as possible its process of political and economic modernization. Turkey, associated with the Community, is a large expanding country; it is also one of the Member States' partners in the Atlantic alliance, occupying a strategically important geopolitical position."⁸⁶ This conclusion hits on all the potential benefits of a European alliance with Turkey. From Europe's point of view, Turkey represented an interesting proposition that, while it posed many problems, could be a member state from which the Union could reap many rewards.

To help prepare Turkey for eventual accession, the Commission recommended increased cooperation in the fields of finance, industry, technology, politics, and culture.⁸⁷ Yet many of these recommendations, while encouraging to those in favor of accession, came unsupported by concrete policies. Indeed, the ability of the EEC to implement concrete policies was severely restricted by human rights issues, which Turkey regarded as internal affairs. Turkey did not want the EEC meddling in its internal affairs, yet wanted tangible economic cooperation, putting the relationship in a dilemma. Finally, the opinion recommended that accession talks should begin around 1993.

Work towards a Customs Union and the Reformulation of the EEC:

After the European Commission's rejection in 1989, Turkey's candidacy languished without much incident for the next two years. On September 30, 1991, the two parties held an Association Council in Brussels. Here, Turkish and EEC officials agreed to resume regular meetings of an association committee; a committee dedicated to working on trade and economic

⁸⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

issues.⁸⁸ Through this partnership's detailed work, the reality of a customs union began to take shape. The committee laid the groundwork for the Customs Union (CU), which would eventually be established in 1995.

The seminal Treaty of Maastricht signed on February 7, 1992, a realization of the previous Single European Act, changed the European Economic Community into the European Union. Besides the name change, Maastricht fundamentally altered the reach of the organization. During the trek towards economic and monetary union, EEC elites slowly realized that they needed to unify politically as well. The EEC had always been criticized for having a democratic deficit because of the relative weakness of its only popularly elected body, the EP.⁸⁹ In the end, Maastricht combined economic and monetary union (EMU) with political union, establishing the European Union. While not overtaking the Commission, the EP gained more influence, partially erasing the democratic deficit. A tentative agreement to coordinate foreign policy, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), also originated here.

For years, the EU had used summits called European Councils that brought together the European political elite in order to solve integration problems such as enlargement. The head of each EU member state meets with the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council (usually a former head of state). These summits do not occur regularly, and technically have only suggestive power. Yet historically, they have played an important role in both crisis resolution and setting the EU agenda. The first important European Council, in terms of Turkey's candidacy, occurred at Copenhagen from June 21-22, 1993.

The Copenhagen European Council laid out a set of economic and political criteria for prospective EU members to meet. Previously, candidate countries did not have a standardized list of the requirements necessary to join the EU. Now, through the work of this summit, the so-called

⁸⁸ Ozgul Erdemli, "Chronology: Turkey's Relations with the EU," in *Turkey and the European Union*, Ed. Ali Carkoglu and Barry Rubin, (London: Cass Publishing, 2003), 5.

⁸⁹ "Treaty on European Union," *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 20 Feb. 2013).

“Copenhagen criteria” would theoretically govern the accession process of each candidate. Copenhagen directed most of its efforts towards preparing the Central and Eastern European countries for accession, countries that had experienced 40 years of Soviet domination. However, the Copenhagen criteria soon came to apply to all candidates, specifically requiring that they, “achieve stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union.”⁹⁰ In effect, the Copenhagen criteria outlined exactly what candidates needed to do to join the EU, albeit without telling candidates how to achieve this.

Copenhagen also contained a small section dedicated specifically to Turkish accession. The members demanded, “... intensified cooperation and development of relations with Turkey,” in order to “... establish a customs union.”⁹¹ This fragment showed that although Copenhagen mainly focused on former Communist countries, it still remembered Turkey and remained committed to the development of the CU.

Negotiations over the CU tended to lean towards more a more centralized and technocratic process, rather than a democratic and transparent one. This can be partially attributed to the complexity of the negotiations, but also to the neoliberal populism with which the Turkish government operated during this period.⁹² The CU reduced tariffs against EU products from 10.2 percent to 1.4 percent, and reduced the tariff between Turkey and the EU (combined) and third-party countries to 6.9 percent.⁹³ This significant liberalization of trade opened Turkey to a wide flow of outside goods, especially from the EU. The CU provided long-term benefits, yet represented a short-term risk. Opening Turkey to foreign competition in the marketplace would

⁹⁰ “Conclusions from the Copenhagen European Council: excerpt on the EU accession criteria,” (21-22 June 1993), 2-3, *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 22 March 2013).

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 2.

⁹² Mine Eder, “Populism as a barrier to integration,” in *Turkey and European Integration: Accession prospects and issues*, Ed. Nergis Canefe and Mehmet Ugur, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 65.

⁹³ *Ibid*.

theoretically improve the quality of Turkish manufactured goods, and allow Turkey to eventually export more of its merchandise. However, during the adjustment period, Turkish industries had a difficult time competing with more established European companies, many of which could afford to sell their products at lower prices.

A remarkable event transpired during the slow CU negotiations: the election of the first woman Prime Minister in the history of the Republic of Turkey, and indeed the first female leader of any previous Turkish polity. Prime Minister Tansu Ciller was elected in the elections of 1993, representing the conservative True Path Party in a coalition government. Ciller's ascension to power represented an important victory for women inside Turkey, as well as the Westernization of the country.

Human Rights Violations and the Kurds:

One of the most fundamental problems for Ciller's government was located in southeastern Turkey: the conflict with the Kurds took on an even greater intensity during this period. The battle between the TAF and the PKK, while it had occurred sporadically over the last few decades, now became even more violent as casualties mounted on both sides. However, the TAF did not only fight a conventional campaign. Since the PKK was a guerilla force, the whereabouts of its fighters often remained unclear. In order to stamp out the opposition, the TAF resorted to extreme measures, especially from 1991 onwards. For example, the military hired a death squad in Mardin province, with instructions to kill anyone suspected of being a 'Kurdish patriot.'⁹⁴ These extrajudicial killings increased in frequency as the Turkish government searched for ways to cripple the PKK's recruitment. In 1992, political murders occurred at the staggering clip of one per day.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Sugden, "Human rights and Turkey's candidacy," 243.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Gendarmes, a division of the TAF responsible for keeping order in rural areas, responded to PKK raids with ferocity, often killing civilians who participated in pro-Kurdish demonstrations, or targeting noncombatants in reprisals.⁹⁶ In addition, the Turkish air force used helicopters and jets to bomb suspected PKK strongholds. On March 26, 1994, the bombing of Kumcati and Sapanca in Sirnak province killed 36 villagers, with 17 children amongst the dead.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the PKK continued to stage guerilla raids on Turkish government sites and the general citizenry, leading to new methods of response by the TAF.

