

Turkey and the EU: European Soft Power and How It Has Impacted Turkey

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Abstract

This study investigated recent developments in relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU), and, specifically, the impact of the EU accession process on Turkey. Review and analysis focused on seven key areas of Turkish culture, politics and foreign relations, including: how Turkish citizens and Turkey's government view the EU and EU membership; the role of religion in Turkey; the structure of Turkish democracy; the state of human rights in Turkey; education policy in Turkey; the Turkish economy; and Turkish foreign policy. Each has evolved over the course of EU membership negotiations, partly as a consequence of the negotiations themselves. Examining how Turkey and the EU have interacted during the accession process, it is clear that Turkey has made substantial changes in policy, but also that implementation of the new laws has had only mixed success. Many of these changes have brought Turkey more in line with European models of the modern state. However, for a wide variety of reasons, including some related to the accession process, Turkey has taken a substantially more negative view of the EU and of membership in the EU as negotiations have continued. The actions of the EU towards Turkey have been an important factor in leading Turkey to reassess its alliances and develop closer ties with non-Western states, while becoming more skeptical of traditional allies. Overall, EU mandated reforms appear to have led to impressive advances in Turkey's domestic affairs, but have also driven Turkish foreign policy to seek stronger ties with non-Western states.

To the People of Turkey

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Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Research Methods.....	5
Chapter 2: Definition of Key Terms.....	8
Chapter 3: Turkey's View of the EU and EU Membership.....	13
Statistics on the Turkish Population's View of the EU.....	13
Reasons for the Declining Support in Turkey for EU Membership.....	15
Culture Clash.....	15
Impact of EU Demands.....	16
Treatment by the EU.....	18
Turkey's Leadership.....	19
Conclusion.....	20
Chapter 4: Religion.....	21
Chapter 5: Democratization.....	32
The AKP's Political Islam.....	34
Role of the Military.....	37
Improvements to Civil Society.....	42
Banning of Political Parties.....	44
The Judiciary and Criminal Law.....	45
Press Freedom.....	50

The National Security Council.....	52
Freedom of Expression.....	53
2007 Battle over the Turkish Presidency.....	56
The Deep State and Ergenekon.....	59
Turkey’s Constitution.....	62
The Likelihood of Continuing Progress.....	64
Chapter 6: Human Rights.....	65
Kurdish Rights.....	66
Insurgency.....	67
Legal Reforms.....	69
Economic Development.....	71
Pace of Change.....	72
Role of the EU.....	73
Conclusion.....	74
Women’s Rights.....	75
Conclusion.....	78
Chapter 7: Education.....	80
Chapter 8: Economics.....	85
Progress in Fulfilling EU Demands.....	86
International Monetary Fund (IMF).....	87
Labor Law.....	89
Finance.....	90
Trade Policy.....	91
Anti-Trust Law.....	93

Innovation.....	93
Privatization.....	94
Customs Union.....	95
Impact on Turkey's Economy of EU Mandated Changes.....	96
Income Inequality.....	98
Current World Economic Crisis.....	98
Conclusion.....	99
Chapter 9: Turkish Foreign Relations.....	102
Overview of Turkish Foreign Policy.....	103
Cyprus.....	105
Israel.....	109
Iraq.....	114
Syria.....	115
Iran.....	117
Russia.....	120
Conclusion.....	124
Chapter 10: Conclusion.....	127
What Will Be the Ultimate Impact of the EU Stalling on Turkey?.....	128
Can Turkey Sustain Progress and Change?.....	130
Conclusion.....	132
Endnotes.....	133
Bibliography.....	167

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Republic of Turkey was founded on October 29, 1923, after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and a war of independence led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. From Turkey's founding, Ataturk tried to imbue the country with the goal of becoming a Western, modern nation. In pursuit of this goal, Turkey signed an Association Agreement with the European Community in 1963. It applied for EU membership in 1987 and became a formal candidate for membership in 1999. In 2002 the EU set out the conditions Turkey needed to meet before membership talks could begin, including creating stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, improved human rights, and a viable market economy.¹ As of 2009, eight chapters of the accession agreement have been opened for negotiation recognizing progress made by Turkey (Enterprise and Industry; Statistics; Financial Control; Trans-European Networks; Consumer and Health Protection; Intellectual Property Law; and Company Law). One chapter has been closed due to tensions over Cyprus (Science and Research). Other chapters have yet to be opened, but negotiations regarding what steps Turkey must take to open the chapters are underway.² After a great deal of tension over progress and stalling of the process, the EU re-opened accession negotiations on October 3, 2005, by making Turkey an official candidate for membership. This is in great part due to the fact that the current ruling party in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), has been open to compromise on many issues related to EU membership negotiations.³

Starting in 1998, the EU issued reports on the progress Turkey had made in meeting EU membership requirements. The first report highlighted five areas that needed improvement: human rights; treatment of minorities; civilian control of the military; improvement in civil rights in South East Turkey (home of a large population of Kurds); and disputes with neighboring countries. Subsequent reports noted other areas for improvement, including: torture; freedom of expression and speech; the judiciary; the death penalty; cultural rights for minorities; corruption; economic disparities; the conflict in Cyprus; honor crimes; labor legislation; democracy; the role of the army; use of necessary force; religious freedom; and the implementation of legal changes already approved.⁴ The most recent report stated that Turkey needs to make yet further improvements in order to meet membership requirements.

EU members have relatively uniform laws that address core aspects of government. These laws include: protections of liberal-democratic secular government; separation of church and state; political and social stability; human rights; fair judicial practices; freedom of speech; and a stable market economy.⁵ In its efforts to join the EU, Turkey passed harmonization packages between 2002 and 2003 that brought Turkey's laws more into line with EU standards. The 2002 harmonization package was passed by a coalition government, while the 2003 package was approved by the AKP, which had been newly elected as the majority in Parliament. Many dismiss these packages as cosmetic, but they include fundamental changes to important laws. Further, Turkey's dedication to joining the EU was demonstrated by the fact that two successive governments with very different domestic policy goals approved harmonization

packages. Issues remain regarding policies the EU believes Turkey still needs to change and whether changes already made are having any pragmatic impact.

European Union (EU) enlargement raises contentious issues both for member states and applicant states. There are strong opinions for and against admission of Turkey, and its candidacy has drawn the attention of many outside of Europe. Turkey is the only secular democracy that is majority Muslim, which makes its membership appealing to those who see the advantage of a more diverse and inclusive EU.⁶ Turkey connects multiple hotspots to Europe and is the largest military power in both the Muslim world and in Europe. Its membership in the EU offers the possibility of better East/West relations, but raises concerns of increasing involvement of the EU in difficult political issues in the Middle East. Some argue Turkey would soon become the largest EU nation and would have the potential to alter the balance of power in the EU. Those who oppose Turkey's membership also cite other concerns, including cultural differences, a possible influx of laborers from Turkey into other EU nations, and worries regarding Turkish migration.⁷

The EU has had great success in making nations applying for EU membership democratize and conform to Western and European norms.⁸ This has been particularly true in Eastern Europe where the EU helped former Communist countries make the transition from authoritarian governments to more open, democratic societies. Turkey's membership process, however, has been unusually drawn-out and difficult. This thesis will address how Turkey's EU accession process has impacted Turkey both domestically and in its foreign relations. This will include examining Turkish policy in regard to: the role of religion (in both the public and private spheres), the role of the military, the state

of Turkish democracy, the Turkish education system, the Turkish economy, human and minority rights in Turkey, Turkish public opinion, and Turkey's foreign policy.

The EU has been successful in convincing Turkey to change its domestic policies to better mirror EU norms, but some of the changes have angered both government officials and the Turkish population. The EU has consistently made the membership process onerous for Turkey and pushed back deadlines, which has upset many in Turkey and has possibly undermined Turkey's progress in becoming a more Westernized state. With this in mind, my hypothesis is as follows: While EU pressures on Turkey to modify policies (in both the domestic and foreign arenas) as part of Turkey's EU membership process were initially successful in enhancing the stability of the Turkish political system and in making Turkey's laws better mirror Western norms, recent EU demands and delays, as well as the consequences of many of the policy changes Turkey has made, have in fact decreased pro-Western public opinion in Turkey, slowed the pace of change, and led to strained relations between Turkey and the West.

The main concern of this proposed review and analysis is to determine how EU policies have impacted one of the West's most important allies, Turkey. It is extremely timely to be discussing this issue. The EU has accepted Turkey's candidacy, so it is a major public policy area currently under discussion and debate in the EU and even impacts nations not in the EU, including the United States and Turkey's non-EU member neighbors.⁹ Within Turkey, the 2008 failure of the soft-coup; the decision not to ban the AKP; the rise of a President whose wife wears a headscarf (previous Presidents publicly expressed religious devotion, but their wives did not wear headscarves, the wearing of which is a major source of political conflict in Turkey); and Turkey's efforts to improve

relations with its neighbors also present a unique opportunity to reexamine Turkey's domestic policies, its role in the world, and how the EU shapes both.

The status of Turkey's candidacy has far reaching implications for matters including the problems and benefits of economic integration, issues surrounding migration, and relations between non-Muslim nations and the Muslim world. A more complete understanding of what issues impact Turkey's status as an EU candidate is crucial to helping determine how to ensure Turkey remains a modern, democratic, secular and Western-oriented power. While much has already been written about Turkey's candidacy, the scholarly work published thus far focuses mainly on just one or two issues and does not provide a comprehensive picture or summary of how EU policy has impacted Turkey. I intend to help fill that gap and offer a thorough evaluation and argument regarding Turkey's future in the EU. This thesis will also help inform debates about the consequences, for both Turkey and the EU, of continued negotiation on Turkish membership in the EU with the goal that this thesis may help policy makers better understand the consequences of their decisions.

Research Methods

A variety of sources were utilized in order to test the hypothesis. The literature review included: EU reports; news articles; scholarly writings (journals and books); articles written by the players involved; editorials; and works documenting the history of the issues. This information was combined with theoretical arguments drawn from scholarly writings based on current and past events and ideas from various perspectives

and from groups with opposing views. Polling data, where appropriate, as well as rankings from various non-governmental sources were used to gauge public opinion.

In order to test the hypothesis, this thesis focused on changes that have already occurred in relations between Turkey and the EU, and in Turkey's domestic policies. This includes changes in Turkey with regard to: the role of the military; the role of religion; the status of democracy; educational policy; economic policy; human and minority rights; public opinions; and the status of Turkey's foreign relations.

These particular policy areas were chosen for several reasons. First, there is information available on each topic that could be examined and synthesized. Second, these policy areas represent a broad cross-section of government policy. Third, these particular areas are ones of importance in the West and also are the methods through which governments exert the most control over their citizens. Fourth, these policy areas are ones that people depend on in their daily lives to create a better future for themselves and their children. Fifth, they are relevant to EU membership negotiations.

There is no one framework or ideal way of examining the relations between Turkey and the EU. Authors on the topic take many different views on Turkey's EU accession process, and this has a profound impact on their writings. Some writers believe that the EU is simply being thorough in its evaluation of Turkey's membership, some assume Turkey will never be welcome in the EU due to structural concerns, labor market anxieties, immigration worries, or simple racism; others lay the blame on Turkey or the AKP for failing to modernize fast enough and resisting EU demands. I have tried to read a wide range of scholarly works that would provide me with a good understanding of all

of these positions, and I have attempted to present information from across all ideological spectrums.

Chapter 2

Definition of Key Terms

AKP: The AKP is the ruling party in Turkey and has Islamist leanings. The extent of those leanings is debated. Its full name in English translation is the Justice and Development Party. The AKP came to power in November 2002 after winning 37% of the vote, but 363 of 550 seats.

Article 301: This is an article of the Turkish penal code that went into effect on June 1, 2005, and has caused tensions with the EU. Article 301 makes it illegal to insult Turkey, Turkish government institutions, or the Turkish ethnicity. Originally it made insulting “Turkishness” a crime, but this has since been changed to insulting “the Turkish nation.” There have been over 60 criminal cases brought under Article 301.

Copenhagen Criteria: The criteria are the norms and regulations that any nation has to adopt and put into practice in order to join the EU. The requirements include economic, political, social, and military policy changes. They were agreed upon by EU members in 1993 in a meeting in Copenhagen.

EU Accession Process: The process by which a country can become a member of the EU. The process involves extensive negotiations between representatives for the EU and the applicant country and culminates in changes in policy in the applicant country. The EU provides monetary and technical assistance to candidate countries during negotiations to help implement changes. Negotiations apply to any area in which the EU feels the candidate country needs to change policy.¹⁰

Honor Crime: A crime in which a person murders a member of his or her family, clan, or community because the killer believes the victim has brought dishonor on the family, clan, or community. It is usually women who are the targets of the honor crime. The supposed offense typically consists of a perceived sexual dishonor, including the way a person is dressed, defying an arranged marriage, or sexual activity out of wedlock.

Illiberal Democracy: While there is no one simple definition, for the purposes of this document, it will be defined as follows: in an illiberal democracy elections are held, but civil liberties are curtailed and people do not enjoy many individual freedoms that are allowed in the West.

Islamism/Islamist Party/Political Islam: These terms are used by many different sources in many different ways. For the purposes of this thesis, these terms will be defined as a political party or movement whose members publicly express that they use Islamic principles (any denomination) to guide their decision making-process. Such groups also desire to change laws in Turkey to allow for greater freedom of expression for Muslim citizens and organizations.

Kemalism: According to a definition in a military journal, Kemalism is “the set of realistic ideas and principles concerning the state, the economy, intellectual life, and the fundamental social institutions espoused by Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey. The basic principles were laid down by Ataturk to ensure the full independence, peace and welfare of the Turkish nation in the present and the future, to ensure the sovereignty of the nation as the basis of the state, and to raise Turkish culture to the level of modern civilization under the guidance of rational and scientific principles.”¹¹ Further, when Turkey was founded, Ataturk insisted that the new state be secular. Ataturk

abolished the position of Caliphate (“the political office of the titular head of Islam”), which had been centered in the Ottoman Empire. The military believes they are in a unique position to defend Kemalism, partly because when the nation was founded in 1923, the military was given the prerogative to ensure that these values were upheld.¹² There is wide disagreement on exactly what Kemalism is and how it should be implemented and understood today. These differences fall both between religious, secular, and nationalist groups, and within such groups.

