Turkey in Europe: Record, Challenges and the Future

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Turkey (and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire) and Europe has been long, often tense or openly hostile, and is in some senses fundamental to the identities and development of each; this relationship also adds a considerable burden of suspicion to Turkey's current aim of joining the European Union (EU). This essay examines these propositions by providing an account of the history of the relationship and of Europe's recent, conditional approach to Turkish accession to the EU. While accepting that much remains to be done at the institutional level to bring Turkey into alignment with EU norms, this paper argues that Turkish accession is a historic opportunity for Europe that it should not squander. Despite mixed signals, further development of Turkey's democracy along the path to Europe is the most likely course. The story is not "never-ending", but the end will not come quickly.

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The relationship between Turkey (and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire) and Europe has been long, often tense or openly hostile, and is in some senses fundamental to the identities and development of each. Since Atatürk created the Turkish Republic and set it on a new path to modernity and Europe, and especially since Turkey made clear its ambition to join the European Union (EU) to consolidate this direction, the historical relationship—and especially the cruder contrasts between Christian Europe and Muslim Turkey—has added a considerable burden of suspicion to achieving EU membership. The EU has decided that while Turkey sufficiently fulfils its basic membership criteria to begin accession negotiations it is not yet sufficiently aligned with the EU's *acquis communautaire*, but there is a more general unease about the cultural differences that remains. This essay examines these propositions by providing an account of the history of the relationship and of Europe's approach to Turkish accession to the EU. While accepting that much remains to be done at the institutional level to bring Turkey into alignment with EU norms, it argues that Turkish accession is a historic opportunity for Europe that it should not squander.

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From the Ottomans to the Republic

Historically, Islam was intent on expanding its sphere of influence, and only a century after Muhammad's death in AD 632 it had entered Europe through the Iberian Peninsula, where it remained for more than 700 years, and made its way even into what is now France. In the East, the Ottoman takeover of Constantinople in 1453, after more than a century of Turkish conquest in the Balkans, was a signal to European states that they faced a major—almost existential—threat. As Davies explained, "Islam's conquests turned Europe into Christianity's main base."[2] Turks subsequently made even bolder incursions into Europe, conquering Hungary in the 16th century (not to mention their expansion in the Near East). But in 1683 the Ottoman's (second) siege of Vienna was broken and its armies began a retreat that lasted for the next two centuries. Permeating the confrontation between Turkey and Europe had been a contest between Islam and Christendom,[3] but coinciding with the reduction in its intensity Christendom itself began to fracture. Starting with the 16th century Protestant Reformation, Europe entered a period of social, economic, technological and intellectual ferment which led to bitter divisions within Christianity and the decline of Papal temporal power, a vast expansion of European power and imperial outreach, the development of nationalism, and the rise of religious and social turmoil and inter-state wars (what a Europeanist of *la longue durée* might term "Europe's civil war"). Europeans continued to see Turkey as 'the Other' (moving perhaps from the charge of 'Infidel' to that of 'Uncivilized', as Delanty argues), with the late 18th century English parliamentarian and conservative thinker Edmund Burke declaring that the Turks were "worse than savages."[4]

The Ottomans at their height controlled a vast empire, but gradually became aware that their own relative power was declining. As a result, in the 19th century they turned to Europeans for the education of their elites, finances for their ailing treasury, and even ideas (including, in the case of the Young Turks, ideas about nationalism). World War I, in which the Ottomans allied with Germany, led to the collapse of their now-brittle empire. Turkish revolutionaries, eventually under the leadership of Atatürk, established the Turkish Republic in 1923 and embarked on a program of rapid modernization. The introduction of a Latin alphabet, surnames, the weekend, civic nationalism, secular government, and ultimately multi-party democracy was the work of Atatürk and his successors.[5]

Europe, in this brief account, defined itself historically to some extent in opposition to the Ottoman Empire because of the latter's essentially Islamic character and expansionist intent. But by the beginning of the 20th century, with the Empire weakened and a growing recognition of the importance of oil to their economies, European imperialists asserted their own expansionist plans for capturing the Ottoman Empire's extensive Middle Eastern possessions. World War I provided the chance to cloak their greed with high-mindedness. At the end of 1916, the Allies included among their war goals "The liberation of the peoples who now live beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks, and the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself radically alien to Western civilization."[6]

