Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times

Kemal Kirişci

Institute for Security Studies
institut d'études de Sécurité

European Union
Union européenne

In January 2002 the **Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)** became an autonomous Paris-based agency of the European Union. Following an EU Council Joint Action of 20 July 2001, it is now an integral part of the new structures that will support the further development of the CFSP/ESDP. The Institute's core mission is to provide analyses and recommendations that can be of use and relevance to the formulation of the European security and defence policy. In carrying out that mission, it also acts as an interface between European experts and decision-makers at all levels.

Chaillot Papers are monographs on topical questions written either by a member of the EUISS research team or by outside authors chosen and commissioned by the Institute. Early drafts are normally discussed at a seminar or study group of experts convened by the Institute and publication indicates that the paper is considered by the EUISS as a useful and authoritative contribution to the debate on CFSP/ESDP. Responsibility for the views expressed in them lies exclusively with authors. *Chaillot Papers* are also accessible via the Institute's Website: **www.iss.europa.eu**

Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times

Kemal Kirişci

The author

Kemal Kirişci

is Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Bogaziçi University, Istanbul. He holds a Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and is also the director of the Centre for European Studies at the university (www.ces.boun.edu.tr). He also serves on the Executive Board of the Centre for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies (www.edam.org.tr), an independent think tank dealing with issues concerning EU-Turkish relations. His books include *Turkey In World Politics: An Emerging Multi-Regional Power* (co-edited with B. Rubin, 2001); *The Political Economy of Cooperation in the Middle East* (co-authored, 1998); *Turkey and the Kurdish Question: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (co-authored, 1997); and *The PLO and World Politics* (1986).

This **Chaillot Paper** *only deals with events up until the end of June 2006.*

Contents

n° **92** September 2006

Contents

Préface

Nicole Gnesotto

S ur la longue route qui mènera peut-être la Turquie au sein de l'Union européenne, les questions sont nombreuses, les défis majeurs, tant pour la Turquie elle-même que pour l'Union. Beaucoup d'encre a coulé pour dresser la liste des défis démographiques, économiques, institutionnels, culturels et politiques que pose l'adhésion de la Turquie. Beaucoup d'encre également pour apporter des réponses à ces questions, positives pour les uns, plus réservées pour d'autres.

Moindre est en revanche l'attention portée aux aspects géopolitiques de ce dossier et notamment aux évolutions de la politique étrangère et de sécurité de la Turquie. Pour certains, le débat est superflu, dans la mesure où Ankara est d'ores et déjà un allié stratégique des Européens du fait de son appartenance à l'OTAN. Pour d'autres, la question est relativement secondaire par rapport aux questions posées par la Turquie pour le fonctionnement même de l'Union. Pour d'autres enfin, sans doute les plus actifs dans le débat, la question est majeure mais elle relève plus souvent de positions générales sur la sécurité internationale et la relation entre l'Europe et l'Islam que des mérites propres de la politique étrangère turque. Dans ce clan des « geopolitics first » se retrouvent d'ailleurs aussi bien des partisans déterminés de l'adhésion de la Turquie que ses adversaires les plus acharnés.

L'objectif de ce Cahier de Chaillot *n'est pas d'intervenir une fois de plus dans la série d'argumentaires pour ou contre l'adhésion turque. Il est plus modeste, mais certainement aussi plus utile : il est d'analyser le plus concrètement possible l'évolution récente de la politique étrangère turque, notamment sous le leadership de Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, d'en évaluer les fondements structurels, d'en discuter les possibles évolutions à l'égard de toutes les régions et de tous les conflits voisins de la Turquie. C'est cette analyse à la fois historique et politique que propose ici Kemal Kirişci, professeur à l'université de Bogaziçi, Istambul, sans doute l'un des plus lucides observateurs de l'évolution du débat et des politiques de sécurité de la Turquie.*

Une sorte de course de vitesse semble désormais installée entre les dynamiques de déstabilisation régionale en cours (de l'Afghanistan à l'Iran, de l'Irak au conflit israélo-palestien jusqu'au Liban) et les dyna-

miques de transformation démocratique de la Turquie selon les normes européennes, sans qu'il soit possible d'évaluer lequel de ces deux mouvements aura le plus d'influence sur l'autre dynamique. La Turquie se trouve ainsi confrontée à deux défis majeurs, celui de sa sécurité régionale d'une part et celui de son ancrage européen de l'autre, au moment même où la communauté internationale ne contrôle plus l'équation stratégique du Moyen-Orient et où nul ne sait très bien qui contrôle et comment le processus même d'intégration européenne.

Paris, juillet 2006

Introduction

A decade ago Turkey was in conflict with most of its neighbours, its relations with the European Union (EU) were tense and the Turkish economy was in the throes of a major recession. Turkey was surrounded by serious ethnically-driven conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus, while Turkey itself was experiencing a violent internal ethnic dispute involving its own Kurds. Iraq constituted a challenge but there were glimmers of hope with regard to a 'new' Middle East emerging from the Madrid peace process and the Oslo Accords. Today, Turkey has accomplished major economic and political reforms that have brought it to the gates of EU membership. However, Turkey still finds itself in the midst of a troublesome region in turbulent times. The Balkans is somewhat stabilised and the violent conflicts there have receded. However, the ex-Soviet space is still unstable. Ukraine's 'Orange' and Georgia's 'Rose' revolutions have not been consolidated. Ethnic conflicts remain unresolved in the Caucasus. The Middle East, on the other hand, has simply plunged into an abyss with the impossible situations prevailing in both Palestine and Iraq. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 led to a new macabre era in a region living with the constant threat of terrorism and violence. More recently, Iran's nuclear ambitions have simply aggravated the situation, while Samuel Huntington's once highly contested theory of the 'clash of civilisations' seems more and more plausible.

Against this background, Turkey is caught between two sets of challenges. The first set includes the typical conventional challenges that relate to national security, territorial integrity and political stability. The second set of challenges has to do with maintaining the pace of political reform, gaining access to markets, ensuring economic stability and growth in the region, as well as securing energy supplies. Above all, but closely related to these challenges, is of course the ultimate challenge for Turkey: EU membership. Many Turks and many in the region recognise how crucial the EU's engagement of Turkey has been in propelling

Turkey from the appalling state it was in the mid-1990s to where it finds itself today. Yet Turkey continues to face an array of formidable problems. The Kurdish issue, in spite of all the reforms that have been undertaken, has made a comeback with a vengeance. Terrorism perpetrated by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is on the rise. Major public demonstrations of displeasure with the current situation in Kurdish-populated areas have occurred. The chaos in Iraq is still raging, with the future of a united Iraq in serious question. This has severely strained US-Turkish relations and the future of relations with the US is overshadowed with uncertainty. The challenge of reconciling Islam with democracy is still an ongoing process in Turkey that has not been concluded. The Cyprus problem remains unresolved, with the implications that this has not only in terms of domestic politics but also in terms of EU-Turkish relations. Improving relations with Armenia and addressing the Armenian genocide issue will continue to constitute a major challenge. Last but not least is the impact of the crisis provoked by Iran's nuclear ambitions on Turkey's national security, its relations with the US and the region as a whole.

How will Turkey respond to these challenges? What are Turkey's immediate foreign policy concerns and options? What do Turks in general and Turkish decision-makers in particular think about these concerns and options? What are the new patterns of Turkish foreign policy making and behaviour? Will Turkish foreign policy contribute to efforts to resolve challenges in the regions surrounding Turkey or might Turkey adopt policies aggravating the situation? Can Turkey indeed play the role of a model for the region's transformation towards democratisation and engineer an 'intercivilisational dialogue'? This paper will address these questions in four sections. The first chapter aims to describe the current circumstances that surround Turkey and their impact on Turkish foreign policy. It charts Turkey's transformation from a 'post-Cold War warrior' to an aspiring 'benign regional power'. The second chapter offers an analysis of the emerging 'new' Turkish foreign policy and its characteristics. The third chapter (before the conclusion) discusses the national viewpoints and options *vis-à-vis* the many foreign policy challenges facing Turkey. In its final section, the paper concludes that Turkey, in order to meet the challenges it faces, will need to maintain its transformation and consolidate the reform process. This will very much depend on the EU's continued engagement of Turkey, with

a credible prospect of eventual membership. In turn, Turkey may be able to contribute to the stabilisation of the three troublesome regions that surround it and assist the EU in expanding the zone of 'democratic peace'.

From a 'post-Cold War warrior' to a 'benign regional power'

1

During the course of the last decade, both Turkey and its surrounding region have been dramatically transformed. Turkey during the Cold War was a staunch ally of the West. It was a *status quo* power and its geostrategic location gave it an importance that seemed to secure it a safe place in the Western Bloc. National security and foreign policy issues were very much conceived as a function of Turkey's membership of NATO and other Western organisations. This arrangement also allowed a degree of parliamentary democracy to develop while a number of sensitive domestic issues, such as the Kurdish problem, as well as foreign policy issues, such as bilateral conflicts with Greece and the Cyprus problem, remained beyond the realm of democratic debate and decision-making. The economy too seemed to be performing reasonably well, especially after the decision in 1980 to start liberalising it.

The economy had become transformed from a state-led and protected economy to an open economy with a growing manufacturing and service sector. One important consequence was the growth of foreign trade and especially exports. Turgut Özal as first Prime Minister in the 1980s and then President of Turkey early in the 1990s developed a foreign policy that emphasised the expansion of Turkey's commercial and economic relations with surrounding regions. His foreign policy was characterised by his attempt to join the then European Community when he filed an application for membership in 1987 and took steps towards the establishment of the Black Sea Cooperation project. This was also accompanied by personal peacebuilding initiatives in the Middle East, like his infamous 'water pipeline' project of 1986. It was envisaged that this pipeline would carry Turkish water to the Gulf countries as well as Israel and this was meant to promote interdependency as a step towards peacebuilding.

Özal had also succeeded in keeping Turkey out of the Iran-Iraq war while expanding economic relations with both countries. Furthermore, after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Özal per-

suaded a reluctant national foreign policy elite to support the US-led United Nations intervention and the imposition of an embargo on Iraq. Domestically, Özal had also seen the country through a political transformation from military rule between 1980-1983 to growing democracy characterised by the reopening of the Turkish parliament and the holding of regular elections. Hence, Turkey at the dawn of the post-Cold War era seemed to be doing reasonably well. Turkey was thought of as a country that would indeed benefit from the dividends of the 'end of history'. In contrast to its neighbours, with the exception of Greece, Turkey had found itself on the side of the 'winners'. Therefore, it was not surprising that *The Economist* in December 1991 declared Turkey to be the 'Star of Islam'[1] and presented Turkey with its democracy, secular form of government and liberal market economy as a 'prototype' to be emulated especially by the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

However, the optimistic role advocated for Turkey by *The Economist* and the rosy picture painted by Francis Fukuyama's 'End of History' thesis for the future of world politics did not materialise. Instead, Turkey very quickly found itself in the very midst of a turbulent region with serious conflicts erupting in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. The Kurdish problem in Turkey returned to haunt the government with the rise of the PKK in the aftermath of the end of the Gulf War, and adversely affected Turkey's relations with a host of states in the region as well as the EU. The Kurdish issue was also accompanied by the rise of an increasingly virulent political Islam in Turkey, creating considerable tension within the country. By the mid-1990s the legacy of Özal with respect to foreign policy making and the substance of foreign policy was changing. The instability and insecurity reigning within Turkey and Turkey's immediate neighbourhood culminated in the 'national security-centered' understanding of foreign policy reasserting itself. A very important consequence of this was that the military, especially through the National Security Council, acquired a greater say in foreign policy and indeed in domestic politics too. Özal's relatively liberal approach towards the Kurdish problem, Islam and international relations was replaced by an approach that emphasised the threat to Turkey's territorial integrity and secular nature of government. The discourse developed by the traditional state elite of Turkey as opposed to the elected political elite came to dominate security and foreign policy making. In Turkey decision-makers were increasingly nostalgic for

1. 'Star of Islam: A Survey of Turkey', *The Economist*, 14 December 1991.

the Cold War years and were becoming engulfed in a 'fear of abandonment'. This deeply impacted on the way the external world would be defined and perceived in Turkey. Turkey was seen to be encircled by strategic threats at a time when the Turkish state elite felt that the West was abandoning Turkey.

In the 1990s Turkey was bogged down in economic and political instability. Weak coalition governments failed to address the economic and political structural problems of the country. Kurdish nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism were perceived by the establishment and especially the military as threats to Turkish 'national security'. In 1996 the formation of a coalition government with an Islamist political party, *Refah* (Welfare), led by Necmettin Erbakan, taxed the military's patience. In 1997 Erbakan's domestic and foreign policy idiosyncrasies led to what in Turkish politics came to be referred to as a 'post-modern' *coup*. The military imposed a string of measures on the government to combat Islamic fundamentalism. Eventually, the government collapsed. All of this coincided with a period when Turkey entered into major conflicts with Greece, Iran, Syria and Cyprus. The military also mounted regular incursions into northern Iraq. Relations with Israel, especially in the area of military cooperation, expanded while relations with the Arab and Muslim world deteriorated.

The security approach

One of the most distinguishing aspects of current Turkish foreign policy is how different it is from Turkish foreign policy only a decade ago. A prominent scholar of Turkish foreign policy, Ziya Önis, refers to the Turkey of the 1990s as a 'coercive regional power'.[2] Turkey during this period was characterised by a readiness to employ force, using the threat of force and other confrontational tools of foreign policy. Furthermore, foreign policy making in general remained restricted to a narrow elite accustomed to viewing the surrounding world from the perspective of 'national security' considerations. Against this background, an American military analyst highlighted the potential of Turkey actually becoming a security risk in the Middle East.[3] Yet another American military analyst expressed similar concerns and went even further, arguing that US military cooperation with Turkey was coming 'into increasing conflict with the broader themes of democratisation,

2. Ziya Önis, 'Turkey and the Middle East after September 11: The Importance of the EU Dimension', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4 (Winter 2003), pp. 84-5. Önis distinguishes netween 'coercive' and 'benign' regional powers. The former is more likely to use force in its foreign policy and hence can be a source of insecurity and instability in its neighbourhood. In contrast, a benign power adopts a more constructive role and promotes a network of economic and political relations. Furthermore, such a power, rather than side with one or the other party in a conflict, adopts a balanced approach to disputes in the region, and advocates the use of diplomacy in resolving disputes.

3. Jed Snyder, 'Turkey's Role in the Greater Middle East', *JFQ Forum*, Autumn 1995. The article can be accessed at: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/1609.pdf.

human rights, and economic considerations that define the West's post-Cold War interests.'[4] Turkey of this period had come to be labelled as a 'post-Cold War warrior' leading it to be perceived as a liability rather than an asset for EU security policies.[5]

A quick glance at Turkish foreign policy especially in respect to security-related issues reveals a pattern of behaviour worthy of the above terms. The most striking of the many examples that can be offered concerns the regular military incursions into northern Iraq against the PKK. The presence of PKK bases in northern Iraq and the authority vacuum there, accompanied by the worsening of the security situation in the Kurdish-populated areas of southeastern Turkey, provoked these incursions. The most significant of them started days after the customs union agreement was signed between Turkey and the European Union in March 1995. This was also a period when the Turkish authorities regularly accused Iran and Syria of harbouring PKK militants and threatened these countries with military action. In the case of Syria such a threat was made in January 1996 but could not be put into effect because of the crisis that erupted in Greek-Turkish relations. It would be in October 1998 that Turkey came close to mounting a military operation against Syria to coerce the latter to cease its support for the PKK and its leader Abdullah Öcalan. The threat was followed through by an impressive show of military force on the Syrian-Turkish border. As a result of this threat, Syria indeed expelled Öcalan but this time Turkey entered into a confrontation with Italy.

Italian products were boycotted across the country in Turkey when the Italian government refused to extradite Öcalan after he turned up in Rome subsequent to his expulsion from Syria. Relations with Russia soured as well when the Duma tried to grant asylum to Öcalan during his passage through Russia on his way to Italy. Relations with Russia had been deeply marred over allegations of Turkish support for Chechen militants versus Russian support for the PKK. In 1996 Turkish authorities apprehended Chechen militants who had sea-jacked a ship carrying mostly Russian passengers but refused to treat them as terrorists and eventually sentenced them to relatively light prison terms. In June 1995 Greek-Turkish relations were particularly strained when the Turkish Parliament announced that if Greece were to increase its territorial waters from the current six miles to twelve miles this would be considered as a *casus belli*. Worst, in January 1996 Turkey came

4. Michael Robert Hickok. 'Hegemon rising: The gap between Turkish strategy and military modernization', *Parameters*, vol. 30, no. 2, Summer 2000, pp.105-6.

5. Dietrich Jung, 'Turkey and the Arab World: Historical Narratives and New Political Realities', *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1, March 2004, p. 12.

very close to a war with Greece over islets in the Aegean Sea. A very nationalistic climate prevailed across the country at the time and it was intense American mediation that prevented the crisis from escalating into an all-out war between two NATO allies. This also coincided with a period when Turkey vehemently objected to Cyprus's EU accession process starting. In December 1997 when the EU decided to start Cyprus's accession process and excluded Turkey from the list of candidate countries for membership, Turkey threatened closer integration with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). This came less then a year after Turkey had threatened to strike any Russian S-300 missiles that might be deployed on the Greek side of the island.

Relations with Greece remained particularly strained during this period. The two countries remained locked in an arms race and frequent confrontations between the air forces and navies of both countries in the Aegean Sea were reported in the media. The mood of the foreign policy makers was probably best captured by a leading figure in Turkish diplomacy, Sükrü Elekdag, a retired ambassador and a former deputy undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He advocated that Turkey should prepare itself to fight 'two and a half wars' simultaneously against Greece, Syria, and the PKK.[6] This thesis was also strengthened by a conviction that Turkey was being encircled by an 'alliance' composed of Greece, Russia, Armenia, Iran and Syria. It was partly in response to this perception that Turkey began to develop a very close relationship with Israel. Military and strategic cooperation was an important aspect of this relationship. Interestingly, this policy was advocated, deepened and pursued by the military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at a time when the government included an Islamist political party that tried to resist these developments.

Turkey's expanding of military relations with Israel was not a particularly welcome development in the region and provoked considerable insecurity and resentment. This was further aggravated by a long-standing conflict over the sharing of the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris with Iraq and Syria. The Arab media very much reflected this resentment and presented the Israeli-Turkish cooperation as an 'alliance against all Arabs' and defined it as part of an effort to oppress Arabs.[7] The peak of this negative attitude and resentment against Turkey was best symbolised at the Tehran summit of the Islamic Conference Organisation in December 1997. With the support of Iran, Syria and a number of other

6. Şükrü Elekdağ, '2½ War Strategy', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* (Ankara), vol. 1, no. 1, March-May, 1996.

7. Jung, op.cit., pp. 10-11.

Arab countries the summit at its plenary session voiced strong criticism of Turkey and of Turkey's relations with Israel, in a move that went against the well-established principle of consensus decision-making. The then President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel, found himself having to leave the summit prematurely.[8] This happened against the background of the Turkish military's decision to force the leader of the Islamist party, Necmettin Erbakan, out of government in June 1997. Erbakan had come to power with an anti-Israeli agenda and while in government had tried to develop closer links with Iran and Syria as well as Libya despite the resistance of the state establishment.

EU-Turkish relations suffered as a result of Turkey's national security-centred and confrontationist foreign policy. The European position on the Kurdish problem and especially the Luxembourg European Council decision to exclude Turkey from the list of candidate countries for the next round of enlargement constituted at least two issues where this policy manifested itself. The EU, and many EU member governments as well as the European Parliament, were bitterly critical of Turkey's human rights record and its handling of the violence surrounding the Kurdish problem. Typically, the EU's calls for a political solution to the Kurdish problem and its advocacy of 'minority rights' played into the hands of hardliners who would argue that the EU was only interested in weakening Turkey's territorial integrity. For example, in 1995, Süleyman Demirel reacted in an unusually forceful way to the remarks made by the then French Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Juppé, that Turkey should find a political solution to the Kurdish problem. Demirel argued that Juppé's statement was unequivocal evidence of Western intentions to create a Kurdish state in Turkey.[9] The Luxembourg summit decision aggravated the tension and fuelled the mistrust expressed in Turkey towards the EU.

The Turkish government, at the time very much under the influence of the advocates of the 'national security' approach, decided to suspend political dialogue with the EU and refused to participate in regular meetings with the EU. The first-ever report on Turkey that was prepared by the European Commission in November 1998 provoked a negative reaction too. The report aimed to assess Turkey's progress toward pre-accession to the EU on the basis of the Copenhagen political criteria. The report found Turkey wanting with regard to all these criteria. Regarding the Kurdish problem, the report noted that 'Turkey will have to find a

8. 'Demirel İkö zirvesini terkedip döndü', *Milliyet*, 11 December 1997.

9. *Turkish Daily News*, 10 May 1995.

political and non-military solution to the problem.' The references to minority rights and the need for a political solution provoked criticisms and once more led to accusations of European aspirations to undermine Turkey's territorial integrity. During an interview, President Demirel expressed his discomfort over the need to meet the Copenhagen criteria on minority rights, because of Turkey's genuine fear of separatism. He argued that such criteria imposed on Turkey could complicate its prospects of EU membership.[10]

A striking characteristic of this period was the manner in which advocates of change or reform in Turkish foreign policy often saw their efforts being undermined by the military or hardliners within the state establishment. A conspicuous case in point concerned Mesut Yılmaz when as Prime Minister he led an initiative in 1996 that aimed to recognise the jurisdiction of the international court of justice on disputes over the Aegean Sea. His Foreign Minister, Emre Gönensay, to his surprise and embarrassment, discovered at the NATO Berlin meeting that the Turkish military were questioning the ownership status of an island called *Gavdos* south of Crete under the pretext that there were certain parts of the Aegean Sea that qualified as 'grey areas' in respect to ownership.[11] Weak governments did not help either. The frequent replacement of ministers, especially ministers of foreign affairs, made it much more difficult for civilians to exert their influence over the state elite. Civil society was much weaker too.

These factors facilitated the predominance of the 'security' approach against the more liberal approaches. This was also facilitated by a public much more inclined to go along with a world view based on the 'security' approach. In a survey conducted in November 2001 two thirds of those surveyed believe that 'Turks did not have any friends but Turks'. In the same survey, when asked how worried they were that Turkey could be attacked militarily, close to half of the respondents expressed some form of concern. On the other hand, when these respondents were asked from which country a military attack would most likely originate, almost 30% of them named Greece.[12] This sense of isolation and vulnerability naturally made it easier in Turkey to sustain the 'national security' approach and the discourses associated with it. In turn, this discourse and confrontationist policies helped to perpetuate public beliefs about an unfriendly and threatening world surrounding Turkey. This complicated the task of reformists who easily risked

10. *Radikal*, 4 February 1999.

11. *Milliyet* and *Sabah*, 13 June 1996.

12. Ali Çarkoglu and Kemal Kirişci, 'The View from Turkey: Perceptions of Greeks and Greek-Turkish Rapprochement by the Turkish Republic', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, Spring 2004, pp. 128-31.

being labelled by the hardliners as 'traitors' serving the interests of foreign powers.

Transformation of relations with Cyprus, Greece and Syria

The security approach was gradually abandoned from 1999 onwards. An area where the transformation of Turkish foreign policy became most conspicuous is reflected in the dramatic and major turnabout when the government adopted a completely novel policy on Cyprus. The decision of the Turkish government to lend its support to the Annan Plan and encourage the Turkish-Cypriots to cast a 'Yes' vote at the referendum was no less than revolutionary. It is probably one of the most striking illustrations of the transformation that Turkish foreign policy has gone through recently. Turkey had been party to forty years of fruitless negotiations[13] and had basically supported the *status quo* on the island created as a result of the events in the summer of 1974.

The turnabout in Turkey's Cyprus policy also demonstrates how the Turkish foreign policy mindset is becoming much more open to cooperation, dialogue and to the notion of searching for 'win-win' outcomes to international conflicts. During the course of the first few months of 2004 especially the Turkish public observed this new thinking unfolding on the question of Cyprus. The Turkish public had long become accustomed to the well-established view that 'no solution is actually the solution' in Cyprus. In May 1999 the then President, Süleyman Demirel, in reaction to arguments that a solution ought to be sought for Cyprus, had responded with the remark that 'trying to bring together the two communities who do not want to live together would provoke conflict'.[14] For a long time in Turkey advocating ideas challenging the *status quo* in Cyprus normally amounted to virtual treason. The country experienced a long and detailed public debate on the Annan Plan. TV stations were filled with round tables and discussion programmes in which a wide range of ideas and opinions on various aspects of the Plan were freely expressed. In the midst of this debate, the Commander of the Aegean Army, General Hursit Tolon, made a public statement saying that he believed those who advocated policies amounting to an abandonment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) ('*ver kurtul*' was a slogan used by the advocates of the *status quo* in Cyprus who were critical of

13. Previously there had been 11 sets of negotiations involving the parties on the island. For a short summary of these negotiations, see Murat Yetkin, 'Bu kaçıncı Kıbrıs Müzakeresi?', *Radikal*, 24 March 2004. The most recent one was held between 2002-2003 and produced an earlier version of the Annan Plan that was turned down by the Turkish side.