Lausanne Treaty: Signed in 1923, it was a peace treaty to end the Turkish war for independence. It established the modern nation of Turkey and identified what groups would be officially recognized minorities and thus qualify for minority protections in Turkey. These groups would be considered as equal to the Turkish majority under law, and would receive special rights (including the right to build schools and the freedom to use their own languages for education and publication). The only groups provided protections under the Treaty are people of Greek, Armenian, or Jewish descent. Turkey does not recognize any Muslim groups as a minority.¹³

Liberal Democracy: “A two-dimensional concept, encompassing both democratic rule and political liberties.”¹⁴ Liberal democracy includes individual liberties, government transparency, accountability of the government to the people, and the rule of law at all levels of life.

National Security Council: The NSC is a military body that had the authority to set policies related to national security without government input. Changes to the NSC were of great importance to the EU. In response, Turkey has modified the NSC.

Ottoman Empire: The Empire that stretched from modern Turkey through much of the Middle East and the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire has had a profound impact on Turkey, and much of the Turkish public consider themselves to be the heirs of the glories of the Ottoman past. One legacy left by the Ottoman Empire on modern Turkey is in regards to Turkey's foreign relations with nations in the Middle East and, most famously in the West, with Armenia. Turkey's Ottoman past has complicated relations with former Ottoman territories. Many EU member states also continue to view Turkey through the prism of the Ottoman Empire. It is likely that part of the reason some EU states are opposed to Turkish membership is due to such nation's distrust of Turkey based on conflicts with the Ottoman Empire.

PKK: The Kurdistan Workers' Party: In 1978, a group of Kurds founded the PKK and began a violent campaign against Turkey for an independent Kurdish homeland. This campaign continues today and has led to tens of thousands of deaths.

Schengen Agreement (or Schengen Regime): The Schengen Agreement (named after the city in Luxembourg in which it was signed) addresses free movement of persons within EU member states. The Schengen Agreement provides that inside EU territory people can travel without restriction by possessing a Schengen Visa even if they are not citizens of an EU nation. Not all nations' citizens can obtain such a visa, with some countries' nationals on a so-called "black list." The Schengen Agreement also blocks new member countries and candidate countries from continuing their old visa policies and agreements. Turkey began to implement the Schengen Agreement in 2005.¹⁵

Secular Government: A government in which a religious leader does not control decision making, citizens are not required to worship any religion, and religious groups

cannot legally force citizens to behave according to the religion's rules. A secular government allows for the right to change religious affiliations, the right to worship according to individual beliefs, and the right to build places of worship.¹⁶ Defining how religion and the state should interact has been a source of tensions between Turkey and EU negotiators.

Socialization: Refers to the idea that the EU can shape the behaviors of member and potential member countries through the accession processes and through continued requirements after membership coupled with the threat of expulsion. The EU believes it can impact individual citizens in such states by forcing changes to laws on which citizens learn to depend.¹⁷

Chapter 3

Turkey's View of the EU and EU Membership

Turkish support for joining the EU and for embracing European values appears to be declining.¹⁸ Public opinion in Turkey had been a key driving force behind the push for EU membership.¹⁹ Turkish popular support for membership had enabled the government to make difficult changes.²⁰ The EU accession process has had a negative impact both on Turkey's citizen's support and on the elected leadership's desire to push for EU mandated reforms and membership. Several factors have led to this declining popular support. Prominent among these factors, the EU has required Turkey to make various unpopular changes to Turkish policy, and several EU leaders have made repeated critical comments stating that Turkey does not belong in the EU.

Statistics on the Turkish Population's View of the EU

A number of studies, conducted in different ways and using different questions, have all reached the same conclusion: the Turkish population's support for EU membership is declining. One study conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States examined Turkish popular opinion of the EU. The study found that "Turkish support for strong EU leadership in world affairs...dropped, from 50% in 2005 to 35% in 2006."²¹ In 2010 the percentage of people in Turkey who thought the EU should have a strong role in world affairs dropped to 13%, while 56% stated they were reluctant to see the EU exert strong leadership on the world stage.²² Finally, the study

found the percent of Turks who see EU membership as a good thing declined from 73% in 2004 to 54% in 2006.²³ This percentage has declined further. In 2010 just 38% of the Turkish population believes joining the EU is a good thing.²⁴ The BBC conducted a poll that found similar trends. In 2005, 40% of Turkish citizens believed the EU had a positive influence in the world while 16% thought the EU had a negative influence. In 2007, the numbers changed to 30% positive and 32% negative.²⁵ In 2010 the numbers had shifted further to 29% positive and 46% negative.²⁶ The 2007 study also found that one in three voters in Turkey sees the EU as a bigger threat to Turkey than is Iran, and identified the EU as the fourth most important threat Turkey faces in the world.²⁷

Surveys from Turkey in 2006 showed that 34% of Turkey's population wanted a return to a "past age."²⁸ What exactly was meant by "past age" was not made clear in the text from which this statistic is drawn. There are two types of "pasts" the text does mention. One such past is a more "moral past," which is being threatened by modernization. Two surveys in 2006 and two more in 2007 found that more respondents desired the return of such a past than desired EU membership.²⁹ The other possible "past" mentioned is a return to the days of the Ottoman Empire.³⁰ Whatever the particular "past age" is, it is troubling that a third of Turkey's population would prefer that past to EU membership.

Other polls have asked a simpler question: do you support Turkey becoming a member of the EU? In 1996, 54.8% of Turkish citizens supported EU membership. Initially, these numbers grew. In 1998, 61.8% supported membership.³¹ In 2002, support had climbed to 65%.³² In 2004, multiple polls were conducted. One found 62% support,³³ while the other found 77% of Turks in support of EU membership.³⁴ In 2005,

support for EU membership was roughly 70%.³⁵ These numbers descended rapidly thereafter reflecting troubles Turkey was having in gaining membership. In 2007, support for EU membership declined, with two polls reporting just 50% of citizens in favor.³⁶ Support fell further in 2008 to a mere 40%.³⁷ As of 2010 the percentage of respondents in Turkey in favor of EU membership fell further to just 38%.³⁸

Reasons for the Declining Support in Turkey for EU Membership

There are a number of reasons for the decline in Turkish support for EU membership. Turkish opinion has been influenced by cultural differences between Turkey and the EU, the impact EU demands have had on Turkey, and the behavior of EU member states towards Turkey's candidacy.

Culture Clash

Some EU member state leaders, when discussing Turkey's possible EU membership, have stated that they do not want Turkey to join the EU. Pope Benedict XVI has also made his opposition to EU membership for Turkey clear. The Pope has been quoted as saying that "the roots that have formed Europe...are those of Christianity...Turkey is founded on Islam...Thus entry of Turkey into the EU would be anti-historical."³⁹ Former French President Giscard d'Estaing stated in 2003 that "[Turkey's] capital is not in Europe...and 95% of its population is outside Europe. [It has] a different culture, a different approach, and a different way of life. It is not a European country."⁴⁰ France's current President, Nicolas Sarkozy, has stated he does not think Turkey has the correct culture to join the EU.⁴¹ Former German Chancellor Helmut

Schmidt stated in 2004 that “‘fundamental cultural differences’ between Turkey and the EU are of ‘decisive importance.’”⁴² Austria, France, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands have all stated that they oppose Turkish membership.⁴³ Also, in 2006, over half of EU citizens thought cultural differences were so great that Turkey should not be allowed to join the EU.⁴⁴ In 2010, there was no nation in the EU in which more than 50% of citizens supported Turkey’s EU membership, and overall, 58% of EU respondents stated Turkey did not have the proper Western values to be an EU member state.⁴⁵ While no nation has officially announced they would vote against Turkey’s candidacy (and thus prevent it, as new EU members must be approved unanimously⁴⁶), their silence does not indicate support. Rather, it is apparently out of fear of pushing Turkey completely away from negotiations and concern about Turkey’s reaction to outright rejection.⁴⁷

Impact of EU Demands

Turkey’s citizens support EU membership as a general concept, but have not always supported the specific changes that the EU has demanded. As Turks have learned of the criteria they must meet, opinion has grown more negative. In 2002, 58% of Turkish citizens did not know what the Copenhagen criteria (what Turkey needed to do to join the EU) required, yet they supported EU membership. When asked about specific requirements, an interesting picture emerged: 54% objected to abolishing the death penalty; 56% objected even to broadcasting rights for Kurds and other minorities, even if it were the only demand made of Turkey in terms of human rights;⁴⁸ and 75% opposed EU membership if Turkey had to recognize Cyprus.⁴⁹ This same pattern of opinion was

found among elected officials.⁵⁰ Thus, citizens supported EU membership, but not the changes required to achieve membership.

Three important issues illustrate key areas of concern. The first regards declining support among members of the AKP and in religious populations. Islamic groups thought that joining the EU would lead to greater freedom to practice religion and religious customs in Turkey, but have been disappointed with the EU. One case in point is the case before the ECHR regarding the headscarf ban. When the court ruled the ban was legal, there was a decline in support for joining the EU.⁵¹ The loss of support for membership among the elected officials of the AKP can be seen from the AKP's failure to appoint a full-time lead negotiator to the EU until January of 2009.⁵² Religious groups have been frustrated that EU reforms have not led to as large an increase in the role of religion in the public sphere as they had hoped.

Second, many in Turkey think EU pressures for increased human rights protections will increase the ability of the Kurds to divide Turkey.⁵³ They believe that granting minorities language and culture rights will undermine the unity of the state and open the door to more minority groups to extract individual rights and sovereignty from the state. Additionally, many think that if Turkey makes all the reforms requested and still does not get admitted to the EU, the reforms will leave Turkey crippled and unable to use its military or National Security Council to defend itself or maintain its culture and secular nature.⁵⁴

Finally, Turkey has made demands of the EU in return for changes in Turkey, but the Turkish demands have sometimes been rejected. For example, Turkey has demanded that Denmark shut down the Kurdish TV channel Roj TV, and asked the EU to help close

the station. Turkey claims that the channel broadcasts PKK propaganda, and helped to transmit calls for uprisings in 2006 by Kurds. So far, Denmark has declined to shut the station and the EU has refused to apply pressure on Denmark to do so.⁵⁵

Treatment by the EU

Turkey is the longest standing applicant nation to the EU, and has been trying to join the EU since 1963, when Turkey applied for membership in a precursor organization.⁵⁶ Turkey was particularly upset following the outcome of the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, because they perceived that nations that were not as advanced economically or in terms of meeting political criteria were granted candidate status but Turkey was not.⁵⁷ The granting of official candidate status to Slovakia was particularly offensive to Turkey as Slovakia did not have a properly elected national government. In response, Turkey's leaders slowed the pace of reforms, and put political relations with the EU on hold.⁵⁸ Turkey has also been frequently distressed because the EU has a number of binding treaties with Turkey that the EU has failed to keep, including a treaty regarding steps the EU would take to address the troubles in Cyprus.⁵⁹

The EU has further angered people in Turkey by calling on Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide and allow for greater political rights for Kurds in Parliament.⁶⁰ Many in Turkey also note that the PKK has an extensive financial and material support network in Europe. Ongoing financial support from citizens and meetings between government officials in Italy and the PKK's leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1998 are sources of anger for Turkey. It took until 2002 for the EU to even designate the PKK a terrorist organization.⁶¹ The Turkish population overall is disappointed with Europe for

condemning Turkey for its human rights problems, but failing for so long to condemn atrocities committed by the PKK.⁶²

Turkey's Leadership

Interactions with the EU have confounded Turkish government officials in addition to Turkey's population, and Turkey's leaders have shown inconsistent interest in EU membership. After the Luxembourg Summit in 1997 it took two years for Turkey to return to the negotiating table.⁶³ After a setback in 2005/2006 regarding the lack of a timetable for Turkey's membership, the AKP greatly slowed the pace of reform, and even failed to appoint a chief negotiator to lead discussions with the EU. It took until 2009 for Turkey to appoint a full-time negotiator, but he performs other government roles as well, and has not given his full attention to the membership talks.⁶⁴

One study has noted that even before 2001, when the EU slowed Turkey's candidacy, public support for joining the EU decreased.⁶⁵ This study, done prior to the recent dramatic decline in support, suggested that Turkish public opinion was heavily in favor of joining the EU, despite setbacks, but only due to pressure on the population from Turkey's leaders.⁶⁶ Since then, support from the leadership has also begun to decrease. Turkish government officials and the public now say that they will walk away from negotiations if the EU proposes more conditions or anything short of full membership.⁶⁷ Notably, starting with the 2005 setback, many Turkish AKP and opposition MPs began to express doubts about joining the EU.⁶⁸ Turkey has walked away from or slowed negotiations before, as in 1997 and 2005, over EU policy requirements and refusal to offer incentives, so this may not be an idle threat.⁶⁹

Conclusion

Due to Europe's reluctance to admit Turkey to the EU, and actions the EU has taken that demonstrate their concerns, Turkey's population has developed a more negative view of Europe and EU membership. This decline in support for EU membership is in large part due to the belief held by many in Turkey (and in other nations) that the EU will never welcome a large Muslim nation into the organization.⁷⁰ Of the studies and polls noted previously, two specifically addressed the question of why support has been decreasing. One study attributed it to frustrations over the EU's treatment of Turkey's candidacy.⁷¹ The other had almost an identical finding when it noted that Turkey's struggles to become a member have led to a decrease in Turkish support for EU membership.⁷² When EU membership appeared to be a near-term possibility, Turkish public opinion helped drive reforms, but as membership seems unlikely, support has slipped, and reforms have slowed. It has been hard for Turkey's governments to sustain work towards EU demands with such inconsistent and unwelcoming EU behavior and with decreased popular support.⁷³ Now that the decline in support for joining the EU in Turkey and the general reasons for that decline have been documented, the next five chapters of this thesis will explore more specifically what the impact of the EU accession process has been on Turkey.