> Much has changed over the past decade, but the long interaction between Turkey and Europe persists, and with it the promise of an even closer and more productive engagement

There followed a complicated game of intrigue between the Allies themselves, in association with various aspiring Arab rulers and Zionist advocates, which redrew the map of the Middle East in ways that made more sense to Western goals than to local conditions, and which forms the basis of many of the conflicts in the Middle East today. Carving up the Ottoman Empire was the intent of the 1917 Agreement of St Jean de Maurienne between Britain, France and Italy, in which Italy entered the war on the promise of a part of Anatolia; but Greece, too, had ambitions in Asia Minor, the heartland of Turkey. By the end of the war, the Allied governments planned to divide up the entire Ottoman Empire for themselves. Their maneuvers led to a declaration of independence by the Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, and a hard-fought but ultimately successful war of independence that lasted until late 1922. The Sultan was deposed in November that year, and, as Fromkin put it, "Thus in 1922 the centuries-old Ottoman Empire came to an end; and Turkey, which for 500 years had dominated the Middle East, departed from Middle Eastern history to seek to make herself European."[7]

Europe and the Republic

The rise of the Turkish Republic introduced a new dynamic into the relations between Europe and Turkey, driven to a large extent by the changed geopolitical circumstances and mutual economic needs. Turkey was a neutral power during World War II and joined the Council of Europe in 1949, but its fear of Soviet expansion saw it join NATO in 1952. Turkey played a calculated, but intelligent, game during the period after the war. The communist coup in Prague in February 1948 and the Soviet blockade of Berlin in June the same year signaled the end of the grand anti-Nazi alliance between the West and the Soviets and the beginning of a Cold War which would have repercussions across the entire world. Geopolitically, Turkey was an important element in the West's defensive alliances in Europe, and Russia's traditional 19th-century policy of trying either to dominate or undermine Turkey meant that an alliance with the Soviet bloc (or, later, with the Non-Aligned Movement) was unlikely. Turkey received aid under the Marshall Plan for its economic development and NATO membership had obvious benefits for modernizing its military. However, it was not systematically wooed into the Western orbit. Germany willingly accepted Turkish guest workers from 1961 following the erection of the Berlin Wall to address its labor shortages, but has been reluctant to accept them into its society; the same is true in other European states. Islamic practices more broadly are not welcomed in Europe, especially when conflated with the challenge of increased illegal immigration into Europe from Islamic (generally North African) states. The relative lack of integration, even in subsequent generations, and the physical barrier imposed by the *burqa* have created resentment amongst Europeans, even acknowledging the difficulties of properly measuring integration.[8] Now that Europe's internal security problem has been settled by the developments that have led to the European Union, and the divisions of the Cold War ended, Europe confronts an issue that goes to the heart of what it means to be 'European': the possible entry of Turkey into the EU (an objective that Turkey has pursued with the EU's organizational predecessors since the late 1950s).

What then does it mean for Europe, so long nurturing the idea that it was built on the foundations provided by the philosophy of ancient Greece, the law of ancient Rome, and the Christianity of ancient Jerusalem (even if that is a somewhat simplistic and self-congratulatory idea), to accept within its ranks a country in which the vast majority of citizens are Muslims? One need not hark back to the time of the Crusades, as populist European politicians sometimes do, to claim fundamental differences between Islamic and (nominally) Christian societies. The attacks against the West by extremists on September 11, 2001 and beyond—notably in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005—have lent credibility to these sorts of claims. Two areas of Islam, in particular, touch modern European sensibilities: the lack of separation between church and state, and the subordination of women to men. Both come together in what Europeans see as an assault on freedom of speech, whether in the 1989 death *fatwā* against Salman Rushdie for his novel *The Satanic Verses*, in the violence in Denmark and elsewhere in protest against the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in 2005 that offended many Muslims, or in the 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and the threats against his collaborator, the apostate Muslim Ayaan Hirsi Ali, for their film *Submission I*.[9]