14. 'Birlikte yaşamaya zorlamak kavga çıkarır', reported in *Milliyet*, 20 July 1999.

those who supported the Annan Plan) were simply 'traitors.'[15] His statements provoked a furore in the media as well as a public rebuke from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül. Interestingly, the Office of the General Staff distanced itself from the General's remarks. Instead the military associated itself with the position of the government as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in support of the Annan Plan and the idea of an eventual referendum. During this period both the Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as Abdullah Gül, frequently alluded to achieving a 'win-win' solution for Cyprus. This kind of discourse was a relatively new and novel one in Turkish foreign policy and undoubtedly the pressure created by the EU and the prospects of starting accession talks played a critical role.

However, it is possible to argue that the transformation of Turkey's foreign policy started back in 1999 with the capture of Abdullah Öcalan and the initial steps taken with regard to improving relations with Greece and Syria. The first major departures from established traditional foreign policy came in the area of Greek-Turkish and Syrian-Turkish relations. Actually, the seeds of an improvement were sown immediately after the October 1998 crisis with Syria.[16] The Adana Accords that were signed by both sides committed Syria to ensuring that Öcalan would not return to Syria and that the PKK would be denied support. The Accords also put a verification mechanism into place. In return, Turkey supported policies aiming at normalisation of relations with Syria and signed a series of agreements on 'low politics' issues and confidence-building measures. The major breakthrough in relations between the two sides came in the spring of 2000 when the Turkish President, soon after his inauguration and in spite of considerable resistance among the public and the state elite, attended Hafez Assad's funeral. This visit appears to have had a very positive psychological impact on the Syrians, which was extensively reflected in the Arab media. Economic and social relations between the two countries expanded in an unprecedented manner. Syria became much more receptive to publicly recognising Turkey's sovereignty over the Alexandretta (Hatay) region and ceasing the practice of using maps that showed the region as part of Syria. Early in 2004 the President of Syria paid a visit to Turkey and became the first ever Syrian head of state to visit Turkey since independence. This was reciprocated by the Turkish Prime Minister's visit in December 2004. Both countries reached a free trade agreement and even

15. 'Ülke hain yetistiriyor', *Milliyet*, 18 January 2004.

16. Mahmut B. Aykan, 'The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 6, no. 4, June 1999, and Yüksel Sezgin, 'The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, Autumn 2002.

decided to cooperate on the exploitation of the waters of the Tigris and the Asi river.[17] These developments would simply have been unthinkable back in 1995.

Greek-Turkish relations have come a long way too since the mid-1990s when both sides had come to the brink of war. In February 1999, when Öcalan was apprehended in Kenya and brought to Turkey, relations between Turkey and Greece had soured once more. The President of Turkey at the time had even gone as far as declaring that Turkey held the right to treat Greece in the same manner that it had treated Syria for harbouring the leader of the PKK and for supporting terrorism. There were also strong public reactions. Istanbul University even took the decision to stop scientific cooperation with Greece and banned its faculty members from travelling to Greece. Yet the political embarrassment caused by Greece's involvement in the Öcalan affair allowed the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Simitis, to purge hardliners. The hardline and confrontationist Foreign Minister, Theodore Pangalos, was replaced by George Papandreou. Papandreou represented a new approach in Greek foreign policy towards Turkey that advocated dialogue and engagement. His counterpart Ismail Cem in the new government of Bülent Ecevit was able to reciprocate. As the new government began to show signs of a commitment to political reforms, the two foreign ministers took the very first steps in reaching agreements on 'low politics' issues and confidence-building measures. The earthquakes that both countries suffered in the summer of 1999 triggered reciprocal waves of public empathy that helped to strengthen the hand of both Foreign Ministers. This was followed by the Greek decision to support Turkey being declared a candidate country for EU membership at the Helsinki European Council summit.

In a very short period of time, the two governments succeeded in achieving an unprecedented level of cooperation that made it possible for the Greek and Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministers, George Papandreou and Ismail Cem, to visit each other early in 2000. This was very significant because these were the first reciprocal visits between both countries to take place in almost four decades.[18] These visits were also crowned by a series of agreements for cooperation signed between the two countries.[19] The two sides had finally managed to cross a threshold after many stillborn efforts at cooperation and produce results, even if these were agreements on relatively uncontroversial issues. The fact that the two sides had worked

17. 'Barişa yeni adım', *Radikal*, 23 December 2004. Symbolically this is very significant considering that there was a time when there was speculation that conflict over water resources could lead to war, including between Syria and Turkey; see for example Joyce R. Starr, 'Water Wars', *Foreign Policy*, no. 82, Spring 1991.

18. George Papandreou was the first to pay a visit in January 2000, 38 years after Evangelos Averoff's visit in 1962; *Radikal*, 19 January 2000. Ismail Cem returned the visit in February 2000, 40 years after Selim Serper's visit in 1960: *Radikal*, 3 February 2000. Subsequently, both leaders paid reciprocal visits on numerous occasions with public appearances and participation at public events.

19. For the texts of the agreements, see the website of the Greek-Turkish Forum at www.greekturkishforum.org.

together and produced agreements was in itself a significant contribution to public confidence. This would also be the beginning of a new era where the public would become accustomed to jovial images of Greek-Turkish officials meeting and, compared to the past, positive news about the relationship being reported. It is not that crises did not occur. What was new and critical was that these crises were addressed without the dialogue itself suffering and the notion of war between the two countries lost its relevance.[20]

These developments were also accompanied by a significant increase in inter-societal relations. The number of Greek nationals visiting Turkey increased from just under 150,000 in 1996 to more than half a million in 2005. Civil society relations in practically all domains have simply exploded in recent years. Greek-Turkish trade boomed from 300 million USD in 1999 to over 1.8 billion USD in 2004.[21] Many have argued that this level of trade is still below the actual potential even if it is a sign of the degree to which the Greek-Turkish *rapprochement* has deepened.[22] Clearly, there still remains a series of bilateral conflicts between the two countries that have not been resolved. However, both sides have been successful in preventing these conflicts from undermining the normalisation of relations between the two countries. Furthermore, in Turkish foreign policy-making circles, relations with Greece have ceased to be seen in the context of the old 'win-lose' confrontationist approach. It is doubtful that without this change taking place Turkey's Cyprus policy would have altered.

Helsinki 1999 and beyond

Turkey signed a customs union agreement with the EU in 1995 against considerable resistance from the European Parliament on the grounds of Turkey's poor human rights record. Turkey's poor democratic and human rights record continuously cast a shadow over EU-Turkish relations. These relations hit an all-time low in December 1997 when Turkey was not included in the list of candidate countries for the next round of enlargement. In 1998 relations with the EU became further strained when Turkey experienced a major confrontation with Greece, Italy and to a lesser extent Germany over Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK. In October he had been expelled from Syria and found himself seeking asylum in Italy after having travelled via Russia and Greece. The crisis reached a

20. During the Imea/Kardak crisis the media had whipped up nationalist feeling and there was a lot of warmongering at the time. Yet the mood among the Turkish public in 2004, right after the referendum in Cyprus, was very different and is well captured by an incident widely reported in the media. The Rector of Istanbul University, Kemal Alemdaroğlu, in the context of the debate on changing Turkish foreign policy, had made nationalist remarks that threatened Greece with invasion. In May 2004, when he was leading a group of university rectors in protest against a draft law concerning higher education in Turkey, the media reported that an onlooker had shouted at him: 'Alemdaroglu, are you leading the people behind you on your way to invade and conquer Greece?' For coverage of the story, see for example *Zaman*, 18 May 2004.

21. See Annex III.

22. Sahin Alpay, 'Türk-Yunan yakınlaşmasının neresindeyiz?', *Zaman*, 22 February 2005.

peak in February 1999 when Öcalan was finally captured in Kenya at the Greek Embassy and brought to Turkey for trial.

The capture of Öcalan in 1999 and his trial turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Turkey. The PKK stopped its attacks and a degree of normality returned to the southeast of Turkey. The improvement in the security situation opened the way for the emergence of a climate conducive to early reforms. This was accompanied by a *rapprochement* in Greek-Turkish relations that would be strengthened by the positive climate of reconciliation engendered in the wake of the earthquakes that struck both countries. The earthquakes demonstrated how inept the state apparatus was in responding to a crisis on such a scale, while to the surprise of the Turkish public assistance from the international community and especially from supposedly 'enemy' countries poured in. At the same time, the fledging Turkish civil society was able to rise to the challenge and made a modest contribution to search and rescue operations as well as to reconstruction efforts. A combination of these factors very much undermined the legitimacy on which the traditional 'national security' mentality had been based in Turkey.

The decision to have the summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Istanbul and the visit of Bill Clinton in November 1999 were two symbolically important events. Clinton's charisma and his reference to the twenty-first century as 'Turkey's century' if Turkey succeeded in reforming itself and resolving its conflicts in the region impacted positively on the public. These developments increased calls for reform and also weakened the reticence of the Turkish public towards the external world. However, the fundamental breakthrough of course came in December 1999 when the European Council summit in Helsinki declared Turkey a candidate country for membership. This brought EU-Turkish relations to a new level, allowing the EU eventually to enjoy considerable influence over Turkey. Conditionality, in the form of the Copenhagen criteria, but also the need for Turkey to resolve its disputes with neighbouring countries, became important vectors of change and reform for Turkey.

The Helsinki European Council summit was not important just for the decision it took on Turkey's candidacy, but also because it called for the establishment of military capabilities that would give the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) some teeth. However, ESDP also required the possibility of making use of NATO facilities. Turkey, a long-standing member of NATO, made

it known that it would veto the use of such facilities unless it was included in the decision-making process. EU member countries, particularly those keen to have ESDP developed, such as France and Germany, resented Turkey's position and regarded it as an attempt to stall the development and deepening of European integration. Delicate negotiations pursued between the United States, Britain (informally representing the EU) and Turkey culminated in a preliminary agreement in November 2001 that broke the deadlock over the use of NATO facilities. It has generally been recognised that Turkey's willingness to compromise played an important role in creating a positive climate for inviting Turkey to participate at the Convention on the Future of Europe that would in 2002 start to draft a constitution for Europe. Austria and Germany were known to have objected to Turkey's participation and wanted to limit the participation to countries that had already started pre-accession negotiations. The breakthrough on ESDP is cited as an important factor that helped tip the balance in favour of Turkey. In turn, in Turkey the decision reached at the Laeken Summit in December 2001 helped to make up for the deep resentment that had been caused by the decision of the Nice Summit in December 2000.[23] Turkish officials were very disappointed that the institutional changes envisaged in the Treaty had not made any allowance for Turkey's possible membership.

The reform process started slowly as the right-wing nationalist party in the coalition government together with conservative circles in the country resisted change. The mentality associated with 'national security' made its presence felt as some of the more critical reforms relating to the lifting of capital punishment, introduction of broadcasting and education in minority languages and curtailment of the powers of the security forces were bitterly resisted. When these reforms were nevertheless adopted by the parliament in August 2002, the coalition collapsed. Early elections in November culminated in a complete overhaul of the parliament. Each and every political party in the outgoing parliament was replaced by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the social democrat Republican People's Party (CHP). AKP received almost two-thirds of the seats at the parliament on a ticket that advocated reforms, EU membership and a commitment to improve relations with neighbouring countries, including resolving the problem of Cyprus. The AKP was formed by some of the young disciples of Necmettin Erbakan who parted ways with him after the 1997 'post-

23. See 'Ankara'ya Laeken dopingi', *Milliyet*, 12 December 2001.

modern' *coup*. They had toned down the radical Islamic rhetoric of Erbakan and replaced it with a discourse that emphasised liberal democracy. They shied away from being described as Islamists and preferred to be called conservative democrats. Subsequent to coming to power, they were able to see through a series of reforms as well as stick to the economic stabilisation programme begun by the previous government.

By December 2004, when the European Council was taking the decision to start accession talks with Turkey in October 2005, the AKP government had achieved nothing less than a revolution since coming to power in November 2002. The European Commission in its *Progress Report* for 2004 concluded that Turkey had 'sufficiently' met the Copenhagen criteria. The government had succeeded in seeing through a series of reforms that had also included the scaling down of the influence of the military. It had created the circumstances in which Turkey's cultural and ethnic diversity could much more easily be expressed even if certain problems continued to linger on. The report also identified Turkey as a 'functioning market economy'. The government had succeeded in navigating Turkey through a difficult and demanding stabilisation programme that had brought inflation rates well below levels that the country had not seen for the past forty years. This was accompanied by unprecedented fiscal discipline together with a robust general economic performance.

Turkey, subsequent to the December 1999 EU Helsinki summit, engaged in a long and painful reform process. This process, conducted under the watchful eyes of the EU, transformed Turkey dramatically. Turkish democracy and human rights improved significantly while the Turkish state permitted a much larger public recognition of Turkey's ethnic and cultural diversity. These developments played a critical role in the European Council summit decision in December 2004 to start negotiations in October 2005. Even if problems to do with the implementation of the reforms still exist and if these are occasionally the subject of considerable media attention, many of these problems are eventually resolved. It is this transformation that has focused much attention on Turkey, especially from the Arab world, and has led many in Europe and elsewhere to present Turkey as a model or example for regime transformation and democratisation. This has also been accompanied by calls from a wide range of quarters for Turkey to play an intercultural or civilisational dialogue role too.

The Turkish economy looks very different too.[24] The Turkish economy has grown significantly in size and has continued to become diversified. Turkish foreign trade has grown significantly from 57.3 billion USD in 1995 to close to 190 billion USD in 2005. Most dramatically, Turkey's infamous hyper-inflation has been brought under control and in 2005 was below 8 per cent compared to 106 per cent in 1995. Similarly, the budget deficit has been shrinking and there are already reports that Turkey could be meeting the Maastricht criteria much earlier than previously expected.[25] Confidence in the Turkish economy and society has been reflected in a conspicuous manner in two specific areas. Tourism has significantly increased and become a major source of income, especially for financing Turkey's current account deficit. Most fascinatingly, visitors to Turkey rose to more than 21 million in 2005 from just under 8 million in 1995, suggesting a striking growth in Turkey's attractiveness as a tourist and business destination. A significant proportion in the increase actually came from countries neighbouring Turkey, partly due to Turkey's growing economic attractiveness, and partly due to Turkey's liberal visa policy. Foreign direct investment was another growth area. In 2005 FDI entries were close to 10 billion USD, more than the total of all FDI that had previously entered the country until 1999.[26]

More importantly for the purposes of this paper, a parallel transformation can be observed in Turkey's foreign policy too. This transformation became visible first with the Turkish parliament's refusal in March 2003 to allow the United States to use Turkish territory to open a northern front for its intervention in Iraq. The decision cast a dark shadow over US-Turkish relations but on the other hand it was received by the Arab world as well as in many European countries as a sign of democratic maturity.[27] This unexpected development also helped to mitigate to a certain extent fears of some member countries that if Turkey became a member of the EU it would be a 'Trojan horse' for the United States' interests.[28] The decision was also critical because it reflected public opinion and civil society preferences. Traditionally, such a decision would have been very much the prerogative of the military and foreign policy establishment. Furthermore, both the President's office and the military resisted becoming involved in an intervention that was not multilaterally sanctioned. During the course of the summer mounting concern about the growing chaos in Iraq, prospects of an emerging Kurdish state and the growing presence of the PKK cul-

24. See Annex I for details.

25. Caner Bakır, 'Turkey: en route to meet the challenging Maastricht criteria?', *Studia Europaea*, nos. 2-3, October 2005.

26. The total stock of FDI in Turkey in 1999 was just over 10 billion USD. See section entitled 'Foreign Direct Investment' p. 2 at http://www.deik.org/bultenler/businessguide/DEIK-BG-8-FDI.pdf (visited 29 April 2006).

27. Ziya Önis and Yilmaz Suhnaz, 'Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?', *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2005.

28. Charles Grant, 'Turkey offers EU more punch', *European Voice*, 1-7 September 2005.

minated in the adoption of a decision by the Turkish national assembly in October 2003 authorising the government to send troops to northern Iraq. The decision was very much reflective of the old 'national security' approach yet at the end the government refrained from using these powers in the face of growing resistance to Turkish involvement coming from Arabs and Kurds in Iraq as well as from European circles.

With respect to Cyprus, as outlined above, a miracle was performed when Turkey's 'no solution is the solution' approach to the division of the island was turned upside down. Instead Turkey decided to lend its support to the Turkish-Cypriots' decision to go along with the Annan Plan contemplating the reunification of the island. This plan was originally announced by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in November 2002. This uniquely detailed and comprehensive plan envisaged the establishment of a reunited Cyprus, delicately striking a balance between the two sides on the island. The Annan Plan went through a number of modifications before it took the form that was submitted to a referendum on both sides of the island in April 2004. Turkey's support for the re-unification of the island overnight changed Turkey's image in the international community. Turkey's standing increased also because of the manner in which Turkey was demonstrating to the world – and especially the Muslim world – that democracy and Islam could indeed co-exist.

In conclusion, more than a decade and a half after the end of the Cold War when Turkey was first presented as the 'star of Islam', Turkey has finally reached a level of development where it is manifesting a potential to play the role of a model for the Muslim world awaiting or seeking democratisation. The events of 9/11 and its aftermath also highlighted the potential of Turkey to pre-empt a clash of civilisations and maybe even to help to nurture a dialogue between the West and the Muslim world.

In spite of these positive developments, Turkey remains stuck in the midst of three troublesome regions in turbulent times. The Balkans is still awaiting stabilisation even if considerable progress has been made since the violence that followed the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The former Soviet space neighbouring Turkey on the other hand is still experiencing its difficulties. The 'Orange' and 'Rose' revolutions of Ukraine and Georgia have increased prospects of democracy, liberal market economies and the rule of law. However, the future is still uncertain in both coun-

tries due to domestic politics as well as the ongoing ethnic conflicts. The Armenian and Azeri conflict remains unresolved. Furthermore, the neighbourhood is a major supplier and transit region for oil and natural gas. The instability and uncertainty in the Middle East if anything has increased compared to the Cold War and the 1990s. The US intervention in Iraq succeeded in unseating a regime that was a source of instability in the region but failed to replace it with a viable one. The deeply troubling and volatile situation has been further aggravated with the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President of Iran. Iran's nuclear policies, coupled with the foreign policy discourse it has adopted against Israel and the US, is further complicating an already fraught situation. Lastly, although Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon was welcomed as a positive development, the domestic situation and the nature of the regime continues to constitute a source of instability for the region. Open conflict between Israel and Hizbollah in summer 2006 has added to this instability. Therefore the shape and form that Turkish foreign policy takes can have an important bearing on how the regions surrounding Turkey emerge from these turbulent times.

'New' national security, 'new' foreign policy and structural changes

2

The engagement of Turkey by the European Union and the principle of conditionality that the EU employs with candidate countries are clearly two critical factors that have brought about the emergence of this 'new' foreign policy in Turkey. However, there are also other reasons behind this sea-change in Turkish foreign policy. The legacy of Turgut Özal's policies, which emphasized the importance of interdependence and economic relations as well as the interests of a growing vibrant export-oriented sector in Turkey, can be cited as additional factors. The Turkish military's steady involvement in UN and NATO peacekeeping operations in Turkey's region also contributed to this transformation as well as to the alteration of perceptions of Turkey especially in the Balkans. A case in point is Turkey's foreign policy posture towards war in the former Yugoslavia and the crisis in Kosovo in 1999. In spite of domestic pressure to intervene in the war between Serbs and Bosnian Muslims, the Turkish government refrained from adopting or pursuing policies that conflicted with the position of the international community. However, at no point did Turkey adopt unilateralist policies such as violating the UN embargo on arms sanctions even if it was Turkey's perception that these sanctions clearly worked to the disadvantage of Bosnian Muslims. It participated in UNPROFOR and the Turkish military unit in Zenica earned itself a very positive reputation among both the Bosnian and the Croatian populations. Once the Dayton Peace Accords were signed, Turkey maintained its troops and contributed to the efforts to stabilise Bosnia-Herzegovina. Similarly, the Turkish government and foreign policy-makers worked very closely with the international community during the Kosovo crisis and deployed peacekeeping troops under NATO. The deployment of these troops was symbolically very important. It was the first time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that Turkish troops were returning to the Balkans in relatively significant numbers and in a visible manner.

This necessitated very close cooperation between Turkey on the one hand and Bulgaria, Greece and the FYROM on the other. In many ways, the fact that it was acceptable to have Turkish troops back in the Balkans signified that all the parties involved had put the images from the Balkan wars in 1912 and the First World War behind them. Undoubtedly, Greece's transformation or 'Europeanisation' and adoption of constructive policies towards Turkey as well as other Balkan countries were central if not critical to these developments. A similar observation could be made about Bulgaria too. Bulgaria in 1989 had expelled more than 310,000 Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks to Turkey. The two countries risked becoming embroiled in an armed conflict were it not for the restraining influence of bipolar politics. However, the collapse of the communist regime and the gradual transformation of Bulgaria into a pluralist democracy and a liberal market changed the nature of Bulgarian-Turkish relations. The status of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria improved dramatically and was reflected positively in Bulgarian-Turkish relations. The Bulgarian-Turkish border in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War became the first border to become completely demilitarised by the mid-1990s. The engagement of Bulgaria by the EU and the massive reforms adopted in Bulgaria set a precedent for Turkey's own internal reforms.

The 1990s was also a period during which Turkey developed closer relations with the ex-Soviet world surrounding it. The Black Sea Cooperation Organisation, set up in 1992, became an important forum for this purpose. This was an *avant-garde* project initiated by Turgut Özal. The project slowly and surely, even if in a modest manner, helped economic, functional, social and political relations to develop in a region where almost none had existed during the Cold War. Turkey invested considerable scarce resources and intense diplomatic efforts into injecting life into this effort at regional cooperation. This was a period when Özal introduced a very liberal visa policy for nationals of countries of the region. The number of visitors from the Balkans and the Soviet Union was a little more than one million in 1990, at the end of the decade the numbers had increased close to 2.4 million and to more than 5.5 million by 2005.[29] These measures helped to boost trade, and societal contacts increased significantly. Bilateral business associations were set up. Most importantly, commercial relations with Russia exploded and Turkish companies became involved in an ever-growing number of especially large construction projects.

29. Updated figures from Tables 1 and 2 in Kemal Kirişci, 'A friendlier Schengen visa asylum system as a tool of "soft power": the experience of Turkey', *European Journal of Migration and Law*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2005.

Turkish companies began to invest in Russia as well as other regional countries such as Bulgaria, Rumania, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan. There were also attempts to improve relations with Armenia. Efforts involving civil society as well as diplomacy to open the border with Armenia were made, even if this did not produce positive results.

One of the most striking developments in the 1990s with respect to Turkish foreign policy was that the concept of security became much more complicated and multi-faceted. Traditionally, Turkish security policy was based on conventional security threats from the Soviet Union during the Cold War as well as from Greece and to a lesser extent from Iraq and Syria. However, in the 1990s this situation changed drastically. The Soviet threat basically disappeared. Greece continued to be defined as a major source of security threat accompanied by the threat from growing weapons of mass destruction capabilities of neighbouring Middle Eastern countries. This was accompanied by the security threat emanating from the PKK, which received considerable logistical as well as political support from the very countries that posed a threat to Turkey. These threats in themselves accounted for the large expansion in Turkey's armaments procurement programme especially in the mid-1990s. In 1996 it was reported that the Turkish armed forces would need resources amounting to 150 billion USD for its weapons requirements in the coming 25 years.[30] In 1994 Turkey had the largest defence budget in proportion to its GDP in NATO after Greece, Britain and the United States.[31]

Yet, besides these more traditional 'high politics' security threats, Turkey was becoming familiar with a new set of 'low politics' threats. These ranged from organised crime, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings and the illegal arms trade to money laundering. One very significant consequence of these new and unconventional 'threats' is that inevitably agencies beyond the military and the ministry of Foreign Affairs became involved in foreign policy making. These agencies ranged from the Gendarmerie, the Police, the ministry of the Interior and even social security agencies, not to mention non-governmental organisations. As a result, not only a greater number of agencies became involved in 'security'-related policy making but, because of the transnational nature of these 'threats', these agencies willingly or unwillingly found themselves increasingly involved in regional and multilateral cooperative schemes and forums. In other words,

30. *Turkish Daily News*, 5 April 1996.

31. Calculated from *The Military Balance* 1995/96 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), p. 39.

officials from these agencies became more and more exposed to the culture and need, if not urgency, of having to interact and cooperate with their counterparts in other countries as well as non-governmental organisations.

Hence, even if with respect to a number of bilateral conflicts and 'high politics' issues Turkey in the 1990s was earning itself a reputation for being a 'coercive regional power', there was also a dimension of Turkish foreign policy that was composed of cooperation and dialogue especially on 'low politics' issues. Furthermore, with regard to a number of 'high politics' issues such as the Armenian-Azeri conflict and the conflicts in the Balkans, Turkey did display a willingness to use multilateral forums, employed dialogue and adopted constructive policies. These developments in Turkish foreign policy especially involving the Balkan countries led an expert on Turkish foreign policy, Şule Kut, to argue that Turkey was in effect already a 'benign regional power' seeking to play an active, stabilising role in its neighbourhood.[32] Hence, when evaluating the nature of current Turkish foreign policy this legacy needs to be borne in mind. This legacy is also critical because it reflects the gradual rise to prominence of commercial, economic and other more technical interests in foreign policy-making alongside narrowly-defined 'national security' interests. In turn, actors both within the state as well as civil society acquired a growing say alongside traditional foreign policy actors such as the military and the ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is against such a background that the characteristics of Turkey's 'new' foreign policy and foreign policy-making may best be understood.