Chapter 4

Religion

Religion has led to conflict between Turkey and the EU, and also political battles within Turkey, particularly with the recent rise of political Islam. The EU has been placing pressure on Turkey to expand protection for minority religious groups. These demands have included, among others, improving the freedom to worship and run religious foundations, and allowing minority groups to more easily make repairs to their houses of worship. The differing sides within Turkey can be categorized generally into two camps: the AKP, representing political Islam, and the nationalists, representing secularism. The AKP has been pushing for what they consider to be expanded religious freedoms. The AKP has met with some success, but has not been pleased with some EU demands and court rulings that have reaffirmed Turkey's secularists' positions.

The nationalists have been attempting to defend their vision of Ataturk's legacy of secularism. They too have met with mixed success. The nationalists are concerned that EU reforms are undermining the unity and secular nature of the Republic. There is a spectrum of nationalist opinion regarding the severity of the threat. Some nationalists believe that the EU has no intention of threatening Turkey's norms, but that the changes will have that impact anyway. There are nationalists who believe the EU is intentionally threatening Turkish secularism, but feel EU membership requirements are part of the modernizing process Ataturk would have wanted. Others perceive an existential threat to Turkey from EU reforms. Some of the latter camp's attempts to defend their cause have

denigrated into violence against minority groups and those they view as threatening the unity of the state, in particular Christian missionaries. An interesting dynamic is developing where both the AKP and the nationalists appear to be turning against EU membership, but for very different reasons. The nationalists' fear of the EU is particularly ironic, as they claim to represent Atatürk's vision of a modern, Western Turkey.

One of the demands that the EU has made of Turkey is that it must develop a more secular attitude towards religion and "further develop conditions for the enjoyment of freedom of...religion."⁷⁴ This is a complex set of requirements meant to assure that religious groups have a say in government, but not control of the government, and that these groups be permitted genuine religious freedom in private life.⁷⁵ The exact balance of rights and restrictions differs in individual EU nations. France has a definition of secularism closer to Turkey's, as can be seen by France's efforts to prevent people from wearing headscarves or burqas. Nonetheless, European states are generally notable for their secular character. That is, religion is not supposed to define the state's "functioning or character."⁷⁶

In Turkey, by way of contrast, secularism has meant stricter limits on the influence of religion and on religious freedom. Religion is not only something people can practice as part of tradition; it is something the state can define to fit its view of how the country should be run and how people should behave.⁷⁷ Turkey was founded on the principle that secularism requires curtailing religious freedoms or practices when religious forces threaten to control the government or impede or oppose the state's or military's decisions about how a modern nation should function.⁷⁸ While people are free

to practice their faith in private, the Turkish government heavily regulates religious institutions.⁷⁹ Turkey and Europe both agree that in a secular state, the government cannot be based on religious principles or doctrine, but they differ in applying this concept.

Overall, in evaluating Turkey, the EU states that “as concerns freedom of religion, freedom of worship continues to be generally respected.”⁸⁰ There are, however, a number of issues that the EU would like Turkey to address regarding the free practice of religion. These issues include: limits the Turkish government has placed on worship at designated sights, constraints on minority religious groups building houses of worship, and crackdowns on political Islam.⁸¹ While the EU has placed demands on Turkey, Turkey is aware that the EU does not speak with one mind on freedom of religion. EU nations each have their own different tolerance for the level of religion that is tolerated in the public realm and Turkey has used these divisions in negotiations to help defend Turkey’s position on secularism.

Turkey has made some of the required progress in changing rules related to non-Muslim places of worship. In the past, by Turkish law, only mosques were allowed to restore their buildings if they were in need of repairs, but Turkey recently changed the law to allow renovations to all places of worship.⁸² Official permission is theoretically no longer needed to restore or repair religious buildings held by non-Muslim minority groups. However, problems exist in enforcing this new freedom. One example is a Greek Orthodox Church that was impacted by a bombing that targeted another building in 2003. To this day, the government has blocked the Church from repairing the damage. Turkey has limited clerics, as well as structures. For example, Turkey has made it

difficult for non-Muslim religious communities to bring trained clergy into the country.⁹ Turkey also continues to ban non-Muslim higher religious education.⁸³ The EU has pressured Turkey to address the issues discussed above, but Turkey has not yet addressed these problems.

One specific case the EU and Turkey have sparred over is Turkey's closure of the Halki Seminary,⁹ a seminary used to train Greek Orthodox religious leaders in Turkey. The closure of the Halki Seminary coupled with the difficulties in bringing clergy into the country has left the Greek Orthodox community without enough leaders.⁸⁴ The EU has pressured Turkey to open the Seminary, but Turkey has refused. Turkey closed Halki after the 1971 military coup. The military closed all private universities when it took power. Halki was one of many schools that were closed. Turkey has offered that Halki Seminary can re-open, but only as a part of the Turkish governmental theological system. The Seminary has refused this demand so far.⁸⁵

Turkey issues national ID cards to all citizens. These cards have caused controversy as when the cards were introduced, Turkey required citizens to select a religion to be listed on the card. Removal of the religion line was a change the EU demanded. Turkey modified regulations regarding the ID cards in 2006 to give citizens the option of leaving the religion line blank. A further problem arose when citizens wanted to change the faith listed on their ID cards. Under the law, Turkey allowed citizens to change their faith. In practice, officials often refused to do so. In an attempt to address concerns related to the cards, a Turkish citizen filed a case before the ECHR demanding that the religion line be removed completely, and in February of 2010 the ECHR ruled in favor of the citizen. The AKP government has agreed to respect the

ruling and remove religious affiliation from the ID cards.⁸⁶ This situation is similar to what occurred regarding Greek ID cards. Greece used to issue ID cards that stated a person's religion, but under EU pressure, agreed to remove that line from the cards.⁸⁷

Non-Muslim religious minorities are protected under Turkish law, but these protections have not extended to minority groups' property rights. Non-Muslim minority foundations and religious groups have historically faced severe property rights restrictions. Such limitations apply only to communal property (such as schools, cemeteries, and hospitals) owned by foundations and public religious communities; there are no property restrictions on individuals from minority groups owning private property (such as homes or factories). In 2003, Turkey amended laws regarding property owned by minority groups. Non-Muslim groups are now allowed to buy property for religious, cultural, educational, and social functions, and purchase buildings to provide health services.⁸⁸ In 2008, Turkey took further steps, including allowing minority religious communities to manage and purchase property, found companies, and raise money.⁸⁹ Such communities are still not allowed to sell property without government approval. There have also been problems enforcing these new laws, and the police still sometimes seize property from minority religious groups without cause. Further, the government still has the power to interfere in religious foundations. It can dissolve the foundation, seize property, dismiss trustees, and intervene in managing assets.⁹⁰

Changes demanded by the EU have helped stir up nationalist sentiments in favor of preserving the ethnic and religious purity of Turkey. This has led to violence by some nationalists against people they do not see as Turkish, particularly Christians. EU demands appear to have led to violence by some Turkish citizens against Christians,

including the 2007 murder of an Italian priest by a nationalist teenager.⁹¹ Protection for Christian minorities in general is lacking, including in the field of missionary work. Officially Turkey allows missionaries, but in practice officials often place restrictions on missionary efforts. This includes harassment and intimidation of missionaries and missionary groups. Violence against missionaries has also been increasing. This was demonstrated by a recent case in which three Christians in Malatya (eastern Anatolia) were killed by nationalists who disliked their presence in Turkey. The Christians were killed at a Bible printing house that was used as a center for missionary work.⁹² The government arrested those responsible for the crime,⁹³ but Christians in Turkey still face unofficial harassment and occasional violence.⁹⁴

Overall, incidents of violence against minorities have increased over the last decade, despite government actions to combat such crimes.⁹⁵ These facts demonstrate an interesting dynamic in Turkey, where some nationalist citizens who once supported EU membership strongly have begun to reject the West due to the impact of EU demands. The nationalists' fears and desires to preserve ethnic and religious purity have created tensions and reprisals against many who are not responsible, but who are seen as representative of what the nationalists reject. The nationalists also view their actions as a defense of secularism. They see the EU mandated changes as allowing for greater expression of religion in the public sphere. In fact, some people believe that elements of Turkey's security forces are behind the killings of religious minorities and missionaries in an attempt to discredit political Islam and bring a halt to the EU process. This claim is bolstered by claims by the killer of Turkish-Armenian Hrant Dink, who stated that he was working under direction from the security services.⁹⁶

In general, however, Turkey's citizens and government are quite tolerant of religious minorities. For example, in 2003, two synagogues were attacked by suicide bombers. The synagogues were reopened a few months later, and at the reopening ceremony, the chief rabbi was joined by the top Muslim cleric in Istanbul, the local mayor, and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan. This meeting was the first time a Turkish prime minister had ever attended an event with a chief rabbi.⁹⁷ Of additional importance, the father of one of the bombers gave an interview to a Turkish newspaper in which he stated: "We cannot understand why this child had done the thing he had done...First, let us meet with the chief rabbi of our Jewish brothers. Let me hug him. Let me kiss his hands and flowing robe. Let me apologize in the name of my son and offer my condolences for the deaths."⁹⁸

Importantly, in Turkey only certain minorities can benefit from minority protection laws under the Lausanne Treaty (see Chapter 2). The minorities protected by the treaty are Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. This means that ethnic Muslim and many small groups of Christian minorities cannot receive such benefits.⁹⁹ Being a member of one of the recognized groups entitles one to, among other freedoms, religious rights. (While Greeks and Armenians are not usually defined as religious groups, they are defined as such in the Lausanne Treaty due to their being classified as religious groups by the Ottoman Empire.) Turkey stresses the unity of the State, and argues that all Muslims born in Turkey are thus Turkish and not entitled to minority status.¹⁰⁰ Because of this interpretation, the treatment of Muslim religious minorities has not met EU standards. Treatment of most Christian groups that are not included in the Lausanne Treaty has also not met EU requirements. For example, the Assyrians have difficulty building new

churches, opening schools, teaching their language, training new clergy, and bringing clergy into the country. The EU wants the protections of the Lausanne Treaty expanded to other groups, including Assyrians, Kurds, and Alevis, and all non-protected Muslims and Christians.¹⁰¹ The government has opened dialogue with the Alevi minority, but has taken few concrete steps to insure their rights.¹⁰²

Despite the efforts of Ataturk and those of his followers to eliminate the role of religion in government, as in Ottoman times, Islam remains one of the major identity references in Turkey and continues to influence civic life. Most Turks see being a Turk as being a Muslim; without distinction. Islam remains the founding ideal of numerous Turkish political parties formed over the years (many of which were banned by the secular army, followers of Ataturk). These parties draw their support in part from the fact that they want to expand the role of religion in both public and private life. 1995 was the first time a party that was expressly religiously oriented, the Welfare Party, won power within a coalition in modern Turkey. Their electoral victory (with just 21% of the vote) showed clear popular support for religious parties in politics. The party was abolished in 1998 by the Turkish Constitutional Court for violating the secular nature of Turkey. The Virtue Party arose in its place, but was banned for being too extremist in 2001. Members of the banned Virtue Party splintered into two new parties. One is the Felicity Party, which has maintained many of the policies that led to the banning of the Virtue Party. It garners roughly 3-5% of the vote. The other splinter party is the AKP, which has tried to distance itself from its roots in the Virtue Party, and has presented a more moderate Islamist stance. The AKP won the elections of 2002 with 34% of the vote, won reelection in 2007 with 47% of the vote, and remains in power as of 2010.¹⁰³

Parties that express some religious ideals are now dominant in Turkey, as the balance of power has shifted away from secular parties. The shift has been so profound that even the secular parties are beginning to adopt a more religious tone in order to appeal to the populace.¹⁰⁴ All parties have tried to avoid any conflict with the secular forces in the country and have largely been successful so far. While such a development may appear to be at odds with the EU vision of secular government, the EU and many of the member states have made very positive statements regarding the work the AKP has done in modernizing Turkey.

While the EU puts pressure on Turkey regarding freedom of religion, it is clear that EU members, themselves, have limitations on religious freedoms and lack one shared position on freedom of religion. Notably, Europe has been growing increasingly intolerant of Muslims within EU countries. France and the Netherlands have both considered and passed legislation aimed at restricting the rights of Muslim populations. Voters in Switzerland approved a referendum that banned the building of minarets on mosques.¹⁰⁵ Some actions of EU member countries seem quite in line with Turkish beliefs regarding religion and state interactions, where the government plays a role in determining how religion may be practiced and expressed in public. The ironic outcome of this is that EU negotiators are making demands on Turkey that are not met in some EU countries. Turkey has attempted to use the division between EU members on religious issues in negotiations. When Turkey encounters demands it believes are unfair, its negotiators have sometimes attempted to support their position using laws from conflicting EU nations.

For example, the Turkish government has a Department of Religious Affairs (DRA), which has the roles of addressing all matters relating to Islam in the public sphere; educating people about religion and on religious teachings; deciding where a mosque can be built; and directly overseeing places of worship.¹⁰⁶ The EU has pressured Turkey to dismantle the DRA. However, at the same time, some EU member nations have begun to limit what attire people can wear in public as an expression of their religious faith. While the EU is demanding less influence over religious affairs by the Turkish government, several EU nations are increasing the role of the state in policies pertaining to religious practices. The contradiction in EU member nation behavior and EU demands on Turkey has led to a slowing of progress towards completing EU accession negotiations by Turkey.

Another area where the EU has requested changes, even though it has not made an official demand, is in regard to Turkey's policy on allowing women to wear Islamic headscarves. Turkish women are not allowed to wear headscarves in higher-education facilities or government buildings.¹⁰⁷ Headscarves are met with hostility by many in Turkey, as demonstrated when a female MP who wore a headscarf into the Turkish Parliament in 1999 was booed by secularists and forced to leave the building.¹⁰⁸ The EU has unofficially pressed for Turkey to change this policy, despite the fact that EU member states do not all agree on the issue of headscarves.