Gendarmes frequently emptied and destroyed entire villages that refused to support a squad of village guards. A village refusal, whether because of political persuasion or simple incapacity, was looked on as an act of treason by the gendarmerie. Between 1987 and 1995, the TAF displaced 378,335 villagers from 820 villages and 2,345 smaller settlements, giving some idea of the magnitude of the devastation.⁹⁸

Casualties of the Kurdish conflict also occurred in the prisons, as Turkey's state security apparatus cracked down on dissent. Journalists, politicians, and trade unionists served time in jail, whether the opinions they expressed were pro-Kurdish, or perhaps somehow critical of the government or Ataturk.⁹⁹ In 1994, 34 prisoners died while in custody, an alarmingly high figure. Torture in these prison facilities became the norm rather than the exception.

Despite these blatant human rights violations, progress towards the Customs Union remained steady. The EU, while it occasionally passed judgment on human rights issues through EP resolutions, dedicated the majority of its effort towards economic and political goals. It had no way of effectively monitoring for potential violations, and could not impose sanctions.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, within Turkey itself, many politicians did not even take these EP resolutions seriously, correctly

⁹⁶ Ibid, 244.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 243.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 244.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

putting more stock in the power of the Commission rather than the Parliament.¹⁰¹ In addition, the tendency for Greek members of the EP (MEPs) to unanimously vote in favor of such resolutions, even while atrocities against the Turkish minority within Greece were commonplace, enraged the Turks, who pointed to the lack of objectivity.¹⁰² As a result, one of the most expedient political stances during this period consisted of criticizing EU politicians.¹⁰³

Examples of these criticisms abound, illustrating that Turkish politicians did not fear an EU backlash, nor a termination of Customs Union negotiations. State Minister Ayvaz Gokdemir infamously called three women MEPs investigating human rights violations inside Turkey “these prostitutes from Europe” in June of 1995.¹⁰⁴ He kept his job (even under female PM Tansu Ciller!), and was reappointed following the next elections. This case illuminates the limits of EU power to chastise Turkish political insults, as well as the clear emphasis upon economic cooperation at the expense of human rights. It also displays Turkish reticence to accept EU oversight on what Turkey thought of as the internal affair of a sovereign state.

In fact, it would take a scathing public report by the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture in 1992 to expose Turkey’s sponsorship of this practice. The European Court of Human Rights also passed judgments against Turkey, finding widespread human rights violations within the gendarmerie and the police. While Turkey did not belong to the EU, it did belong to these other two human rights-focused organizations, forcing it to refrain from detaining prisoners incommunicado and to abolish torture in 1997.¹⁰⁵

If violations of human rights cited by the Europeans were not the sole explanation for the slow, stop-start nature of CU negotiations, than what was? Patronage-based politics, along with the attendant political posturing inside Turkey, indicated the most important contributing factor.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 245.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 248.

Turgut Ozal's creation, the conservative Motherland Party, opposed the CU, even though Ozal himself had applied for EU accession back in 1987!¹⁰⁶ This amazing fact shows the constantly evolving situation in Ankara, where parties made decisions based almost entirely on fickle public opinion. The Islamist Welfare Party stood behind even stiffer opposition to the CU, citing eventual EU membership as "incompatible with the country's national interest, as well as its religious/cultural heritage."¹⁰⁷ Here, Islamist opposition to Europe, evident since at the founding of the republic, once more made an appearance. Despite internal opposition, external skepticism, and technical difficulties, Turkey and the EU signed the agreement to form the CU on March 6, 1995. However, this did not mean that the CU instantly came into effect. It would take years in order to fully implement the difficult objectives outlined by the agreement.

From 1995 onwards, the intensity of the Kurdish conflict waned. One might be tempted to conflate the finalization of the CU treaty with the decrease in casualties, as the EU gained more influence within Turkey. However, in reality, the war against the PKK simply petered out, as years of violent conflict finally took their toll. The PKK made fewer strikes against village guards and the gendarmerie, meaning fewer reprisals by the government, as well as the decreased incidence of torture and extrajudicial killings.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the pace of the cycle of violence slowed due to PKK fatigue.

Corruption and "Postmodern" Coup:

Public relations disasters also contributed, shedding harsh light on how the TAF chose to combat the PKK. In particular, the Susurluk crash of November 1996 revealed the close relationship between security forces and criminals. A village guard chief and police chief were on vacation with a drug smuggler wanted for numerous political murders when their automobile had

¹⁰⁶ Eder, "Populism as a barrier to integration," 66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Sugden, "Human rights and Turkey's candidacy", 246.

an accident. Investigators found a trunk full of cash and silenced weapons, along with death-squad leader Abdullah Catli's 'green passport', a document kept for elite public servants only.¹⁰⁹ The incident sparked popular outrage, leading to public demonstrations against political corruption.¹¹⁰ In the face of these protests, the authorities reined in some of their illicit activity, at least in part.

The 1995 parliamentary elections had yielded an unprecedented result: a coalition government headed by an Islamist party. Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan began his term in 1996, leading the Welfare Party after winning a slight plurality at the polls. However, his term did not last for long. In 1997, the TAF engineered a coup that removed Erbakan and replaced him with the secularist Mesut Yilmaz (leader of the Motherland Party), the fourth in the series of military-led political coups.¹¹¹ Although the TAF did not completely obliterate the political structure, as they had done in 1980, this coup served as a reminder of the unmistakable influence of the military over the political system inside Turkey. Labeled a "postmodern coup", it was preceded by calls for a return to secularism by many NGOs and civil society groups.¹¹² This fact reflects the continued public perception of the military as the safeguard for the secularist democracy envisioned by Ataturk. However, on the other hand, a legitimate government leader had been ousted from power, showing the EU that Turkey still needed to improve the stability of its government.