Structural aspects of 'new' foreign policy and the 'Sèvres phobia'

A number of structural and substantive characteristics of this 'new' foreign policy can be identified. Foremost among these is the manner in which the definition of 'national security' is changing and in parallel Turkey's infamous 'Sèvres phobia' is weakening. One important aspect of Turkish political culture, which is very much an integral part of Turkish political life, has been the conviction that the external world is conspiring to weaken and carve up Turkey. Turkey is depicted as surrounded by enemies, who are extremely efficient and can act in unison. This phenomenon is

32. Şule Kut, 'The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s', in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (London and Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), pp. 5-12.

often referred to as the '*Sèvres phobia*'.[33] In essence it reflects the fear that the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 (drawn up by the victorious powers at the end of World War I and carving up the remaining Anatolian regions of the Ottoman Empire into small states and occupation zones) will be revived. The 'Sèvres phobia' is closely associated with a long tradition of viewing the world from a *realpolitik* perspective.[34] It is also a reflection of the Ottoman Empire's relationship with Europe and the manner in which the Ottomans constantly lost territory to European powers during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This perspective on history has deeply marked Turkish decision-makers.

The 'Sèvres phobia' becomes important not only because it constitutes a filter through which the world is perceived, but also because the elite is able to manipulate it to influence public attitudes towards the external world. In this manner 'national security' becomes defined and stressed with respect to concerns and threats, real or imagined, that might undermine Turkey's territorial integrity. As Pinar Bilgin notes, the 'fear of loss of territory' has been all- pervasive.[35] In Turkey, the military plays a critical role in perpetuating the 'Sèvres phobia'. Turkish national security culture, which is heavily influenced by the military establishment, emphasises thinking and analysis influenced by the 'Sèvres phobia'. Military education and socialisation is a very important process for the dissemination of this culture. All men in Turkey serve in the army and most top bureaucrats attend a training programme on national security run by the military. In this programme, bureaucrats are exposed to a similar perspective on world affairs to that to which all the officer corps of the Turkish military experience. The military perspective is very much based on the aforementioned *realpolitik* view of world politics that is characterised by a deep sense of suspicion and a tendency to shy away from cooperation. It was not astonishing that as late as in 1999 a four-star General and Commander of a military graduate academy, Nahil Şenoğlu, during the opening ceremony of the new academic year, alerted the young officers that they were there to learn about 'how Turkey was the most lonely country in the world and that the country was surrounded by the largest number of internal and external enemies in the world'.[36]

This call for vigilance became particularly conspicuous in the context of EU-Turkish relations. For example, in the course of 2002, as Turkey debated the adoption of reforms necessary to

33. A growing number of analysts of Turkish foreign policy are making references to the role of the 'Sèvres phobia', sometimes also called the 'Sèvres syndrome' or 'Sèvres complex'. See for example Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (London: Zed Books, 2001).

34. See Ali Karaosmanoğlu, 'The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1, Fall 2000, for the dominance of *realpolitik* thinking in Ottoman as well as Turkish national security culture.

35. Pinar Bilgin, 'Turkey's changing security discourse: the challenge of globalisation', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 44, no. 1, January 2005, p. 184.

36. Reported in *Radikal*, 4 October 1999.

meet the Copenhagen criteria, there were numerous public figures who made references to the Europeans' or the West's intentions of weakening and dividing up Turkey. These allegations increased especially in the context of reforms that would allow for 'education and broadcasting' in mother tongue languages other than Turkish. Many emphasised that these reforms were being demanded by the EU with the thinly-veiled purpose of weakening national unity and encouraging the Kurds to entertain the idea of secession. A former mayor of Istanbul, a politician and at the same time founder of a private university in Turkey, Bedrettin Dalan, argued on a television programme that the EU demands for education reforms in Kurdish was part and parcel of a 'divide and rule' policy to achieve the ultimate goal of reviving the Roman Empire. He did also add that he himself was of Kurdish origin.[37] Kemal Gürüz, the then head of the Higher Education Board, a body that oversees all universities in Turkey, argued that anybody who demanded that there should be education in Kurdish were advocates of secessionism.[38] Similarly, a MHP minister in the previous government, Abdülkadir Akcan, claimed that the EU was trying to replace the Lausanne Treaty with the Sèvres Treaty by demanding these reforms.[39] The Lausanne Treaty had replaced the Sèvres Treaty, which had never been ratified by the Ottomans, in 1923 when Turkey emerged victorious from a war of liberation against occupying powers and achieved international recognition for its independence.

The problem of Cyprus was another issue where similar observations had also been made in the context of relations with the European Union. As the deadline for reaching a settlement based on the Annan Plan, 28 February 2003, approached, opponents of a settlement invoked the 'Sèvres phobia'. The most conspicuous manifestation of this occurred when a public demonstration was organised by the 'supporters of the Denktaş platform', the platform founded by leading public figures and non-governmental organisations including also a former minister of Foreign Affairs, Şükrü Sina Gürel. The platform presented itself as a reaction to the public demonstrations that took place in support of the Annan Plan led by Turkish Cypriots on the island in December 2002 and January 2003. During these demonstrations there had been widespread criticism of Denktaş's policies. The demonstration organised by this platform took place on 2 February 2003. The former minister of Foreign Affairs argued that with the

37. *Haber Türk*, 25 February, 2002.
38. *Radikal*, 19 February 2002.
39. *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2002.

Annan Plan there were efforts to undermine national unity and that this could be protected only by standing behind Denktaş and the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Similar remarks were also made by the President of Istanbul University when addressing the demonstration.[40] During the demonstration, banners with slogans such as 'Turkey's defence starts in Cyprus' and 'Those who give away Cyprus will also give away Turkey' were displayed.

The manner in which 'Sèvres phobia' permeated all walks of life for a long time facilitated the notion that foreign and security policy must be exempted from the day-to-day haggling of politics.[41] One important consequence of such an understanding of foreign and security policy-making has been the notion that limits to democracy can be accepted in order not to jeopardise national security in Turkey. This was expressed by one of the longest-standing politicians, Bülent Ecevit, a former prime minister and a social democrat, when he noted that the vulnerability of Turkey demanded a special type of democracy.[42] This line of thinking also manifested itself in the belief that, for example, the Copenhagen criteria should be implemented taking the country's special conditions into consideration. There have also been some who have even suggested the idea of a 'privileged relationship' that Christian Democrats in Europe have long advocated for Turkey as an alternative to full membership. A former ambassador and deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gündüz Aktan, has for example been one prominent figure in Turkey who has looked at the notion of 'privileged membership' somewhat favourably in the belief that Turkey would enjoy greater freedom this way on issues such as Cyprus, Kurdish minority rights and bilateral unresolved conflicts in the Aegean Sea with Greece.[43]

This kind of 'national security' understanding was questioned by a former prime minister, Mesut Yılmaz, in August 2001. He challenged the all-encompassing and broad manner in which 'national security' has been conceptualised. He argued that such a conceptualisation would complicate prospects of EU reforms. Yılmaz's remarks at the time were not well received by the Turkish General Staff. Nevertheless, there were also those who supported the Prime Minister's position. The Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD), for example, came out forcefully in support of a redefinition of 'national security' in a manner that could introduce greater scope for reforms. There

40. Reported by NTV, Evening News, 2 February 2003.

41. Gencer Özcan, 'The Military and Foreign Policy Making in Turkey', in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, op.cit.

42. Bilgin, op. cit.

43. See for example his column 'İmtiyazlı Ortaklık', *Radikal*, 19 May 2005.

were also prominent former diplomats, ministers and retired generals who voiced their opinion in favour of the need to revise Turkey's traditional definition of 'national security'. There were also those who advocated that the EU offered an opportunity for Turkey to adapt itself to an increasingly competitive global environment. These were also accompanied by the long series of EU reform packages that did considerably increase the say of civilians in the process of defining 'national security'. However, more importantly, the military itself has also been changing. Furthermore, and maybe most importantly, the EU's engagement of Turkey is seen increasingly as a development that is contributing to Turkish security rather than eroding it.[44]

This is a relatively recent development in the ranks of the military that has important implications in terms of the reconceptualisation of 'national security'. Mistrust towards Europe and the EU always ran deep in the military. This was vividly reflected when the then Secretary General of the National Security Council, General Tuncer Kılınç, at a military and internationally-attended conference in Istanbul in March 2002, declared that the EU was a 'Christian Club' and that it was a 'neo-colonialist force determined to divide Turkey'. He advocated that Turkey should abandon its bid for EU membership and explore other avenues, including closer relations with Russia and Iran. His controversial remarks precipitated a lively debate in Turkey. However, the next day the former President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel, delivered a scathing criticism of the General's argument verging on mockery. The then Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu, too felt the need to intervene and reassure the public that General Kılınç had expressed his personal opinion and that for the military membership of the EU was a 'geostrategic' objective.[45] In a climate of apprehension about the military's stand, in May 2003 the new Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Yasar Büyükanit, announced at a similar international conference: 'I state once again the views of the Turkish Armed Forces on this issue with capital letters: the Turkish Armed Forces cannot be against the European Union because the European Union is the geopolitical and geostrategic ultimate condition for the realisation of the target of modernisation which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk chose for the Turkish nation'.[46]

General Büyükanit's remarks reflect this gradual change from the traditional 'national security' definition to a new one that man-

44. Ersel Aydınlı, Nihat Ali Özcan and Dogan Akyaz, 'The Turkish Military's March Towards Europe', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 1, January-February 2006.

45. For the reporting of some of the reactions see 'Askerden iki sürpriz', *Milliyet*, 8 March 2002.

46. Yasar Büyükanit, 'Küreselleşme ve Uluslararası Güvenlik', in *Küreselleşme ve Uluslararası Güvenlik: Birinci Uluslararası Sempozyum Bildirileri Istanbul, 29-30 May 2003* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basim Evi, 2003). The speech of the General was made available separately in English during the conference and is available online at http://www.tsk.mil.tr/genelkumay/bashalk/konusma/sarem/saremaciskonusmasi_290503.htm.

ifests itself in different ways. For example, early in 2002 the National Security Council was advocating the importance of promoting economic and commercial relations with all neighbouring countries to promote peace and security rather than solely emphasise military measures. Again, on this occasion the military was prepared to give its support to a pragmatic arrangement at the Turkish frontier with northern Iraq, encouraging local trade and work for thousands of trucks that would otherwise remain idle. The fact that this benefited the local Kurdish population on both sides of the frontier and that there was a risk that the PKK might abuse the trade was overlooked for reasons of pragmatism. Early in April 2004 the Chief of Staff, Hilmi Özkök, noted that the Turkish military increasingly needed personnel that could rely on knowledge and pragmatism to meet the security challenges of the future; these remarks, in comparison with the earlier remarks of General Senoglu in 1999, reflected the extent to which there had been a change of attitude. Possibly, a more important and telling remark of his came again early in 2004 in reaction to General Hursit Tolon, who had accused advocates of the Annan Plan in Cyprus of being traitors. On this occasion Özkök noted that the military had to learn to recognise that it was not only the military who loved the country and that they were not the only patriots. It is against the background of such remarks that it becomes easier to account for the major turnaround in Turkey's Cyprus policy. It is indicative of the extent to which the elements of the traditional 'national security' definition and the 'Sèvres phobia' were eroding by early 2004.

As Alper Kaliber notes, traditional foreign and security policy-making in Turkey, which was once excessively securitised and insulated from the public domain, is dissolving.[47] This process of change is clearly not yet complete and is ongoing. Turkey's relationship with the EU will in this respect be critical. The remarks of a retired four-star General, Edip Baser, are very telling in this context. At a conference in Ankara in September 2004 on governance and the military, he remarked that he thought that EU membership would constitute an anchor for Turkey's internal as well as its external security. Currently, this is probably not a very unusual line of thinking in the ranks of the military, although it certainly would not have prevailed only a few years ago. The military is indeed adjusting to the recognition of diversity in Turkey, to civilian contributions to foreign and security policy-making and to the need for democratic accountability. This is being reflected in

47. Alper Kaliber, 'Securing the Ground Through Securitized Foreign Policy: The Cyprus Case Revisited', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2005, p. 311.

concrete policy outcomes on 'high politics' issues such as the new policy on Cyprus and northern Iraq among others. However, as the authors of a recent and perceptive article in *Foreign Affairs* have noted, the Turkish military is likely to continue to adjust to a new understanding of national security as long as there is ongoing evidence of progress towards membership and the EU becomes a new guardian of stability and security.[48]

The role of civil society

One important consequence of an evolving 'new' conception of national security and foreign policy is the growing role of civil society in foreign policy-making. Traditionally, civil society was seen as a threat and non-governmental organisations were readily associated with foreign influence and seen as tools of external agents. This is changing and it is possible to argue that one of the most striking aspects of the 'new' Turkish foreign policy is actually the role that civil society has acquired in policy-making. It would be wrong of course to assume that civil society enjoys the kind of presence and influence that is associated with civil society in EU countries. Nevertheless, over the last decade or so civil society has started to flourish in Turkey. The EU has contributed to this development directly, by providing funds for non-governmental organisations, and indirectly by encouraging greater democratisation in Turkey. The idea of civil society and state cooperation especially on foreign policy and international issues is an even more recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, the first concrete steps in this area were taken when the government and especially the ministry of Foreign Affairs sought the support of civil society groups and representatives during the run-up to the ratification of the Customs Union Treaty by the European Parliament. Since then, considerable distance has been covered and today it is possible to find examples of civil society involvement in foreign policy issues of both a 'low' and 'high' politics nature.

With regard to 'low' politics, a case in point is the cooperation that has taken place between the state authorities and civil society in combating the trafficking of women and illegal migration. The notion of cooperating with the external world was relatively alien to the Turkish military and bureaucracy. The pervasive 'Sèvres phobia', together with the accompanying deep mistrust towards

48. Aydınlı et al, op. cit, p. 7.

the West and the international community, often constituted a major mental barrier for Turkish officials in developing cooperative projects with foreign officials. This too began to change as closer relations with the EU made it inevitable that officials had to develop contacts at all levels with their EU counterparts and with civil society as well as international organisations. Turkish officials from the Ministry of the Interior, Gendarmerie and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have cooperated very closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organisation for Migration and Turkish and international non-governmental organisations. For example, the Interior Ministry officials subsequently joined by the Gendarmerie were able to make arrangements in September 2003 with a non-governmental organisation, the Human Resources Development Foundation (*Insan Kaynakları Geliştirme Vakfı*) and the Directorate General of the Status of Woman, to provide social assistance to victims of trafficking until their safe return to their countries of origin could be arranged.

This development in itself is a significant indication of the transformation that Turkey is going through and testifies to the close cooperation that is developing between the bureaucracy and civil society in Turkey. During the NATO summit in June 2004, a major additional breakthrough was achieved when, in the presence of the US Secretary of State Colin Powell, a protocol was signed between the municipality of Istanbul and the Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF). This protocol improved the quality of protection to be offered to women victims of trafficking. The HRDF also instituted a mechanism which enables it to receive instant information about trafficked women apprehended by the police. The police, together with the HRDF, cooperate closely with the authorities and non-governmental organisations of the country of origin of trafficked women to ensure safe repatriation. Furthermore, the Interior Ministry has also instituted the practice of granting humanitarian residence permits of up to six months for victims of trafficking.

A similar example occurred in the area of asylum. The Turkish government had acquired a notorious reputation for violating the *non-refoulement* principle (the principle of not sending asylum seekers or refugees back to their country of origin or to a situation where they may face death, torture or degrading treatment). Many western governments and human rights organisations as well as

refugee advocacy groups used to criticise Turkey bitterly for this in the mid-1990s. Often, the Turkish authorities would not allow these organisations access to themselves or to Turkish society. Today, government agencies cooperate very closely with Turkish as well as foreign non-governmental organisations and international organisations such as the UNHCR. This cooperation has even involved an organisation such as the International Catholic Migration Commission running training seminars for the Turkish police on asylum law. Less then a few years ago it would have been unthinkable that the Turkish Police would actually submit itself to a programme run by an NGO, let alone an international one carrying a religious name. In December 2004 the UNHCR organised a major consultation meeting on Turkish asylum policies with the participation of a large number of Turkish non-governmental organisations and Turkish government agencies. The meeting involved an open debate and discussion over a pending Turkish asylum law. In the past, such issues would have been regarded as being too sensitive in terms of national interest and security to debate with NGO representatives. Subsequently, a number of similar meetings bringing together officials with academics and representatives of non-governmental organisations as well as the UNHCR were held. Most fascinatingly, in the context of the European Commission's twinning projects there were foreign government officials who shared offices at the Turkish Police Headquarters in Ankara preparing Turkey's *Action Plan on Asylum and Migration* with the objective of programming the harmonisation of Turkish laws with those of the EU. Lastly, the government in January 2006 amended its 'Asylum Regulation' from 1994 in a manner that explicitly calls for the possibility of cooperation in the area of asylum with non-governmental organisations.[49]

Another example concerns Russian-Turkish commercial relations. In late May 2005 a crisis erupted in Russian-Turkish relations when Russia halted and imposed an embargo on the importation of fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers from Turkey on the grounds that they were infested by insects. These exports constituted a major source of income for local producers and very quickly the developments filled the news and featured prominently in the Turkish media. What was interesting was the approach that the Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, adopted. In a rather unprecedented manner for Turkish politics, the Prime Minister not only adopted a conciliatory tone towards

49. Article 7 of the 'Asylum Regulation', *Official Gazette*, 27 January 2006.

Russia in the context of a highly visible bilateral conflict but he also promised that he would enter into direct dialogue with Vladimir Putin. The approach was unusual and can be considered as a typical example of the 'new' Turkish foreign policy because such a problem in the past would either not have attracted the attention of the Prime Minister or, if it did, it would have been framed in a confrontational and populist manner, putting the blame on the other party. Instead, the issue not only made it to the top of the governmental agenda, and thus in a sense acquired a 'high politics' dimension, but the Prime Minister, in a critical speech, argued that the problem was partly Turkey's fault and that he would dispatch the minister responsible for Agriculture to Russia to negotiate a solution to the problem. He added that they did not intend to make enemies for Turkey but earn friendships.[50] However, what was interesting was also that a number of non-governmental organisations were involved in attracting attention to the problem and mobilising the government's support for its resolution. These organisations included the Turkish-Russian Business Council, the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM) and the Cut Flowers Association (*Kesme Çicekciler Birliği)*.

Civil society and actors beyond the military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have become involved in 'high politics' issues too. A case in point is Turkey's quest for membership of the EU. Traditionally, EU-Turkish relations from the time of their inception in the late 1950s were very much dominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to a lesser extent the State Planning Organisation. Business interest and civil society groups began to make their presence felt particularly during the lobbying efforts directed at the European Parliament (EP) in support of the adoption of the Customs Union Agreement. The EP had been somewhat reluctant in approving the Customs Union Agreement signed in March 1995. But EU-Turkish relations drifted back into the hands of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially with the government decision to suspend political dialogue with the EU immediately after the Luxembourg European Council summit in 1997. It was the Helsinki Summit decision in 1999 that would gradually open an important public space for civil society in general and foreign policy-making in particular. Civil society and the liberal media made their presence felt in a very visible manner during the first half of 2002 when the country experienced a bitter debate between advocates of

50. Reported in *Radikal*, 12 June 2005.

reform and those who considered the adoption of the European Commission's reports as a potential source of threat to Turkish national security. This was a period when the coalition government was internally split and hardliners both within and outside the military were vociferously making their discomfort with reforms such as those on broadcasting and education in mother tongue languages other than Turkish known. Although the military had expressed its indifference to the lifting of the death penalty – another very controversial reform Turkey was expected to adopt – there were many who were objecting to this on the grounds of national security too.

The standard accusations that the EU was a Christian Club that would never admit Turkey as a member and that the reforms that were being demanded aimed essentially at weakening Turkish national sovereignty and territorial integrity gained intensity. The campaign of the Eurosceptics included the hacking of the email messages of the European Commission representative Karen Fogg early in 2002. Many public figures supportive of membership who had communicated with her by email were branded as collaborators and traitors to Turkey and its independence. Yet, in spite of divisions within the coalition, at the end the government did succeed in receiving enough votes in the parliament to push through a critical reform package in August 2002 addressing the above as well as other sensitive issues. Support from pro-EU civil society groups ranging from TUSIAD, the Economic Development Foundation (IKV) to *ad hoc* groups such as the Europe Movement (*Avrupa Hareketi*) as well as media campaigns helped to mobilise the critical parliamentary margin that was needed to adopt these reforms. A powerfully pro-EU public opinion contributed to this outcome too. However, relations within the coalition making up the government became strained and eventually the government had to take the decision to hold an early election in November 2002.

The adoption of this reform package was critical because it actually went further than the reforms that had been envisaged in Turkey's first National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA). The role that civil society played can be better understood against this background. In most of the other candidate countries, the preparation of such a document was quite straight-forward and was completed within a matter of a few weeks. However, the preparation of the Turkish document dragged on until the end of

March 2001, months after the EU had adopted its Accession Partnership (AP) Strategy for Turkey. The government had to negotiate endlessly with different branches of the state in an effort to find an acceptable formulation for reforms, especially on the more sensitive issues such the lifting of the death penalty, expansion of freedom of expression and the introduction of cultural rights. A number of draft versions were prepared. The final version had fallen well short of expectations and of the AP itself.

The wording in the NPAA adopted for the critical reforms was very vague and ambiguous. A case in point was the lifting of capital punishment and introduction of cultural rights. The AP identified the removal of 'any legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in TV/radio broadcasting' and the need to ensure 'cultural diversity and guarantee of cultural rights for all citizens irrespective of their origin' as well as the need to 'abolish the death penalty, sign and ratify Protocol No. 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights' to meet the Copenhagen political criteria. The AP also called for the reduction of the influence of the military by noting the need to 'align the constitutional role of the National Security Council as an advisory body to the government in accordance with the practice of EU member states'. The NPAA was simply silent on the prospects of TV/radio broadcasting in 'mother tongue' languages other than Turkish and the reduction of the military's influence. Instead it noted that the official language of Turkey and that of education was Turkish. It did, though, add there could be no obstacles placed to the free use of other languages and dialects by people in their day-to-day lives. However, the NPAA did say that this freedom could not be used for the purposes of separatism. On capital punishment, the NPAA did not go beyond stating that the parliament would consider lifting it in the medium term and remained silent on the adoption of Protocol No. 6.[51] The August reform package went well beyond these restricted goals. It would be difficult to explain how the government and reformists were able to eventually see through the adoption of this critical reform package without including the role of civil society and the media. Civil society and the media played a crucial role in weakening the hold of the 'national security' discourse and priorities over one of the most critical issues concerning Turkey's future: membership of the EU. It is doubtful whether Turkey could have reached the point of 'sufficiently' meeting the Copenhagen political criteria without the adoption of the August package of reforms.

51. *Avrupa Müktesebatının Üstlenilmesine İlişkin Türkiye Ulusal Programı* (Ankara: Avrupa Birliği Genel Sekreterligi, 2001), pp. 7 and 11.

Cyprus can be considered to have been one of the most important issues – if not indeed *the* high politics issue – of Turkish foreign policy in the past couple of decades. During this period, Turkey's Cyprus policy had long been framed in a 'national security' context. The newly elected government led by AKP had included the resolution of the Cyprus problem in its party programme together with support for EU membership. The then Prime Minister, Abdullah Gül, and Tayyip Erdoğan, as the party leader, had toured EU member capitals and attended the Copenhagen European Council summit in December 2002. They had made it quite clear they intended to move forcefully on both the issue of Cyprus as well as on EU membership. In January 2003 the government was delivered a scathing warning and criticism (couched in national security language) by the Chief of Staff regarding their EU and Cyprus policies. The criticism was also accompanied by the military's concerns about the governing party's commitment to secularism. Özel, a leading analyst of Turkish politics writing at the time, noted that the military's remarks would be very representative of the formidable challenge that the government would face in office.[52] Yet, within exactly a year, the government had succeeded in winning the military over to their side on the issue of Cyprus and very much on the issue of the EU too. It would be difficult to offer a full account of such a dramatic turnabout without also taking into consideration the role that, again, civil society and the media played in the emergence of Turkey's 'new' Cyprus policy.

Preempting a solution over Cyprus had become a convenient tool in the hands of those who either did not wish to see Turkey progress along the path towards EU membership or simply resented the damage the reform process was inflicting on their interests. Cyprus was a particularly easy card to use as the plight of Turkish-Cypriots was always considered to be a national cause. Advocates of a solution in Cyprus easily risked finding themselves facing accusations that they wanted to sacrifice Cyprus for the personal benefits that would accrue from EU membership. The election to parliament of Tayyip Erdoğan, in a by-election in March 2003, and his popularity as Prime Minister, accompanied by the decisiveness with which he was able to push two sets of critical reforms through parliament, strengthened the hand of the government. The success in getting these reforms – one of which involved curtailing the powers of the military – adopted brought

52. Soli Özel, 'After the Tsunami', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 14, no. 2, April 2003, p. 92.

Turkey very close to meeting the Copenhagen political criteria. This was acknowledged by the European Commission in its regular progress report for 2003 as well as by the European Council summit in Rome in December. However, these encouraging signs from the EU were also accompanied by immense pressure on Turkey: it was made clear that the absence of a solution over Cyprus would severely complicate Turkey's prospects of getting a negotiating date in December 2004.[53] This weighed heavily on the government as well as on decision-makers within the state, including the military.