In response to this EU request, in 2004, the AKP sued Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) hoping that the court would rule that the headscarf ban was illegal under European law. However, the court ruled that the ban was legal. (The AKP attempted to overturn the ban again in 2008, when Parliament passed a

constitutional amendment easing the ban on headscarves, but Turkey's Constitutional Court struck the amendment down.)¹⁰⁹ The case before the ECHR raises an interesting question about the EU request and whether or not Turkey is acting in accord with European norms. When coupled with the headscarf ban in public high schools in France (but not at universities or in private schools) and France's attempts to ban the wearing of the burqa in public, the court ruling would seem to show that Turkey's actions are in line with EU norms.

Overall, as EU reports have stated, Turkey does a good job of protecting people from religious persecution, and is largely in harmony with the laws of EU nations. There are some areas that Turkey does need to improve upon to fully meet EU demands, but overall EU pressures have met with considerable success in changing Turkey's practices, and the EU has been very willing to work with the AKP. EU mandated changes have created some backlash in Turkey. While Turkey's citizens and government as a whole are still quite tolerant of people of different faiths, there has been an increase in the number and severity of religious based attacks by some members of Turkish society. The government has taken swift action to arrest perpetrators and to discourage such crimes. Turkey and the EU both deserve credit for the progress that has been made in protecting religious rights and freedoms, while maintaining a largely secular Turkish state.

Chapter 5

Democratization

The central drama of Turkish democracy has historically been the threat of military coups. This aspect of Turkish politics was one the EU was intent on changing. This inevitably led to conflicts between the EU-backed AKP and the (nationalist and secular) military, which did not want see its power eroded. The AKP pushed hard to ensure legal changes were made that limited the ability of the military to interfere in politics, while the military attempted to block most of these new rules. One defining moment in the battle between the AKP and the military, which will be discussed below, was the 2007 “soft-coup” in which the military tried to prevent the election of the AKP’s candidate to the Presidency. While the role of the military was a central issue to the EU, the EU also expressed other major concerns for Turkey to address, including issues related to civil society, press freedom, freedom of expression, the banning of political parties, the judiciary, and Turkey’s Constitution.

Turkey has a history of Constitutional government stretching back to the short-lived 1876 Ottoman Constitution (which lasted roughly one year). The structure of Turkey’s current government is detailed in the 1982 constitution. The 1982 Constitution was written following a coup led by five top army leaders in 1980. These leaders appointed 100 people (some former parliamentarians, some were constitutional scholars, others were selected because of their ties to the military leaders) to draft the new Constitution, which was approved by the military leaders. The constitution mandates a

parliament. In Turkey the parliament is called the Grand National Assembly and has 550 seats. A high threshold, 10% of the vote, must be met for parties to win seats in the Assembly.¹¹⁰ Under the original constitution members were elected to five-year terms, and the Assembly was responsible for electing the President who served for seven years and could not be reelected.¹¹¹ In 2007, voters approved constitutional amendments that reduced the term of the President to five years, but allowed the possibility of re-election. The amendments also called for the President to be elected by popular vote instead of in parliament. Voters also shortened the length of the parliamentary term to four years.¹¹² Overall, Turkey has made 34 EU-demanded constitutional amendments that have increased freedom of expression and association, improved gender equality, and decreased the role of the military in the political process.¹¹³

Issues of religion, the military and democratization are closely interlinked in Turkey. Turkey's military sees itself as the guardian of Ataturk's vision, Kemalism (see Chapter 2), which specifies that the Turkey be a secular democracy. The military believes they are in a unique position to defend Kemalism because when the nation was founded the military was given the prerogative to ensure that the values of Kemalism were upheld.¹¹⁴ Democratically elected governments have often been threatened by the military. Since its founding, Turkey's democracy has been very unstable with the military forcing out a civilian government four times.¹¹⁵ The most recent coup was against the Islamist Welfare Party.¹¹⁶ This coup differed from previous coups, and was referred to as the "soft" or "post-modern" coup, as the military did not directly intervene or remove the government. Instead the military combined with the media to create an environment in which the Welfare party was forced to leave office. Since 1997, there

had been no indication the military would stage another coup until the AKP came to power and attempted to appoint a new President, in 2007. The military considers the AKP to be an extremist Islamic party, but many others, such as the EU negotiating teams, think of the AKP as more moderate.¹¹⁷ This disagreement is discussed in detail below.

The AKP's Political Islam

An important question regarding Turkish democracy is the nature of the AKP, which was founded by members of a previously banned religious party.¹¹⁸ Some people fear that the AKP is an extremist Islamic party. Other people have argued that the AKP is a civic-minded party that has its origin in Islamic sensibilities but respects democracy.

However, there are reasons to think AKP's secular veneer may not represent their real intentions. Prime Minister Erdogan was educated in religious schools and is a devout Muslim. When he was elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994 he declared himself the city's "imam" and began his first city council meeting by reading from the Koran. As mayor he banned the serving of alcohol in dining facilities owned by the city of Istanbul, and criticized the use of contraception. In 1998 he was arrested for, and convicted of, using religion to provoke disorder for reading a poem that some considered Islamist at a rally, and spent four months in jail.¹¹⁹ (The poem in question was actually written as a nationalist rallying cry before World War I and the author was a favorite of Ataturk's.) Erdogan claims this incident changed him and made him see religion as a private matter, but many skeptics believe this is not true and see his politics as simply religion-based populist appeals.¹²⁰

The AKP has pushed for Islamic goals such as allowing women to wear a headscarf in universities and government institutions¹²¹ and criminalizing adultery.¹²² The AKP also attempted to reverse a policy put in place following the 1980 coup that took points away from students from religious schools who took the university exams.¹²³ The EU opposed the plan to restore the points on university exams, and threatened to end membership negotiations over the criminalization of adultery. Both plans have been dropped. Additionally, the AKP has yet to secure real institutional changes that protect minority religious groups.¹²⁴

The AKP has placed few women on the AKP candidate lists for election, and resisted numerous efforts to grant women equal status in Turkey.¹²⁵ The percentage of AKP members of Parliament who are women is 8.8%. This is below the overall total for women in Parliament of 9.1%, and below the percentage of women the CHP, the next largest party, sent to parliament. The CHP's Parliamentary delegation is 10.1% female. The AKP, however, does substantially better than the MHP, in which women are just 2.8% of Parliamentarians.

It appears that as soon as the AKP enacted selected changes the AKP wanted and the EU demanded regarding religious freedoms, the AKP stopped making further reforms.¹²⁶ When the European Court of Human Rights upheld a ban on headscarves in public schools, Erdogan stated that: "It is wrong that those who have no connection to this field (of religion) make such a decision...without consulting Islamic scholars."¹²⁷ Erdogan's comments are not in line with the EU's view of a stable, secular democracy, and the AKP slowed the pace of change in response to the ruling.

Nonetheless, the AKP can be viewed as a moderate Islamic party and is much more moderate than their predecessors. The AKP has been more willing than any party in the past to push for EU membership, to enact reforms, and to challenge the military.¹²⁸ AKP leaders appear to know that political Islam in Turkey is harmful to both Turkey's stability and Turkey's chances of joining the EU.¹²⁹ They also appear to be aware that they cannot survive in Turkey if they rely on Islam to drive all their ideas, because the military will step in. The AKP needs a democratic nation that provides protections for civil and political rights to advance their social causes.¹³⁰

The AKP may have abandoned the idea of “an alternative social and political order”¹³¹ previous Islamic parties advocated and instead seems to accept dealings with the West and many Western values.¹³² The AKP has changed their language to that of “pluralism, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law” in speeches and in their political platform.¹³³ They are attempting reconciliation with the West, perhaps because they see that phrasing their arguments in Western terms gives them increased legitimacy.¹³⁴ The policies the AKP has pursued in power have been more Western than most previous governments, even including secular ones. Further, despite the few highly visible fights over religious matters, such as that over headscarves, the AKP's actions while in power have focused very little on religious issues. Erdogan's arrest in 1998 also shows an ironic side of the battle in Turkey over democracy and religion. Secularists believe radical Islam is the biggest threat to Turkey's stability. The secularist's jailing of elected politicians however also creates instability in the electoral system (even if many of those elected officials have in fact broken laws regarding secularism).¹³⁵

Role of the Military

Turkey connects multiple Middle East hotspots to Europe and represents the largest military power both in the Muslim world and in Europe.¹³⁶ This makes the role the military plays in Turkish political life of great importance to its EU membership talks. Turkey has a long history of military intervention in government affairs and the military continues to have a large constitutional role. The status of the military in Turkey contrasts with the EU view of democratic republics, in which the military is given little role in government affairs and policy making.¹³⁷

In 2007 the EU noted shortcomings in civilian oversight of the Turkish military. The EU raised concerns regarding the military's political influence as seen in the military's frequent public comments on issues including Cyprus, the secular nature of government, and conflict with Kurdish groups. The EU also argued that the military still has too much ability to hide its actions in regards to opposing the civilian government, and that the military still has too much control over its own budget. The military was accused of interfering with the election of the Turkish President, Abdullah Gul, in 2007, by publishing a letter to the public regarding what the military viewed as dangers to the secular nature of Turkey if Gul were elected. The EU is currently worried about comments from the military regarding the new elections called by the AKP.¹³⁸

The military, as noted before, does see itself as guarding Ataturk's vision, which includes assuring the indivisibility of the nation and the secular nature of Turkey.¹³⁹ However, while the military sees itself as a guardian, it does not see itself as a ruler.¹⁴⁰ After each coup the military has returned power to the people¹⁴¹ while securing a larger role for itself from which to, in the view of the military, better defend secularism.

Currently, the problem Turkey is having with Kurds is the main reason the military gives for maintaining its role in politics, claiming it needs to keep the peace. The EU process, however, has given the AKP a chance to force through changes that would decrease the role of the military in government affairs.¹⁴² Despite this, the military in Turkey had, and it can be argued still does have, a standing in Turkey's laws and in the hearts and minds of the population that gives it an unofficial veto power over some government policy.¹⁴³

While the military enjoys high popularity with the public, the AKP too has high political and popular legitimacy in the minds of the Turkish people, as can be seen in the overwhelming magnitude of their electoral success. The AKP holds 62% of seats in Parliament and control of many local government bodies. Coupled with AKP claims to be secular, this makes it hard for the military to justify a coup,¹⁴⁴ or resist the changes being asked of them. It is very encouraging for the stability of Turkish democracy that the military did not halt the election of the AKP in either 2002 or 2007. The EU was also pleased that the military, despite its rhetoric, did not halt the election of Gul (this will be discussed in greater detail below).¹⁴⁵ The failure of the "soft-coup" against Gul shows that the military respects the new rules that were created to limit their influence.¹⁴⁶

Additionally, the military would not want to risk its legitimacy with the Turkish population by overthrowing a government that is not one of radical Islamists, but just one of religious people. The AKP has used its mandate to push for EU mandated changes, and if this continues the military is unlikely to step in to disrupt the EU process or overthrow the AKP government.¹⁴⁷ Many believe that EU membership would be the crowning achievement for Turkey's military,¹⁴⁸ and they are unlikely to take actions that upset this chance.

Another example of how the influence and power of the military has decreased can be seen in the restraint the military showed in dealing with PKK (Kurdish) terrorists in Iraq after the second U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the past, the military conducted raids and operations without parliamentary or civilian permission or input. When Turkey did invade northern Iraq after the second Gulf War, the military operation was authorized by the parliament. This is a major departure from previous military operations when the military did not seek government approval, and demonstrates a much greater level of civilian control over the armed forces.¹⁴⁹

While progress has been made towards reigning in the military's role in politics, there are still concerns. The military continues to state its opinion on policy issues outside the military sphere and continues to pressure the government on both military and non-military issues. Further, the military can launch internal security operations without civilian oversight.¹⁵⁰

For most of Turkey's history, the military was allowed to keep its budget secret from the civilian government, but there have been recent changes. The Prime Minister is now allowed to oversee military-owned property and review the specifics of the budget. Additionally, the provision in the Constitution that made the auditing of the military budget secret was repealed.¹⁵¹ Despite these steps, the military still has the ability to keep much of its budget secret from the parliament.¹⁵² This secrecy prevents real civilian oversight.

Civilian control over the military has not yet been fully successfully created in regards to security policy. The High Military Council, an advisory board of all active four-star generals, reports to the government on the military's ability to meet Turkey's

security needs. While the report carries great weight, no civilian, outside of a few officials in the government, are allowed to see it.¹⁵³

During the course of the 1990s, the military grew increasingly concerned about growing Islamic power, issuing a report by the National Security Council (NSC) in 1992 stating political Islam was a threat to the nation's security. These fears culminated in the 1997 bloodless coup to remove the sitting government. Threatening to remove and actually removing governments is a serious impediment to stability and the creation of democratic institutions in Turkey.¹⁵⁴

While there has been no coup since 1997, the military has not remained silent in politics. In October of 2006, Turkey's secular President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and the Chief of Turkey's military, Gen. Yasar Buyukanit, warned against creeping expansions of Islamic fundamentalism in government and the General stated that "every measure will be taken against it."¹⁵⁵ The military's Chief of General Staff stated in 2007 that Turkey is facing more threats to its security than at any time in recent history. He noted that only "dynamic forces," such as the army, could prevent the destruction of the country.¹⁵⁶ The army even threatened a coup against the sitting government over the election of Abdulla Gul as President. The military, and its desire to defend Turkey from Islamic politics and Kurdish rebellion, has made reform harder.¹⁵⁷ While these statements may be an exaggerated attempt to show the military is still strong in the face of the institutional power it has lost due to EU reforms, it is still a powerful reminder of what the military can do if it chooses.

Of importance, the reforms reducing the power of the military were mostly passed when the army was headed by Hilmi Ozkok.¹⁵⁸ He believed the military's power should

decrease and did not oppose reforms, a unique stance in Turkey's modern history for the army head to hold.¹⁵⁹ Yet even the changes he approved were fairly minor, and if more severe changes were requested, there might be more confrontation.¹⁶⁰ The EU has avoided advocating changes that would push the military towards a conflict,¹⁶¹ instead looking to make small changes and reduce the role of the military in modest ways.