Formally speaking, there is no cultural or religious test for membership of the EU, though there are political, legal and economic preconditions that candidate countries must meet (on the basis of some sense of geographical contiguity). These 'Copenhagen criteria', applicable to all aspiring EU members, were summarized as follows: "Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union."[10] Turkey, having become a candidate country in 1999 and been involved in accession negotiations since October 2005, is annually tested, and has consistently fallen short of many of the additional criteria in the 33 areas of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU's vast body of laws and judicial decisions. EU progress reports provide a mixed account of developments in Turkey, highlighting the contrast between the increasingly developed formal institutionalization of democracy and human rights, and the lagging attitudes and practices by the political and military elites, a theme repeated in the 2010 report.[11]

There remain a number of central concerns about Turkey's political institutions, such as about the limits to civilian oversight of the military, and of the military's interventions into public debates, its judicial role, and its budget

At the same time, Europeans themselves are questioning the basis of their Union, not simply because of recent economic problems within the euro-zone but because of a deep-seated uncertainty about how far and in what sense they are one people. Indeed, these are two aspects of the very same issue. Current difficulties with the euro, the common currency of 17 of the EU member states, reflect very different attitudes of Europeans to fundamental issues around the honesty of budget reporting, attitudes towards borrowing funds, retirement age and income, and corruption within state instrumentalities. To put it bluntly, 'thrifty' Europeans confront 'profligate' Europeans, and wonder just how much they have in common.

Turkey's Responses

Waiting—perhaps stuck—in the ante-chamber to "Europe" has led to some interesting developments within Turkey itself. Accession to the EU has become a point of political difference between some of Turkey's political parties and there has been a reaction against what some see as the humiliating position of a supplicant. Turkey has asserted an increasingly assertive role for itself in the Middle East, recently strengthening relations with its neighbors Syria and Iran, distancing itself from Israel,[12] and acting as a broker in the continuing disputes over Iran's unclear nuclear ambitions.[13]

Turkey's foreign policy during the past few years may have given it greater sway amongst the regimes in the Middle East—which some analysts call "neo-Ottomanism"—but has strained its long-term relationship with Israel almost to breaking point, and set others wondering about its relationship with the West. The Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, sought to allay these fears, declaring in mid-2010 that "I consider it very wrong to interpret Turkey's interests with other geographic regions as it breaking from the West, turning its back on the West or seeking alternatives to the West. Turkey is part of Europe."[14] Turkey's dynamic Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, has recently, and not unreasonably, made a critique of the global order, and staked a claim for Turkey's role in redefining it. Turkey, he argued, should be "among the countries that will lay the foundations of this order." This development is significant. As Kardaş explains, "In the post-Cold War era, Turkey has been increasingly engaged in the diplomatic affairs of its surrounding regions. A large part of Davutoğlu's vision and proactive agenda builds on this legacy. However, Davutoğlu seeks to move beyond this regional focus and to assert a role for Turkey on the global level."[15]

While trading to some extent on its Islamic credentials in its foreign policy (and more systematically on an ethical approach to building a new international system), Turkey has also seen something of a resurgence of Islamic observance internally, though the demographics of villagers migrating to the cities may have contributed more to this than a reaction against the apparent hostility of many Europeans to Islam. Culturally, the situation in Turkey is mixed, with European influences on dress, music, food and literature relatively strong in the larger Turkish cities. Out of this cultural exchange, for example, has emerged the writer Orhan Pamuk, winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature, who creatively combines Turkish and European sensibilities, but is perhaps more valued in Europe than in Turkey.[16]

Turkey's Democratization

The record of democratization in Turkey is at the root of differing interpretations of its future. Modern Turkey is based on Kemalism, and few are prepared

Photo: AA, Evren Aydemir

The relationship between Turks and 'Europeans' may have been suffused with hostility or suspicion for centuries, but history is not destiny.

to challenge Atatürk's legacy openly. Kemalism is resolutely secular, but democratization has brought a tension between secularism and democracy, especially since the coming to power of (what some would call 'Islamist') the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002. As Perry Anderson has noted, "[T]he ambiguity of Kemalism was to construct an ideological code in two registers. One was secular and appealed to the elite. The other was crypto-religious and accessible to the masses. Common to both was the integrity of the nation, as supreme political value."[17] Despite its consistent public support for democratization and EU membership, there remains considerable suspicion that the AKP is concealing its true agenda.[18]