Yet civil society and the media had been doing its share too. The December 2002 and January 2003 Turkish-Cypriot demonstrations in support of a solution and EU membership were accompanied by an unprecedented public debate in Turkey on Cyprus. The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) had already initiated a series of brain-storming sessions on Cyprus that were attended by academics, journalists, retired diplomats and generals. TESEV also produced regular reports on Cyprus to inform public opinion and the media. These were accompanied by conferences at various universities; the most significant of these were probably those organised by Bahçeşehir University together with the East Mediterranean University in Northern Cyprus. These conferences became occasions for demonstrating the impossibility of continuing with the 'old' policy. TUSIAD also played a critical role. It too adopted position documents and its leadership made statements that were highly supportive of the need to look for a solution. TUSIAD also organised meetings in Northern Cyprus with the participation of business people and opinion leaders. The debate in the media became very critical in terms of questioning given assumptions and analysis about Cyprus. The public debate not only provided the possibility to air alternative ideas but also to legitimise the holding of such views without being automatically labelled a 'traitor'. The public saw prominent personalities from all walks of professional and business life, including former ministers, diplomats and generals, supporting a 'new' policy.

It is against this background that the government was able to respond to the outcome of the December 2003 elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The results of the elections indicated a bitterly divided island with a slight edge enjoyed by those who had run on a ticket that advocated a solution

53. For example, see the remarks by the European Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, Gunter Verheugen. 'Verheugen: Kararsızız', *Radikal*, 28 October 2003.

to the problem in Cyprus and EU membership. This opened the prospects for the government in Ankara to engage in a last-minute final attempt to lead an initiative to restart negotiations over the Annan Plan. The government by now not only had consolidated its power but had also acquired experience in mobilising support for a political initiative and additionally had the enormous advantage of an economy that was showing robust signs of a recovery. A combination of these factors enabled the government, in the course of January 2004, to skilfully negotiate a decision with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the military and the president's office, and also Rauf Denktaş, to revise Turkey's policy. The government had succeeded in persuading both the office of the President as well as the National Security Council to un equivocally support a solution on the island based on the Annan Plan.

Space precludes the possibility of offering other examples of cases where civil society has had at least some influence on outcomes with regard to 'high politics' issues. For example, non-governmental organisations have been a key element of the Greek-Turkish *rapprochement*. Civil groups were engaging each other even during the intense crisis between Greece and Turkey in 1996. A case in point was the manner in which both countries' national travel agency associations had come together to address the problem of the impact that the crisis would have on their business and the measures they would need to take to control the damage. Subsequently, once relations began to improve, contacts exploded. Civil society interactions came to be seen as of vital importance for consolidating the spirit of the *rapprochement* and resisting 'national security' based discourses. The EU played an important role by supporting civil society contacts between the two countries.[54] Business groups today have become important channels of communication for both governments but also constitute the basis on which both countries build their interdependence.

Business in general and business companies in particular are playing a growing role in shaping foreign policy. The influence of TUSIAD has already been highlighted. The Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) monitors Turkey's business and economic relations very closely and hosts 70 bilateral business councils. A cursory study of DEIK reports and statistics gives an insight into the growing influence of business on foreign policy. It is not only commercial relations that have been growing. Turkish companies in 2005 had obtained construction projects in 38

54. For a detailed analysis of this role, see Bahar Rumelili, 'Civil Society and the Europeanisation of Greek-Turkish Cooperation' *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1, March 2005.

55. Reported in *Milliyet*, 10 January 2006.

countries totalling 9.3 billion USD.[55] Turkish companies have also invested extensively abroad. Turkish foreign direct investment abroad as of October 2005 stood at more than 7.8 billion USD and these official figures do not include many small enterprises set up by Turkish investors in neighbouring countries and especially Russia.[56] Major Turkish holdings have bought factories and set up chains in these countries. A case in point is the Migros chain of supermarkets and shopping centres owned by Koç Holding that operates under the name of 'Ramstore' in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, the FYROM and Russia. In Russia alone the company has invested more than 250 million USD and operates 22 supermarkets and three shopping centres covering a surface of 300,000 square metres.[57] DEIK estimates that Turkish business investment in Russia amounts to 1.5 billion USD. These big companies and construction contractors displayed their influence when they were able to hold the inauguration of the Turkish Commerce Centre in Moscow with the participation of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and the Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, in January 2005.

The situation in northern Iraq and the prospects of an independent Kurdish state emerging has meant that the agenda of actors in Turkey has been dominated by a 'national security' discourse. If in the course of the last year the concerns about an independent Kurdish state and its implications for Turkish national security have somewhat diminished, business and civil society contacts deserve at least some credit. Business associations and groups have developed very close contacts in Iraq in general but in the north in particular. Business considerations motivate these players and consequently they seek dialogue. In this respect, the Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) has been a critical organisation that has enjoyed access to top Iraqi officials as well as Kurdish leaders. As will be discussed later on (see page 70), business interests played an important role in persuading the Turkish authorities to authorise flights over and from Turkey to northern Iraq. According to DEIK, in 2005 alone there were 86 Turkish companies that took up 109 new business projects worth 1.5 billion USD in Iraq. It is estimated that together with business that has not been reported this figure is more likely to be around 3.5 billion. Among the major projects that Turkish companies have completed in Iraq is the American Embassy, a number of highways, the Suleimania University, and the airport of Erbil.

56. Data obtained from the webpage of the Turkish Treasury, 'Sectoral breakdown of invesment revenues', www.hazine.gov.tr (consulted on 25-06-2006).

57. Information obtained from www.migros.com.tr/migros/magaza1_1.htm (8 April 2006).

Another example of the growing influence of Turkish business on Turkish foreign policy comes in the context of the Palestinian-Israel conflict. As part of its 'new' foreign policy the Turkish government has in many ways been aspiring to contribute to the resolution of this conflict and has, as will be discussed later, tried to even offer its mediation. This goes well beyond traditional Turkish foreign policy. One other novel aspect of Turkey's efforts is that Turkish business has tried to offer its services to that end. TOBB initiated a project centred around the management of the industrial park at the Erez crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal. TOBB was able to develop contacts with all parties including the Israeli government and the World Bank. It succeeded in mobilising the support of all the parties including the Israeli government. A prominent Turkish columnist, Murat Yetkin, commenting on these efforts, defined TOBB as the 'soft power' face of Turkey.[58] He also argued that Turkey's policy towards Iraq is being increasingly shaped by economic considerations and influence.[59]

The growth in the role of civil society with regard to 'low' as well as 'high politics' issues in Turkish foreign policy inevitably needs to be seen in the context of the broader civilianisation of Turkish politics in general. The current government has been successful in adopting a series of reforms that has reduced the influence that the military had traditionally enjoyed in Turkish politics. In this respect, the reorganisation of the composition of the National Security Council (NSC) in favour of civilian members and the appointment of a civilian Secretary General has been critical with regard to foreign policy-making. The NSC continues to be an important institution with regard to the definition of national security and interests. Civilians have become much more assertive and the change in policy on Cyprus and northern Iraq needs to be seen in that context. Furthermore, the government also appears to have succeeded in redressing the balance between what a leading Turkish political scientist calls the 'bureaucratic and military (state)' versus the 'political' elite.[60] Traditionally, and especially on critical security and foreign policy issues, the 'state' elite tended to enjoy greater influence while 'politicians' were considered to be too partisan and short-sighted to be able to defend and protect Turkey's national security and interests. This is changing and the reform of the NSC needs also to be seen in that context. This becomes critical to the understanding that the 'state' elite need

58. Murat Yetkin, 'Hisarciklioğlu ile Israil'e uçuyorduk', *Radikal*, 11 November 2005.

59. Murat Yetkin, 'Yeni Irak-Kürt siyaseti şekilleniyor', *Radikal*, 3 November 2005.

60. Metin Heper, 'The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey and Germany Compared', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1992.

not necessarily have the sole monopoly of knowledge and expertise in foreign policy-making. This offers prospects for more 'democratic' foreign policy-making and hence in turn for a greater role for the public and civil society. In that sense the government in its foreign policy- making is becoming more sensitive and receptive to inputs from circles outside and beyond the 'state' elite.

The current government and foreign policy

This development of civilianisation is critical to understanding many aspects of the 'new' foreign policy as it affects key issues ranging from Cyprus to northern Iraq and the Middle East. Without this civilianisation, it would be difficult to understand how the concerns of civil society, business circles and the media would have prevailed over traditional national security concerns on Cyprus, for example. Nevertheless, the current AKP government has also brought its own flair to Turkish foreign policy. At least three characteristics of the current government's foreign policy approach can be highlighted. The first one can best be described as a willingness to be proactive and take risks. These are clearly two qualities that are difficult to associate with traditional Turkish foreign policy. In a classic article, Malik Mufti points out how Turkey has traditionally been known as a *status quo* power in foreign policy, preferring 'caution' to 'daring' action.[61] Turkish decision-makers and diplomats too have been known to prefer to adhere to well-established ways of conducting business rather than take risks. This aspect of traditional Turkish foreign policy is sometimes highlighted as one of the reasons for the many bilateral and unresolved problems that Turkey has had to live with. In contrast, this government has been much keener to be 'daring' in addressing and attempting to resolve entrenched bilateral conflicts. The turnabout in Turkey's Cyprus policy is probably the most obvious example of a 'daring' initiative on an otherwise extremely entrenched policy issue. In developing a 'new' policy on Cyprus, the government demonstrated its ability to overcome the massive resistance to change through dialogue and debate. This policy has also been frequently referred to as 'being one step ahead of the others'.

Another example occurs with regard to the Armenian question. Turkey has long faced the challenge of calls for it to recognise the Armenian genocide from a wide body of actors ranging from the

61. Malik Mufti, 'Daring and caution in Turkish foreign policy', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 52, no. 1, Winter 1998.

European Parliament to various EU member country parliaments as well as local legislative assemblies. Traditionally, these calls have met with bitter and sternly defensive Turkish reactions. Yet, in March 2005 the government initiated a policy advocating the idea of the setting up of an international commission of historians to study the issue of the Armenian genocide. Both the government as well as the opposition expressed their determination to have the issue debated in all its dimensions. This was a major departure from the standard established position of brushing the issue aside. The Prime Minister, during the OSCE summit in May 2005, went as far as announcing publicly that he would consider himself bound by whatever conclusion such a commission would reach.[62] His efforts to convince the Armenian government to support the initiative subsequently failed. However, what is striking is that this government was willing to take an initiative on as difficult a topic as the Armenian genocide. This was also reflected in the readiness and willingness both of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to support the holding of a controversial academic conference on the Armenian problem. The conference, which was initially going to be held in May, was cancelled as a result of nationalist pressures. Subsequently, a local court unsuccessfully attempted to stop the conference from being held in September 2005. The conference became the first public occasion when all views on the Armenian issue were aired, including the idea that what had happened to the Armenians in 1915 was a genocide. A newspaper in its headline the next morning declared 'the word "genocide" has been pronounced but the world has not come to an end'.[63]

A second salient characteristic of this government's approach to foreign policy is to address and attempt to resolve bilateral problems and actively develop closer relations with neighbouring countries. It has already been pointed out that Turkey was notorious for its bilateral conflicts. Yet, starting especially from the very late 1990s a dialogue with Greece and Syria had already emerged. An important distance has already been covered with regard to normalising Turkey's relations with these countries. However, what is interesting in terms of Turkey's 'new' policy is that the government has actually adopted a policy that it has referred to as 'zero-problems with neighbours'.[64] In that context, the government instigated regular high-level meetings with the governments of neighbouring countries as well as encouraging the development of closer cultural, economic and social relations. The minis-

62. *Radikal*, 16 May 2005.

63. 'Soykırım bile dendi, dünya hala dönüyor', *Radikal*, 25 September 2005.

64. This policy has been referred to on numerous occasions by Abdulah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the chief foreign policy advisor of the Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu; for an articulation of this idea see Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Türkiye merkez ülke olmali', *Radikal*, 26 February 2004.

ter responsible for trade and economic relations, Kürsat Tüzmen, has been particularly visible in this context. He has very closely cooperated with Turkish companies as well as business associations and chambers to expand economic relations. In this case too there have been efforts to improve relations with Armenia even if a major breakthrough has not been achieved regarding opening the border between the two countries. Nevertheless, direct flights between Istanbul and Yerevan have been permitted as well as the possibility of Armenian nationals entering Turkey on a facilitated visa arrangement. Similar observations can also be made about Iraq and Kurdish-populated northern Iraq with regard to efforts to expand economic and social relations in spite of lingering concerns about the future status of northern Iraq and the presence of the PKK.

The third and possibly most visible aspect of Turkey's current government's 'new' foreign policy is a growing shift away from seeing the world from the perspective of 'win-lose' to 'win-win' games. It has already been mentioned that traditional Turkish foreign policy thinking very much saw international relations from the perspective of *realpolitik* and power struggles. It is not that 'win-win' thinking did not exist in Turkish foreign policy at all. It did, but it was often limited to low politics issues and it acquired some prominence in the high politics context only during Turgut Özal's leadership. Even then it had a very limited impact on overall Turkish foreign policy. Hence the introduction and the first widespread appearance of the term 'win-win' in the context of the Cyprus problem was very telling of the changes occurring in Turkish foreign policy – especially considering that the decades-old 'no solution is the solution' policy on Cyprus was precisely based on a 'win-lose' approach to the problem. In the context of such an emotionally-charged issue as the Cyprus problem it was very interesting to see the manner in which the Prime Minister and in particular Abdullah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in numerous public and television appearances actually emphasised the need to find a 'win-win' solution on the island. This was also accompanied by a language and discourse quite different from what the public had until then been accustomed to hear. Unlike in the past, Turkish officials and government leaders began to replace terms such as 'them', the 'others' or even the 'enemy' with simply 'Greek-Cypriots' and/or 'partners' when expressing opinion or preferences about finding a 'win-win' outcome to the conflict on the island.

The 'win-win' approach has not been limited to the Cyprus problem. Today, the idea of 'win-win' thinking is becoming part of a common discourse with regard to a wide range of issues on Turkey's foreign policy agenda. Most recently, the government lifted its veto against the inclusion of Armenia in 'Euro-control' governing flights over the European airspace.[65] The departure from established policy was explained by the authorities as a 'win-win' agreement reached with the Armenians who promised that they would not use a veto against Azerbaijan's eventual membership in the future. Similarly, the Turkish government softened its position towards the participation of the Greek Cypriots in NATO meetings. The media reported that the government had accepted the Greek-Cypriots' informal participation at the NATO meeting in Sofia late in April and that the Turkish Foreign Minister would be seated together with the Greek-Cypriot Foreign Minister at dinner.[66] Interestingly, this development coincided with reports in the Greek media that Condoleezza Rice, who had just visited Turkey and was attending the NATO meeting in Sofia, would be initiating efforts to avoid a crisis erupting in the autumn over the failure of Turkey to implement the Additional Protocol (AP) fully and open up its harbours to Greek-Cypriot shipping.[67]

The examples that were elaborated earlier on in the context of the involvement of civil society in respect to cooperation on combating trafficking, extending protection for asylum seekers and the resolution of the 'fruit and vegetable insect crisis' with Russia are all typical manifestations of the 'win-win' approach to resolution of conflicts. As was pointed out earlier on, the notion of a 'win-win' approach in Turkish foreign policy had been gaining ground since Syria was coerced into expelling Abdullah Öcalan in October 1998.

65. *Cumhuriyet*, 8 March 2006.
66. *Radikal*, 27 April 2006.
67. *Radikal*, 1 May 2006.

Turkish viewpoints on foreign policy issues

Against this background of transformation, Turkish decision-makers face a number of foreign policy challenges. One such challenge concerns the management of Turkish accession talks at a time when resistance to Turkish membership in the EU is increasing and the Turkish public's confidence in the EU's ability to meet its word is falling fast. Relations with Greece and the Cyprus problem constitute additional challenges. The Middle East in general, the situation in Iraq (especially in northern Iraq) as well as Israeli-Palestinian relations in particular are issues that the government and public in Turkey are following closely. The crisis over Iran's nuclear programme and possible nuclear weapon ambitions is a pressing issue that is especially taxing on foreign policy-makers in Turkey. This crisis impacts directly on US-Turkish relations which have been going through a difficult period for some time and coincides with Turkish reluctance to support US policy towards Syria. Relations with the US are also closely related to the current government's ambitions to play a role in transforming the Muslim world and even promote a 'dialogue' between the West and the Muslim world.

Relations with the EU

Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge and issue facing Turkey today is EU membership. In many ways, almost all the other issues are linked to this in one way or another. Membership prospects have been an important agent of change for Turkey. The relationship with the EU will continue to have an important impact on the substance and style of Turkish foreign policy. The trends that were identified in the previous chapters are likely to continue if Turkey's EU membership prospects remain on course.

Turkey has proven that it can change and reform itself to meet the Copenhagen criteria. In spite of a series of problems that erupted during the course of 2005, especially concerning freedom

of expression, the government appears committed to see through the implementation of political reforms. However, from the government's point of view, one of the greatest challenges in EU-Turkish relations will be how to manage the Turkish public's deep-seated mistrust of the EU in the coming years. The Turkish public in general is very supportive of membership and is cognizant of the positive changes that have taken place over the last few years. There is considerable recognition of the role that the EU has had in this change. However, the public at the same time has very little trust in the EU. Numerous surveys have shown that Turkish public opinion overwhelmingly believes that the EU will not admit Turkey as a member even if Turkey meets all the Copenhagen criteria. This view was reinforced by the events that occurred and the discourse used especially in Turko-sceptic circles during the run-up to the December 2004 European Council summit and the October 2005 Council meeting concerning accession talks.

Some analysts have even attributed some of the nationalist backlash in Turkey and the indictments accusing Orhan Pamuk, a prominent Turkish writer, and others of slander against the Turkish nation to the humiliation that the public has experienced as a result of this discourse.[68] This mistrust was also reflected in the manner in which the 'Accession Negotiation Framework' was dissected by the Turkish media for evidence of wording suggesting double standards towards Turkey and reluctance on the part of the EU to eventually admit Turkey as a member. Hence, it is no wonder that emphasis was put on the document's reference to the fact that 'negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand' rather than to the pledge that 'the shared objectives of the negotiations is accession'. A very recent public opinion survey has shown that 63.1 per cent of the Turkish public remains supportive of membership and 58 percent considers membership to be useful. Yet, at the same time, half of the public (50.3 per cent) surveyed believes that the EU aims to harm Turkey by aspiring to divide it up.[69] It is not surprising that in April 2006 after the widespread disturbances in Diyarbakır and elsewhere in Kurdish-populated southeastern Turkey, the media was filled with analysis blaming these disturbances on the EU's and the United States' intentions to undermine Turkey's territorial integrity.

Managing this distrust is going to be very critical for the government both in the short and long term. In the short term, it will com-

68. Philip Gordon and Ömer Taşpınar, 'Turkey on the Brink', *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2006, p. 57. In this paper the authors have highlighted how the public in Turkey has been feeling frustrated with the European discourse on Turkey and attributed some of the rise in nationalism in Turkey to this phenomenon.

69. 'Türkiye Milliyetçilik Araştırması', *Tempo* (Weekly), no. 957, 6 April 2006, pp. 26-7.

plicate the politics of the implementation of the Additional Protocol in a manner that would allow Greek-Cypriot' ships and aircraft access to Turkish harbours and airports. The government adopted the Additional Protocol in July 2005 to extend the application of the customs union between the EU and Turkey to the new member countries. However, so far it has resisted extending its implementation to Cyprus in spite of tremendous EU pressure, including threats of suspension of accession talks. In June 2004 the EU had promised the adoption of three sets of directives to ensure an end to the isolation of the Turkish-Cypriot community from the international community in return for their support for the Annan Plan. The directive concerning the movement of people between the north and the south of the island was put into place relatively easily. However, the EU subsequently experienced great difficulties in adopting the remaining directives due to Cypriot government resistance. In February 2006 the EU finally did adopt the directive promising financial assistance, while the one promising the lifting of the trade embargo on the north remains blocked. In the meantime, the government feels very much trapped between Turkish public opinion that feels the EU is failing to deliver on its promises and EU pressure to normalise relations with Cyprus soon. This stalemate could indeed lead to a crisis in the autumn when the European Commission will have to report on progress in respect to the implementation of the Additional Protocol in general and towards Cyprus in particular. Accordingly the accession negotiations could risk being suspended. A first taste of this crisis was experienced in June when Cyprus tried to block the opening and closing of the first chapter in the accession negotiations. The crisis was eventually overcome but in the meantime the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan said he did not care if the accession negotiations were to stop over the issue of the opening of Turkish harbours and airports to Greek-Cypriot vessels and aircraft.

In terms of the long run, the government will be facing two important challenges with regard to budgetary developments in the EU and the resistance to Turkish membership in European public opinion. It is generally recognised that budgetary problems in the EU will complicate the possibility of Turkey receiving the kinds of pre-accession funds that the previous round of candidate countries enjoyed. Without such funds it will be much more difficult for the government to mobilise the public support that will be necessary for pushing through costly administrative, economic and technical reforms. This in turn may slow and complicate

Turkey's efforts to harmonise many of its policies with those of the European *acquis*. The requirement highlighted in the Negotiation Framework for Turkey that certain 'benchmarks' will have to be met for opening and closing chapters will strain the government's relations with the public. In turn, the opposition will probably be inclined to abuse these developments and fuel the already high-level of general mistrust among the public towards the EU.

In the long term the government will also have to develop a strategy to address the issue of European public opinion that is hostile to Turkey. In this respect three issues will probably become important: (i) the issue of the potential movement of Turkish labour to especially older EU member countries; (ii) the cost of Turkey to the European Union and (iii) cultural identity issues. These are all very tough and controversial issues that fuel resistance towards Turkish membership in the European Union. The Negotiation Framework document actually introduces a number of provisions to address these three issues. Firstly, it provides for the possibility for member states to introduce safeguards to prevent or restrict free movement of Turkish labour. Furthermore, the Framework pushes membership prospects, if membership is indeed ever going to happen, to beyond 2014. Secondly, the overall cost of integrating Turkey remains a highly contested issue. Many in Europe consider Turkey to be just too poor. This, accompanied by the views of those who argue that culturally Turkey is not European and is just too different, accounts very much for the reference to the 'open ended' nature of negotiations. Thirdly, though, the Framework does attribute importance to developing an intensive political and civil society dialogue to improve mutual understanding and ensuring greater support of European citizens. Lastly, of course, the government and the EU will need to manage the tensions that will arise from constant efforts on the part of those opposed to Turkish membership to raise the issue of a 'privileged relationship' with Turkey in place of membership. So far, the Council as well as the European Parliament has not granted any official status to such an option. Attempts to introduce this option to the Negotiation Framework and to reports by the European Parliament have been thwarted. However, the issue is likely to regularly come up and strain not only EU-Turkish relations but also the government's relations with the public in Turkey.

It is difficult to say what exactly the strategy of the government in respect to these issues is going to be, other than to note that the

government frequently reiterates its commitment to EU membership. So far, all the evidence is that the government has been participating in the screening process with goodwill and competence. At the same time in April 2006 the government announced that it aimed to adopt another package of reforms on outstanding issues with regard to a full implementation of the Copenhagen criteria. These developments continue to suggest that the government remains firmly behind its commitment to the accession process and membership. Nevertheless, the confrontation between the EU and Turkey in June over the issue of the extension of the Additional Protocol to Cyprus and the posture that the Prime Minister and his Minister of Foreign Affairs have taken suggests that the government intends to take a tough stand on the issue at least until the national elections in 2007. Yet all the indications are that the government and state establishment will continue to seek full membership and full enjoyment of the four freedoms associated with the EU, accompanied by a categorical refusal of the idea of a 'privileged relationship'. In this context, the Turkish Prime Minister has on numerous occasions forcefully expressed the unacceptability of any arrangement that falls short of full membership. It will be remembered that on 3 October 2005 Abdullah Gül refused to board his plane until it was quite clear that in the Negotiation Framework there was no wording alluding to such an outcome. However, the issue of what is to be done about European public opinion and cultural resistance to Turkey is a matter that does not easily lend itself to an answer. It would be unrealistic to expect a comprehensive and detailed grand strategy from the government. The best that the government will be able to do is to continue to emphasise the centrality attributed to EU membership and continue to reflect this in its domestic as well as foreign policies. It is likely that civil society, and especially leading Turkish non-governmental organisations, as well as companies, will become active in campaigns aiming to influence European public opinion. A number of such campaigns have already been launched by leading big businesses in Turkey.

Greece and Cyprus

An area where the government's commitment to eventual EU membership is most conspicuously reflected is Turkey's relations

with Greece and the Cyprus problem. Turkey's approach to relations with Greece and the problem of Cyprus cannot be seen independently of EU-Turkish relations. It is doubtful whether there would have been the same kind of improvement in Greek-Turkish relations and a turnaround in Turkey's Cyprus policy without the EU. It also seems that it would be unrealistic to expect a return to the 'old' Turkish foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus as long as Turkey's membership prospects remain real. This does not however mean that the bilateral conflicts that have long dominated Greek-Turkish relations have completely been resolved. Paradoxically, most of them remain in place. Disputes over the limits of territorial waters and air space in the Aegean Sea, the delineation of the continental shelf and the rights of minority communities have not been resolved. Bilateral exploratory talks have been going on for some time quietly. However, no major breakthrough has been publicly announced even if there is speculation that considerable distance has been covered, but for mostly domestic political considerations this is not publicly mentioned. Hardcore security issues and conflicts, such as violations of air-space or territorial waters and dustups between the navies and air forces of both countries, appear not to dominate the bilateral agenda or when they do arise are quietly resolved or put on the back burner. A case in point was the accident that took place between a Greek aircraft and a Turkish plane in May 2006 over the Aegean Sea. The leadership as well as the media of both countries chose to deal with the accident in a coolheaded manner and the overall relationship did not seem to have been affected in spite of the loss of both aircraft and the Greek pilot.