If stability is maintained, the military will likely allow changes to occur because EU membership would fulfill Ataturk's vision of Turkey as European.¹⁶² The military was unable to eradicate security threats from Kurds, Marxists, and nationalists by military means, and became willing to try civilian means.¹⁶³ However, if civilian political means fail, the military might step back in, no matter what legal changes had been implemented.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, if there is instability in Turkey resulting from EU demands and it leads to the undermining of Turkey's society, the military might act.¹⁶⁵ It is not clear that the institutional changes made so far have impacted the military's thinking on its role in Turkish politics.

Long-term effects may depend upon a strong civil society that could, if needed, counter the strength of the military and challenge its power. Such a civil society does not currently exist in Turkey.¹⁶⁶ The military is the most trusted institution in Turkey and even though there have been changes in the legal standing of the military, there have not been changes to Turkish citizen's views of the military or its role.¹⁶⁷ People line the streets when the military comes by to chant pro-army slogans.¹⁶⁸ The AKP may have high legitimacy, but the military's is higher.

Improvements to Civil Society

Turkey has taken steps to bring its laws regarding freedom of association and assembly into line with EU requirements. Turkey began these reform efforts in 2001 by dropping restrictive rules that required official government authorization for any public rallies. At that time, however, freedom of association and assembly could still be restricted on the ill-defined grounds of maintaining public order. Kurds had almost no right to freedom of assembly and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) often faced government interference with their actions.¹⁶⁹ Turkey continued its reforms in 2004, by making demonstrations and gatherings easier to organize and attend and reducing surveillance and interference with NGOs. Restrictions remained on what such groups and events could do or say, and sometimes rallies were violently broken up.¹⁷⁰ In 2008 Turkey lifted most of the remaining restrictions on public demonstrations.¹⁷¹

As of 2010, due to the changes Turkey has made, freedom of assembly and association laws are in line with European norms. However, there are still some cases of arbitrary denials of the freedom of assembly, and the police still sometimes use disproportionate force against demonstrators.¹⁷² There have also been problems bringing those who commit abuses against demonstrators to justice.¹⁷³ Overall, however, Turkey has been successful meeting EU demands, which has led to a more vibrant civil society in Turkey, as intended.

The EU has pressured Turkey to improve the transparency of its government, and Turkey has responded.¹⁷⁴ New legislation allows individuals to acquire government information upon request, although it is not clear that this change has been fully

enforced.¹⁷⁵ Turkey also took steps to address the corruption of some government officials, but enforcement has, again, been mixed.

These changes are reflected in the rankings given to Turkey by Transparency International. In 2004 when Turkey began making changes, Turkey ranked 77th out of 146 nations for its level of corruption (1 is least corrupt, 146 most corrupt).¹⁷⁶ In 2007 Turkey created a new program to teach provincial governors how to implement a code of ethics, and Turkey's score from Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index rose to a new high of 58th of 180 nations in 2008. Corruption remains a problem, with both AKP and opposition politicians implicated.¹⁷⁷

While Turkey has had a turbulent past regarding the freedom of its elections, the last two elections in Turkey have gone very smoothly. The first election of the AKP in 2002 was considered a free and fair election, and was a win for stability.¹⁷⁸ The 2007 election in Turkey was also judged by the EU to be "plural, transparent, professional, and efficiently managed."¹⁷⁹ Further, after a court case was filed by opposition parties, the ECHR ruled in 2007 that Turkey's 10% threshold for party representation did not violate the rights of people to participate in free elections.¹⁸⁰

Turkey has made significant progress in developing a more advanced and healthy civil society, a society more free to question the government. This shift is reflected in the Freedom House scores Turkey has received since 1995 when Turkey entered into a Customs Union with the EU and, since 1999, when negotiations on Turkey's membership began. Freedom House gives countries separate rankings for political and civil rights. The closer a country is to a score of 1 in each category, the greater the level of democratization. In 1995, Turkey received a 5 (out of 7, with lower being better) for

both political and civil rights. In 1999 Turkey earned a 4 for political rights and a 5 for civil rights. Turkey's rankings have improved since. In 2003, Turkey received a score of 3 for political rights and a 4 for civil rights. Turkey's rankings improved again in 2005 as Freedom House gave Turkey a score of 3 in each category. Turkey has received the same score since 2005 to the most recent report in 2009.¹⁸¹

Banning of Political Parties

The EU has had some success in changing Turkish policy regarding the banning of political parties. Rather than bans, Turkey has developed other punishments. If a party violates a law, it will be informed of the violation by the Constitutional Court and will be given 30 days to correct the problem; if it does not, the Court may then dissolve the party.¹⁸² In the past, the military disbanded parties without a hearing or ruling by the courts.

The EU condemned Turkey in 1997, when Turkey banned the Welfare party. In response, Turkey allowed the case to go before the ECHR to determine if Turkey's policies were unfair and illegal. Turkey won its case.¹⁸³ In fact, seven political parties disbanded in Turkey since 1997 (including Welfare) have brought cases in the European courts, but only three have won. Turkey's victories suggest that Turkey was already substantially in line with European norms.¹⁸⁴

Despite progress, Turkish political parties continue to face bans, including the Communist Party, a number of Kurdish political parties, and most famously the AKP.¹⁸⁵ In 2008 the AKP was taken to court in an attempt to have the party banned. The case claimed that the AKP was steering the country too far towards becoming an Islamic

state.¹⁸⁶ The court decided on July 30, 2008, not to ban the AKP but removed fifty percent of public funding to the AKP as a message to the party that it must maintain Turkey's secular laws.¹⁸⁷ The President of the Court did say that he could not close the party because he feared what the impact would be on Turkey economically, politically, and internationally. The EU stated that closing the AKP would halt accession negotiations.¹⁸⁸ It is believed the fear of EU disapproval helped to sway the decision of the judges,¹⁸⁹ and while not all the judges have commented, the President of the Court confirmed that part of the reason he did not ban the AKP was out of fear of upsetting the EU.¹⁹⁰

By winning their case, the AKP should be safe from another closure case for a while. Another case can be brought, but cannot use any of the same evidence. This might incline the AKP, which already was judged anti-secular in the court case, to be more cautious, democratic, and centrist to avoid any future trouble.¹⁹¹ Of importance, the military did not offer a public opinion during the court proceedings.¹⁹² The restraint of the military and the court in deciding not to ban the AKP is a major step forward in stabilizing Turkish democracy in a Western mold, as are the changes Turkey has made to laws banning political parties.

The Judiciary and Criminal Law

The EU has expressed a number of concerns with the judiciary system and criminal laws in Turkey. These concerns encompass judicial independence, the professionalism of the judiciary, Turkey's death penalty, Turkey's use of torture, the structure of the court system, and other aspects of Turkey's criminal code.

To address concerns regarding judicial independence, Turkey has modified its judicial selection process to shelter it from political influence. Before the reforms, the President appointed and was allowed to promote judges, and the President's decisions were not open to appeal.¹⁹³ A reform bill passed in 2007 changed this system. All judicial candidates now must submit to an interview with the Ministry of Justice, which has been made responsible for appointing judges. Also, candidates must take a test that uses a transparent scoring system. There has been criticism that the new system is still quite subjective and does not adequately remove judicial appointments from the President's influence, especially as the Ministry of Justice is within the executive branch. Due to these concerns two opposition parties have filed suit against the system.¹⁹⁴ There has been no court decision as of this writing.

Turkey has made progress in drafting a judicial reform strategy, but the specifics have not yet been revealed. Further, the professionalism of the judiciary is sometimes called into question, with a training program for judges still lacking independence from the government. There are additional concerns that judges often make decisions based not on the law, but rather on their political leanings.¹⁹⁵

To qualify for EU membership, Turkey had to eliminate its use of the death penalty. Turkey began to address this concern in 2001 when it limited the use of the death penalty and implemented a de facto moratorium on death penalties issued since 1984.¹⁹⁶ Turkey finally eliminated the death penalty in 2004 in the first harmonization package Turkey passed to comply with EU requirements. Turkey now only allows the death penalty in times of war,¹⁹⁷ and has even spared the life of Abdullah Ocalan, the

captured leader of the PKK terrorists.¹⁹⁸ Turkey has not executed anyone since it changed the law to meet EU requirements.

In order to join the EU, Turkey must outlaw torture and ensure enforcement.¹⁹⁹ Turkey has amended its laws to define torture in line with international standards and has passed laws regarding effective prosecution; treatment of suspects; length of time a person may be held; improvement of prison conditions; prevention of falsified medical reports; a Parliamentary committee on torture allegations; increased freedom for non-governmental organizations; access for the press, lawyers, doctors, and family members to prisoners and the accused; and training for law enforcement personnel.²⁰⁰ The reforms also included a program in the interior ministry in which representatives could be sent unannounced to inspect police stations to check on prisoners and to ensure that no inappropriate methods or equipment were being used in interrogations.²⁰¹ New measures also include training judges, prosecutors, and forensic experts how to employ effective investigation techniques and how to document cases of torture or abuse.²⁰² Due to these changes, Turkey has an extensive set of laws to prevent torture and the ill treatment of prisoners, and the AKP has shown a commitment to ending torture.²⁰³

Nevertheless, torture still occurs. Incidents of torture have fallen sharply since 2000,²⁰⁴ but disturbingly, the number of incidents of torture brought to the attention of NGOs has risen since 2007.²⁰⁵ The Parliamentary commission addressing torture also found that the rate of torture has increased.²⁰⁶ There is still a culture of impunity for those who torture, with few brought to justice, particularly in rural areas, including Kurdish areas,²⁰⁷ where security personnel have been accused of extra-judicial killings. While Turkey has not yet abolished torture (some have argued the EU has not done so

either in regards to terrorism suspects), it has taken substantial steps to change the institutional attitude towards torture.²⁰⁸ Turkey has successfully brought its laws, if not its practices, in line with EU requirements.

Turkey updated its laws regarding terrorism, changing and limiting the definition of a terrorist act to reflect EU requests, and changing penalties for terrorist acts to make them better fit the crime (according to the EU).²⁰⁹ The problems with the old Turkish laws were less with the goal and more with the wording, which was very ambiguous.²¹⁰ Turkey has also agreed to open up debate over what actions Turkey may take to protect its “national security.” In the past, the military was the only group to define what Turkey’s national security policy would be; now the government has a say and the debate is public.²¹¹

Turkey has also addressed EU concerns regarding the role of the military in trying so called “state security offenses.” Such crimes include: political violence, narcotics violations, organized crime, and some non-violent political offenses. The military used to be allowed to try such cases and could legally hold suspects for up to four days (in Kurdish areas, in practice it was ten days) without access to family members or a lawyer.²¹² In 2004, however, Turkey abolished military courts and ended these practices. The military still sometimes holds suspects, but the practice has decreased significantly.²¹³

Turkey’s justice system is still lacking regional courts of appeals that were supposed to have been set up by mid-2007. 2004 saw the first reform of Turkey’s penal code in its entire modern history. New penal reforms allow all persons arrested immediate access to a lawyer, but this is not always practiced.²¹⁴ Turkey passed

legislation to bring other procedures into line with Western norms, including: changing the indictment process, allowing for mediation in some cases, and establishing the process of cross-examination. However, Turkey has not yet made regular and sufficient use of these new procedures.²¹⁵

Criminal procedure has been changed so that the relatives of the accused will be notified upon arrest and the accused can contact family. Changes have been made ensuring that people accused or convicted of crimes are treated similarly to criminals in Europe.²¹⁶ The power of police to detain people without charge was eliminated. Consistent with additional EU mandates, the police are no longer able to seize property without court approval and police conduct towards drunk people, persons on drugs, and persons attempting to flee were made uniform and re-designed to use as little force as possible. However, enforcement of these new procedures is still spotty.²¹⁷

Turkey's modernization of the judiciary has seen success with the ECHR as well. In 2008, the ECHR received 3,705 applications from Turkish citizens against Turkey, which was similar to previous years. The charges were mainly in regards to the right to a fair trial and protection of property rights, but in a large improvement over previous years, few concerned the right to life, torture, or ill treatment. Turkey overall has a successful record of implementing ECHR judgments.²¹⁸

Overall, Turkey has made very significant improvements to its judicial system. It has modernized its judiciary to ensure greater impartiality of judges and remove the military from most aspects of the court system, eliminated the death penalty, reduced incidents of torture, and brought its criminal codes into line with the EU. These

modifications have helped to create a more stable and just democracy where more people have access to the courts and people are treated more equally and fairly before the courts.

Press Freedom

Freedom of the press is a necessary element of a vibrant civil society and democracy. Turkey's press has faced many restrictions over the years and continues to face repression, sometimes in the form of jail sentences. The EU has pressured Turkey to improve the freedom of the press. The current criminal code limits freedom of expression for the press severely, as it forbids insulting state officials and incitement to racial hatred, neither of which is clearly defined. Anti-terror laws are also used to harass the press, as the laws are used to imprison journalists for discussing the military, Kurds, or political Islam.²¹⁹ Article 216 of the Constitution, which makes inflaming hatred a crime, has, in particular, been used to punish journalists who cover the Kurdish plight.²²⁰

EU pressures have led to some reforms. In 2004 a new press law changed the criminal code so that some media crimes faced fines instead of jail sentences.²²¹ However, prison sentences were still allowed for defamation (though the punishment was lowered), claiming Turkey committed genocide, instigating hatred, or calling for Turkey to withdraw from Cyprus,²²² and in 2006 Turkey took steps backwards. A new anti-terrorism law reintroduced jail sentences for journalists and created more restrictions on what subjects may be discussed in the press. The anti-terror law makes it a crime (punishable by up to three years in jail) to disseminate statements and propaganda from terrorist organizations, which mainly impacts reporters covering the Kurds.²²³ According to the EU, Turkey has stalled in making required changes, and has actually reversed

course and become more restrictive in implementing its laws.²²⁴ Further restricting reporters, the Prime Minister has sued numerous journalists since 2005 for defamation for publishing cartoons and reports he found unfavorable.²²⁵

Turkey has given its High Board of Radio and Television (RTUK) control over all media sources. The RTUK is allowed to determine what programming and reporting is appropriate and has often temporarily closed media providers for violating its standards or the law.²²⁶ The RTUK is independent in theory, but is under constant government pressures.²²⁷ New legal reforms, including greater freedom to report news reflecting poorly on Turkey or criticizing Atatürk; a limit on how long the government may close a press branch; that printing materials may only be confiscated by the courts; increased penalties for fabricating news; and providing that owners, editors, and contributors will not be forced to reveal sources, should help.²²⁸ In addition, printing presses may not be barred from operation on the vague grounds that they support crime.²²⁹ Turkey used to ban non-citizens from owning periodicals or becoming editors at Turkish papers, but the new law has changed this as well.²³⁰ It is not yet clear how well any of these changes will be enforced.