Although the CU had little to do with slowing the pace of human rights violations, the decline in the number of such cases represented a small yet important step in Turkey's quest for EU membership. Economic cooperation through the lowering of trade barriers created a greater

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 247.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Goldschmidt Jr. and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 210.

¹¹² Ersel Aydinli, "A Paradigmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey," *Middle East Quarterly* 63.4 (2009): 583, *JSTOR*, Online, (accessed on 8 March 2013).

degree of free trade between the two entities. Without a customs union, other cooperative measures had no chance to succeed.

Historical Achievements but More Difficulties:

From 1987-1997, many things changed in the relationship between Turkey and the EEC/EU. In the span of 10 years, the EEC transformed itself into the more comprehensive EU, Turkey finally submitted a formal request for accession, and the two successfully established a vital customs union. In some ways, there was more progress towards Turkish membership in the EU during this period than ever before.

Yet at the same time, this period saw more of the same difficulties that had plagued the early relationship. For example, the reemergence of the Armenian genocide controversy, which had been simmering for generations, threatened to demonstrate Turkey's serious pattern of human rights violations. Turkey's unwillingness to accept responsibility, or to even recognize the full extent of the tragedy, served as a serious barrier to possible EU membership. The war in the Southeast against the Kurds provided another example of violations, as the TAF resorted to extrajudicial killings, torture, and civilian displacement. As human rights concerns piled up, the drive to establish a CU never wavered, as other European organizations like the CPT produced the stinging reports that led to the lower incidence of torture. In spite of EEC/EU condemnations like the Balfe Report of 1985, the fact that Turkey was not a member of the organization gave such condemnations less weight relative to those produced by organizations that Turkey was a part of, like the Council of Europe. Therefore, Turkey did not face the same punishment and public shaming from the EEC/EU, because it was not beholden to an organization that it was not a full part of.

Besides continued human rights troubles, the drive towards accession suffered further complications due to issues within the government. For example, the Susurluk crash cast a

revealing light on Turkey's corruption problem, as well as the tight relationship between the military and organized crime in the name of fighting the Kurds. In addition, the "postmodern" coup of 1997 showed that the military still held the high ground within the Republic's governance, removing an Islamist prime minister from office. This move simultaneously showed the military's commitment to Kemalist principles of secularism (which the EU wanted) as well as its ruthless disregard of freely-held elections (which the EU did not want). Again, the conflict between Islamists and secularists reared its head, through the reoccurring theme of military-political linkage present since Turkish origins.

In 1997, the combination of repeated human rights violations, corruption, and governmental instability caused by Islamist-secularist tensions finally accumulated in a single event. At Luxembourg, Turkey's EU candidacy suffered a serious blow; a blow from which the relationship has yet to fully recover.

Chapter 4

1997-2002

The Luxembourg European Council, which met from December 12-13 of 1997, represented a setback for Turkey's chances. While they confirmed Turkey's eligibility, the representatives concluded that the, "... political and economic considerations allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged not satisfied..."¹¹³ Evidently, Turkey's progress towards meeting EU qualifications still left much to be desired. Again, one can see the stop-start nature of the negotiations, a factor that continually discouraged Turkish proponents of EU accession. Many who had been expecting a confirmation of Turkey's official EU candidacy (a status the EU had hoped to deliver by 1993) now prepared themselves for a long, drawn-out process that might never reach its conclusion.

The Luxembourg delegates gave numerous reasons for their rejection. The EU cited, "the alignment of human rights standards and practices on those in force in the European Union; respect for and protection of minorities; the establishment of satisfactory and stable relations between Greece and Turkey; the settlement of disputes, in particular by legal process, including the International Court of Justice; and support for negotiations under the aegis of the UN on a political settlement in Cyprus on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions," as its areas of concern.¹¹⁴ Here, one can see the familiar obstacles towards accession making their reappearance. Despite Turkey's progress in some of these areas, such as human rights, it still had a long way to go before it met the official EU standards outlined by the Copenhagen criteria. Yet

¹¹³ "Conclusions of the Luxembourg European Council: extract concerning Turkey," (12-13 Dec. 1997), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 25 March 2013).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

although the Council made mention of these political and social issues, the economic concerns also played a vitally important role.

Luxembourg also contained some hopeful signs. The EU formulated a plan to intensify the Customs Union and implement financial cooperation, allowing Turkish participation in more EU programs and agencies.¹¹⁵ Therefore, although the EU did not promote Turkey to official candidate status, it did outline a plan with quasi-tangible steps, a departure from grandiose pronouncements lacking real policy implementations.

Nevertheless, Turkish politicians were outraged by the Luxembourg Council. One high-ranking diplomatic official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, revealed that, “[Turkey] won't hold any political dialogue with the EU unless Turkey's status is accepted as equal to the status of the other eleven candidate countries.”¹¹⁶ At Luxembourg, other countries passed Turkey in the accession process, gaining candidate status. Most notably, the Republic of Cyprus achieved official designation as a candidate while Turkey did not, amounting to a slap in the face. Turkey had begun an association with Europe in 1963. On the other hand, in 1963 the RoC had only existed as a sovereign state for a few years! This fact, combined with Turkey's past history of a presence on the island and tensions over the Turkish occupation in the north, infuriated Ankara. In addition, much of the former Soviet-dominated Central and Eastern Europe was granted candidate status, while Turkey continued to be shut out.

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, understandably angry at the rejection, severed ties with the EU, and threatened to disrupt U.S. led peace efforts between the TRNC and the RoC on Cyprus.¹¹⁷ He also accused Western Europe of erecting a “new, cultural Berlin wall.”¹¹⁸ This criticism recalls the invective of the EU as a white, Christian club unwilling to accept a Turkish,

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ “Turkish- EU relations deadlocked,” *Anatolia News Agency* 26 May 1998: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 22 Jan. 2013).

¹¹⁷ “Turkey will sever ties with EU, PM threatens,” *Washington Post* 15 Dec. 1997: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 22 Jan. 2013).

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Islamic nation-state. Yilmaz also made reference to a Greek plot to prevent Turkey's entry.¹¹⁹ His comments reflect the poor relationship with Greece.