Instead, what seems to be happening right now is that civil society in both countries is increasingly able to dominate and shape relations between the two countries as societal and economic relations continue to grow and deepen. Trade between Greece and Turkey increased more than fourfold between 1995 and 2005.[70] A similar fourfold increase in the number of Greeks visiting Turkey was recorded.[71] The news in the media with regard to Greek-Turkish relations is more often than not dominated by reports concerning commercial deals and cultural and societal contacts rather than hardcore security issues and conflicts. This growing interdependence is likely to continue to tie the two countries closer to each other. One school of thought advocates that as this interdependence increases, the bilateral disputes will either lose their 'salience' or will become easier to resolve. Another school of

70. See Annex III.

71. Almost 550,000 Greek citizens entered Turkey in 2005 compared to 125,000 in 1995. Updated figures from Kirişci, 2005, op. cit.

thought, on the other hand, argues that as long as the disputes are not resolved they will be like a festering wound that will be open to political exploitation and abuse in both countries. Furthermore, there are also those who argue that the Helsinki European Council summit decisions as well as various other EU documents make it clear that outstanding bilateral conflicts have to be resolved before Turkey's accession, including of course the conflicts with Greece.

The absence of any substantive progress in the resolution of outstanding bilateral conflicts between the two countries nevertheless does have some negative consequences. One such example was the decision of the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Karamanlis, to postpone his planned visit to Turkey in 2005. However, this did not prevent the Prime Ministers of both countries from meeting on a bridge on the border between the two countries in July 2005 to inaugurate a natural gas pipeline project and reiterate their commitment to increased contacts. Similarly, the fact that the visit of General Yasar Büyükanit, the Commander of land forces in Turkey – the first ever of its kind – to Athens in June 2005 went ahead two months after a highly publicised crisis in Greek-Turkish relations that involved the destruction of the Turkish flag at a Greek military school attended by Turkish officers, has been considered a sign of how much relations between the two countries have evolved over the last few years. Both sides during this crisis were able to manage the incident without resorting to any inflammatory nationalist and confrontationist language and without jeopardising the General's visit. The General's visit received considerable media coverage and Büyükanit on his return to Turkey noted that they were received with great hospitality and added that he believed 'soldiers can also make peace'.[72] Both militaries agreed to intensify their relations, organise visits and student exchanges, and also develop a direct line between two major air bases to prevent 'dog fights' over the Aegean Sea. The media reported that these contacts, confidence-building measures and direct lines of communication helped to prevent the accident involving two fighter planes in May 2006 from escalating into a crisis. The Foreign Affairs ministers of both countries held a meeting early in June and adopted eight additional confidence-building measures to avoid repetition of such crises.

It is likely that Turkish foreign policy towards Greece will maintain its current trend. Turkish businesses are keen to expand

72. *Radikal*, 24 June 2005.

economic and commercial relations, as are their Greek counterparts. The acquisition of a Turkish bank by the National Bank of Greece in April 2006 and the emphasis that both sides put on business considerations rather than political ones driving the decision is very revealing about the future of Greek-Turkish relations. Interdependence between both countries will visibly deepen when ongoing construction of the natural gas pipeline between the two countries is completed. Two political issues that have somewhat soured relations may also be ripe for a breakthrough. Greece has for some time been demanding the opening of the Halki Seminary of the Greek Patriarchy in Istanbul, which has remained closed since the early 1970s. The Turkish state establishment does not appear to particularly object to its opening and the National Security Council removed the opening of the Halki Seminary from its list of threats to Turkish national security in its meeting in October 2005.[73] However, a political decision appears to be stalled as the Turkish side is seeking a reciprocal breakthrough concerning the rights of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace. The opening of the Seminary also affects an internal matter concerning secularism in Turkey and restrictions on religious schooling.

Another issue of concern for Greece has long been the Turkish position that an extension of Greek territorial waters to 12 nautical miles would constitute a *casus belli*. In July 1997, in an early effort to improve relations between the two countries, both sides had adopted the 'Madrid Document'. In this document, Greece promised not to adopt any measures that would change the *status quo* in the Aegean Sea and in return Turkey promised not to use force or the threat of force. In this context the Greek government has long demanded a repudiation of the *casus belli* policy. In June 2005 the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, Bülent Arinç, did raise the need to revise this policy and announced that contrary to general belief the Parliament had not actually adopted a formal decision supportive of this policy back in June 1995. Even if the Speaker's opinion is receiving growing support, it appears that the military has insisted that the policy should remain as an option.[74]

On the other hand, what happens in Cyprus is likely to have an important bearing on Greek-Turkish relations. The current government appears to be pretty much committed to finding a solution on the island and seeing through its eventual reunification. Now that the policy change has taken place there is even a certain amount of impatience about this outcome. Furthermore, major

73. The news was leaked to the media after the National Security Council adopted Turkey's new secret 'National Security Policy Document', *Radikal*, 26 October 2005.

74. On the Speaker's remarks, see *Hürriyet*, 8 June 2005 as well as the column by Murat Yetkin, 'Meclis Başkani diş siyaset konuşmaz mı?', *Radikal*, 8 June 2005. For the military's objections and insistence that it be included in the 'National Security Policy Document', see *Radikal*, 26 October 2005.

business interest groups as well as public opinion seem to be behind the current policy. Most importantly, the NSC re-endorsed this policy as late as early January 2006. Nevertheless, Turkey faces two challenges in respect to Cyprus. One is that the current government of Tasos Papadopoulos in Cyprus has not been forthcoming in supporting UN efforts to reunify the island. Instead, it has been trying to Europeanise the problem. Turkey is dead against this policy for two reasons. Firstly, Turkey is not a member of the EU and hence is painfully aware what this would mean in terms of the politics of finding a solution to the problem on the island. Secondly, it fears that those member countries that are against Turkish membership would actually hide behind Cyprus to obstruct Turkish accession. Turkish diplomats as well as some politicians have had long years of first-hand experience of how Greece's position with regard to EU-Turkish relations was exploited by some member countries throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

This is complicated by the fact that Greece has not been as forthcoming as the Turkish side had expected in pressurising the current Cypriot government to support a negotiated settlement under UN auspices. Furthermore, this is complicated by the Turkish government's failure to achieve a major breakthrough in softening the international isolation of Turkish Cypriots. As pointed out earlier on, in Turkey there was an expectation that the Turkish Cypriots would actually be compensated for the rejection of the Annan Plan by financial assistance and direct trade regulations. Greece has preferred to play a low-key role in the politics surrounding these two regulations. Even though the financial protocol was finally adopted, it fell short of Turkish expectations but no progress was achieved in making direct trade with the north of the island possible. The government has linked progress in these areas to extending the Additional Protocol to Cyprus and opening Turkish harbours and airports to Cypriot vessels and aircraft. The position that the Greek government takes here becomes critical, as many in Turkey had hoped that especially the new Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakonyani would take a position that would be more sympathetic to Turkey.[75] The statements by Bakonyani during her visit to Cyprus in April 2006 that the Annan Plan is 'history' and that Turkey should open its harbours and airports to Greek-Cypriot vessels and aircraft suggests that the Turkish government will be very much on its own in facing mounting EU pres-

75. These hopes were actually reflected in an article by a Greek academic at a Turkish university: Ioannis Grigoriadis, 'Kibris sorununa 'kadin eli' değecek', *Radikal*, 18 February 2006.

sure to implement the Additional Protocol fully. This will leave the government vulnerable to criticism by hardliners and the opposition for having compromised on Cyprus without bringing about any significant improvement in the lives of Turkish-Cypriots. This naturally will make the opening of the harbours and airports to Cypriots difficult and may not happen before national elections in Turkey scheduled for 2007. This also explains the hardening of the position of the Prime Minister on this issue mentioned earlier on. In May 2006 there were media reports in Turkey, subsequent to a meeting between Karamanlis and Erdoğan in Thessalonica, that Erdoğan had sought his Greek counterpart's support for postponing the issue until after the elections in Turkey.

Relations with the Middle East

The most turbulent region neighbouring Turkey is undoubtedly the Middle East. The region as a whole and Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbours in particular present both opportunities as well as major challenges for Turkey. The nature of Turkey's relations with the Middle East has changed substantially since the mid-1990s. The EU's engagement of Turkey and the AKP government's profile have played an important role in this. The Arab Middle East is much keener to have closer relations with Turkey than in the past. As will be discussed in more detail later on, many reformists in the Arab world increasingly see Turkey as an example from which to draw lessons. There is also growing interest in developing closer economic relations. Gulf states have shown themselves to be particularly keen to invest in Turkish real estate. Egypt and Syria have recently signed free trade agreements with Turkey and trade is on a modest upward trend.[76] The general expectation is that trade will especially increase between Syria and Turkey. In contrast to the years when Turgut Özal had aspired to a mediatory role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the mid-1990s when the Arab world bitterly criticised Turkey for its close relations with Israel, the Arab world seems more receptive to such a role. There are indeed calls coming from the Arab world for Turkey to play such a role in Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian relations.

The controversy over the visit of the Hamas leader Khaled Mashal to Turkey early in February 2006 needs to be seen from this perspective. However, this visit also showed the limitations that

76. See Annex III.

Turkey faces in this regard. The visit provoked bitter criticism from Israel and the United States. Israeli-Turkish relations currently lack the intimacy that characterised them in the mid-1990s. However, today these relations are much more balanced. In the past they were dominated by the military sector. In contrast, it is economics that dominates these relations today. Trade is booming, especially since the signing of a free trade agreement in 1996. Trade increased almost sixfold, the highest increase in Turkish trade with countries of the region, from around 350 million USD to almost 2 billion USD in 2005.[77] Israeli investments in Turkey are increasing while Turkish companies are becoming involved in major construction projects in Israel. Trade and business rather than military considerations have become much more important elements of Israeli-Turkish relations. At the same time Israeli-Turkish relations have also gone through a number of crises. In April 2004 there was the crisis when the Turkish Prime Minister accused Israel of employing state terror against innocent Palestinian civilians. This was accompanied by an uproar over Israeli presence in northern Iraq and assistance to Kurdish *pesmerghas*.[78] Nevertheless, the two countries were able to overcome their differences and both the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül, as well as Tayyip Erdoğan subsequently visited Israel. The newly appointed Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Livni, made her first visit to Turkey late in May 2006. The media extensively reported how, despite their differences, on certain issues Livni and her Turkish counterpart Gül were on very relaxed and friendly terms. It also should not be overlooked that both Erdoğan and Gül, not to mention various members of the AKP, have on numerous occasions pointed out, including to Khaled Mashal, that Israel has the right to exist and that violence against Israel is unacceptable. The fact that this comes from public figures with an Islamic background carries paramount importance in terms of the impact on the Muslim world. There is a huge difference between such remarks being made by typical secularist leaders in Turkey compared to members of the AKP who are democratically elected but willing to operate within the bounds of a western democratic and secular regime. This also would at least partly account for the success that the AKP government had in bringing the Israeli and Pakistani ministers of foreign affairs to Ankara in an attempt to mediate the establishment of relations between the two countries. The AKP and its leadership's position

77. See Annex III.

78. For an in-depth analysis of these issues, see Mustafa Kibaroğlu, 'Clash of Interest Over Northern Iraq Drives Turkish-Israeli Alliance to a Crossroads', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 59, no. 2, Spring 2005.

on Israel is also in stark contrast with the discourse of Necmettin Erbakan and his Welfare Party on Israel.[79]

The Palestinian problem however will continue to cast a dark shadow on Israeli-Turkish relations. Turkey has a long tradition of close relations with the Palestinians and was actually one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the PLO. It was the Madrid peace process and the prospects of peace between the Palestinians and Israelis with the adoption of the Oslo Accords that had opened the door for the development of closer relations with Israel in the mid-1990s. In contrast, the collapse of the peace process and the ensuing violence have deeply marked public opinion in Turkey, which greatly empathises with the Palestinians. Hence, undoubtedly, pro-Palestinian sympathies, which are particularly strong among AKP constituencies, partly account for the occasional brush-ups with Israel and also for the visit of Khaled Mashal. This factor also explains this government's enthusiasm for playing a mediatory role between Israelis and Palestinians. This runs against the traditional sobriety of the foreign policy-making establishment with respect to Turkey's capacity and capability to mediate between Israelis and Palestinians. Clearly, Israelis do not foresee such a role for Turkey, nor do they seek it.[80] Traditionally, Turkey's role has been more of a messenger between the two parties rather than a mediator. Yet, as long as the government continues to feel pressure from public opinion and especially the rank and file in the AKP in support of the Palestinian cause, the government will continue to aspire to a mediatory role. The government's aspirations to play a role in a 'intercivilisational dialogue' (to be examined in greater detail further on) will supplement this pressure. In the meantime the Palestinian issue will also remain a major obstacle preventing Israeli-Turkish relations from living up to their full economic, social and political potential.

The future of Iraq

One of the greatest foreign policy challenges that face Turkey is undoubtedly the future of Iraq. During the course of the last two decades, Turkey had difficult relations with Saddam Hussein's regime and had actually also been a target of a number of outright military threats in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War as well as in the late 1990s. Nevertheless, Iraq was an important

79. See p. 88 for an analysis of Erbakan's discourse.

80. At a meeting on 10 April 2006 with a group of academics and journalists, Dan Schueftan, Deputy Director of the Centre for National Security Studies at the University of Haifa and consultant to Israeli prime ministers, stated in a very frank and unequivocal manner that Turkey should just not get involved in any mediation exercise. Alon Liel, a former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel and a member of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs with past postings in Turkey, at a seminar organised by the Bogaziçi University-TUSIAD Foreign Policy Forum on 'The future of Iraq and Israeli-Turkish relations' (26 October 2004) had taken a similar view but had underlined the importance of Turkey's involvement as a go-between and also underlined the importance of the role that for example Turkish business could play in helping Palestinians to revive their economy after the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

economic partner until UN embargos were imposed. Even if during this period a certain degree of border trade was tolerated, this trade never reached the levels reminiscent of the period before the UN embargos. The situation was further aggravated because shrinking trade levels exacerbated the dire economic conditions in a problematic Kurdish-populated part of Turkey. It is generally considered that these economic conditions did aggravate the violence that characterised the southeast of Turkey during the 1990s and helped to mobilise support for the PKK.

The American intervention in Iraq and the ensuing chaos came just at a time when both the politics and economics of the southeast had started to visibly improve. The PKK had laid down its arms, and the Turkish government was introducing political reforms promising greater rights for the Kurdish population of the area. The southeast seemed to be fast returning to a degree of normalcy that it had probably never experienced. Instead, the security situation in the southeast started to deteriorate after the PKK's decision in 2004 to take up arms again. Many officials in Turkey attribute these developments to the chaos in Iraq and the PKK's ability to operate from northern Iraq with impunity. One major challenge for Turkey remains how to deal with the PKK at a time, unlike in the 1990s, when Turkey is unable to mount operations against the bases of the PKK in northern Iraq and is also unable to ensure the cooperation of either the Americans or the Iraqi government against the PKK. The government has been able to avert pressures to allow military intervention against the PKK in northern Iraq with considerable difficulty. The fact that it is widely recognised that such an intervention risks jeopardising Turkey's relations with the EU brings an additional complication that the government has to deal with. The issue became particularly sensitive in April 2006 when the Turkish military amassed troops in the southeast, especially along the Iraqi border. The issue came up during Condoleezza Rice's visit and was used by the Turkish side to demonstrate once more to the US Turkey's determination to stop PKK terrorism. However, as of early July 2006 Turkey was continuing to refrain from mounting a major cross-border military operation against PKK bases.

Another related challenge for Turkey is Iraq's territorial integrity. Those in Turkey who had advocated a policy supportive of the American request to use Turkish territory to open a northern front against Saddam Hussein had argued that this would

allow Turkey a say in the process that would shape the future of Iraq. This position very much reflected the concern and fear that an American intervention would inevitably, by design or by default, lead to the disintegration of Iraq and the emergence of an independent Kurdish state in the north. They expected this would lead to irredentist demands on the part of Kurds in northern Iraq and separatist demands from Turkey's own Kurds, thus throwing Turkey's own territorial integrity into doubt. This fear was aggravated by the fact that Turkey had just defeated the PKK and was finally entering into some degree of normalisation. These scenarios have also been fuelled by the 'Sèvres phobia' mentioned earlier on. Paradoxically, this concern and fear about Iraq's disintegration and the dire consequences for Turkey is widespread among the general public, including among those who had supported the infamous March 2003 parliamentary bill that denied the US any access to Turkish territory.

Fascinatingly, Turkey is learning to deal with this challenge against all odds. The concern about the territorial integrity of Iraq had played a central role in the adoption of a second parliamentary bill during the summer of 2003 that authorised the government to send troops into northern Iraq ostensibly to assist American forces to maintain order and achieve stability in Iraq. The bill had provoked massive anti-Turkish demonstrations among the Kurds of Iraq and many members of the provisional government of Iraq made it quite clear that Turkish troops would not be welcomed. In the autumn of 2003, the government decided not to make use of this bill when US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, announced that the US after all would not need Turkish military support. Yet, the idea and advocacy of a military intervention into northern Iraq persisted. A number of 'red lines' were formulated which, if crossed, would call for such an intervention. These ranged from the emergence of a separate Kurdish entity in the north, whether in a federated or independent manner, the annexation of the city of Kerkük with its rich oil reserves into such a Kurdish entity and the protection of the Turkmen communities in northern Iraq.[81] It was generally assumed and believed that the Turkmen were persecuted by the Kurds and that the Turkmen did indeed seek protection against such persecution. Actually, as the author of an important report on Iraq noted: 'Turkey's Iraqi policy for a long time had an ethnic characteristic focusing on the Turkmen as a counter-balance to the Kurds'.[82]

81. On these 'red lines', see Mustafa Kibaroğlu, op. cit. For an early and powerful defence of a policy of the 'red lines', see Ümit Özdağ, *Türkiye-PKK ve Kuzey Irak* (Ankara: Avrasya Dosyası Yayınları, 1999). For a criticism of 'red lines' policies, especially of a policy based on 'co-ethnic Turkmen' versus 'enemy Kurds', see Mustafa Alp Bengi, 'Ankara'nın Irak hataları', *Radikal*, 3 February 2006. The commentary came soon after remarks by high-level Turkish officials concerning the status of Kerkük and Talabani's reaction arguing that Kerkük is an internal matter and that Turkish meddling would lead to chaos and a situation where you would have Kurdish radicals claiming rights over Kurdish-populated cities in Turkey such as Diyarbakır and Van. Reported in *Radikal*, 30 January 2005.

82. Gökhan Çetinkaya, *Seta Irak Dosyası: Irak'ta Yeni Dönem, Ortadoğu ve Türkiye* (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı, Ankara, March 2006), p. 4.

These 'red lines' that were virulently defended during the course of 2003 and 2004 gradually eroded and today the Turkish government seems much more at ease with the 'realities' of Iraq. In the course of less then a decade, Turkish foreign policy in regard to northern Iraq has evolved from the unacceptability of an erosion of Iraq's 'territorial and political' unity to one that is prepared to co-exist and even cooperate with a federated Kurdish state as long as its name is not 'South Kurdistan'.[83] The preferred ideal arrangement would be one where Kerkük would not be included within the federated state but the issue of its inclusion seems also to have ceased to be a realistic 'red line'.[84] The indication is that some compromise agreement reached with the consensus of all Iraqi parties would become acceptable to the Turkish state establishment and government. Furthermore, in the face of the ensuing instability and an ever more violent Iraq, and the prospect of the emergence of a theocratic Shi'a state in the south and an unstable violent Sunni Arab centre, there have even been those who have suggested that Turkey may well be comfortable with a stable Kurdish state dependent on Turkey as an outlet to the external world.[85] At the same time others have urged that Turkey should prepare to co-exist with an independent Kurdish state and that an automatic adversarial security relationship should not be assumed between northern Iraq and neighbouring Kurdish-populated areas in southeast Turkey.[86] Nevertheless, the general view in Turkey does remain that if Iraq were to indeed disintegrate, the Middle East as a whole would be an even more insecure and dangerous place.[87]

A number of reasons can be cited for this dramatic change in Turkish policy towards northern Iraq. One important reason for the erosion of the policy of 'red lines' is undoubtedly the United States' occupation of Iraq and its military presence there. There is the weight of the sheer recognition that an intervention without the support or neutrality of the US is simply not a realistic option. US-Turkish relations have been strained over Iraq; however, as will be pointed out below, cooperation is slowly but surely increasing. There is an effort on the Turkish side not to dwell on the crises of the past resulting from the humiliating manner in which the American military in July 2003 arrested a group of Turkish soldiers based in Suleimania. The Turkish government had also crossed swords with the US over US raids on Fallujah and Tela'far. Instead the Turkish side has become much keener to cooperate with the United States to ensure that a viable state can indeed

83. Remark by a prominent Turkish columnist with a special interest in Northern Iraq, Ilknur Çevik, quoted in Rainer Hermann, 'Kürt Korkusu azalıyor', *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 23 November 2005, reproduced in Turkish in *Radikal*, 29 November 2005.

84. In a closed 'off the record' meeting in May 2006, a high-level Turkish diplomat from the cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs insisted that Kerkük remained a 'red line'. However, columnists, business people and retired diplomats present at the meeting did not share the view and did not see such a policy as being realistic.

85. See especially commentaries by Şahin Apay, 'Türklerle Kürtlerin Ortak Kaderi', *Zaman*, 1 September 2005; based on a letter from a reader, 'Okur mektupları', *Zaman*, 16 April 2006.

86. Gökhan Çetinkaya, op. cit., pp. 47-8.

87. This point was once more reiterated by the Permanent Secretary of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yiğit Alpogan, during the run-up to the elections in Iraq; reported in *Radikal*, 15 November 2005.

emerge subsequent to the adoption of the new constitution in October and the national elections in December 2005 in Iraq. Furthermore, there is also a recognition that a military intervention in northern Iraq on the part of Turkey would not only adversely affect Turkish-EU relations, but would also seriously undermine the accession process in general. Against such a background, the idea of a military intervention becomes pretty difficult to sustain.

Another important factor has been developments in Iraq itself. The persistent chaos and instability is of deep concern to Turkish decision-makers. There is a clear recognition of the dire consequences in economic, political and national security terms to Turkey if this instability and chaos were to get even worse. This also explains the new position of the Turkish government, i.e. that US troops should not be withdrawn until there is a viable military in Iraq composed of all ethnic groups.[88] A spillover of terrorism is as much a concern as the loss of economic opportunities at a time when Turkish decision-makers are attaching growing importance to expanding commercial and economic relations with neighbouring countries. Faced with the absence of any other viable options, the Turkish government and state establishment has become deeply attached to the state- and government-building process in Iraq. They have given support to the drafting of the constitution as well as to the electoral processes. These are seen as the only way that may after all save Iraq as a unified entity. This has also led the government to argue that Turkey has to respect whatever decision the Iraqis agree upon with regard to the internal political arrangements.

The Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, acknowledged this reality when in October 2005 he argued that Turkey had to adjust to the fact that Jalal Talabani, whom Turkey once considered to be just a tribal leader, was today the President of Iraq. He made similar remarks concerning Masoud Barzani, who had earlier on been received by George Bush as the 'president' of the 'Kurdish region' in Iraq.[89] This line of argument played an important role in eroding the policy of 'red lines' and casting doubt on the legitimacy of intervention. Furthermore, the policy towards the Turkmen has been revised. The relationship between the Kurds and the Turkmen had previously been seen in terms of a 'win-lose' scenario. The poor performance of the Iraqi Turkmen Front supported by Turkey both in the January 2005 as well as December 2005 elections very much undermined the widely held notion of a unified

88. This is a point that came out from the meeting between the prime minister's advisor, Ahmet Davutoglu, and some leading columnists in March 2006. Reported in Şahin Alpay, 'Ankara nın "proaktifbariş" politikasi', *Zaman*, 7 March 2006.

89. For an analysis of the meaning and significance of these remarks see Murat Yetkin, 'Özkök: Irak'ta durumu kabul etmeliyiz', *Radikal*, 31 October 2005.

Turkmen community needing Turkish assistance and support. Instead, Turkish decision-makers have, during the course of the last year, came to discover the diversity of viewpoints and political leanings among the Turkmen, not to mention the fact that a considerable proportion of the Turkmen are actually Shi'a, an empirical reality of which many Turks had not previously been particularly aware. Furthermore, the fact that the new constitution ensured that their cultural and social rights were facilitated were indeed factors that helped the emergence of a 'new' policy on northern Iraq.