A troubling case is that of the newspaper *Nokta*. In 2007, fifty policemen entered the offices of *Nokta* under orders from a military prosecutor and copied every document on every computer, including personal emails. The raid was prompted by an article *Nokta* published that was unfavorable to the military. Particularly troubling is that the AKP did not condemn the raid, and in fact could have stopped it, because the final approval came from the justice minister, who is an AKP member. This has made many in the EU worry about Erdogan's commitment to improving press freedom.²³¹

Overall it seems that Turkey has made mixed progress in improving press freedom. While new laws have come into force, not all of the laws have improved press freedom, and those that do have a mixed record of enforcement. Further, the press is not always willing to criticize the government, and government officials often put pressure on the media to report negative stories regarding the government in a favorable light.²³²

Freedom House scores on press freedom support this conclusion. In its 2002 Report, Freedom House gave Turkey a score of 58²³³ (score of 0 [best] to 100 [worst]²³⁴). This score improved through 2005 when Turkey received a score of 48.²³⁵ As reforms stalled and reversed, Turkey's score dropped to 51 in 2007 after the implementation of the new anti-terrorism law.²³⁶

The National Security Council

Turkey's 1982 constitution, which was written by the military, grants the NSC the highest authority for making decisions related to the "preservation of the State."²³⁷ The NSC was supposed to be subordinate to the civilian government, but in reality it took on a decisive role in politics and over half the NSCs members are generals.²³⁸ The NSC's internal workings and decisions were never made available to the public.²³⁹ The NSC expanded its role because the Turkish military believes that it is better placed than any other group to make decisions in Turkey's interests.²⁴⁰ The EU viewed reform of the National Security Council (NSC) as crucial to Turkey's candidacy, and Turkey responded with sweeping changes.²⁴¹

Turkey made changes to both the composition of the NSC and its powers. Turkey changed the membership of the NSC from ten members, five from the military and five

civilians, to fourteen members, five from the military and nine civilians.²⁴² The head of the NSC used to be chosen by the military, but now a civilian²⁴³ chosen by the Prime Minister heads the NSC.²⁴⁴ Additionally, the NSC now only meets once every two months²⁴⁵ and its papers are drafted by the civilians on the council.²⁴⁶ The NSC's power has been greatly reduced. The NSC is now purely an advisory board that submits recommendations to the government.²⁴⁷ The NSC is also no longer allowed to access public agency personnel and documents at will.²⁴⁸

The EU accepted these changes and considers Turkey's policies regarding the NSC to be in line with EU requirements, but there are still problems regarding the NSC. The military accepted these changes in part because decisions of the NSC are made by consensus, which the military can still shape and control.²⁴⁹ It is important to note that the 1997 coup began when the Islamic Prime Minister decided not to follow the NSC's recommendations and submitted them to Parliament.²⁵⁰ Further, none of these changes have stopped the military and NSC from intervening in politics.²⁵¹ However, the AKP has not given in to pressures from the military, which is a departure from previous governments, and the military has not staged a coup. The changes to the NSC represent real progress towards civilian dominated democracy.

Freedom of Expression

The EU wants Turkey to revoke its laws against insulting, vilifying, or caricaturing the state or persons who work for the state.²⁵² In an attempt to address EU concerns, Turkey modified the relevant articles in its penal code. The result was the now infamous Article 301. Article 301 (after being amended in 2008) prohibits publically

denigrating the Turkish nation, the parliament, any member of the government, the judicial system, and the military or other security organizations.²⁵³ The punishment for such an action ranges from six months to two years in jail (before EU pressures forced an amendment, the punishment was up to three years in jail). It is not clearly defined anywhere what exactly constitutes an insult, so the law can be used to charge people quite easily. The Article has been used to charge people who have stated they believe Turkey committed genocide against Armenians at the end of World War I and against people who call attention to the plight of the Kurds.

Article 301 has been used by officials in Turkey's government and military to bring vague criminal charges against political enemies. The changes Article 301 created included a requirement for permission to be obtained from the Justice Minister before launching a criminal investigation under the Article.²⁵⁴ This however does not solve the problem of ending politically motivated charges, as the Justice Minister answers to the AKP.²⁵⁵ Article 301 did not substantially alter rules regarding free speech, just the penalty for violating those rules.²⁵⁶

There are four cases involving Article 301 that deserve a quick discussion. The case of Hrant Dink, the "Mr. Ocalan" incident, the banning of YouTube, and the case of Orhan Pamuk. Hrant Dink was a prominent member of Turkey's Armenian community. He was charged twice under Article 301 for insulting Turkey by claiming Turkey committed genocide against the Armenians. The first time he was acquitted. The second time he was convicted and given a suspended sentence of six months. He appealed that case to the ECHR, but never got a day in court, as he was assassinated by a young Turkish nationalist in 2006 for insulting the state. At the time of his death, prosecutors

were preparing a third charge against him.²⁵⁷ His case became a major issue between the EU and Turkey. The EU was not pleased by the charges against Dink and was outraged over his death. In the second incident, a Kurdish politician was sentenced to six months in jail under Article 301 for showing respect to jailed terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan by referring to him as “Mr. Ocalan.”²⁵⁸

The third case revolves around the website YouTube. In Turkey the Internet is not specifically restricted, but the same rules that apply to the press and TV apply to it.²⁵⁹ Thus there is room for censorship. Freedom of expression on the Internet was put to the test when a video insulting Atatürk was posted on YouTube. In response, Turkish prosecutors took YouTube to court demanding the video be deleted. YouTube refused, and Turkey blocked access to YouTube for the whole country.²⁶⁰ Further, action was taken by a Parliamentary commission, which approved a proposal to block all websites that insult Atatürk or question the secular principles of Turkey.²⁶¹ Censorship of the Internet is not in keeping with European policy or norms.

The final example is the heavily followed case of journalist Orhan Pamuk. Pamuk is an internationally acclaimed Turkish author. He was arrested and charged for comments he made in an interview with a magazine regarding the 1915 Armenian genocide and the situation of the Kurds. Pamuk denied the official story in Turkey that more Turks were killed by Armenians than the other way around and stated that Turkey had killed a disproportionate number of Kurds.²⁶² In the end, the prosecutor’s office dropped the charges amid international pressure.²⁶³ While the dismissal of charges against Orhan Pamuk is an encouraging sign, Article 301 is still troubling. Article 301 represents a major stumbling block for Turkish democracy and civil society as it makes

people wary of criticizing the government. The EU has expressed its desire to see Turkey repeal the Article. The EU is also concerned that charges continue to be brought against people, like Dink and Pamuk, who were only expressing non-violent opinions.²⁶⁴

2007 Battle over the Turkish Presidency

The President in Turkey has the ability to appoint the head of the army and all of Turkey's judges and university rectors.²⁶⁵ In addition, the President can veto laws.²⁶⁶ It is a very powerful position. Thus the army has always been very worried about a member of an Islamic party becoming President.²⁶⁷ In 2007 the term of the President, Necdet Sezer, who is a fierce secularist whom the military supports, was ending.²⁶⁸ He was not eligible to be reelected. As the AKP controlled the parliament, it was allowed to nominate someone for the office, and it was likely to be able to get the party's choice elected. The AKP selected Abdullah Gul as their candidate over the objections of the opposition parties and the military.

While Gul has stated that he will defend the secular principles of Turkey,²⁶⁹ and is considered by many people to be a moderate,²⁷⁰ the army and the opposition were worried. Gul was part of the Welfare government that the military toppled in 1997 and Gul's wife once brought Turkey before the European Court of Human Rights over the policy banning women from wearing headscarves in higher education facilities and government buildings. The case was dropped, she claims, because Gul was the foreign minister and she did not want to sue the country while her husband was in that job. Others claim she withdrew the case because she learned the court was going to rule against her.²⁷¹

Gul was prevented from taking office when the military threatened to intervene, people began to demonstrate against Gul, and the opposition walked out of parliament. This denied the AKP a quorum, so the vote on Gul's nomination could not occur.²⁷² The AKP held the vote despite the fact the parliament did not have a quorum present, and Gul won. The main opposition party then sued the AKP in an attempt to block Gul's nomination based on the fact that he was elected without a quorum present.²⁷³ The military threatened to take action to prevent Gul becoming President. After the deadlocked round of voting, Turkey's military increased its warnings to the government and stated outright that they might intervene to defend secularism against Gul.²⁷⁴ The military reminded the government that the army is part of the debate and the security services must have their voices heard.²⁷⁵ The military made the statement as the court was deliberating, which likely made it a message not just to the government but also to the courts.²⁷⁶ The courts also faced pressure from secular groups to void Gul's election.²⁷⁷

Many legal observers of Turkey thought that, based on Turkish law, the AKP would win the case. The independence of the courts was thus called into question when they voided Gul's appointment to the Presidency. In fact, most of the judges in the court system are strict secularists who were appointed by a secular president and oppose the AKP.²⁷⁸

In response to the moves by the opposition and the court's decision, the AKP called new elections. The AKP was hoping to gain a large enough majority to elect Gul without any other party needing to be present. The AKP actually lost seats, but was able

to convince incoming members of smaller elected parties to support Gul's nomination for the Presidency. This gave the AKP the needed quorum.²⁷⁹

In the end, Gul became President, the military did not intervene, and Gul has served as a moderate. No one can be sure of why exactly the military did not halt Gul's election, but there are several theories. One is that the military will not take action because it has been weakened institutionally.²⁸⁰ As Gul is not a polarizing figure in Turkey²⁸¹ (Gul has never been arrested for sedition, unlike Erdogan), it would be difficult for the military to justify a coup to the people.²⁸² If the military were stronger institutionally it might have been able to prevent Gul's appointment without a coup.

Along similar lines, the second proposed reason is that since Gul promised to support the secular ideals of Turkey's founding, the military did not feel it had to intervene.²⁸³ The threats from the military were intended to remind him of that duty, but the army never intended to overthrow him or his government.

The third reason is that the EU stated that it viewed the election of the President as a test of Turkey's progress towards democracy.²⁸⁴ The EU, and many others, believe the prospect of losing EU membership helped control the military.²⁸⁵ If fear of the suspension of EU membership negotiations was the reason for the military's restraint, it would represent a real strengthening of Turkish democracy due to EU pressures.

If any or all of the above reasons the military did not halt Gul's election are true, and there is reason to believe they all are, it would show real progress towards a more Western democracy. If the military has been weakened institutionally, that will give the civilian leadership greater control over the nation. If Gul's pledges were sincere, it would show greater trust between religious groups and the military, which augers well for the

future stability of democracy. During the drama over the Presidency, AKP officials publicly rebuked the military for attempting to intervene, stating that the military must answer to the government, not the other way around. This is not a course of action that other Turkish governments have attempted and suggests real progress.²⁸⁶

If EU pressures have helped control the military, then continued negotiations with the EU will provide more time and support for groups working to strengthen civilian leadership over military. Of course, if the EU were to withdraw candidacy status from Turkey, and EU membership was all that was keeping the military from overthrowing governments, it is possible that the military will revert to its previous behaviors.²⁸⁷

The Deep State and Ergenekon

The Deep State refers to elements of the military, security forces, and the judiciary who support the ideal of Kemalism and are fiercely nationalist. The exact format of the Deep State is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is fairly clear that the NSC was a central part of the Deep State.²⁸⁸ The NSC used to issue a document that listed what it believed should be Turkey's domestic and international priorities and was top-secret, being revealed only to top military officials and state administrators. It was sometimes called the "state's secret constitution."²⁸⁹ This document was drafted mainly by, and considered the manifesto of, the Deep State. While the practice of writing the "state's secret constitution" has been ended by EU reforms,²⁹⁰ it appears the Deep State may still be quite active.

Some nationalists in Turkey, including the Deep State, have begun to turn against EU membership. The nationalists see EU membership as granting too many rights to the

Kurds, which will end up with Turkey being divided into two nations, a Kurdish nation and a Turkish one. In their nightmare scenario, the remaining Turkish state might become a religious state. The Deep State also thinks the EU economic changes are just a way for the EU to exploit Turkey and take decision making power out of its hands.²⁹¹ Further, the Deep State actors are afraid that EU-mandated changes will threaten their positions and power.²⁹²

These fears are likely behind the Ergenekon scandal. The Ergenekon organization is a secret group of ultranationalists who strongly support Kemalist ideals and strictly support Turkey's national sovereignty. While it had been suspected that Ergenekon existed, it was not until a criminal investigation was begun in 2007 that any concrete proof surfaced. In 2008, eighty-six members of Ergenekon were arrested, including sitting judges, prosecutors, journalists, military officers, members of the bureaucracy, and retired military generals. The group is accused of planning a series of violent attacks to provoke a military coup against the AKP. The Ergenekon members were accused of crimes including: a 2006 armed attack on the highest administrative court in Turkey that killed a judge, a 2006 bombing of a secular newspaper, a series of attacks against persons Ergenekon labeled unpatriotic, ties to organized crime, playing a role in the assassination of Hrant Dink, killing an Italian priest, killing three Christians in 2006 at a Bible publishing house, and the assassination of a commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie in 1993. The members were also accused of planning future illegal actions, and of having ties to the army that they intended to use to foment a coup.²⁹³

AKP opponents have argued that the AKP is simply using this wide-ranging case as a way to attack its enemies.²⁹⁴ There appears to be evidence, including from the

founder of the New York City Police Department's computer crimes investigation unit, that the charges against the people accused of being members of Ergenekon is fabricated.²⁹⁵ Some people are arguing that the AKP is using the case, and planting the evidence, in order to discredit its rivals in the military who want to check the AKP's rising power.²⁹⁶ There have also been charges by the defendants that their rights have not been protected, and that they have been detained without charge in excess of what the law allows.²⁹⁷ The case has yet to be decided. Of central importance, however, the army has not objected to the arrests or attempted to influence the judicial process thus far.