The Turkish military is a proud defender of Ataturk's legacy, but it is clearly more committed to secularism than to democracy. It has intervened decisively in Turkey's political affairs a number of times, but its recent confrontations with the AKP government—most strikingly in 2007 when it threatened, but did not over-

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throw, that government—confirm its deep, and deeply illiberal, secularism.[19] Atatürk was more concerned with modernization, including secularism, than with establishing democracy, though he was not opposed to democracy as such. The military has tended to see its task of defending the Republic against external and internal enemies as sanctioning a political role, as required, even against democracy. The political game in Turkey over almost a decade has been a very serious struggle between the military and the AKP, in which the continuing attempts to join "Europe" have played an important tactical role. Europe's stress on democracy as a precondition for membership has allowed the AKP to out-maneuver the military, as it has put in place measures for greater civilian control of the latter in line with the "Copenhagen criteria". The recent constitutional referendum in September 2010 passed a number of changes to the 1982 Constitution (drafted by the military) which brought it more into line with EU norms, but was also a blow against the military both in general and in particular with changes to the military justice system which empowered civilian courts to prosecute military personnel for attempted coups.

The military, however, retains its monopoly on the "instruments of armed force" as well as an ideologically independent leadership, and we should not dismiss its ability or willingness to intervene in the political sphere. Any potential military threat, however, may have been reduced by growing support for the Republican People's Party (CHP), re-invigorated under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu to pose a genuine political challenge to the AKP. The general election of June 2011 revealed growing support for both the AKP and CHP, suggesting that democracy may have become the "only game in town".

Both the distance between the military's leadership and the government and the extent to which the military accepts civilian (government) control, perhaps the two key political features of the current situation within Turkey, are the subject of contestation among informed commentators. Some are convinced of the military's democratic commitment, and are persuaded that the so-called Ergenekon affair in 2007 (where a plot against the government by senior and former military officials was exposed and then successfully prosecuted in the courts) shows that the bulk of the military remains loyal to rule by civilian government; other commentators are not so sure.[20] Daniel Pipes, for example, charges the AKP with devising, in Ergenekon and the more recent Balyoz affair, an "elaborate conspiracy theory" against the military.[21]

At the broadest level, Turkey's democratization has been hampered by a political legacy from the Republic's venerated founder that focused, *inter alia*, on the values of republicanism and secularism as distinct from democracy, and by a military that sees itself less as the servant of government than as the ultimate protector of the Republic. In a historical sense, these factors are straightforward enough to explain, but they bring to a head in Turkey a number of the fundamental challenges of democratization that confront any country on such a political journey, and to which I now turn.

The Challenges of Democratization

While questions about the respective political dispositions and aims of the military and the AKP are importation, they are just one part of the complex political equation in Turkey today. The key ingredients of democratization are the following: *a political community* that encompasses the bulk of the population; robust, predictable and sovereign *democratic institutions and processes*; a *civil society* that acts both to diffuse and check governmental power; a *leadership* that recognizes the importance of public service over private gain; and *time* for all these elements to bond together into a system where democracy is the "only game in town", and violence is no longer an option for governmental change.

Political Community

Creating and sustaining a political community is essential to a modern democracy. As Sir Ivor Jennings pointed out, "the people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people."[22] In relatively extensive societies—*Gesellschaft*, as distinct from what Ferdinand Tönnies called *Gemeinschaft*[23]—political community is a place in which there is a level of respect and trust between people who are otherwise unknown to each other; this moral regard that people in such a community have towards each other is essential for politics to succeed. There seems to be a contrast between Turkish nationalism, which is very strong, and the creation and maintenance of political order within the multi-ethnic community of modern Turkey. Nationalism in this context serves to stifle contestation in the Turkish polity because it construes contestation from non-Turks as a challenge to the existence of the polity itself. The defensive nature of Turkish nationalism has meant that the expression of the cultural rights of minority communities has been curtailed. The situation with regard to the use of languages other than Turkish is confusing, with broadcasting in Kurdish and other languages by private and public channels at the local level now permitted, as well as the *de facto* use of Kurdish in election campaigns, but—as the European Commission has pointed out—"the use of any language other than Turkish in political life is still illegal under the Law on Elections and Political Parties. The courts have been issuing contradictory decisions in court cases against Kurdish politicians."[24] Turkish is the only language permitted to be taught in public or private schools.[25]