1999 and Momentum for Turkey's Accession to the EU:

An important development in the Kurdish-Turkish conflict took place in 1999. Abdullah Ocalan, founder and leader of the PKK, was finally captured, quickening the pace of the already declining violence.¹²⁰ From this point onwards, the Kurdish separatist movement began to fall apart, as the PKK changed its name and became a nonviolent pressure group.¹²¹ Although Kurdish separatist elements still exist, the movement is no longer unified under a single banner. As Kurdish raids and terrorist attacks decreased, Turkish reprisals and human rights violations lessened in response.

The summer of 1999 brought a thaw in Turkish-Greek relations through an unforeseen circumstance. Both countries experienced devastating earthquakes that destroyed buildings and killed many citizens. In the aftermath, the countries undertook a joint-relief effort, precipitated by generous donations from common citizens. The cooperation, although it did not instantly lead to resolution of the Cyprus question, nevertheless was a step in the right direction.

During December 10-11, 1999, a new European Council meeting at Helsinki attempted to atone for the damage caused to EU-Turkish relations two years earlier. Specifically, the document referred to Turkey as an official candidate state, one of the main bones of contention at Luxembourg.¹²² The word choice of the EU created a conciliatory tone, stating that Turkey is "destined" to join the Union.¹²³ By using the word destiny, and only lightly passing over obstacles for accession, the Council seemed focused on the promise of the future rather than

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Goldschmidt Jr. and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 388.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council: extract concerning preparations for enlargement," (10-11 Dec. 1999), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 28 Jan. 2013).

¹²³ Ibid.

rehashing past difficulties, a major shift in intent. In addition, the Council complimented Turkey on its impressive progress towards meeting the Copenhagen Criteria, while encouraging it to continue on that path.¹²⁴

At Helsinki, the Council repeated the strategy of outlining specific methods to enhance integration, rather than making vague statements. For example, in the document, the Council requested that the Commission, "...present a single framework for coordinating all sources of European Union financial assistance for pre-accession."¹²⁵ This line is important for two reasons. First, it displays that the EU took Turkish accession seriously, and realized that they needed to coordinate their efforts even before formal accession negotiations began. Second, an EU coordination of financial aid packages to Turkey represented the extension of a legitimate olive branch for any injuries caused at Luxembourg, as well as a clear statement of intent.

Although a specific paragraph in the document refers solely to Turkey, the Council made a noticeable effort to treat Turkey as one of thirteen other accession candidates rather than a special case.¹²⁶ Through a continual reaffirmation of equality between the candidates, the document attempted to make Turkey feel less like an outsider, constantly beset by their Greek rivals and Western European elites, and more like a legitimate candidate. This approach also appealed to Turkey's sense of fairness in that all applicants were to stand on equal footing, and expected to meet the same political, social, and economic requirements.

How did the tenor of EU-Turkish relations change so drastically in two years? The best answer to that question lies with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, chairman of the Democratic Left Party and leader of Turkey from early 1999 until late 2002. A veteran of Turkish politics, Ecevit had served as prime minister several times during the 1970s, was incarcerated after the 1980 military coup, and eventually made his return to the political scene in the 1990s.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

The words he spoke just a few days after Helsinki's conclusion revealed how Turkey accomplished so much in so short a time: "We had said we could not give up full membership rights, but we could not turn it into an obsession at the same time... We had proved that we could open to the world without being a member of the EU and that we could be strengthened despite [difficult] problems."¹²⁷ In November 1999, Istanbul hosted the summit for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), an organization dedicated to arms control and conflict resolution. The success of this summit showed that Turkey could open up to the outside world, and help make cooperative agreements with European nations.

Ecevit also stressed the importance of internal changes within Turkey. By passing approximately 100 constitutional and legal changes, working towards greater transparency and harmonization within the coalition government, and promoting the formation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and volunteer groups, the Turkish government had expressed a clear desire to improve human rights and democracy.¹²⁸ At the same time, Ecevit acknowledged that Turkey still had room for improvement in these areas. In a statement to the Turkish Parliament, Ecevit declared, "... we have to overcome certain issues which contradict membership to the EU. One of them is death penalty."¹²⁹ The EU's prohibition on the use of capital punishment represented a challenge for Turkey, who had utilized the death penalty for centuries. Yet Ecevit, instead of hiding from the issue or criticizing the EU, met it head on, granting him further credibility.

Ecevit realized that Turkey should not just make changes in order to gain membership in the EU, but, "In fact, the Copenhagen criteria are the assurances of the lifestyle we deserve, not

¹²⁷ "Turkish premier optimistic about meeting European standards," *Anatolia News Agency* 14 Dec. 1999: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 15 Jan. 2013).

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

the issues the foreigners insist that we solve.”¹³⁰ By focusing on making improvements within Turkey, rather than fixating on EU opinion, Ecevit’s administration found a balanced approach that significantly benefited the accession negotiations, as well as conditions for the citizens of the Republic.

Helsinki represented a huge step forward for the proponents of Turkish accession. Questions about the EU’s ability to accommodate Turkey, as well as Turkey’s ability to conform to European demands still remained, yet Helsinki fostered an atmosphere of hopefulness for Europhiles. Capitalizing on this atmosphere, the two sides met at the Accession Partnership for Turkey in December 2000, at which the European Council congratulated Turkey on its pre-accession strategy, and requested the submission of its plan for the adoption of the *acquis* (EU law).¹³¹ A few months later, in March 2001, the EU set a road map for the specific legal and policy adaptations necessary for membership, and Turkey responded by forming the National Program for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA).¹³² Since EU law originates from many different treaties, all of different contexts and time periods, falling into line with the *acquis* can be extremely complex. The fact that both sides formed programs directly responsible for solving this problem demonstrates the urgency of membership negotiations in the wake of Helsinki.

In October of 2001, the Turkish parliament passed 34 amendments necessary to meet the Copenhagen criteria, reflecting the success of both the NPAA and EU guidance.¹³³ These amendments concerned discrepancies between EU law and Turkish law, and successfully harmonized a good part of Turkey’s legal structure with EU requirements. At this point, public support for EU membership reached an all-time high of 75% in favor.¹³⁴ The European Council at

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ali Carkoglu, “Societal perceptions of Turkey’s EU membership,” in *Turkey and European Integration: Accession prospects and issues*, Ed. Nergis Canefe and Mehmet Ugur, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 22-23.