To some degree most, if not all, countries have a "deep state," including the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and the United States.²⁹⁸ The difference is that in none of these nations does the Deep State appear to have nearly the influence it has in Turkey. However, whereas in the past the nationalist Deep State was considered to be the ultimate power in the country, as the arrest of the members of Ergenekon show, that Deep State is no longer the ultimate power.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the Deep State apparently remains a force in support of an ultra-nationalist Turkey and its "members" can quickly change depending on what battle is being fought.³⁰⁰ There are also fears that a new Deep State is arising, this time filled with AKP supporters. In fact, it is possible that the Ergenekon charges have been fabricated by this new Deep State.³⁰¹ If this shift does occur or has occurred, the Deep State may still be the ultimate power in Turkey, but in a very different incarnation.

Turkey's Constitution

Turkey's current Constitution was drafted by the military in 1982. The EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, stated in December of 2008 that Turkey must modify its constitution to join the EU and Turkey would have a much easier time making other reforms if it changed its constitution.³⁰²

The EU noted a number of areas that needed to be addressed. This included structural changes and modifications to language to define the ideals of the state. The structural changes included: decreased constitutional power for the NSC, strengthening the parliament, reducing the power of the President, and reforms to the judiciary. The EU wanted Turkey to change language that stressed the rights of the state over the individual, and language that placed restrictions on freedom of speech, religious expression, and association. The EU noted that Turkey needed to better define what constituted individual liberties.³⁰³

In September of 2007, the AKP began an effort to modify the Constitution in response to remaining EU concerns. Over time, the Constitution has been modified many times (around a third of the articles have been amended), and until the election of the AKP in 2002, all parties believed it needed modifying. The current effort by the AKP has, however, met with resistance from opposition parties and the military. The impasse is related more to internal power struggles than a true belief that the Constitution is sound.³⁰⁴ When the AKP attempted to change the Constitution, the methods it used upset other interested parties. The AKP drafted in secret without involving any other political parties or institutions, including the military. The AKP also pushed for a lifting of the ban on headscarves in public buildings over any other needed changes. This shifted

focus away from reworking the Constitution and towards a battle over secularism.³⁰⁵ In the end, the AKP only managed to amend the Constitution to lift the headscarf ban in universities. However, the Constitutional Court annulled the changes as being against the secular nature of the state.³⁰⁶

Efforts to resume the process began again after the 2007 failures, but Erdogan declared in June of 2009 that efforts to amend the Constitution would be halted due to resistance from opposition political parties.³⁰⁷ Erdogan and the AKP too, however, shared blame for the breakdown of the reform process. If the AKP had attempted to engage secular and opposition groups earlier in the process, it is possible it would have been easier to modify the constitution.

The AKP attempted again in 2010 to make modifications to the Constitution. The proposals included efforts to bar discrimination based on sex, improve civil liberties, and protect personal privacy.³⁰⁸ While these provisions were fairly uncontroversial, there were other changes that the secular forces opposed that impacted the judiciary. The amendments would give the President and Parliament increased say in the appointment of judges and prosecutors. The number of members on the Constitutional Court was expanded, as well as increasing the size of the body that is in charge of appointments to judicial positions.³⁰⁹ The opposition claims that such changes will allow the AKP to fill the judiciary with Islamists, thus ending secular rule without an election. Despite objections, 58% of voters in Turkey approved the changes on September 12, 2010. Thirty years to the day after the military staged its 1980 coup.³¹⁰

The Likelihood of Continuing Progress

The pace of progress by Turkey in meeting EU demands has been impressive, but began to slow in 2004. In fact, the AKP has not had success since 2007 in creating any meaningful new reforms.³¹¹ This slowing can be attributed, in part, to the EU's negotiation strategy.³¹² The EU has failed to provide any timetable for membership, or even agree to discuss such a timetable. This has led to a belief among many people in Turkey that membership will never be offered. The fact that leaders of EU nations are even actively discussing alternative options to membership, including a so-called "privileged partnership," does not help the efforts of Turkish reformers.³¹³ As the reformers in Turkey constantly have to reassure groups skeptical of individual changes that EU membership will be the reward for their sacrifice, reformers are weakened when the EU does not offer encouragement for Turkey's membership. While the AKP says democratization is inevitable, Turkey is in danger of backsliding due to the vanishing prospect of EU membership.³¹⁴ One disconcerting example of this is that in Turkey's 2007 election, issues regarding EU membership were not even discussed. This silence was particularly troubling as the AKP had used the prospect of EU membership to win votes in previous elections.³¹⁵

While Turkey has made great progress thanks to the EU accession process, the progress has not been smooth, and the unpopularity of certain changes coupled with the failure of the EU to provide clear support for Turkish EU membership has led to a nearly complete stoppage of further reforms, and has in fact led to a backlash within Turkey against reforms and the EU. The future is anything but clear.

Chapter 6

Human Rights

Turkey has a poor record of protecting human rights and the rights of minorities, and Turkey's failures in this arena have been a major point of contention for the EU.

Human rights problems that the EU has demanded Turkey address include:

discrimination against Alevis, Kurds, women, and Christians; the use of torture; lack of an adequate legal system; and inadequate protections of free speech.³¹⁶ This section will focus on issues related to Kurds and women. Discrimination against Alevis and Christians is covered in Chapter 4, and a discussion of torture, the legal system, and free speech is offered in Chapter 5. Turkey has made some progress in regards to Kurdish and women's rights, but has not made sufficient progress. In the case of the Kurds this is mainly due to fears of terrorism. The reasons for the lack of progress in women's rights are not clear.

Countries applying for EU membership must adopt and enforce laws that match the EU vision of human rights.³¹⁷ In its drive towards EU membership, Turkey has taken procedural steps to improve human rights, including modernizing its laws and ratifying or agreeing to abide by numerous international treaties, including: the European Convention on Human Rights; the European Court of Human Rights; the Committee on Ministers of the Council of Europe; the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture; the European Social Charter; the UN Convention for the Prevention of Torture; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; and Protocol 6 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Protocol 6 abolishes the death penalty).

Turkey and the EU disagree on the definition of minorities. Turkey sees its citizens not as belonging to ethnic groups but instead as all just being Turkish citizens. In Turkey only certain limited minorities can benefit from minority protection laws, under the Lausanne Treaty.³¹⁸ Being a member of one of these protected groups entitles individuals to educational, religious, citizenship, and cultural rights.³¹⁹ The EU believes that Turkey needs to expand and ensure protections, in accordance with European standards, for individuals of differing ethnic origin, religion, or language in order to allow them to maintain their identity.³²⁰ Specifically, the EU wants to see Turkey expand the rights granted by the Lausanne Treaty to include a broader range of minority groups.³²¹ To the EU, Turkey has failed to make progress in “ensuring cultural diversity and promoting respect for and protection of minorities in accordance with European standards.”³²²

Kurdish Rights

The issue of Kurdish nationalism was a problem that was present at Turkey’s founding. Kurds objected to the government’s unwillingness to recognize them as a group distinct from Turks, and uprisings began in 1925. The issue has not faded, and today the complaints of the Kurds include the same identity arguments, social and economic development disparities between majority Kurdish areas and majority non-Kurdish areas, and the lack of cultural and linguistic freedoms. As the level of

democracy and freedom increased in Turkey, so did Kurdish demands for greater respect of their rights. From this desire, there have arisen a number of political parties and activist organizations. Most of these groups promote peaceful methods to advance what they believe is the Kurdish cause; some, however, do not. The most famous is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which espouses terrorism. While this group draws support from many Kurds, there are many Kurds who support the PKK's aims but do not support violence, and still many other Kurds who oppose the PKK altogether. Kurds who oppose the PKK are angered in part because the PKK's terrorist activities make organizing peaceful movements more challenging. The Turkish government tends to assume that any Kurdish group supports terrorism. Importantly, however, there is no formal Turkish policy of discrimination against Kurds, as they are viewed as being Turkish. There is no forced segregation of Kurdish populations. When people of Kurdish background embrace being Turkish, some have risen to very high levels of power.³²³

Insurgency

For the past three decades, Turkey has been dealing with a violent insurgency led by the Kurdish group the PKK. The Kurds' demands have ranged from increased rights as a minority groups, to greater autonomy, to full independence. The Turkish government maintains that as Kurds are Islamic, they cannot be a minority group.³²⁴ This is in keeping with Ataturk's vision that the state should be homogeneous.³²⁵ Turkey has historically feared the breakup of the country, as when Turkey was founded, it had to fight wars against the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Kurds in an attempt to maintain its

territorial integrity. Thus the sometimes perceived, sometimes real, efforts by the Kurds to undermine the unity of the state are viewed harshly.³²⁶ The PKK began its violent insurgency and terrorist campaign against Turkey in response to Turkey's continuing refusal to listen to Kurdish demands for greater freedom. The PKK was initially a Marxist movement founded in the 1970s, similar to other Marxist terrorist groups, including the Shining Path in Peru. PKK's initial goal was an independent homeland for Kurds carved out of the south-eastern corner of Turkey. Between 1984 and 1999 the PKK killed over 30,000 people. Turkey struck a major blow against the PKK when the PKK leader, Ocalan, was captured in 1999. Following Ocalan's capture, the PKK said it would disband, in 2002, but it did not. Instead, some members of the PKK fled into Iraq, while others formed a Kurdish political party in Turkey.³²⁷

In 2003 Turkey offered amnesty for any PKK fighter who agreed to lay down his or her arms, and who had not participated in previous violence.³²⁸ The offer was met with enough interest that Turkey and the PKK agreed to a cease-fire in September of 2004.³²⁹ However, the cease-fire was often violated by both sides and violence on the part of the PKK increased in 2005.³³⁰ Since 2006, violence has returned with greater frequency. Part of the reason for the increase in violence is that after Ocalan's capture, the leadership of the PKK splintered leaving no one supreme faction that controls the whole PKK.³³¹ This leads different PKK groups battling to show which is strongest.

The worst violation of the cease-fire to date was in 2006 when an uprising began in Diyarbakir, which the PKK and some related groups would like to make the unofficial Kurdish capital in south-eastern Turkey. Riots began after a battle between PKK fighters and the military which left 14 PKK members dead. The PKK called for civil unrest and

the government responded, according to Heinz Kramer, by using “drastic steps, firing not only tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets, but also live rounds, which they claimed to have fired into the air to disperse the protesters.”³³² 16 civilians were killed and hundreds more were injured or arrested. The PKK then carried out a series of bomb attacks in Istanbul and tourist destinations.³³³

In an effort to advance its EU accession process, Turkey has recently allowed PKK fighters to escape into Iraq. Turkey has hoped that letting fighters escape will increase stability in the region, reasoning that PKK fighters would not be able to create as much havoc if they were located across the border. The resulting decrease in violence has freed the Turkish government to increase freedoms to Kurdish groups remaining in Turkey and has helped lead to a negotiated cease-fire with the PKK.³³⁴

Legal Reforms

The EU has, since 2002, supported Turkey’s efforts to combat the PKK. However, the EU does not believe that Turkey’s treatment of the Kurds is acceptable, and has pushed Turkey to ease restrictions on Kurds. To further the accession process, Turkey has responded to EU demands and codified some rights of Kurds.³³⁵ In fact, Erdogan, against the wishes of the military, admitted that Turkey had made mistakes in dealing with the Kurds. Erdogan’s boldness in doing so was partly a consequence of EU pressure from the accession process.³³⁶ Kurds, as a result, have become some of the strongest supporters of EU membership in Turkey, largely because they have seen substantial increases in their rights and freedoms achieved through that process.³³⁷

Despite core disagreements, Turkey began expanding rights to Kurds in 2002.³³⁸ Changes allowed Turkish nationals to broadcast TV programs in languages used in their everyday lives, including Kurdish, under the same laws as those governing programming in Turkish.³³⁹ This was the first time Turkey allowed TV broadcasting in a language other than Turkish. However, at first only state-owned channels were allowed to broadcast in Kurdish, and these channels only set aside 30 minutes a day for these broadcasts.³⁴⁰ The right to print publications in Kurdish was also granted,³⁴¹ but in practice such publications were often shut down.

As of June 2008, T.R.T., the public service broadcaster in Turkey, was allowed to broadcast nationally all day in languages other than Turkish. A new Kurdish language radio station also received authorization to broadcast in Kurdish.³⁴² However, it was nearly impossible to open such television channels. When other language channels existed, they had to have Turkish subtitles, which made broadcasting difficult and costly.³⁴³ On January 1, 2009, Turkey “launched a 24-hour Kurdish channel in the main Kurdish dialect” for the first time.³⁴⁴ These have been significant steps towards meeting EU demands regarding Kurdish broadcasting and linguistic rights; however, the restrictions Turkey places on such rights and the failures to fully enforce such rights is problematic.