The role of the emergence of a 'new' Turkish foreign policy in general needs to be highlighted too. With regard to Iraq, this manifests itself at least in three distinct ways. Firstly, the government and state establishment is much more open to dialogue and efforts to find 'win-win' outcomes to difficult problems. It was Turkey that initiated a process of constant consultation between countries neighbouring Iraq. The foreign ministers from these countries meet at regular intervals to discuss Iraq. This policy of 'dialogue' has also been extended to the parties within Iraq to include not just the Turkmen, but also the other groups in Iraq. Increasingly Turkey has adopted a policy of consultations with all parties in Iraq, including the Shi'a and the Kurds. The special envoy for Iraq, Ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol, and his predecessor Osman Korutürk, paid numerous visits to Iraq while Iraqi community leaders were frequently invited to Turkey during the course of the last year or so. Similarly, the Chief of Turkish Intelligence paid visits especially to Kurdish leaders. The reports that emerged from these consultations contributed to the emergence of a consensus to give the domestic political process inside Iraq a chance against interventionist policies as well as to prepare Turkey to develop official relations with the Kurdish regional government in northern Iraq once the new constitution in Iraq comes into effect.[90] Most significantly, early in December 2005, the Turkish president, ahead of a regular National Security Council meeting, stressed the need to adopt a 'new' approach to Iraq in the light of the fact that a federal Iraq may emerge from the Iraq elections.

Civil society and especially business interests have been playing an important role favouring dialogue and efforts to find 'win-win' approaches. Many Turkish companies have become involved in a wide range of projects in northern Iraq ranging from commercial

90. See media coverage on the report prepared by the Turkish special envoy to Iraq, Ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol, *Radikal*, 28 February 2006.

projects to the construction of airports. These business people and companies, who are often from the Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey, have a stake in ensuring stable and peaceful relations. TOBB, an association with very close links to the government, has also been involved. The Minister responsible for economic relations, Kürşat Tüzmen, has led business groups to Iraq (including northern Iraq) on a number of occasions. Turkish music is extremely popular in northern Iraq and there is a lively music business that includes concerts given by prominent Turkish singers. Many businessmen often have direct and personal links to the Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq. They are able to act as informal channels of dialogue and help to diffuse tense situations from otherwise escalating to high levels of conflict. A case in point is the manner in which business people played a critical role in diffusing tension over the granting of over-flight rights for 'Kurdistan Airlines' and also eventually ensuring authorisation for a private Turkish airline company, Flyair, to fly to Erbil.[91] One newspaper announced the news in big front-page headlines. Late in September 2005, the media was reporting news about the challenge that the government faced in relation to this demand, which would in effect amount to a recognition of the term 'Kurdistan'[92], a term that has traditionally provoked considerable aversion, especially in Turkish security circles. The prominence of the 'win-win' approach and pragmatism was reflected in a deal that business people were able to broker allowing the opening of flights routes between Istanbul and airports in northern Iraq.

In the 1990s, when the Turkish military regularly intervened in northern Iraq, it would have been difficult to talk about the influence of civil society and business interests. For civilians, travelling into northern Iraq was often a complicated challenge in itself. In the mid-1990s it would have been difficult to imagine that one day the Turkish Chief of Staff would actually be calling for pragmatism and recognition of the realities on the ground. These remarks played a critical role in the eventual erosion of the policy of 'red lines' and its replacement with a policy prepared to deal with the Kurds in northern Iraq directly. The government has been more reluctant to label and define Kurds of northern Iraq, whatever their future aspirations, as 'others' and hence willing to seek dialogue and a cooperative approach to addressing security challenges. This is reflected in the willingness to achieve a resolution of the tension surrounding the issue of Kerkük through dialogue.

91. 'Kurdistan'a uçuş izni', *Radikal*, 30 November 2005.

92. 'Kürdistan havayolları, Türkiye hava sahasından geçiyor', *Milliyet*, 30 September 2005.

However, the issue of the presence of the PKK in northern Iraq remains a challenge. Turkish decision-makers are frustrated with the ability of the PKK to mount operations from its bases in northern Iraq into Turkey. The massive disturbances that erupted in Diyarbakır and other cities in southeastern Turkey in April, to some degree provoked and instigated by the PKK, has not only increased pressure to revise the current anti-terror law to give security forces greater powers, but has also led to the deployment of a massive military force on the border. Therefore, Turkey's 'new' policy is likely to be tested severely if the PKK continues its terrorism activities and little cooperation can be extracted from Kurds in northern Iraq and Iraq in general, not to mention the United States. In turn, this issue will be closely related to how successful the government is in overseeing the implementation of reforms concerning the cultural rights of Kurds in Turkey and also going beyond that by drawing radical elements among Kurdish nationalists into the regular political system in Turkey.

Iran and nuclear weapons

Iranian-Turkish relations have come a long way since the days when an ideological conflict raged between the two countries. In the 1990s relations between the two countries were dire partly because Turkey was unstable. Iran was very good at exploiting both political Islam and the Kurdish problem in Turkey at a time when both were perceived as constituting a threat to the regime in Turkey. Turkey felt itself to be very vulnerable to Iranian interference. There was ample evidence of Iranian involvement in support of the PKK as well as the Turkish Hizbullah. These would now and then lead to serious conflicts between Iran and Turkey, including occasional border skirmishes between the militaries of both countries. However, today the situation is very different. Turkey feels much more confident towards Iran both economically and politically. Iran is an important supplier of oil and gas to Turkey. In turn, Turkey attributes great importance to expanding its exports to Iran while at the same time increasing the involvement of Turkish companies in the Iranian economy. Furthermore, Turkey continues to maintain a visa-free travel policy towards Iranian nationals that attracted almost a million Iranians in 2005.

Faced with the new government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in

Iran, the major challenge for Turkey is how to ensure the kind of pragmatic relationship that had developed between Iran and Turkey during the reign of the previous president, Mohammad Khatami. The Iranian nuclear policy is an important aspect of the issues that will have to be addressed, but it is not the only one. There are also economic considerations. Iran is a growing market for Turkey and one that Turkey certainly does not wish to lose, given that it needs the income from trade to be able to finance its energy bill. Dependency on Iranian natural gas is another key issue. This winter the Turkish government got a taste of what this dependency means, when Iranian supplies were interrupted for a brief period. It coincided with a time when difficulties were being experienced with supplies from Russia. Hence vulnerability in terms of energy supplies in general and particulary those coming from Iran constitutes another major factor that has a bearing on Iranian-Turkish relations. There is also some concern that the new government in Iran may attempt to use its natural gas and oil as a political weapon. This is of course exacerbated by the mounting international crisis stemming from fears that Iran aims to acquire nuclear weapons.

The issue of nuclear weapons constitutes a challenge for Turkish decision-makers for a number of reasons. Turkish government officials have pointed out on numerous occasions that they do not have any particular objection to Iranian efforts to develop nuclear energy. However, they do consider the acquisition of nuclear weapons a threat to regional stability and fear the spectre of proliferation. Turkey is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and has a long tradition of a preference to stay away from nuclear energy. In the mid-1990s an attempt to build a nuclear energy plant near the city of Silifke on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea was defeated due to environmentalist and local opposition. However, the increase in the price of oil, growing concerns about assured energy supplies accompanied by ever-growing Turkish energy needs, has brought the issue of building a nuclear power plant back into the spotlight. In April 2006 the government announced and identified Sinop on the Black Sea as the location where a nuclear energy plant would be constructed. The government has repeatedly announced that nuclear energy policy will be transparent and will be run under IAEA supervision. A senior retired Turkish diplomat argued that in the absence of a nuclear energy programme Turkey would be doomed to an asymmetric

relationship with Iran. He added that this did not necessarily mean that Turkey had to have nuclear weapons, but that for strategic reasons it would be critical to have a nuclear energy capacity if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons.[93] Hence, there has also been speculation that if Iran were to develop nuclear weapons the pressure would mount on Turkey to do the same and that this pressure would be even greater if Turkey's EU membership prospects were weakened.[94]

The question of nuclear energy is quite likely to be a divisive issue within Turkey. Developing nuclear weapons would be an even more controversial issue. This would require the complete overhaul of Turkey's strategic thinking, which so far has been based on national defence centered around NATO membership and conventional military deterrence. A longstanding Turkish expert on nuclear issues, Mustafa Kibaroğlu, went as far as arguing that acquisition of nuclear weapon capabilities would actually seriously undermine Kemal Atatürk's famous *motto* for Turkish foreign policy: 'peace at home, peace abroad'.[95] However, it is quite likely that if Iran does indeed go nuclear there will inevitably be advocates of Turkey doing likewise. This will be even more likely if the Turkish state establishment's confidence in the West and especially in NATO's ability to stand by Turkey erodes. This danger of erosion would be particularly vulnerable to any deterioration in EU-Turkish relations. Of course the opposite is also possible. The more Turkey becomes engaged by the EU, the more the likelihood of membership increases, the more Turkey would feel confident economically and politically, the less Turkey would perceive a threat from a nuclear Iran.[96] Ironically, it is such a Turkey that would have the economic resources to develop a nuclear weapons capacity, but its democracy and close relations with the international community would surely shield it from nuclear ambitions. On the other hand, a Turkey that feels isolated and abandoned would be a Turkey that economically may not necessarily have the resources for a nuclear weapons programme but its elite, or part of it, may aspire to such a weapons capacity for reasons of insecurity. In the absence of sufficient economic resources, it is Turkish democracy that would have to suffer to ensure the diversion of economic resources to finance such a programme.[97]

A second, and possibly more immediate, challenge resulting from Iranian aspirations to acquire a nuclear weapons capacity that Turkish decision-makers face is how to manage relations with

93. Özem Sanberk, 'Türkiye kendi nükleer teknolojisini daha fazla geçiktirmemeli - asimetrik komşuluk ilişkisi', *Radikal*, 1 February 2006.

94. This danger was highlighted as early as July 2004 by *The Economist* in the context of the Pakistani 'bomb' leading to an Iranian one, *The Economist*, 10-16 July 2004, p. 36. See also Mustafa Kibaroğlu, 'Good for the Shah, Bad for the Mullahs: The West and Iran's Quest for Nuclear Power', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 20, Spring 2006, p. 19.

95. Kibaroğlu quoted in Karl Vick, 'Iran Spurs Turkey's Revival of Nuclear Plans', *Washington Post*, 7 March 2006.

96. This point has for example been highlighted by the Brussels representative of TUSIAD Bahadır Kaleağası in 'AB perspektiifi olmasaydı Türkiye belki de nükleer güç geliştirmesi kaçınılmaz olacakti', *Radikal*, 10 October 2005.

97. Such a danger was highlighted in an 'off the record' meeting in May 2006 with a high-level Turkish diplomat from the cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

an American administration that may seek a unilateral military intervention against Iran. The Turkish government prefers to seek a resolution to the crisis over Iran through dialogue and it has a clear stake in such a resolution. It fears the economic and political consequences of both sanctions as well as a possible military intervention of a unilateral or even multilateral nature. After all, Turkish decision-makers and the Turkish public have first-hand experience of what the UN military intervention against Iraq in 1991, sanctions against Iraq during the 1990s and then the unilateral US intervention against Saddam Hussein, have meant to Turkey economically and politically. Nevertheless, on numerous occasions Turkish government officials have declared that Turkey would be prepared to go along with whatever the international community decides through the United Nations Security Council. In the meantime, both the Turkish Prime Minister as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in April 2006 told visiting Condoleezza Rice that the Turkish government would not support any unilateral policies and especially none of a military nature.

The most dreaded scenario is an American unilateral intervention accompanied by tremendous pressure on Turkey to cooperate. This would leave any government in Turkey in a pretty impossible situation. Firstly, the current government would have to be sensitive to an electorate that would expect solidarity with yet another Muslim country under attack. For Turkish public opinion at large, especially given the situation in Iraq, any unilateral intervention will be seen purely and simply as 'imperialism'. The government would have to take that into consideration too. Secondly, a military intervention would inevitably push oil prices to astronomical levels with dire consequences for the Turkish economy whose performance so far is one of the current government's strong points. Thirdly, the whole region would risk being plunged into even deeper political turmoil that could have serious consequences for Turkish democracy and reform. Fourthly, no Turkish government would want to be involved especially in a unilateral military intervention that would run against the spirit of the Kasr-i Sirin Treaty of 1639 signed between Safavids in Iran and the Ottomans. The frontier that was delineated in this treaty still holds to this day and the peace that this treaty brought to the parties was interrupted only once, early in the eighteenth century.

These challenges suggest that Turkey is in a major dilemma. On the one hand, a nuclear Iran is clearly a threat and a source of

instability. On the other hand, the imposition of sanctions on Iran, let alone military intervention, would adversely affect Turkish economic and political interests. Turkey's relations with the current American administration would be soured too as the government and the public is virtually certainly unlikely to support such an intervention. However, for reasons of political realism Turkey is likely, at the declaratory level, to advocate a policy of going along with any decision that the international community reaches through the United Nations Security Council. At the same time it is quite likely that the government will look discreetly towards Russia and China to preempt any dramatic decision emerging from the Security Council. Furthermore, the government will hope that the European Union will be able to discourage the US from mounting a unilateral military strike and contribute to efforts to persuade Iran to reach a negotiated settlement to the crisis. Yet, at the same time Turkey has also seen itself drawn into the diplomatic exercise to persuade the Iranians to support a negotiated agreement. The Turkish daily *Hürriyet* reported that early in June intensive telephone contacts and consultations had taken place between the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gül, his Western counterparts from Germany and the United States, and Javier Solana. Subsequently, Gül entered into contact with his Iranian counterpart and the Iranian chief negotiator on nuclear issues, Ali Larijani, to explain the efforts of his Western counterparts to develop a dialogue with Iran and find a negotiated solution.[98] Later in the month Gül, during his visit to Iran, tried to persuade his hosts to seriously consider the package deal that had been put together by Germany and the United Nations Security Council. If a resolution of the crisis over Iran's nuclear policies is indeed achieved, the role that Turkey plays in it would become a concrete example of what some academics and officials mean when, in the context of the debate on Turkish membership of the EU, they speak of Turkey's potential contribution to the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).[99]

Relations with Syria

Syria constitutes a challenge for Turkey that is somewhat similar to Iran, even if at a lower level of intensity in terms of its relations with the US. Like Iran, the Syrian regime too is in deep conflict with the

98. Fatih Çekirge, 'Alo… Sayın Gül', *Hürriyet*, 12 June 2006.

99. Steven Everts, who currently serves in the cabinet of Javier Solana, the High Representative of the EU for CFSP, had mentioned that Turkey could help engage rather than confront regimes in Tehran and Damascus in a dialogue as an example of the contribution that Turkey could make to the EU's CFSP. Steven Everts, 'An Asset but not a Model: Turkey, the EU and the Wider Middle East', *Essays*, Centre for European Reform, October 2004.

United States. Syria is often labelled as a 'rogue state' by the current American administration. The US accuses the Syrian regime of supporting the resistance in Iraq as well as international terrorism and terrorism against Israel. Syria also has poor relations with the EU. The assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, in February 2005 and the Syrian government's initial reluctance to cooperate with the United Nations investigation into the assassination strained EU-Syrian relations. There is also a general disappointment with Syria because Bashar Assad, after he became president subsequent to the death of his father, failed to see through the reforms that he had promised. In contrast, Syrian-Turkish relations are often defined as excellent. Never have Syrian-Turkish relations been so good since the days when Syria gained its independence from France. Relations between both countries were traditionally characterised by persistent conflict. It has already been mentioned that both countries came to the brink of war in 1998. However, similar situations had occurred in the past too. The most notorious was the confrontation between the two countries soon after Syria merged with Egypt in 1956 to form the United Arab Republic. On that occasion, the intense ideological conflict compelled both sides to amass troops against each other. This often ideologically-driven conflict persisted throughout the Cold War and both countries found themselves in opposing coalitions on a wide range of issues. In the post-Cold War the conflicts persisted especially over Syria's support for PKK terrorism, the sharing of the waters of the Euphrates and Turkey's relations with the Arab world.

Today the situation could not be any more different from the situation that pertained less then a decade ago. Economic relations are booming. Trade between the two countries increased almost 50% in the course of a decade from approximately half a billion to 570 million USD.[100] This trade is expected to grow further since a free trade area agreement was signed between the two countries in 2004. Furthermore, the frontier that was once largely sealed and mined is much more relaxed. There is a joint project to clear a huge piece of land the size of the island of Cyprus of landmines. The project aims to open this area to organic agricultural production. In the meantime, there are a growing number of people crossing the border and a greater number of Syrians are visiting Turkey. The frontier region between the two countries has also had longstanding family and social relationships that are being

100. See Annex III.

revived. Furthermore, Turkish business, especially from the region around the border area, is increasingly interested in joint ventures and investments in Syria. Syria is also an important gateway for Turkey to the Arab world both in the physical sense of transit trade but also in the political sense of the word. The conspicuous improvement in Arab-Turkish relations is partly a function of improved Syrian-Turkish relations. In the past Syria successfully used Arab as well as Third World forums, such as the Non-Aligned movement, very much against Turkey, complicating the ability of Turkey to develop closer relations with the conservative Arab world in particular.

These developments leave Turkey at odds especially with the United States. The US advocates a policy of isolation against the Syrian regime and has even threatened it with sanctions. The US government, and to a lesser extent the EU, have at times expressed disappointment if not frustration with Turkey's growing relations with Syria. The US Ambassador in Turkey did publicly state that Turkey should act together with the US and the EU and hoped the planned visit of the Turkish President would be reconsidered.[101] The visit coincided with the aftermath of Hariri's assassination and US-EU joint efforts to pressurise and compel Syria to cooperate with the international community and withdraw from Lebanon. The American administration openly argued that such a visit ran against efforts to isolate the Syrian regime. The Turkish side on the other hand argued that Turkey aimed to counsel Syria to cooperate. Indeed this point was highlighted by the Turkish President during his contacts in Syria.[102] Subsequently, the Turkish Prime Minister, during his meeting with George Bush in June 2005, reportedly told him that Assad had promised both him and the Turkish President that they would indeed withdraw from Lebanon.[103] Nevertheless, Bush subsequently did not hesitate to state that Turkey's relations with Syria were an obstacle to improving US-Turkish relations.

This leaves the Turkish government in a very difficult position. One of the conspicuous features of the 'new' Turkish foreign policy is the emphasis placed on economic relations and improved contacts with neighbouring countries. The Prime Minister during an interview noted that he was not keen to close a frontier that had in the past been impenetrable for thirty/forty years. He also added that Turkey could not afford to jeopardise its commercial and trade relations with neighbouring countries. He said this was par-

101. *Radikal*, 14 March 2005.

102. The president did call on the Syrian side during his visit to go along with the international community; *Radikal*, 23 April 2005.

103. *Radikal*, 8 June 2005.

ticularly the case because in the past the international community had failed to compensate Turkey for its losses of revenue from trade. He did though carefully note that Turkey would meet its obligations under the United Nations.[104] The remarks of the Prime Minister reflect the feeling among the business community in the major cities along the Syrian border and the southeast. The business community in Gaziantep, a major and growing commercial and industrial centre of the region, attributes great importance to relations with Syria. Furthermore, there is a lot of enthusiasm for reviving a whole natural regional economic zone that once had included Aleppo and Damascus in Syria. This is also reinforced by a recognition that the cities further east of Gaziantep, in the mostly Kurdish-populated southeast of Turkey, such as Diyarbakır, suffer from high levels of unemployment. This is also generally recognised as aggravating if not undermining efforts to normalise the situation in the southeast. Therefore, it is highly likely that as long as Syria does not directly threaten Turkish security interests, Turkish decision-makers will prefer to follow a policy that will continue to develop and expand economic relations or at least not jeopardise them.

However, this does not necessarily mean that Turkey is on a collision course with the United States or the EU. Actually, the Turkish government continues to cooperate with the US in getting Syria to respond to international community pressures. A case in point is a critical impromptu visit that Abdullah Gül, in his capacity as Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid to Syria in November 2005, when he urged the government to cooperate and hand over the Hariri assassination suspects to the UN. Later in the month the Syrian government did indeed hand over the suspects to the UN-appointed prosecutor. The media reported that Gül's visit had actually been planned during the 'Broader Middle East Forum for the Future' gathering in Bahrain in November 2005, in a meeting between Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish Prime Minister, Gül himself and Condoleezza Rice.[105] If this story is indeed correct, it is indicative of how Turkey's good relations with Syria can be used as an avenue for bringing pressure through dialogue considering that the alleged suspects were indeed sent to Vienna about ten days later.[106] The difference between Turkey and the US appears to be more a difference of methods in reaching goals that are after all fundamentally similar. In the case of Syria, Turkey has repeatedly made it clear that it supports reforms in Syria and

104. Interview broadcasted by TRT1, 'Ankara Gündemi', 26 January 2006.

105. *Radikal*, 17 November 2005.

106. Abdullah Gül denied media reports that he had been a 'messenger', *Radikal*, 18 November 2005.

expects Syria to cooperate with the international community on the investigation into the assassination of Hariri as well as supporting its withdrawal from Lebanon. It was symbolically important that Erdoğan visited Beirut in June 2005 just after an anti-Syrian parliament was elected for the first time in thirty years.

Relations with the United States

Turkish-US relations have gone through rough waters since the Turkish parliament's decision not to allow American troops to use Turkish territory in the opening stages of the intervention against Saddam Hussein in 2003. Since then relations have hopped from one crisis to another with some degree of normalisation taking place in the background. After 9/11 both the government as well as the Turkish public had stood behind the American decision to intervene in Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime and apprehend Osama bin Laden. Turkey provided troops for the multinational force and also led its command on two occasions. Turkey has also lent both economic and political support to the Hamid Karzai government in Afghanistan. A former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hikmet Çetin, serves as NATO's chief civilian representative in Kabul. The same cannot be said about America's invasion of Iraq. Turkish public opinion right from the start objected to a unilateral intervention in Iraq even if a part of the state establishment was prepared to go along with it. However, what actually led to the deterioration of public opinion towards the United States was the failure of the American government to ensure a transition to a degree of stability and normalcy in Iraq. The constant images of bombardment and the suffering of ordinary people in Iraq, coupled with the inevitable clashes of interests, became an important source of the 'anti-Americanism' with which the Turkish public has become associated recently.

There have been occasions when the government has had to succumb to this 'anti-Americanism' such as during the American military operations in the cities of Fallujah and Tela'far. The excessive use of force and the suffering of the civilian populations led the government on both occasions to voice its criticism against the American administration's handling of the occupation of Iraq. Such criticism has generally not been well received by the US administration. This situation has also been aggravated by Turk-

ish concerns and fears about Iraq's territorial integrity. There is a deep-seated belief in the public that the US intervention had much more to do with control of oil supplies than bringing democracy and the rule of law to Iraq. The issue of territorial integrity when seen from that perspective fuels the conviction that the US has a stake and an interest in a divided Iraq. This of course exacerbates feelings especially in nationalist circles in Turkey as they fear the implications of a disunited Iraq for Turkey's own territorial unity and domestic politics. Many in Turkey also see what is happening in Iraq through the lenses of religion and suspect that Iraqis have been singled out for being Muslims. Nevertheless, in spite of this 'anti-Americanism' fuelled by the war in Iraq, the Turkish government has by and large been cooperative in its relations with the US. As was pointed out earlier on, Turkey has come to share the US's broader objective of a federal Iraq as the only viable way of holding Iraq together. The most concrete manifestation of Turkey's readiness to cooperate occurred at a most critical time when the Turkish government succeeded in bringing together Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador in Iraq, with Iraqi Sunni leaders in Istanbul in December 2005.[107] The meeting was critical in ensuring the participation of Sunnis in the Iraqi national elections in mid-December.

It goes without saying that an American unilateral intervention against Iran and Syria would only worsen 'anti-Americanism' in Turkey and make it even more difficult for the government to manage public opinion to prevent further damage to American-Turkish relations. This is very unfortunate because currently the government in power in Turkey does advocate democratisation in the Middle East and unlike any previous government in Turkey it does carry some clout in the Arab and Muslim world with regard to advocating reform. The government, together with many circles in Turkey, does clearly see that a democratised Middle East with liberal market economies would actually serve Turkey's interests. This explains the support that Turkey eventually lent to the 'Broader Middle East and North Africa' project and why it played an active role in the adoption of the *Istanbul Initiative* by NATO in June 2004.[108] The problem here between Turkey and the current US administration seems to be over strategies of reform. Turkey sees democratisation as a long- term transition process and questions the wisdom of attempting to achieve that transition at the expense of current regimes, let alone by force or unilateral inter-

107. For the details and assessement of the meeting, see Özdem Sanberk, '15 Aralık seçimleri ve Aralık Istanbul Girişimi', *Radikal*, 9 December 2005.

108. For a description of the document *Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: Reaching out to the Broader Middle East* adopted on 28 June 2004, see http://www.nato.int/issues/ici/index.html .

vention. The chaos in Iraq and the challenges that this presents to Turkey is a constant and daily reminder of the dangers of military intervention or imposed transitions (transformations or regime change). This difference partly explains the conflict over Syria in particular and to some extent Iran too.

The concern in Turkey is that any policies aiming to replace the current regime by force in Syria may set off dynamics in Syria similar to those that now prevail in Iraq. The current regime is primarily dominated by the Alawites while the Sunni majority is kept out of power together with an important Kurdish minority. Many Turkish officials fear that a sudden collapse of the Syrian regime could bitterly destabilise the country and possibly unleash a process of territorial disintegration with dire consequences for regional stability. Furthermore, among the Sunni population in Syria there is a strong Islamic fundamentalist movement that could also seize the occasion to wrest power away from moderates and secularists in Syria. Such a situation would presumably create difficulties for the United States too not to mention Israel. Hence, Turkey advocates instead a gradual process of reform and transformation in Syria rather than any attempt to bring about change by intervention or compulsion. Undoubtedly such an approach would present the advantage of not jeopardising Turkey's economic interests and would also allow Turkey to continue to enjoy some degree of influence in Syria.