¹³² Ibid., 23.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Laeken in December of 2001 signaled EU appreciation of the constitutional amendments.¹³⁵ In short, with the European political elite, Turkish government, and Turkish public all steaming towards accession, it seemed as though nothing could stop Turkey's "destiny" to join the EU. But the good feeling of Helsinki could not last forever, and the atmosphere eventually soured.

An unlikely combination of factors culminated in the cooling of EU-Turkish relations. First, the economic crisis of 2001 hit Turkey hard, leading to high inflation and low confidence in the government. Many Turks had to focus on the short-term problem of putting food on the table, and were unable to devote much time or energy to supporting the long-term prospects of EU membership. Then, in February of 2002, an unknown source hacked into the email account of European Commission representative Karen Fogg, who was stationed in Ankara at the time.¹³⁶ Dogu Perincek, leader of the quasi-Marxist Labor Party (IP), probably was behind the hacking, and certainly manipulated the emails to accuse Fogg and her colleagues of forming a conspiratorial "special network to destroy Turkey."¹³⁷ Private discussions about free speech amendments, as well as lighthearted teasing of the names of Turkish officials (e.g. Mesut Yilmaz literally translates to "happy unyielding"), were blown out of proportion.¹³⁸

This came at a delicate period for EU accession, as the Turkish political elite discussed how to further adjust in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria. Also, at the same time, Turkey pursued bilateral talks with the RoC, attempting to solve the deeply-rooted problems on the island. Opponents of a Cyprus solution used the Fogg emails to accuse her, and by extension the EU, of meddling in the internal affairs of the TRNC.¹³⁹ These accusations, although bogus, precipitated a nationalist reaction against EU membership, as public support slightly dropped.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 23-24

¹³⁷ "Perincek reveals hacked emails of Ambassador Fogg," *Hurriyet Daily News* 11 Feb. 2002: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 5 Feb. 2013).

¹³⁸ Catherine Collins, "EU envoy's email riles many Turks," *Chicago Tribune* 27 Feb. 2002: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 5 Feb. 2013).

¹³⁹ Carkoglu, "Societal perceptions," 24.

Euro-skeptics gained supporters from this scandal, and the already difficult path for Turkish accession became even more treacherous.

The up and down relationship between Turkey and the EU can be clearly observed in the period of 1997-2002. From disappointment at Luxembourg, to success at Helsinki, to scandal in Ankara, the relationship during this period was constantly in flux. Yet more changes loomed on the horizon. The elections of 2002 would come to alter the path of Turkish accession irrevocably, and signal a new era inside Turkey.

The Rise of the AKP:

By 2002, the momentum gained at Helsinki towards integration with the EU had been completely lost, as Prime Minister Ecevit's health worsened, leaving him incapable of pushing through vital reforms. The rest of the political elite dithered, as the Euro-skeptics used the Fogg scandal to argue against EU membership. However, Ecevit's decline in health eventually served as the catalyst for massive changes in the Turkish political system, as prominent members of Ecevit's party resigned and tried to form a new party.¹⁴⁰ Sensing an opportunity, other parties in the Turkish Grand National Assembly called for early elections. However, the old government still had a vital role to play, passing a package of reforms including the abolition of the death penalty.¹⁴¹ These reforms significantly improved the standards of human rights, and signaled Turkey's firm commitment to gain EU membership. The reforms also reflected the enthusiasm of the Turkish people for the EU, rather than merely the government, as support for EU membership amongst the citizenry hovered around 65%.¹⁴²

In 2002, another Islamist party gained control at the polls. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by the charismatic Recep Erdogan, received 34 percent of the vote, sweeping

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 19.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁴² Ibid, 19.

Erdogan into the role of prime minister.¹⁴³ Yet unlike the previous successful Islamist party (the Welfare Party), the AKP garnered a much more convincing percentage of the votes, meaning that the TAF would have a more difficult time simply easing Erdogan out of the government. The AKP's main platform centered on economic relief for the impoverished majority of Turkish citizens, which it planned to provide through increased modernization and democratization.¹⁴⁴ The twin goals of modernization and democratization just happened to nicely coincide with EU demands. However, each side had slightly different ideas about the practical definition of these terms, as Erdogan's modernization still showed influences of Islamism. At this point, a credible anti-European party did not exist, meaning that the AKP could link their policies to EU membership without fear of political backlash within the parliament or the broader population.¹⁴⁵ Once elected, the AKP tried to ride the tide of EU momentum to the Copenhagen European Council of 2002.

At this second Copenhagen Council, pro-EU forces inside Turkey again met with disappointment. Despite the passage of crucial reforms by Turkey, accession negotiations did not begin here, as had been widely predicted. Yet the Council did not completely reverse the momentum of Turkey's accession hopes, as they set December 2004 as the goal for membership negotiations, pending interim assessments.¹⁴⁶ Proponents of EU accession looked at this summit as a moderate success, because the representatives chose an official date for the initiation of formal agreements. Euro-skeptics, on the other hand, pointed to this development as yet another example of the EU stringing Turkey along, afraid to commit to full Turkish membership but unwilling to move the process forward. After Copenhagen II, the EU discussion within Turkey slowed, as it soon became occupied with the Iraq war spilling over its borders. Yet the fact that an

¹⁴³ Goldschmidt Jr. and Davidson, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 388.

¹⁴⁴ Carkoglu, "Societal perceptions," 20.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Islamist party, long the bastion of popular resistance to EU membership, had so openly supported policies improving Turkey's candidacy, signaled a drastic change in the political landscape.¹⁴⁷ No more could Islamists and secularists be clearly defined along EU lines, as had been the case in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. The AKP capitalized on popular enthusiasm for EU membership despite Islamist roots, showing its political savvy and staying power.

Even though formal progress towards accession slowed, Turkey continued to pass landmark legislation at a dizzying speed. In the summer of 2003, the AKP government adopted reforms that fundamentally changed the nature of life inside the country; reforms that an Islamist party of the 1990s would not have dreamed of implementing. For example, in June 2003 the parliament lifted the ban on public use of the Kurdish language, allowing it to be spoken in media broadcasts for the first time.¹⁴⁸ The normalization of conditions in the Southeast led to better conditions for the Kurdish minority. As hostilities continued to wane, the government could begin to focus on the reintegration of the Kurds into the social and cultural fabric of the country by extending the freedom of language to them.