The content of Turkish nationalism is variously construed, but Metin Heper[26] endorses Atatürk's public view was that it is—or should be—a *civic* nationalism, a conscious act of citizenship, and that use of the term "Turkish" is also a *civic* term, denoting citizenship regardless of ethnicity or religion (as outlined in the 1924 Constitution). The continuing construction of "Turkish" and "Kurdish" identities, however, suggests a level of differentiation between these "brother" peoples that has deep roots. It also suggests that successive Turkish governments have been inept in welcoming Kurds into the economic and other developments of Turkey. Addressing the Kurdish challenge continues to be politically divisive within Turkey, though perhaps after the 2011 election we are closer to resolution than ever before. The AKP government is hopeful of better integrating the Kurds (many of whom support it) within the framework provided by the European accession process, while the CHP will not stand in the way of greater local self-government for the regions of Turkey. Meanwhile, the Kurdistan Workers' Party's (PKK) demand for an autonomous state has dwindling support, and its method of armed struggle is discredited; and the coalition that comprises the Kurdish 'Peace and Democracy Party' has only limited support for its proposals for relative autonomy.

Democratic Institutions

The formal institutions of Turkish democracy are reasonably robust. A free press has developed, particularly since a constitutional amendment in 1993 broke the state monopoly on radio and television broadcasting. The electoral system has produced, by all accounts, free and fair elections over a long period, with political parties that organize interests and policies (though with an excessively high threshold of votes, 10%, for parties to be represented in the Grand National Assembly). Yet while certain freedoms (such as association and assembly) are constitutionally protected, enabling legislation contains loopholes or qualifications that provide room for suppression merely on the grounds that certain views are not welcomed. Associations, for example, cannot have "prohibited objectives" (Article 30 of the Law on Associations) or be "in contravention of law and morality" (Article 56).[27]

There is a high degree of independence of judges, guaranteed by the Constitution. Legislation is subject to judicial review through the Constitutional Court to determine its constitutionality. This Court, however, played a key and contentious role in the political crisis of 2008, when it accepted a petition to examine the constitutional validity of two AKP constitutional amendments and another petition from the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals to disband the AKP for "anti-secular activities."

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From a democratic standpoint, there remain a number of central concerns about Turkey's political institutions, such as about the limits to civilian oversight of the military, and of the military's interventions into public debates, its judicial role, and its budget; about the independence and impartiality of the judiciary; about the extensive nature of corruption; and about the protection of human rights. As Freedom House put it, "Turkey's military-drafted constitution fundamentally lacks the inclusiveness, the clearly-defined rights, and the limitations on state power that are crucial for democracy in a multicultural society such as this."[28] Similar concerns about Turkey's democratization can be seen in the many formulae that, over the past decade, have attempted to capture its experience. Turkey has been described as a "delegative" democracy;[29] as "functioning if imperfect";[30] as "an unconsolidated 'procedural democracy'";[31] and, because of the military's role, as a "protected democracy".[32] Of particular concern is that Turkish citizens themselves are somewhat skeptical about the viability of democracy.[33] The prospect of a new constitution, championed by the AKP but negotiated between the major political parties and ratified by the citizenry, provides a major opportunity to address the democratic deficiencies identified here.

Civil Society

Accounts of democratization, especially since the collapse of communism in Europe, have emphasized the positive role of a diverse and growing civil society. The role of civil society in consolidating democracy has been analyzed by Diamond in terms of ten functions,[34] but its importance lies in changing the balance between state and society in economic, organizational and cultural senses.

One may still detect an excessive role of the public sphere in the "daddy state"—*devlet baba*—that protects its citizens from cradle to coffin. But state predominance in Turkish lands is not new.[35] Turkish economic life was dominated by state-owned industries and an aversion to international economic engagement

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until the premiership of Turgut Özal, which started in 1983. Yet the complacency and corruption of government were on sad display in the aftermath of the August 17, 1999 earthquake in Turkey that destroyed much of the city of İzmit. Özel argues that the idea of the "daddy state" was shattered on this day[36] when the avoidance of building codes was exposed, as was the inability or complacency of the civilian or military authorities to come to the aid of the people affected.