In the case of Iran, for Turkey the concern is not so much that Iran might territorially disintegrate but that sanctions or military intervention in Iran would simply strengthen the hold of the current Iranian regime over the country. During the rule of President Mohammad Khatami and the reformists in Iran, relations between the two countries improved significantly. Turkey was very supportive of Khatami's policy of 'dialogue between civilisations'. But the success of conservative mullahs in reinstituting their control over the Iranian parliament followed by the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president has changed the picture in Iran dramatically for Turkey. In Turkey, Iranian efforts to develop a nuclear energy and even – as many suspect – a nuclear weapons capacity are seen partly in the light of Iranian domestic politics. These developments are seen as a sign that the regime feels itself to be insecure and is actually trying to rally public support by mobilising nationalist feelings around the nuclear issue. Hence, there is a general belief that any attempt to impose sanc-

tions or, worse, mount a military intervention would only gal-vanise the Iranian masses in support of their government.[109] In this context, the Turkish government had traditionally supported the EU's constructive engagement policy and policy of dialogue.

Clearly, current US decision-makers are frustrated with Turkey with regard to Iraq, Iran and Syria. There is an important diver-gence of opinion and also a considerable degree of mistrust that seems to be building up between the two countries. This has been aggravated by Khaled Mashal's visit to Ankara. The initial Ameri-can governmental response was relatively toned down. Immedi-ately after the visit took place the American ambassador registered his country's displeasure with the visit. Yet he did also add that the American administration had been informed in advance about the visit and also chose to highlight instead the importance of the message that the Turkish authorities gave to Mashal.[110] At the time both Gül, directly to Mashal, and Erdoğan, indirectly, had stressed the importance of accepting Israel's existence and the importance of seeking a dialogue with Israel. Actually, Erdoğan had noted that now that Hamas had come to power democrati-cally it had to make sure to use 'democratic' means, in other words peaceful means, to resolve the conflict with Israel. In Turkey there were mixed reactions, from open support to bitter criticisms. The leader of the opposition party, Deniz Baykal, called it an act of cooperation with terrorism.[111] Interestingly, an expert from the Brookings Institute, Ömer Taşpınar, argued on the other hand that the Turkish government had encountered much more criti-cism domestically than they had internationally, including in the US.[112] Nevertheless, since the visit the tone of US criticism seems to have mounted. The Turkish media reported that two close con-fidants of the Prime Minister were bitterly criticised for the visit during their meetings in Washington DC in March 2006. This was followed by the criticism of Representative Robert Wexler, a mem-ber of the American-Turkish Friendship Group, during his visit to Turkey in April. On the Turkish side the mistrust has become aggravated by the demonstrations that turned violent in Diyarbakir and a number of other Kurdish-populated cities in Turkey in late March and early April 2005. The demonstrations were called for by the PKK and came at a time when PKK activity both in the southeast as well as in the big cities of the west, such as Istanbul, is increasing. The presence of the PKK in northern Iraq and the reluctance of the US to intervene against the PKK on

109. Ömer Taşpınar, 'Iran'da diplomasi zamanı', *Radikal*, 17 April 2006.

110. For an assessement of Amer-ican reactions, see Murat Yetkin, 'ABD'den net mesaj. Hamas'in gelecegini biliyorduk onemli olan mesaj', *Radikal*, 22 February 2006.

111. *Radikal*, 22 February 2006. For an example of a column prais-ing the government's policy on Hamas, see Sahin Alpay, 'Hamas ziyareti: Ankara'dan iyi diplo-masi', *Zaman*, 21 February 2006, compared to a critical view from former Turkish diplomat turned politician Mehmet Ali Bayar, 'Hamas vakasi: Akıldan firar mı, macera mı, vizyon mu?', *Radikal,* 25 February 2006.

112. Ömer Taspinar, 'Hamas ele-stirileri abartili', *Radikal,* 20 Febru-ary 2006.

behalf of Turkey are fuelling this mistrust. The tension manifested itself in a fiery exchange of words between a senior member of the Turkish Parliament, Şükrü Eledağ, former ambassador to Washington DC in the 1980s, and Robert Wexler over support for Hamas versus the PKK.[113]

The US and Turkey appear to have become locked in a cycle of mistrust. What happens to this mistrust and Turkish 'anti-Americanism' in the near future will depend a lot on what shape US policy towards Iran first, and then Syria and Hamas, takes. The international community's position will be critical too. Yet US-Turkish relations were not always in this current state and 'anti-Americanism' was not previously a particularly dominant feature of Turkish public opinion. The US was hugely popular in Turkey during the 1990s, especially after the American-led interventions to stop the violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999. The US was after all defending Muslims from the deadly regime of Milosevic. Bill Clinton was highly popular. He will be remembered as the US president who addressed the Turkish parliament in a speech during which he both praised and gently criticised Turkey. He had argued at the time that the twenty-first century could be Turkey's century in the region if Turkey successfully reformed itself. He will for a long time to come be remembered as the American president who received a standing ovation from the parliamentarians and massive praise right across the Turkish media. His popularity was further enhanced when he freely and almost casually mixed with the local people of the area that had recently been hit by an earthquake in western Turkey. His administration had also played a critical role in bringing the prestigious OSCE summit to Istanbul despite considerable Congressional opposition. The summit is generally considered to have played a critical role in encouraging the advocates of reform in Turkey.

The current 'anti-Americanism' needs to be seen in the context of the Bush administration's policies in Iraq and their consequences for Turkey. It is very telling that in contrast to Bill Clinton's visit, the visit of George Bush to Turkey during the NATO summit in June 2004 provoked protests and George Bush was neither able nor willing to mix with the public the way Clinton had done. Hence, Turkey's 'anti-Americanism' need not be seen as a permanent feature of US-Turkish relations and a symptom of clashing interests. There are numerous areas where American and Turkish interests do harmoniously overlap and extensive cooper-

113. Reported in *Radikal*, 11 April 2006.

ation does take place. Afghanistan has already been mentioned. Another important area of cooperation is EU-Turkish relations. US support for Turkey's aspiration to EU membership is one policy area where continuity has persisted from the Clinton to the Bush administration.[114] This support has been so open and forceful at times that it has provoked reactions from some European leaders. A case in point is the Copenhagen summit in December 2002, when George Bush in person called on a number of leaders to seek support for Turkey, provoking a somewhat undiplomatic reaction from an irritated Jacques Chirac. Subsequently, there were a number of Europeans and columnists who argued that Turkey might well become a 'Trojan horse' of the Americans if it were to become a member. This view, however, receded after the Turkish decision not to support the US invasion of Iraq.

Ironically though, this did provoke some in the US to question the wisdom of supporting Turkish membership of the EU on the grounds that the closer Turkey got to the EU, the more anti-American it was becoming. However, this view does not appear to have changed the thrust of US policy on Turkish membership of the EU. The Turkish media, for example, reported that Condoleezza Rice lent her support to Turkey's case during the negotiations that culminated in the adoption by the EU of the Negotiation Framework in October 2005 for Turkey. She played a critical role in helping to resolve a dispute over the wording of an article in the Negotiations Framework and Abdullah Gül thanked her in person for her intervention.[115] It is true that the EU's engagement of Turkey has indeed engendered a sense of confidence in Turkey. This may at times culminate in policies that do not always coincide with those of the United States, compared to the past when Turkey felt itself to be much more dependent on the US. Yet a Turkey that is embedded in the EU is much more likely to be an asset for the US in terms of regional stability in the Middle East and the Caucasus compared to a Turkey that may be adrift economically, politically and socially. It is doubtful that such a Turkey would have much of a contribution to make to efforts to expand democracy and liberal markets in its region. Furthermore, a Turkey that is adrift could also become a liability in terms of building and ensuring the security of an East-West energy corridor as well as in terms of averting a 'clash of civilisations'. Clearly, Turkey's EU membership in the context of US-Turkish relations need not be seen as likely to lead to a 'win-lose' outcome.

114. For a comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU-Turkish relations on the Turkish-US relationship, see Önis and Yılmaz (2005), op. cit.

115. *Radikal*, 6 October 2006.

Energy issues and the East-West Energy Corridor

Possibly for the first time in Turkey domestic energy needs acquired 'high politics' urgency in January and February 2006. On a number of occasions pressure in natural gas pipelines fell and it looked like Turkish industry might come to a grinding halt, not to mention households in big cities, like Istanbul and Ankara, experiencing the risk of freezing in the cold winter conditions. Turkey's huge dependency on external sources of energy was revealed in almost a cruel manner. The issue was also taken up by the National Security Council of Turkey in its April meeting. This dependency is heavily centred on Russian and Iranian supplies, especially with regard to natural gas.[116] This is further complicated by the fact that the Russian natural gas distribution company, Gazprom, will be enjoying a significant say over the distribution of Russian gas in the Turkish market.[117] However, this dependency cuts both ways. Russia and Turkey are important trading partners and there is also a certain degree of interdependency here, in the sense that, just as Turkey needs Russia for these natural gas supplies, Turkey is an important market for natural gas but also a potential transit country for markets beyond Turkey. After decades if not centuries of rivalry and conflict Russian-Turkish relations over the last couple of years have been flourishing in all senses of the word. Maintaining a 'win-win' approach to the issue of energy between Russia and Turkey will be critical. The opportunities in terms of cooperation that this interdependence is creating and the importance of trust were highlighted by the Russian Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko, in a personal article published in the Turkish daily *Radikal* entitled 'There is more to this dream'.[118] Furthermore, in November 2005 the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, held a symbolic summit emphasising future cooperation prospects at the Turkish port city of Samsun where the Blue Stream gas pipeline ends.

Closely related to Turkey's energy dependency is also the fact that Turkey is situated right next to the very regions that not only produce but also hold huge reserves of oil and natural gas. The Middle East is estimated to hold more than 65 per cent while the area corresponding to the former Soviet Union holds 13 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves. Similar figures can be cited for natural gas reserves too. This brings up the issue of Turkey becom-

116. Turkey imports 19 billion cubic metres of Russian natural gas, 13 billion cubic metres via Bulgaria and the rest through the Blue Stream pipeline across the Black Sea. Turkey imports another 6.7 billion cubic metres from Iran via a pipeline and an additional 5.8 billion cubic metres from Algeria and Nigeria: *Radikal*, 3 January 2006. Turkish dependency on Russia is currently around 60 per cent and is expected to go up to 80 per cent if new alternatives cannot be found, *Radikal*, 22 January 2006.

117. This level of dependency has led some leading columnists to sound alarm bells; see Murat Yetkin, 'Kapitulasyonlar geri geldi', *Radikal,* 5 December 2005 and Ismet Berkan, 'Rus emperyalizmi ve Türkiye', *Radikal*, 4 January 2006. For an analysis of Gazprom's marketing strategies and Russian state interest in this strategy, see 'Russian energy: Customer relations, Gazprom-style', *The Economist*, 29 April 2006.

118. Viktor Khristenko, 'Bu rüyanın devamı da var', *Radikal*, 18 November 2005.

ing a major transit country for energy resources between producing and consuming countries. The United States had long been supportive of Turkey's effort to realise the Baku-Tiblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project to bring Azeri oil onto the world market independently of Russia. The project had initially been signed in 1994 and construction had started in September 2002. The project has been completed and the first shipment of oil reached the end of the line, Ceyhan on the Mediterranean coast, late in May 2006 with the actual inauguration ceremony scheduled for July. In the meantime, the European Union too has become interested in seeing Turkey become an alternative conduit of especially natural gas from source countries other than Russia. In that context, the EU has become keen to promote the Caspian-Turkey-Europe Natural Gas Pipeline Project as well as to incorporate Turkey into the South European Gas Ring. In the meantime, in late June 2006 the European Union and a number of governments on the route of this pipeline, including Turkey, signed an agreement lending political support to the eventual construction of the pipeline. Hence, Turkey is increasingly seen as an 'East-West' energy corridor. This naturally opens great opportunities economically and politically for Turkey.

However, three obstacles remain in the way of this 'corridor' becoming thoroughly operational. Firstly, Turkey will need to be stable and secure. In that respect the US as well as the EU will have a stake in the continuation of the reform process in Turkey. Secondly, at least Russian acquiescence to this 'corridor' project will have to be assured for especially Central Asian oil and natural gas to be able to transit Turkey. Russia itself is interested in using Turkey as a transit country for its own exports as well as Central Asian oil and gas, especially from Turkmenistan. This could lead to what a Turkish newspaper called a 'cold war in natural gas transportation'.[119] Turkey will have to display considerable skills in reconciling US and European Union interests to avoid dependency on Russia and maintaining the current 'win-win' spirit in Russian-Turkish relations. The third challenge is Iran. The nature of the current regime in Iran and its efforts to develop nuclear weapons may jeopardise the possibility of Turkey being used as a transit for Iranian natural gas. Especially if the US and the EU decide, one way or the other, to adopt sanctions or coercive measures against Iran. Additionally, Turkey becoming an energy 'corridor' will also depend on the reform process in the oil- and natural

119. 'Doğal gazda soğuk savaş', *Radikal*, 2 February 2006.

gas-producing countries of the region. In that context, Turkey's ability to field 'soft power' in support of political transformation and civilisational dialogue may become critical.

Turkey as a regional civil power, 'model' and the intercivilisational dialogue

The government appears to be positioning itself to play the role of a regional 'civil' power as well as conduct an intercivilisational dialogue. The Hamas overtures, the handling of the Danish 'cartoon crisis' and the efforts to seek Sunni support for the elections in Iraq are good recent examples. Traditionally, Turkey had shied away from getting involved in Middle Eastern politics let alone aspiring to a mediatory role in Arab-Israeli relations. At best, Turkey played a low-key role with respect to confidence-building exercises such as its role in the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security of the multilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks, the observers it provided for the multinational force in Hebron and its contributions to the monitoring of elections in Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East. In the past, from time to time the Turkish authorities were also called on to carry messages between Palestinians and Israelis as well as Syrians and Israelis. Recently, this tradition seems to be changing as the government appears to be seeking a higher profile.

These efforts undoubtedly do have a domestic political context. At a time when a lot seems to be going wrong for the Arab and Muslim world, the government wants to be seen making an effort to improve the situation. This is accompanied by greater self-confidence coming with the recognition that Turkey carries more prestige and weight in the Arab world and especially among Islamic groups who prefer to distance themselves from violence and seek to reform their countries. The reforms that this government has succeeded in implementing, accompanied by Turkey's EU membership prospects, are critical factors that contribute to the government's credibility in the Arab and Muslim world. This is further strengthened by the very fact that this is a government led by a political party with an Islamist legacy capable of demonstrating that Islam and democracy can actually co-exist. This is an important advantage that this government enjoys in the Arab world compared to the previous image of Turkey as a country

under the domination of a hardline secularist regime supported by the military. Often there was a reluctance to consider it as a democratic and pluralist regime. Instead in the Arab world emphasis was put on the secularist aspect of the Turkish regime and discomfort was expressed about the influence of the military. This had led some to point up a rather 'uneven fit' between the Turkish model and the Arab world that severely constrained those who in the 1990s had once advocated Turkey as a political model to emulate.[120] The coming to power of the AKP government in November 2002 and the manner in which this government succeeded in seeing through a wide range of reforms is, however, changing perceptions of Turkey in the Arab world.

This change of attitudes in the Arab world is a very critical reflection of the new government's approach to foreign policy. The improved relations with the Arab world have not been brought about at the cost of relations with other countries, such as for example Israel. The current government's policy is in stark contrast to the foreign policy that was developed by Necmettin Erbakan in the mid-1990s. Erbakan at the time led a political party, Refah, that emphasised political Islam much more conspicuously. This was reflected in his foreign policy too. He had taken a stance against the European Union and NATO. He advocated what he called an Islamic Common Market and even an Islamic NATO. He also did not shy away from using anti-Semitic language, besides being anti-Israeli. He entered into conflict with the Turkish state establishment when he tried to develop close relations with Iran, Libya and Syria yet at the same time provoked considerable discomfort among conservative Arab regimes including Egypt because of his efforts to cultivate close relations with radical Islamic groups. The beginning-of-the-end of Erbakan's stay in government had partly been provoked by these policies and in particular by the open support that his party had given early in 1997 to an anti-Israeli demonstration held in a suburb of Ankara. Erbakan's policies and style succeeded in alienating practically everybody, from leading conservative Arab governments to the Turkish establishment, not to mention Israel.

It is against this background that the current government's foreign policy becomes more striking and meaningful. The AKP government has succeeded in putting Turkey on a path of membership to the European Union and has not seen a contradiction between this policy and the party's Islamic legacy. Instead, its abil-

120. Ömer Taşpınar, *An Uneven Fit? The 'Turkish Model' and the Arab World* (Washington DC: The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at The Brookings Institution, August 2003).

ity to emphasise democratic pluralism and the need for reforms without throwing secularism into question has been central to its success and credibility. This explains the government's ability to maintain positive relations with the Arab world as well as Israel today. In April 2004 the Prime Minister raised the stakes with Israel when he accused the government of state-terrorism when the ageing leader of Hamas was assassinated by Israeli security forces. Yet at no point did he question Israel's right to exist in the region within secure borders and indeed in the spring of 2005 he visited Israel. He and his government continued to support expanding trade and other relations between the two countries. The visit of the Hamas representative, Khaled Mashal, is presented by government officials in the light of this foreign policy approach too. A similar observation can be made with regard to the cartoon crisis in February 2006. The government and the Prime Minister struggled to take the initiative during the crisis aimed at instigating a dialogue and reconciliation as well as seeking moderation from both sides in the conflict, and criticised the use of violence during demonstrations in the Muslim world bitterly and unequivocally.

An interesting manifestation of this change of heart in the Arab world towards Turkey occurred again at the Organisation of the Islamic Countries (OIC) meeting in late May 2003. Abdullah Gül made the issue of democratisation a foreign policy objective and stressed the need for Muslim countries to democratise and pay greater attention to human rights and women's rights and encourage greater transparency in governance. This may well have been the very first occasion when Turkey has openly attempted to live up to the frequent calls on it to become a 'model' for other Muslim countries with some credibility. The fact that this Foreign Minister came from a political party that had Islamist roots and that it happened in Tehran makes this transformation even more significant. The Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, made a similar speech emphasising self-criticism during the fifth Jeddah Economic Forum in Saudi Arabia in January 2004 and received a standing ovation, especially from the women who had been segregated from the men in the conference hall. Erdoğan took a similar position in respect to the growing tendency in the West to associate Islam with terrorism. During the sixth Euro-Asian Islamic Council meeting in September 2005, he argued in front of an audience of more than seventy leaders from the Muslim world that 'if

today the word "Muslim" is associated with terrorism we, as leaders of the Islamic world, must remind ourselves that this was not the teaching of Islam we received from our forefathers'. He also added that those in the Muslim world who saw the 'Katrina' disaster as a punishment of God on the United States were simply ignorant.

The changed image of Turkey in the Arab and Islamic world also accounts for the adoption in June 2004 by the OIC summit of the *Istanbul Declaration* with its emphasis on the need to move towards greater democracy in the Muslim world. This was a declaration on which Turkey had been working hard and could not have been adopted without the support of the Arab membership. At that summit, Turkey was rewarded with the election of a Turkish Secretary General for the OIC Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu. Not just the fact that he was Turkish, but also that this was the first time the OIC was electing rather than appointing a Secretary General, carried significant additional symbolic value.

These are very significant developments in terms of Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East and they can be partly attributed to Turkey's EU vocation. More and more Arab officials have openly welcomed Turkey's relations with the EU and have made statements to the effect that they consider this to be something positive in terms of their own economic and political development. Ironically, an Arab media that once used to bitterly criticise Turkey's western vocation during the Cold War and in the 1990s today is presenting Turkey's membership of the EU as a test case.[121] A test case of whether Europe will be able to live up to the liberal values it preaches by admitting Turkey into its ranks and thus shed its image of being a 'Christian Club'.[122] Some of these commentaries present this also as a critical test case of whether Samuel Huntingdon's infamous 'clash of civilisations' can be averted. Others have also raised the argument that Turkey advancing towards EU membership is welcome evidence against the idea that reform cannot coexist with Islam.[123] There were also those who argued in favour of Turkey's potential for constituting a 'model' for reform and transformation in the Middle East. One author went as far as arguing that 'it will be possible to learn from Turkey's experience. This will mean that the reforms will come via from within a great Islamic country'. The author went on to argue that reforms attained in this manner would become much more palatable than would otherwise be the case.[124] Another author

121. Further to the release of the European Commission's Progress Report in 2004 on Turkey, numerous articles appeared in the Arab media raising the question of whether the European Union was actually going to be able to pass the test of opening accession talks with a Muslim country that had met the necessary political criteria; see for example Gassan Serbel, 'Sınavın Adı Türkiye', *Al-Hayat* (London) 7 October 2004, reproduced in Turkish in *Radikal*, 15 October 2004.

122. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül, at a speech he delivered at the London School of Economics on 14 March 2005 reflected positively on how he had noticed that there were for the first time more journalists from the Arab and Muslim world than Europeans covering the issue of Turkish membership at the December 2004 EU Council summit. He noted 'their focus was the Summit decision on Turkey. The relief, joy and pride felt in the Islamic countries after the positive vote by the EU for a Muslim country is of great historic meaning'. The prime minister too noted that during his press conference after the European Council December 2004 summit there were 200 representatives from the Arab media and considered this is a clear sign signal that Turkey is emerging as a regional actor in the Middle East; reported in Bülent Aras, 'Turkey and the GCC: An Emerging Relationship', *Middle East Policy*, vol. XII, no. 4, Winter 2005.

123. Muhammed El Rumeyhi, *Al-Hayat* (London) 13 October 2004, reproduced in Turkish in *Radikal*, 23 October 2004.

124. Haşim Salih, 'Türkiye başardı, ya biz', *Şark-ül Evsat*, 25 December 2005, reproduced in Turkish in *Radikal*, 5 January 2005.

argued that the contest was between the model Turkey was offering in contrast to the one advocated by Osama Bin Laden.[125] This is particularly striking because the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, as he emerged from the Council meeting in Brussels in October 2005 where it was decided to start accession talks with Turkey, had remarked 'the US will be pleased while Bin Laden will be disappointed'.[126]

This emerging change of attitude towards Turkey in the Arab world is a remarkable one. Sadik J. Al-Azm, a leading Arab scholar, notes that the adherents of three important Arab political movements, the Arab left, the mainstream Arab Islamists and Arab nationalists, have traditionally condemned and criticised Turkey for a wide range of reasons. However, he goes on to observe that recently these people 'have come around to a new and different look at present-day Turkey'.[127] He recognises the transformation that Turkey has undergone through its engagement with the European Union and argues that the EU has a critical role to play in consolidating the gains of Turkish democracy in a manner similar to the way the EU 'aided Spain, Greece and Ireland to overcome their troubled fascist, militaristic and authoritarian pasts, respectively'. He then goes on to add that

> 'Both the Arab world and Islam in general are in dire need right now of a reasonably free, democratic and secular model that works in a Muslim society. Turkey is at the moment the most likely place for such a model to develop and mature, given the assistance of the EU-membership and the safeguards it provides. In other words, what we need here is a credible functioning counter-example to the failed Muslim Taliban instance that the Americans left us with in Afghanistan not so long ago, with all its horrors and deformities.'[128]

A more recent manifestation of Turkey as a civil power and an instigator of civilisational dialogue took place in the context of the Danish cartoon crisis in January 2006. The efforts of the Prime Minister were generally received favourably. His approach got support from numerous EU leaders and even culminated in a letter co-published with the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.[129] The letter was presented as part of the Alliance of Civilisations project launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in July 2005 at the instigation of Spain and

125. Yaser Ebu Hilal, 'Bin Laden ile Erdoğan tartışıyor', *Urdu El Ghad,* 4 October 2005, reproduced in *Radikal*, 1 November 2005.

126. *Radikal*, 4 October 2005.

127. Sadik J. Al-Azm, 'Islam and Secular Humanism', in *Islam and Secularism,* The Dialogue Series No. 2, Universitair Centrum Sint-Ignatius Antwerpen, 2005, p. 48.

128. Ibid., p. 47.

129. 'A call for respect and calm', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 February 2006.

Turkey. Both leaders stressed the importance of finding a balance between freedom of expression and respect for religious sensitivities. What distinguished Erdoğan's approach the most was his bitter criticism of the Muslim world for hurting their own cause by resorting to violence and behaving irrationally. His interventions also stressed the importance of reform and democracy. The significance of his role and maybe of the role that Turkey could play in helping to develop a dialogue between the Muslim world and the West was commented upon by an Austrian journalist.[130] The journalist noted that no Western leader could address the Muslim world in such a blunt and forceful manner with the right messages regarding reform. He recognised this as an important contribution that Turkey could make to the EU.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that subsequent to the opening of negotiations in October 2005 there were a number of articles that appeared in the Arab media stressing the importance of the decision in terms of developing a dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. It was interesting to note that the leader of the influential *Al-Ahram* daily in Cairo argued that with this decision the advocates of those who sought to brand the EU as simply a 'Christian club' had lost. This, the leader argued, would increase the prospects of dialogue between the two worlds.[131] The idea of Turkey playing this intercivilisational dialogue role has also been stressed by leaders in the US and the EU. Public figures from George Bush and Condoleezza Rice, representing the US administration, to Tony Blair and Jack Straw, representing the British presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2005, as well as the EU's High Representative Javier Solana and the European Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, are good examples of advocates of this role. This is also accompanied by a torrent of commentaries in prominent European as well as Arab newspapers that support the idea of Turkey as a model for transforming the Middle East and the Muslim world beyond it from regimes that produce all kinds of ills, including terrorism, to more democratic, accountable and economically-viable regimes. This transformation and Turkey's role is also seen as a panacea to an impending 'clash of civilisations'. But can Turkey really be a model and a conduit for intercivilisational dialogue?