In July of the same year, the civilian government confronted the National Security Council, long the power base for the TAF elite. The AKP stripped the NSC of executive powers, in accordance with EU demands, signifying the decline of the military's power to guarantee the constitution and the growth of civilian authority.¹⁴⁹ The AKP consolidated its victory further with legislation passed in May 2004, which banished the state security courts once used by the military elite to dispose of political adversaries.¹⁵⁰ This double-blow to the TAF left no doubt as to where influence now lay. The military, although still quite strong and vital to the political system, could no longer act with impunity to protect Kemalism. These two bills significantly hamstrung the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ "The 41-year journey of Turkey towards EU membership," *Hurriyet Daily News* 2 Jan. 2005: *Proquest Multiple Databases*, Online, (accessed on 27 Feb. 2013).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

TAF, making it extremely unlikely that another “postmodern” coup was on the horizon for the AKP government.

2004 European Commission Report:

On October 6, 2004, the European Commission released an important report on the progress of Turkey towards accession. It found that the constitutional and legal changes enacted by Turkey were impressive and substantial, referring to amendments such as the abolition of the death penalty.¹⁵¹ However, Commission also mentioned several areas for improvement, such as necessary adoption of the Code on Criminal Procedure, which established judicial police and regulated the execution of punishments and sentences.¹⁵² In addition, the report encouraged the further consolidation of legislation and its implementation, specifically referring to a zero-tolerance policy on torture, which Turkey had outlawed but not completely eradicated.¹⁵³ Despite these caveats, the Commission determined that Turkey had indeed fulfilled the political criteria (provided that it would adopt structures like the Code on Criminal Procedure), and recommended that formal accession negotiations begin. Coming from one of the most important branches of the EU, this Commission report considerably enhanced Turkey’s accession prospects.

One of the more interesting provisions of the report emerged as it identified the Turks as the largest third-country national group within the borders of the EU. The report stated, “Long transition periods and a permanent safeguard clause can be considered to avoid serious disturbances on the EU labor market. However, the population dynamics of Turkey could make a contribution to offsetting the ageing of EU societies.”¹⁵⁴ Since a large number of Turks had already more or less successfully integrated with EU member states, a substantial potential for

¹⁵¹ “Recommendation of the Commission on Turkey’s progress towards accession,” (6 Oct. 2004), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 10 March 2013).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

further Turkish immigration to the rest of the EU existed, as new immigrants could settle in amongst family, friends, or at least countrymen.

However, the integration of Turkish minorities into European communities has not always been completely successful. Germany's reevaluation of itself as a multicultural state concerns the problem of Turkish honor killings. In addition, further immigration had the potential to flood the labor market, making it hard for other Europeans to find employment and thus exacerbating tensions between ethnic groups. However, the existence of a Turkish immigrant population also had the potential to benefit the EU. Turkey's youthful age structures added to the increased chance of immigration could perhaps alleviate the EU's decaying age structures, overburdened by massive welfare programs. Within this small fragment of the Commission's report, one can begin to understand the complexity at hand with the Turkish question, and why Turkey had just as much chance to be a boon as a burden to the EU. As long as Commission progress reports remained economic in nature, this generally meant that Turkey's candidacy was progressing. However, the political, social, cultural and religious aspects of Commission reports usually signaled that the EU had some problem with Turkey.

Another subtle provision in the report dealt with the water situation. Turkey, as the source for the Tigris and Euphrates river systems, controlled much of the flow of fresh water throughout the region. The Commission report believed that Turkish accession, "...would probably necessitate a development of EU policies for the management of water resources and the related infrastructure."¹⁵⁵ On the surface, this could be interpreted as a benefit for Turkey, with other experts helping them control vital water resources. However, some argued that this provision showcased the intent of the EU to appropriate Turkey's natural resources under the guise of international development. Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Commission Chairman Mehmet Dulger, a leader within the government, best described the problem: "With this imposition,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

Europe is attempting to take away our biggest trump card against the possible establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq.”¹⁵⁶ As the U.S. invasion of Iraq turned sour, the Kurds straddling the border between northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey agitated for a separate state: Kurdistan. A Kurdish state could pose serious issues for Turkish sovereignty and borders, yet its formation would be unlikely without access to the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. Although the claim about EU seizure of water resources could be interpreted as alarmist inside Turkey itself, the accusation also reflected an idea that gained traction in some political circles. The Kurdish issue represents just one of many potential problems for Turkey’s foreign affairs that could be exacerbated by loss of water resource control, illustrating why water constituted such a vital issue.

The report also functioned as a recommendation for how to bring the EU and Turkey closer together in the future. The Commission suggested a three pillar approach in order to bring this about. First, they suggested EU cooperation to, “support and reinforce the reform process [in Turkey],” particularly in regards to the Copenhagen Criteria.¹⁵⁷ The second pillar pertained to the accession negotiations themselves. The Commission recommended the usage of intergovernmental conferences within the EU to agree on Turkey’s candidacy, with final decisions requiring, “unanimity and with full participation of all EU members.”¹⁵⁸ This provision was intended to mollify those members concerned about the effects Turkey would impose on EU structures. Specifically, if Turkey was to gain full membership, it would gain a share of seats in the EP and other important governing structures that would significantly alter the balance of

¹⁵⁶ “Water Strategy Vital to Turkey,” *Turkish Daily News* 30 Oct. 2005: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 11 March 2013).

¹⁵⁷ “Recommendation of the Commission on Turkey’s progress towards accession,” (6 Oct. 2004), *CVCE Database*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

power within the EU. Finally, the third pillar advised the initiation of a more intense political and cultural dialogue between individuals from EU member states and from Turkey.¹⁵⁹

Within the third pillar, a specific reference to civil society implied that politicians, not military officials, should be at the forefront of this dialogue, signaling EU intent to elevate the prominence of elected representatives over the generals of the TAF. For accession to eventually succeed, the EU-Turkish relationship needed more and better dialogue. Only increased dialogue could bridge the gap between European and Turkish understandings of sovereignty. This gap seriously undermined the relationship because, for example, Turkey believed that Cyprus was a national interest and an internal affair, while the EU vehemently disagreed.