The economic development of Turkey has been, in some periods (including at present), very impressive, but the development of an economic sector apart from state subsidized sectors and those with other protections from the state has been more difficult. Economic privatization and a reduction of bureaucratic red tape in private economic activities are being slowly undertaken. A shift in preponderance from the central state would also be assisted by a greater role for, and autonomy of, local government, though one needs to be careful that powerful locals not simply replace central patronage with their own. There are constitutional restrictions on voluntary associations that should be reduced or eliminated, but it should also be noted that the growth of civil society is ultimately a qualitative change in people's attitudes in favor of self-help and against state-dependence. Much still remains to be done in developing the assertive citizenry appropriate to democracy.

Leadership

Elites—political, bureaucratic, business, and military—play an important role in the process of democratization, often initiating and leading change as well as providing role models. If they are greedy, and mistake the public purse for their own, they will damage the people's trust in democratic institutions. Turkey's position at number 56 (of 178 countries) on Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index[37] suggests that better leadership is required, and the European Commission's 2010 progress report argues that while progress has been made in developing an anti-corruption strategy, "effective implementation of the strategy is necessary to reduce corruption which remains prevalent in many areas."[38]

Nevertheless, Turkey's business elite has begun to support and engage with democratization and EU membership.[39] The military's view of itself as the guardian of Turkey, including of its secularism and modernization, means that its sup-

There seems to be a contrast between Turkish nationalism and the creation and maintenance of political order within the multi-ethnic community of modern Turkey

port for democratic outcomes is conditional. As for the bureaucratic elite, Türkmen argues that it is "simply impossible to assert that state bureaucracy in Turkey follows in the steps of democratization."[40] When these factors are added to the general weakness of political leadership outside the AKP, and especially the absence of an effective parliamentary opposition to the AKP, we may say that the quality of democratic leadership in Turkey is wanting.

The Cyprus Problem

Of the issues that hinder the accession of Turkey to the EU, the question of Cyprus, and the related question of relations with Greece, looms large. A detailed history of Cyprus need not detain us here, but it is enough to note the crucial location of the island in Mediterranean trade routes and the consequent multitude of cultural influences upon and within its population, as well as its long links both with Greek culture and the Ottoman Empire. Since the 1959 London and Zurich agreements produced an independent, bi-communal Cyprus Republic, however, the situation within Cyprus has suited no one: neither the Cypriot Greeks, who wanted political union with Greece; nor Turkey, which wanted to protect Turkish Cypriots and to reaffirm the place of Cyprus within its historic lands and strategic interests. The constitution of the Republic, not surprisingly, proved unworkable and led to violence between the two island communities and increasing physical and political separation, not to mention increased tensions between Greece and Turkey. In 1974, a Greek Cypriot coup against Cypriot (-Greek) President Makarios led almost immediately to a Turkish invasion and then to a division of the island into a northern, Turkish area (approximately one-third of the island) and a southern, Greek area. Turkey subsequently settled many thousands of Anatolian Turks in the northern areas. All attempts at a lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue since the 1977 guidelines negotiated by Makarios and Rauf Denktaş, then Turkish Cypriot leader, involve a unification of the island under a bi-communal, federal Republic, but the difficulties of implementing principles that are generally agreed have proved insuperable in the face of the passions unleashed by the memories of the 1963 and 1974 conflicts, by the issue of property rights arising from them,[41] and by the fundamental distrust between the two communities and their continental backers.

Even the promise of EU entry for a united Cyprus failed to generate sufficient agreement for both sides to pass a referendum in 2004 on the reunification plan

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developed by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (though it was approved in Turkish northern Cyprus). Thus, in 2004 the 'Republic of Cyprus' entered the EU without the northern part of the island (the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which Turkey is the only country in the world to officially recognize), and talks on unification between the two sides have continued intermittently without substantial progress. Under these circumstances, the two critical EU members involved—Greece and the Republic of Cyprus—would likely veto Turkish membership of the EU at present. But if the Cyprus situation remained unresolved and Turkey were permitted to enter the EU, it would mean that EU members would be in serious conflict with each other: the EU itself would have to intervene, and its approach to a solution might prove too much for some existing members to bear. While we may sometimes imagine the EU to be a "post-nationalist" phenomenon, the Cyprus issue imported into the EU might well demonstrate the endurance of nationalist fervor and the limitations of a European identity.