Against this background there are also those who advocate caution.[132] The reasons range from the fact that the transformation of Turkey is not yet consolidated to the fact that Turkey is very

130. Gunter Nanning, 'Erdoğan'ın sözleri Türk Kahvesi gibi', in *Neue Kronung*, 12 February 2006, reproduced in *Radikal*, 20 February 2006.

131. *El-Ahram*, 6 October 2005, reproduced in *Radikal*, 10 October 2006.

132. Among the academics that have developed these arguments are Graham Fuller, 'Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities', *The Washington Quarterly*, 2004; Meliha Altunisik-Benli, 'The Turkish Model and Democratization in the Middle East', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 27, nos. 1 and 2 (Winter and Spring 2005); Everts, (2004) op. cit.; and Taşpınar (2004), op. cit.

much a *sui generis* case. The democratisation and transformation of Turkey that is so central to the 'model' and intercivilisational dialogue discourse has indeed come a very long way in Turkey over the last few years. However, the gains from this process are still in a fragile state. Turkey needs a consolidation process. In that respect, the EU's decision in October 2005 to open accession talks with Turkey was very important. However, there is tremendous resistance to Turkish membership among many politicians in Europe and a large proportion of the European public. So far there is no candidate country that has started negotiations without actually completing them and becoming an EU member. Of course there is no reason why there could not always be a first case. In Turkey there is a lot of concern and anxiety about whether Turkey, if it met all the criteria, would actually be allowed to become a member. The reference in the Negotiation Framework to the fact that 'negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand' fuels this anxiety. In the absence of a strong EU anchor, keeping Turkish transformation on a track leading to Turkey being worthy of being regarded as a 'model' may become difficult.

Secularism is an important, even if problematic, characteristic of the Turkish system that lends the Turkish model its uniqueness in the Muslim world. It is the product of a very long, slow and often painful process of westernisation and secularisation of politics and law that may be extremely difficult to emulate in a short period of time elsewhere in the Muslim world.[133] The Arab world by and large and the current regime in Iran are not particularly receptive to secularism. The debate over both the provisional constitution for Iraq as well as the final one adopted in September 2005 have clearly demonstrated the limits to secularism in the Arab world. Just as there are commentaries in the Arab world praising the political developments in Turkey, there are also many in the Islamic world who see the Turkish model as pure and simple heresy. In Turkey's case secularism has been central to its democratisation and in Turkey there is a strong consensus that without secularism Turkey would not be where it currently is today.[134] Turkey's secularism is clearly far from perfect. Tension has for some time been building up between the government, which would like to soften some of the sharper and more rigid aspects of secularism, such as the ban on the wearing of headscarves by women at universities and public institutions, and those circles

133. One Arab columnist has highlighted this point: Abdullah Ebru Rumman, 'Turk modeli Araplari asar', *Rey* (Jordanian daily) 29 January 2006, reproduced in *Radikal*, 2 February 2006.

134. See Binnaz Toprak, 'Islam and Democracy in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2 (June 2005).

that see such initiatives as an attempt to increase the role of religion in Turkey. Against this background, the violent attack on the judges sitting in a session of the Council of State in May 2006 provoked a major crisis in Turkey, leading some to even question Turkey's EU vocation.[135] Clearly, Turkey is still far from having found the right equilibrium between the exigencies of secularism and the freedom of individuals to express their religious identity. This also partly explains why some in Turkey have become nervous of their country being presented as a 'model'.

Many feathers were ruffled in Turkey when in April 2004 the then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, reflecting on the future form of government in Iraq, remarked 'there will be an Islamic Republic of Iraq just as there are other Islamic republics such as Turkey and Pakistan' and went on to add 'there is no reason why Islam cannot coexist with democracy... Why shouldn't an Islamic country, such as Turkey, also be a democracy, as is Turkey?'[136] The Chief of the General Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, was quick to point out that it was not appropriate to present Turkey as a model (*emsal*) for other countries, as Turkey had unique values and was secular. He emphasised the difference between being a Muslim country as opposed to an Islamic state. There were also concerns expressed that presenting Turkey as a model for Middle Eastern countries could jeopardise Turkey's European vocation.

Similar points can be made about ethnicity in Turkey. The Turkish state has come a long way from its old image of a state that insisted on a rigid understanding of national homogeneity and brutally suppressed any manifestations of identity that could undermine this unity. Turkey was once notorious for denying the existence of Kurdish and other ethnic groups in Turkey. Over the last few years, with the adoption of the reforms to meet the Copenhagen political criteria, Turkey has become much more pluralist and the government much more ready to accept cultural and ethnic diversity. A couple of years ago it would have been unimaginable that the Turkish government would accept broadcasting and education in minority languages, including in Kurdish languages. Clearly, the state has become much more at ease with the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in the country. However, there still exist at least two challenges to Turkey's stability with regard to the Kurds.

In spite of the considerable progress recently achieved concerning the cultural and human rights of Kurds, there has been an

135. David Howden, 'Turkey EU project is in danger of collapse', *The Independent*, 24 May 2006.

136. 'Powell'dan gaf: Türkiye Islam cumhuriyeti', *Radikal*, 2 April 2004. For the original text see 'Interview – Secretary of State Colin Powell with Maybrit Illner of German ZDF-1 April 2004, Berlin, Germany; it can be accessed at: http://www.usembassy.state.gov /germany/policy/powell_berlin- mitte.html.

upsurge in violence. After the capture and trial of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, in 1999 violence had pretty much died down. However, the PKK in June 2004 started to mount terrorist attacks. These increased significantly especially during the course of the summer of 2005. This has led to criticism of the government and also to calls for the re-introduction of anti-terror laws that had been eliminated by recent reforms. These criticisms were intensified when the Prime Minister made a critical speech in August 2005 in Diyarbakır, a heavily Kurdish-populated city in south-east Turkey, acknowledging that Turkey continued to have a Kurdish problem and that the state had in the past made mistakes. He promised greater democracy, freedom and economic support to address it. He was accused by the opposition of playing into the hands of ethnic terrorism and endangering Turkey's national unity. This became an occasion for opponents of the EU process to raise their voice too. The Kurdish problem rose to the top of the political agenda in April 2006 after large demonstrations and rioting took place, especially in Diyarbakır. On this occasion the Prime Minister seemed to slip into using populist language and in his address to his party branch in Diyarbakır early in May 2006 he avoided putting emphasis in his talk on Kurdish identity. In his talk he mentioned the word 'Kurd' only once, suggesting how far the political mood had changed as a result of the rise in violence. It seems that with national elections in 2007 approaching the government will remain reluctant to take any new steps going beyond those reforms that have already been adopted.

The situation is further complicated by a Kurdish leadership in Turkey that entertains the nationalist agenda of the PKK. In this regard the EU, unlike the Turkish state, has failed to convince this leadership to respect diversity of opinion and the human rights of Kurds especially with regard to freedom of opinion and expression. They remain reluctant to allow room for opinions other than their own. They are also very much wrapped up in ideological discourses and grand schemes rather than adopting a pragmatic approach and addressing and trying to solve the day-to-day problems of Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey.[137] It is still unclear whether Turkey will be able to meet this challenge and succeed in either neutralising the influence of this nationalist leadership or incorporating them into day-to-day politics. The developments on the Kurdish problem are also closely tied up with the develop-

137. See Bülent Aras, 'Kürt siyasetinin açmazları', *Radikal Iki*, 7 September 2005. For similar observations see also Karl Vick, 'As Turkey Reaches Out, Kurdish Politicians Look Back', *Washington Post*, 6 October 2005.

ments in northern Iraq. It has already been mentioned that Turkish foreign policy towards Iraq and especially developments in northern Iraq has changed significantly. However, there is the risk that developments in northern Iraq may undermine Turkish stability. A Turkey that fails to manage its own Kurdish problem and the situation in northern Iraq would clearly be far from constituting a 'model' for the region.

Nevertheless, as Aras notes, for Turkey the 'task of putting its house in order created self-confidence in regional policy'.[138] In many ways it is this confidence that lies behind the ambition of the current government to develop policies associated with becoming a country that is a 'regional civil power' and that can support 'civilisational dialogue'. The vision for such policies has been articulated on numerous occasions by Ahmet Davutoğlu, chief foreign policy advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister. He has argued that the political development, economic capabilities, dynamic social forces and ability to reconcile Islam and democracy at home are the qualities that offer Turkey the possibility to develop and implement such policies. Interestingly, Davutoğlu is uncomfortable with the notion of Turkey playing the role of a 'bridge' between the 'East' and the 'West' on the grounds that such a role entails passivity. Instead he defines a more ambitious and central role for Turkey. He argues that a self-confident Turkey would have an ability to add its own flair to a 'dialogue' between the two worlds based on its cultural, economic, historic, political and social connections as well as experiences in both worlds.[139]

In the meantime, as long as Turkey's democratisation and overall transformation continues, the best manifestation of Turkey's significance as a 'regional civil power' would be that Turkey can continue to be a modest example and a concrete and tangible reference point of the benefits that a democratic and liberal market economy provides in terms of stability, relative prosperity and security. The consequences of economic growth in Turkey are bound to spill over into regions neighbouring Turkey, including Middle Eastern countries. The figures offered on foreign trade in Annex III of this volume speak for themselves. Turkey's trade with neighbouring countries has increased significantly. This trade is likely to continue to grow and be an important source of growth in the region given that the size of Turkey's GDP is almost equal to the size of Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iraq and Syria put together.[140] Business interac-

138. Aras (2005), p. 2, op. cit.

139. For an articulation of his ideas, see Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Türkiye merkez ülke olmalı', *Radikal*, 26 February 2004.

140. The total GDP for these countries is 332.7 as opposed to Turkey's 353.2 billion USD. Calculated from Annex II.

tions will help to increase contacts, the development of mutual interests and interdependence as well as modestly assist the emergence of a civil society. All in all, these constitute the basis of Turkey's 'soft power' to induce transformation in Turkey's region and especially in the Middle East. Furthermore, the sum of these interactions and the transformation it would induce would also constitute the framework within which a 'civilisational dialogue', particularly between the West and the Muslim world, can be nurtured.

However, there is currently one major challenge. The recent crisis over Iran and the manner in which the international community manages it may have important implications in terms of Turkey's credentials in the region. Until very recently the Turkish 'model' was seen as the more attractive one compared to Iran. This may be changing. The manner in which the American administration is handling the Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions is helping Iran to use the crisis to galvanise popular support in the region. The rise in oil prices and the general shortage in energy are helping to project the image of a powerful country that can challenge the United States in the region. The Iranian regime's confrontational style and populist discourse towards the United States and Israel on some of the hot issues of the Middle East, including the Palestinian-Israeli problem, is succeeding in mobilising masses that want to see an immediate change in the *status quo*. As far as the viewpoint of these masses is concerned, this may well put the Turkish model at a disadvantage, as it is much more gradualist, reform-oriented and much more dependent on dialogue and on seeking 'win-win' outcomes to conflicts. The Iraqi conflict is also exacerbating this situation by driving a wedge between Sunni and Shi'a Arab identities, risking a polarisation in the region that would clearly benefit Iran. Under these circumstances, an escalation of the conflict between Iran and the West and the actual use of force against Iran would bring serious limitations to Turkey's long-term potential role in the region.

Conclusion: between the EU and three troublesome regions

4

The European integration project has been unequivocally successful in expanding the zone of stability, peace and prosperity in Europe. This zone is increasingly referred to as a zone of 'democratic peace' where the expectation of violent conflict is zero. The early stages of this process overcame the historic rivalry between France and Germany, an achievement that was considered to be virtually impossible at the time. Subsequently, the European Community incorporated the formerly authoritarian and military-dominated Mediterranean countries of Greece, Spain and Portugal into the zone. The European Union has more recently achieved an even greater task by anchoring Central and Eastern Europe into this zone. The Balkans, the last remaining trouble spot of Europe, is being engaged by the European Union with at least some prospects of being drawn into the zone of 'democratic peace'. Conditionality attached to prospects of membership and actual membership itself has been the most potent tool of the European Union in drawing countries into this zone. In this author's view, Turkey constitutes the next challenge to expanding as well as consolidating the zone of 'democratic peace' for neighbouring regions which, for geographical reasons, do not have prospects of membership.

Alexander Wendt in his *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) argues that relations between states are shaped by distinct 'cultures of anarchy'.[141] Two of these are of particular interest in the context of the Middle East. The first one is the Hobbesian (derived from the ideas in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, 1651) culture, characterised by deep mistrust of the international system and reliance on self-help rather than any cooperative schemes for solving conflicts. The second one is a Kantian (derived from the ideas in Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, 1795) culture. It exists when states share a body of common values and norms, often associated with pluralist democracies, and enjoy friendly societal relations too. The relationship between such states is characterised by cooperation and a general sense of security and stability.

141. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Decision-makers and societies steeped in a Hobbesian culture will visualise the international arena as one where one can trust no one but oneself. The international arena will be seen as being anarchic or dominated by conflict. This vision of international relations will in turn be supported by a domestic political structure that emphasises national unity, national security and national sacrifice. Questioning and criticising these tenets will not be tolerated. Typically such countries are characterised by domestic political structures that support little tolerance for alternative views and arguments or cultures. In many ways domestic political structures are perpetuated through the presentation of an anarchic world surrounding and threatening the country. International relations are depicted as a 'win-lose' game whose outcome is often determined by 'hard power' capabilities and use of coercion.

On the other hand, a Kantian culture is associated with a world of 'democratic peace' and commitment to seeking 'win-win' outcomes to international problems and conflicts. Such outcomes are ensured by the willingness and ability to rely on and deploy 'soft power' rather than 'hard power'. In a country whose decision-making culture is dominated by Kantian values, there may well be advocates of policies that are a function of Hobbesian considerations. However, such decision-makers or policy advocates would not be in a situation to undermine the dominant culture and the domestic political structures with which it is associated. The domestic system would always be capable of questioning the wisdom of such policies. Furthermore, the level of security and trust in the system would be capable of resisting such occasional challenges. The very nature of a Kantian system would also be one where states would be linked with each other with extensive inter-societal contacts and cooperation. These interactions and the level of interdependence between Kantian states would constitute another set of safety mechanisms against intrusions of Hobbesian thinking. Trust-building and dialogue as opposed to confrontation and mistrust would become dominant features characterising relations between such states or cultures.

Traditionally, Turkish thinking towards international relations has been deeply influenced by the Hobbesian vision. The international environment has traditionally been seen as being anarchical and therefore creating the imperative need to be militarily strong and to be prepared to use military force for 'win-lose'

outcomes. Little tolerance could be permitted for dissent on fundamental foreign policy issues. Economic and political sacrifices were expected to ensure national security. Furthermore, the violence surrounding the Kurdish problem and the security challenges created by the PKK left Turkey on numerous occasions stressing the importance of military capabilities and methods over political ones. Turkey regularly intervened in northern Iraq and continuously suspected neighbouring countries of supporting the PKK and of wanting to undermine Turkey's territorial integrity. Turkey's approach to Cyprus and to its relations with Greece was similarly characterised by Hobbesian thinking.

Yet in the course of the last few years Turkey has been experiencing a major political and economic transformation. This transformation has brought Turkey much closer to Kantian values. This is manifested in both Turkish domestic and foreign policy behaviour. Domestically, the country has become much more open to pluralism and much more at ease with its cultural and ethnic diversity. Its economy has become vibrant and a pole of attraction for other economies in the region. International cooperation and improving relations with neighbouring countries has also acquired importance for Turkish decision-makers. Civil society has begun to play a growing role in domestic politics but also in foreign policy-making. There was a time when it was almost taboo to talk of Kurds in Turkey. They were then only referred to disparagingly as 'mountain Turks'. Whereas today Turkey is slowly but surely coming to terms not only with a federated Kurdish state in northern Iraq but also with the use of the term 'Kurdistan' which would once have been massively rejected. Similar observations can be made about the Armenian problem. The Turkish public is becoming more inquisitive and critical about official knowledge on this issue. Furthermore, on another extremely sensitive issue, the Cyprus problem, Turkey has completely revised its position and advocates integration of the two communities rather than their separation.

This transformation of Turkey has major implications in terms of the European integration project in general and in particular with regard to this project's ability to 'export' or expand the zone of stability, peace and prosperity – the zone of 'democratic peace'. This paper has argued that Turkey is becoming crucial to the expansion of such a zone not just because of its geographical location but because of the way in which Turkey has evolved as a result

of this transformation. Hence, when assessing the impact of Turkey's membership on the EU, it is paramount that this analysis should also take account of the meaning of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy transformation in the context of the future of Turkey's neighbourhood. In the meantime, what might best be hoped for is that Turkey can stay on course and that, rather than being a 'model', Turkey can serve as an example from which lessons can be drawn. As Emerson and Tocci point out, as long as Turkey can continue to be integrated with the European Union it could become a 'spearhead' for values associated with the EU.[142] It can be a 'source of inspiration' for regions otherwise long steeped in a Hobbesian culture of anarchy. Furthermore, a growing Turkish economy as well as a vibrant business world and civil society are themselves becoming tools of soft power by increasing interdependence between Turkey and neighbouring countries.

However for Turkey to wield 'soft-power' and contribute to the expansion of 'democratic peace' there are three challenges that need to be met. It goes without saying that Turkey must continue its transformation and complete its reform process. Undoubtedly in Turkey there are still circles that are resisting reform. They do indeed stand a chance of derailing the process, especially considering that Turkey is still grappling with difficult domestic problems. These problems range from finding a manageable solution to the Kurdish problem that goes beyond just recognising basic cultural rights, to reconciling democracy and secularism with Islam in a manner that gives the country a sense of stability and security. How these problems will be addressed and managed and whose preferences will prevail in the long term will also depend a lot on how the second challenge is met. For the last couple of years, the challenge of EU membership was always Turkey's challenge. Few in Europe believed that Turkey could meet the challenge. Many actually feared and some hoped that Turkey would never be able to meet the Copenhagen political criteria and transform itself to qualify as a candidate for membership of the EU. This time the challenge is Europe's challenge. Will the EU remain engaged in Turkey's membership prospects and instil a sense of confidence among the reformers in Turkey that Europe will indeed be ready to admit the centuries-old 'other' in Europe into its ranks when the accession negotiations are completed? The relationship between these two challenges is critical.

The third challenge results from the very fact that Turkey

142. Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, *Turkey as Bridgehead and Spearhead – Integrating EU and Turkish Foreign Policy* (EU-Turkey Working Paper No. 1, CEPS, Brussels, August 2004).

neighbours turbulent regions in turbulent times. Iran and Iran's nuclear weapon ambitions, the future of Iraq and especially northern Iraq, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, democratisation in the Arab and greater Muslim world, resolution of ethnic and bilateral conflicts in the Caucasus as well as the issues of secure energy supplies and intercivilisational dialogue are some of the issues crowding Turkey's foreign policy agenda. The transformation of Turkey's foreign policy from one characterised by its 'coercive regional power' undertones to a 'regional civil power' has important implications in addressing these issues. The more stable Turkey is, the more the Turkish economy will grow, the more business and civil society will enjoy influence and in turn the more Turkey will have 'soft power' tools to field in relation to these foreign policy issues. This trend and the answers to the third challenge will in turn very much depend on how the above two challenges are managed. The EU has succeeded in having an impact on Turkey's 'culture of anarchy' and moving the country out of a Hobbesian world towards a Kantian one. The process is far from being complete. However, it should be possible to say that the more Turkey is absorbed into a zone of 'democratic peace' the more it is likely to constitute a source of stability and security as well as prosperity for the very regions that are in turmoil. This would mean more reform, more democracy, more stability, more economic activity, more jobs and less violent conflict for the people of these regions. In turn this would also mean more jobs and economic growth for Europeans but also a more stable EU neighbourhood, more secure and reasonably priced energy, a better dialogue between cultures as well as fewer asylum seekers, less illegal migration and less organised crime. The European Union, Turkey and its region should choose to help consolidate this 'win-win' game before it is too late.

Comparative Turkish economic performance,
1995 and 2005

	1995	**2005**
GDP (Billion)[1]	166.40	353.20
Agriculture[1]	15 %	11.7%
Services[1]	52 %	58.5%
Industry[1]	33 %	29.8%
GDP Real Growth Rate[1]	- 5 %	7.3%
FDI Inflows (USD Million)[2]	885.00	9.650.00
Inflation Rate[3]	106 %	7.7%
Interest Rate (Overnight)[3]	106.31 %	14.8%
Total Foreign Trade USD Billion[1]	57.30	189.90
Total Export (USD Billion)[1]	21.60	73.40
Total Import (USD Billion)[1]	35.70	116.50
Tourism Revenues[4] (USD Million)	4.957.00	13.929
Total Arrivals (in thousands of people)[4]	7,726.00	21,122.00

Sources

1. Turkey: Economic and Financial Data National Summary 2005, www.die.gov.tr (consulted 12 June 2006).
2. Foreign Economic Relations Board, www.deik.org.tr (consulted 10 June 2006).
3. Central Bank of Republic of Turkey, www.tcmb.gov.tr (consulted 10 June 2006).
4. Tourism Investors Association, www.ttyd.org.tr (consulted 18 June2006).

Comparative economic performance of Turkey and neighbouring countries, 2005

	GDP (USD Billion)	GDP Real Growth Rate	Per Capita Income (Purchasing Power Parity USD Thousands)	Total Foreign Trade (USD Billion)	Population (2005 est. in Millions)
Turkey	353.2	7.3%	7,900	189.9	69.60
Greece	219.6	3.2%	22,800	66.7	10.66
Bulgaria	25.8	5.5%	9,000	27.5	7.45
Romania	79.9	5.0%	8,300	65.9	22.3
Moldova	3.0	6.0%	2,100	3.27	4.45
Ukraine	82.2	5.5%	6,800	75.4	47.42
Russia	772.1	5.5%	10,700	370.0	143.42
Georgia	5.1	7.5%	3,400	4.0	4.67
Armenia	3.6	8.0%	5,100	2.3	2.98
Azerbaijan	12.0	18.7%	4,600	10.8	7.91
Iran	203.3	5.7%	8,100	98.0	68.01
Iraq	94.1	2.4%	3,400	37.4	26.07
Syria	27.0	3.5%	3,500	12.3	18.44

Sources

1. Columns 1, 2, 3: IMF World Economic Outlook, www.imf.org (consulted 12 June 2006).
2. Columns 4 and 5: CIA World Factbook, www.ciafactbook.com (consulted 12 June 2006).

**Foreign trade relations between Turkey
and its neighbours, 1995 and 2004**

	1995			2004		
	Export	Import	TOTAL (USD Millions)	Export	Import	TOTAL
Greece	210	201	411	1,171	594	1,765
Bulgaria	183	402	585	893	955	1,848
Romania	301	437	738	1,229	1,683	2,912
Moldova	7	15	22	65	26	91
Ukraine	199	856	1,055	564	2,467	3,301
Russia	1,238	2,082	3,321	1,852	8,996	10,847
Georgia	68	50	118	199	300	499
Azerbaijan	161	22	183	401	135	536
Iran	268	689	958	813	1,962	2,775
Iraq	371	488	859	1,821	468	2,288
Syria	272	258	530	391	357	748
Egypt	246	211	457	472	254	726
Israel	240	117	356	1,283	713	1,996
Total	3,764	5,828	**9,592**	11,153	18,911	**30,064**

Source

Foreign Economic Relations Board Country Reports, www.deik.org (consulted 14 June 2006).

Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)
AP	(i) Accession Partnership
	(ii) Additional Protocol
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CHP	Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)
DEIK	Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (*Dış Ekonomik Ilişikiler Kurulu*)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EP	European Parliament
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRDF	Human Resources Development Foundation (*İnsan Kaynağını Geliştirme Vakfı*)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IKV	Economic Development Foundation (*Iktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı*)
MHP	Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPAA	National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*
NSC	National Security Council
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Countries
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı*)
TIM	Turkish Exporters Assembly (*Türkiye İhracatçılar Meclisi*)
TOBB	Turkish Union of Chambers (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği*)
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TUSAID	Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
USD	US dollars

Chaillot Papers

Books

Today, Turkey is caught between two sets of challenges. The first set includes the typical conventional challenges that relate to national security, territorial integrity and political stability. The second set of challenges has to do with maintaining the pace of political reform, gaining access to markets, ensuring economic stability and growth in the region, as well as securing energy supplies. Above all, but closely related to these challenges, is of course the ultimate challenge for Turkey: EU membership.

How will Turkey respond to these challenges? What are Turkey's immediate foreign policy concerns and options? What are the new patterns of Turkish foreign policy making and behaviour? Can Turkey indeed play the role of a model for the region's transformation towards democratisation and engineer an 'intercivilisational dialogue'?

This *Chaillot Paper* deals with these questions and presents a number of options for Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times.