The End of Legitimate Progress:

The October 2004 Commission report led directly to the decisions of the Brussels European Council, held from December 16-17, 2004. At the summit, the EU complimented the, "... decisive progress made by Turkey in its far-reaching reform process and expressed its confidence that Turkey will sustain that process of reform."¹⁶⁰ Recognition of Turkish progress did not necessarily guarantee EU preparedness for full accession negotiations, as seen at previous European Councils like Helsinki. Yet this Council, considering the years of toil toward this goal by both sides, decided to take an unprecedented step. The main conclusion represented a victory for proponents of Turkish accession: the European Council decided that Turkey's preparations were successful enough to open formal accession negotiations on October 3, 2005, so long as the Turks enacted the legislation recommended by the Commission back in October.¹⁶¹ In the previous forty years, Turkey had progressed from associate, to CU affiliate, to official candidate,

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ "Conclusions of the Brussels European Council: extract concerning enlargement," (16-17 Dec. 2004), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 21 Feb. 2013).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

and finally to the inception of formal accession negotiations. A long and arduous journey seemed near to its conclusion.

However, Turkey had to pay a price for their victory. One of the provisions surrounding Turkey's upcoming accession negotiations required that both entities expand the 1963 Ankara Association Agreement to cover all ten new members of the EU.¹⁶² The Republic of Cyprus numbered amongst these states, having joined the EU just a few months earlier in May. For many Turks, both of Anatolia and Cyprus, the RoC's accession had been a bitter pill to swallow, as the Cypriot Turks of TRNC did not share in the accomplishment. The provision to expand the Ankara Agreement, widely seen as a compromise between Erdogan and the EU elite, tacitly recognized Greek Cyprus as the Republic of Cyprus, and therefore the legitimate government of the island.¹⁶³ Thus, the Brussels Council played a part in normalizing relations between Turkey and the RoC, as well as setting a specific time for accession proceedings. Brussels represented both a victory for Turkey and a step towards resolution on Cyprus.

Yet the compromise at Brussels did not kick-start an era of cooperation and good feeling between the two sides. Just weeks after the Brussels European Council handed down their decision, cracks in the tenuous relationship appeared more visible than ever. Within the EU, opinion was divided on the benefits of accepting Turkey. EP official Jean-Louis Bourlanges voiced the opposition to Turkish accession. Bourlanges posited that Europe's weakness did not lie in, "its insufficient extension but in its lack of cohesion."¹⁶⁴ He, amongst many others, believed that the EU only weakened itself by taking on new members, broadening the membership and diluting the benefits of integration. The constant addition of new members made it difficult for already complex EU structures to work properly. Bourlanges pointed out that Turkey's

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ "The 41-year journey of Turkey towards EU membership," *Hurriyet Daily News* 2 Jan. 2005: *Newsbank Database*, Online, (accessed on 27 Feb. 2013).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

membership could cause, “Massive cultural, economic and social heterogeneity... [preventing] it from becoming a united and democratically organized political community...”¹⁶⁵ To Bourlanges, adding a nation of Turkey’s geographic and popular size, but especially its dissimilar economy and religion, would diminish the effectiveness of the EU, making it more of a divided rabble than a Union. The lead-up to Brussels 2004 had actually consolidated the opposition movement in some countries.

Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium, resided on the other end of the spectrum. He believed that, “... the EU's role in the world will be enhanced due to Turkey's geostrategic weight and size.”¹⁶⁶ Also, some in the EU believed that Turkey’s reforms, although impressive, were merely an attempt to gain EU membership rather than reform for reform’s sake. Verhofstadt simply countered, “If a State wants to accept our values, making them prevail in its society, then why should it be refused membership?”¹⁶⁷ In other words, what did Turkey’s intentions matter if it continued to pursue these reforms regardless? He revealed the pointlessness of the argument over intent, preferring to work towards a Turkey that respects human rights.

Turkish leaders also began to show more signs of wariness regarding EU accession, now that it finally seemed to be at hand. The rapidly changing role of the military worried more than a few within the Republic. In the estimation of one author, Turkey’s civil-military situation represented a puzzling quandary: “By calling for the power of the army within Turkish society to be reduced, the EU is playing an unclear role: on the one hand, it is- rightly- encouraging democracy, as military power has no legitimacy; on the other, it is sapping secularity, as the army has the greatest commitment to [Turkey’s] defense.”¹⁶⁸ Meddling in the deep and binding linkages between the political and military elite seemed beyond the EU’s purview to some.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ferdinando Riccardi, “Disagreement over Turkey becomes more radical,” (7 Jan. 2005), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 23 March 2013).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ferdinando Riccardi, “A few important aspects of Turkey’s uneasiness towards the EU,” (11 Jan. 2005), *CVCE Database*, Online, (accessed on 29 March 2013).

Ataturk's Republic could not have existed without a military guarantor of the constitution. By catering to EU will, many within the political elite (especially the secularists) believed that Turkey was beginning to lose its sovereignty. How could the Republic continue without the identity prescribed by national hero Mustafa Kemal Ataturk? Without the military in its traditional role, some wondered if secularism was becoming a thing of the past, as Islam now took on new importance that had been intentionally kept out of the governance of the Republic.

In addition, the Cyprus compromise did not sit well with some, including Prime Minister Erdogan himself. In fact, on December 9, 2004, just a few days before Brussels, "...his interview with the French daily *Le Monde* was punctuated by a series of "no's" to the recognition of Cyprus."¹⁶⁹ Thus, Erdogan's Cyprus compromise was even more reluctant than might be expected. The new political elite began to question if this compromise, or indeed, any of the other compromises needed for EU accession, truly benefited the Turkish national interest. Indeed, Turkey also had interests in the Turkish republics of Central Asia such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, where it encouraged the development of the Turkish language and intended to play an autonomous role.¹⁷⁰ Some questioned why Turkey even needed the EU at all, since the Republic already held leadership positions in the Muslim Middle East and the Turkish Central Asia. Why did Turkey have to compromise on Cyprus, widely thought of as a national- and increasingly Turkish Islamic- interest, if it could cooperate with less demanding partners?