In its 2010 progress report on Turkey's accession to the EU, the European Commission complained that:

> Despite repeated calls by the Council and the Commission, Turkey still … does not meet its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement and has not removed all obstacles to the free movement of goods, including restrictions on direct transport links with Cyprus. In addition, Turkey has not made progress towards normalising bilateral relations with the Republic of Cyprus. It continues to veto Cyprus's membership of several international organisations, including the OECD and the Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls for conventional arms exports and dual-use goods.[42]

This is despite the fact that other relations between Turkey and Greece have improved markedly over the past few years.

Conclusion

More than a decade ago, one commentator described Turkey's attempts to join the EU as "the never-ending story." Müftüler-Bac argued then that Turkey's "fail-

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ure to uphold democracy" justified the EU's rejection of its accession, but that this also concealed "an aspect of the EU's reservations about Turkey: its perception of Turkey as the Other of Europe."[43] A lot has happened to both Turkey and the EU in the meantime, and not just in the sense that a formal accession process was begun in 2005. The record of Turkish democratization may be incomplete, but it is far from bleak. Democratization has continued since 2002 under the aegis of a government formed by the conservative AKP, and thus far its efforts have not been turned aside by the Turkish military. As Cizre and Walker summarize these complex developments: "Turkey has become more European, more democratic, more conservative and Islam-friendly, and more nationalist simultaneously."[44] Likewise, the EU has attained—though not without difficulty—a constitutional framework in the Lisbon Treaty, but has been beset with difficulties internally, over its economy and the viability of a single currency, and externally, over the "war on terror", or the war against radical Islamists who appear to oppose everything for which Europe stands. Much has changed over the past decade, but the long interaction between Turkey and Europe persists, and with it the promise of an even closer and more productive engagement.

It may be true, as EU progress reports annually explain, that Turkish democratic institutions and human rights practices fall short of EU standards, but the work of aligning institutions, legislation and practices continues, as Turkey's September 2010 constitutional referendum demonstrates. And it is true that with its predominantly Muslim population, the introduction of a democratic Turkey into the "work-in-progress" that is Europe will create a new set of cultural challenges for Europe to manage. But the benefits for Europe of having Turkey's perspectives on the realities of the Middle East, of understanding better the diversity within Islam, and of helping Turkey to realize Atatürk's vision of a modern, dynamic republic all point to the desirability of an ultimate Turkish accession to the EU.

The relationship between Turks and "Europeans" may have been suffused with hostility or suspicion for centuries, but history is not destiny. Despite mixed signals, further development of Turkey's democracy along the path to Europe is the most likely course. We need to be patient: the story is not "never-ending", but the end will not come quickly. The cultural differences between Turkey and Europe are one of the burdens in the accession process, but the potential gains to be made by both sides mean that we must keep such differences in perspective. To make accession possible and successful we must all remember the fundamental principle of respecting our differences and acknowledging our common humanity. As Erasmus, the great Christian humanist of the early 16th century, pointedly asked of his compatriots: “Is not the Turk also a man and a brother?”

> Turkey has become more European, more democratic, more conservative and Islam-friendly, and more nationalist simultaneously

Endnotes

1) I thank the journal’s anonymous reviewers for their helpful advice to strengthen this article.

2) Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 257.

3) A contrast deeply-felt since the Crusades began at the end of the eleventh century, to deliver Jerusalem from ‘the Infidel’, in whose hands it had been since AD 638. It was a campaign that lasted for two centuries and several military expeditions, but ended in failure; see Davies, *Europe: A History*, p. 345.

4) Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 84–99.

5) Details of the political, and especially the cultural, revolution introduced by Atatürk can be found in the standard biographies: Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey* (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1965), pp. 467–482, and 501–505; Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock NY.: Overlook Press, 2000), pp. 396–407; 433–438; 463–467; 498–499; 534–535.

6) Cited in David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), p. 254.

7) Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, p. 552.

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