On July 29, 2005, the Cyprus question proved to be the final stumbling block for accession negotiations. Seemingly honoring the Cyprus compromise agreed upon at Brussels, Turkey did sign the extension of the Association Agreement to the ten new member states,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

including the Republic of Cyprus.¹⁷¹ Yet at the same time, Turkey disavowed any assumption that the signing of this document constituted an official recognition.¹⁷² At this point, negotiations between the EU and Turkey stalled, as the EU demanded the recognition of all EU member states before Turkish accession could continue. While technical chapters of Turkish-EU negotiations continued to see minor progress, the fact remained that, “While it appears all but inconceivable that Turkey could become an EU member with the Cyprus conflict unresolved, the opposite is also true. A solution without accession also appears all but impossible.”¹⁷³

In essence, without agreement on the Cyprus issue, Turkish accession simply cannot happen. Since this point, the alliance between Turkish domestic reformers and the EU, one that produced so much promising legislation, has been stuck in a strategic quagmire. Neither side has budged from this stance, as Euro-skepticism grew inside Turkey, and countries such as France and Austria expressed their reluctance at the proposition, further burdening the process.¹⁷⁴ In 2005, legitimate hope for Turkish accession ended, only a few months after formal negotiations had started.

¹⁷¹ “Commission Report 2005,” (9 Nov. 2005) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/package/sec_1426_final_progress_report_en.pdf, Online, (accessed 26 March 2013).

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Susannah Verney and Kivanc Ulusoy, “Europeanization and the transformation of Turkey’s Cyprus policy,” in *Turkey’s Road to European Union Membership: National Identity and Political Change*, Ed. Susannah Verney and Kostas Ifantis, (London: Routledge, 2009), 125.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Although Turkish accession to the EU has been and will likely continue to be fruitless, this historical analysis nevertheless explores many important issues that have shaped the relationship between the two governments.

First, the role of the military in Turkish civil society has had an undeniable impact on negotiations. The deep roots of the military's connection with politics cannot be overstated. Although there have been recent reductions in military power, the history of military interference in the form of coups, actions on Cyprus, and in perpetrating human rights violations in Anatolia have all discouraged the EU's acceptance of Turkey as a full member. Ironically, the military's power to guarantee the constitution and safeguard the principles of Kemalism have significantly decreased the level of democracy. Rather than protecting the Turkish Republic, the military has damaged it.

Second, the impact of Islam on EU accession has been significant. Historically, Islamists have been against EU membership, while secularists support it. This dividing line in the country's political structure also sheds light on Westernizing reforms. In order to join the EU, Turkey had to institute reforms bringing it more into line with EU principles, such as the Copenhagen criteria. The success of Westernizing reforms depended both upon the strength of the secularists within the government. The reforms' success also depended on their adherence not just to economic modernization prescribed by Kemalism, but to specific Western principles like greater respect for human rights in the form of the abolition of torture. In 2002, the ascension of the AKP to power within Turkey signaled a revolution in this traditional divide, as an Islamist party strongly

supported measures favorable to EU accession. Also, within Europe, the memory of the Ottoman legacy left a faint but damaging mark on European perceptions of Turkey, leading to the characterization of the Ottoman Turks as the “other”, and developing the rudiments of Islamophobia.

Third, as long as negotiations between Turkey and the EU remained economic in nature, the tenor of the discussions tended to be favorable. However, once matters turned to Turkey’s occupation of Cyprus, its discriminatory treatment of ethnic minorities like the Kurds and the Armenians, the use of torture in its prison systems, or other political/social concerns, accession did not progress nearly as rapidly. While Turkey tended to view such matters as relating to national sovereignty, and therefore internal matters, the EU held the opposite opinion, claiming that Westernizing reforms such as the abolition of the death penalty were just as important to Turkey’s EU candidacy as economic reforms like the establishment of the CU.

The Present and Future of the Relationship:

The 2008 economic crisis shook the EU to its core. It shed doubt on the Euro as a viable currency and the Union as a viable economic organization. The reverberations of the crisis continue to resound to this day, as former Ottoman territories like Greece face financial ruin. Even the Republic of Cyprus has not escaped the disaster, recently forcing the EU into drastic action to prevent its bankruptcy. Meanwhile, despite feeling some of the repercussions of 2008, Turkey’s economy continues to modernize and capitalize on its vast potential. This crisis has significantly dimmed the appeal of the EU to Turkey.

In addition, the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2010 overturned much of the established order in the Middle East. This region-wide movement led to the destabilization of many governments, including Syria. At present, the civil war between President Bashar al-Assad and rebel forces has occasionally spilled into Turkish territory. The immediate concerns of the Syrian civil war, as

well as other changes brought on by the Arab Spring, concerns Ankara much more than the seemingly interminable EU accession process.

Finally, Turkey has substituted membership in other organizations to replace the benefits gained by becoming a full EU member state. For example, it is the member of numerous international organizations such as NATO and the Council of Europe, where it holds considerable influence. In addition, Turkey is a leader within the Middle East, as well as increasingly within the group of former Soviet socialist republics with Turkish ethnicity, like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. There is even speculation that Turkey could join an organization called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), headlined by powers Russian and China. Prime Minister Erdogan's enthusiasm for the organization is evident in comments made to Russian President Vladimir Putin: "Take us into the Shanghai Five; do it, and we will say goodbye to the EU.' What's the point of stalling? He added that the SCO 'is much better, it is much more powerful [than the EU], and we share values with its members.'"¹⁷⁵ Whether this statement is a bluff to reignite the pace of EU accession, or an actual sentiment on the part of Erdogan, is unclear. Clearly, however, Turkey and Erdogan are frustrated with the EU, and have little hope for the future.

It is my belief that Turkey and the EU will never fully come to an agreement on Turkey's potential membership. There are too many outstanding issues yet to be resolved, such as the Cyprus question. In addition, the benefits of EU membership are not as clear cut as in previous decades, and the EU could conceivably collapse before Turkey joined, as the most recent estimated date for accession is 2023. Lastly, the war of words between the two sides, spoken during the roller coaster ride of the relationship, has damaged Turkey's chances permanently.

¹⁷⁵ Daniel Pipes, "Is Turkey Leaving the West?" *The Washington Times* 6 Feb. 2013: <http://www.danielpipes.org/12526/turkey-shanghai-five-sco>, Online, (accessed 28 March 2013).

In the end, both Turkey and the EU have benefited from the accession process. Both sides have some economic cooperation in place, leading to mutual financial gain. The EU has gained an in-depth perspective of Turkey, leading to increased dialogue and interaction with the country. And Turkey has instituted a number of landmark reforms that it might otherwise not have passed, such as its abolition of torture.

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