Further progress has been made on the issue of media freedom. It is now common to hear Kurdish music on the radio and see Kurdish programs on TV. Kurdish movies have won awards at Turkish film festivals. There seems to be a more general openness in Turkish society to Kurdish language and culture. Acceptance of the use of the Kurdish language in public (see Chapter 7 for information on the Kurdish language in

the education system) is also rising. In fact, in October of 2010, President Gul stood under a banner written in Kurdish to praise the opening at Mardin Artuklu University of the first university-level program in Turkey on the Kurdish language. At the event, Gul stated that diversity in Turkey is one of its strongest assets.³⁴⁵

Turkey attempted to ease tensions in late 2006 and early 2007 by ending the state of emergency in Kurdish areas. The state of emergency had allowed the military to ignore human rights laws in regard to suspected terrorists.³⁴⁶ Turkey also again offered a partial amnesty for PKK members.³⁴⁷ To this day, the cease-fire continues to be broken by both sides,³⁴⁸ and Turkey continues to battle with Kurdish and Islamic radical groups.³⁴⁹

Economic Development

When Turkey has extended greater freedoms to the Kurds and helped improve the Kurdish economy, violence has usually decreased. This raises questions as to whether Turkey has a Kurdish terrorist problem, or a cultural and social development problem.³⁵⁰ Many Kurds are angry at the government because there are too few jobs available for them and limited future prospects of social advancement. GDP per person (in 2001) in majority Kurdish areas was under \$1,500 per person. Outside of those regions, the figure was over \$2,000 per person, with some areas (e.g., Istanbul) far in excess of \$2,500.³⁵¹ Many Kurds feel that the Turkish state has done little to try to improve their lives or address their needs.³⁵²

Noting the correlation between increased aid and decreased levels of violence, Erdogan announced in 2008 that Turkey would pledge to spend \$14.5 billion to help the

Kurds. The money would be spent over five years as part of a development plan to improve economic conditions in Kurdish areas.³⁵³ The development program will focus on four pillars: economic development, social development, infrastructure development, and institutional strengthening.³⁵⁴

Pace of Change

The AKP has been able to use its success in granting these new policies, programs, freedoms, and expanded peace to gain votes.³⁵⁵ Mostly these votes had previously gone to the main Kurdish party, the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP).³⁵⁶ In the 2007 elections, the AKP doubled its vote among Kurds from 26% of the popular vote in the previous election to 53%, a majority of the Kurdish vote. Kurds switched their votes from small parties and the main nationalist party, the CHP, to the AKP (but not many switched from the DTP to the AKP) due to promises made by the AKP to address Kurdish concerns. In fact, outside of Diyarbakir and a few other municipalities, the AKP won more votes than the DTP.³⁵⁷ Despite this, after the election, the AKP, while allowing the expansion of broadcasting rights, slowed the pace of other changes.³⁵⁸ While the EU accession process provides a clear mechanism for the AKP to address Kurdish concerns, it has chosen not to do so.³⁵⁹ This is likely mainly for domestic political reasons. The AKP is afraid of being banned. The army does not seem to be interested in pushing for a political solution to the violence, and is largely unsupportive of efforts to address Kurdish problems.³⁶⁰ The AKP also spent its political capital on losing battles over the headscarf and the new constitution. Thus the AKP does not have the resources to fight for Kurdish rights.

Different government bodies have differing ideas on how to handle Turkey's remaining problems with its Kurdish population. The security forces, including the military, often resort to extreme force to handle the terrorist threat.³⁶¹ The military has, however, pressured the civilian leadership to push for political and social solutions during times of low violence. In turn, the civilian leadership has made modest progress. However, including expanding some language rights and TV rights, and making changes to education programs, were not part of any coherent plan and they fail to address the most important issues, which are economic and social underdevelopment. Conflicts in the 1990s led to over 37,000 deaths and over 1 million Kurds driven from their homes. These people now mainly live in urban slums far from their original homes. The AKP promise of development aid is a promising step towards ending Turkey's conflict with the Kurds.³⁶² While the legal changes and the promises Turkey's government has made are important steps, practices have not changed as quickly.³⁶³ Turkey needs to increase enforcement of new laws granting freedom to Kurds.

Role of the EU

The EU has had a mixed role in Turkish/Kurdish relations. The EU failed to label the PKK as a terrorist group until 2002, despite many atrocities. The European left has offered a great deal of support to the PKK, including websites based in Brussels, Italy, and Germany, a youth group website in Denmark (now shut down), two TV stations in Denmark, and a radio station in Denmark. Most Turks know someone who was killed by a PKK attack. The PKK is viewed by Turks the same way as al Qaeda is viewed in America. This makes the EU tolerance for the group almost impossible for Turkey to

bear, and many anti-PKK rallies in recent years have also carried anti-Western messages. In many EU nations, PKK members continue to find sanctuary, and the PKK continues to find funding.³⁶⁴

The EU has additionally failed to clearly lay out what it wants Turkey to do for the Kurds, how the EU envisions the changes it has demanded of Turkey will impact the conflict, or what EU policy should be towards the Kurds. In fact, the EU has no statement on what a desirable solution would be.³⁶⁵ The failure of the EU to create such a policy recommendation coupled with the support the PKK has often found in Europe has made it difficult for the EU to have much influence in Turkey regarding Kurdish issues.

At the same time, the EU process does offer some hope. Possibly the best way for Turkey to ensure peace with the Kurds and guard against dismemberment of the nation is for Turkey to follow EU reforms more closely. If Turkey wants to end the violence, it will need to create a true liberal, pluralistic democracy and society. The EU accession process aims to do just that in Turkey.³⁶⁶ However, as EU membership has become more distant, Turkey is defining itself more as “us” and all who disagree as “them,” with Kurds being one of the groups in the “them” category. Reforms occurred fastest when EU/Turkish relations were at their best, and that era has passed for now.³⁶⁷

Conclusion

While progress has been made to increase freedoms for Kurds, restrictions still exist. Kurds have had a difficult time getting the government to address their concerns, in major part because of difficulties in establishing an effective Kurdish representation in Turkey’s political bodies. The difficulties stem from both sides. Turkey removes elected

Kurdish members of Parliament for having ties to the PKK. Some of these cases are based on dubious evidence. A Kurdish difficulty is the so-called “Ocalan factor.”

Although he is still imprisoned, Ocalan enjoys continued support from large segments of the Kurdish population, which complicates building a popular political front.³⁶⁸

Women’s Rights

At the founding of the Republic, Ataturk stated that he wanted women to be equal to men.³⁶⁹ In practice, however, their rights were not, and are not, equal. To help rectify this, in 2001 Turkey passed a new law saying men and women are equal and granting women equal property rights.³⁷⁰ Turkey took a further step in 2004, by amending the Constitution to state that women are equal to men and that the state must ensure equality is enforced.³⁷¹ Women still face obstacles in Turkey despite these changes. This is reflected in the way women are treated in terms of serving the government. As women cannot wear headscarves in public buildings, it is difficult for many religious women to work in government jobs or even get a state education, as these women want to wear a headscarf.³⁷²

Women are heavily under-represented in government; in 2008, just 49 out of 550 seats were occupied by women.³⁷³ In 2007 Turkey had a lower percentage of women standing for election than any EU member state had in its last election.³⁷⁴ Women also serve in very few high-ranking government positions in Turkey.³⁷⁵ Making matters worse, the AKP has removed women from government posts and has very few women on its candidate list.³⁷⁶

Women face challenges in education and employment. In addition to difficulties attaining higher education due to the headscarf ban, many families in Turkey still do not educate their daughters. As of 2004, in many rural areas 50% of girls under 15 years old did not attend school at all.³⁷⁷ Fewer than 25% of women in Turkey have completed secondary education.³⁷⁸ Workplace discrimination is also very common.³⁷⁹ Turkey's Parliament passed legislation aimed at promoting women's employment in 2006. Despite the new law, in 2007, only 24.8% of women in Turkey are employed. This percentage has been steadily decreasing, not increasing, and is lower than in any EU state.³⁸⁰

Violence against women is a problem in Turkey, with roughly 40% of women saying they have experienced intimate partner violence in their lives, and 10% in the past year.³⁸¹ Honor crimes are also a problem facing women. In an honor crime, a woman is killed by her family for her perceived sexual misbehavior.³⁸² Such crimes and the subsequent self-imposed restrictions on women occur throughout the country, including in both rural areas and cosmopolitan centers.³⁸³

Up until 2004, Turkish law allowed the penalty for murder to be reduced if the reason for the murder was an honor crime.³⁸⁴ Turkey changed its penal code in 2004 to make the punishment for honor killings the same as for any other murder.³⁸⁵ The AKP began to respond vigorously to EU pressure regarding honor crimes in 2006. One program has imams declaring honor killings sinful in sermons each Friday. Another response is a program that trains police and army members that such murders are the same as any other murder. Over 40,000 law enforcement officials had received such training by the end of 2008. Erdogan has issued a Prime Ministerial circular on how public agencies can combat honor crimes. Additionally, Turkey's Parliamentary

Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities issued a report on how to stop honor crimes. Shelters and hotlines are being established to help women in need.³⁸⁶

While Turkey's government has made a real effort to combat these atrocities,³⁸⁷ there are still far too few shelters for the demand.³⁸⁸

Honor crimes still appear to be quite common and the rate at which such crimes are committed is holding fairly steady.³⁸⁹ There is, however, evidence that the government-sponsored programs have been working. One possible explanation as to why the rate of honor crimes is not dropping is that conservative families have moved from rural areas to cities. These families are exposed to more liberal lifestyles than they have seen in the past. Because female members of the family now have more options in their behaviors, there are more chances for a woman to do something that will displease the more conservative members of her family.³⁹⁰ Government programs have helped to educate families and prevent honor crimes, but new families who have not been educated yet have committed enough honor crimes to keep the rate steady.

Relatively speaking, Turkey has improved the rights of women, but there is still more Turkey must do. The 2010 Global Gender Gap Report (which measures economic, political, educational, and health criteria³⁹¹) from the World Economic Forum demonstrated just how much work Turkey still has to do. Out of the 134 countries the report examined, Turkey ranked 126th overall.³⁹² Part of the problem is that Turkey's enforcement of its new laws does not appear to have lived up to the professed intent of its legal reforms. For example, when a group of women came to demonstrate in Ankara for the enforcement of their new rights, they were beaten by police, arrested, and prosecuted, much to the dismay of the EU.³⁹³

Conclusion

Overall Turkey has made changes in its laws and customs respecting minority rights, although little further progress has occurred since 2007.³⁹⁴ Turkey's record in front of the ECHR is worth noting. Turkey has lost the majority of cases in which it has been sued. However, in many of the cases brought against Turkey the only evidence against Turkey was from the people claiming offense. The burden of proof at the ECHR is on the defendant, and it can be difficult for a country to prove it did *not* do something.³⁹⁵ Turkey has also argued that it cannot properly defend itself in all cases due to national security concerns. This argument is believable in some instances, but it does not excuse enough of the verdicts against Turkey, as many cases involve non-national security issues (such as women's rights cases, linguistic rights for Kurds, or cases against Turkey's compulsory religion classes).

While Turkey still has progress to make in regard to human rights, the changes it has made are substantial and are a marked difference from Turkey's past. In regard to Kurds, Turkey has allowed greater language rights, allowed Kurdish media to open and operate, ended the state of emergency in Kurdish areas, and promised development aid. Women have also seen improvements in Turkish policy. Turkey has passed laws that help ensure women are given greater equality before the law, helped to promote women's employment, and taken concrete steps towards reducing honor crimes.

The EU has not always been able to effectively push Turkey towards change. Some EU states have used human rights concerns in Turkey as a method to keep Turkey from gaining EU membership. EU members have placed conditions on Turkey that those same states have failed to meet themselves. These conditions prominently include

policies regarding the incommunicado detention of prisoners.³⁹⁶ This has made some people in Turkey reluctant to change Turkey's policies as it is not clear that the EU demands themselves are necessarily the stumbling blocks to EU membership.

Chapter 7

Education

Education is one of the cornerstones of society. The EU has created a uniform system for evaluating students as well as a high quality, internationally competitive university system.³⁹⁷ The basis of Turkey's education system is a modern secular design. Higher education programs and policies are run by the Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK).³⁹⁸ As part of EU negotiations, Turkey began to change its education requirements in 1997. Turkey is in the process of modifying its educational programs and standards to more closely mirror EU laws and requirements, and is participating in the Bologna Process to help Turkey standardize its rules on academic cooperation.³⁹⁹

The EU accession process has led to disagreements between the AKP and secular groups over education policy. The secularists fear that EU reforms have made it easier for the AKP to appoint personnel to positions in the education system who will undermine its secular nature. The AKP has also been accused of politicizing academic positions and creating a climate of self-censorship. The AKP counters that it has simply been implementing EU demands, and respecting agreements it has struck with the EU regarding religious instruction.

Turkey has successfully adopted EU educational standards in Turkish universities⁴⁰⁰ through a program begun in 1997.⁴⁰¹ The goal was to create an “accreditation assessment mechanism and structure” and a “quality assurance system” similar to that in the EU nations,⁴⁰² with the result being the creation of the Turkish

Accreditation Institution (TAI).⁴⁰³ TAI designs and oversees the framework for accreditation in all fields of study in Turkey. TAI has helped consolidate academic and educational links with the EU,⁴⁰⁴ and has been successful in improving academic standards.⁴⁰⁵ Turkey has also adopted EU policies on student mobility, which has led many more Turkish students to receive an education in EU nations before returning to Turkey.⁴⁰⁶

One area of contention between the EU and the AKP is over the role of religion in the educational system. Turkey's Constitution required that religious culture and ethics classes be part of school curriculums. Parents in Turkey, mostly Alevi, sued their government over these classes in front of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which found that the classes taught only Muslim subject matter and Muslim cultural rites. The ECHR ordered Turkey to change its curriculum, but Turkey has yet to do so.⁴⁰⁷

The AKP has modified the high school and university system in Turkey to benefit students from religious schools. Previously, students could go to one of three types of schools and proceed to one of three types of careers: religious school (Imam Hatips), whose students went on to lead or work in Mosques, vocational schools, or secular schools. Only students from secular high schools could go to a public university and enter a government or civil service career.⁴⁰⁸ AKP modifications enabled students who attend religious schools to be able to attend universities without completing full secular studies.⁴⁰⁹ The AKP further ordered the creation of 15 new universities at which the government, thus the AKP, could choose who taught, who ran the school, and what was taught.⁴¹⁰ The AKP argues that the changes do not impact the secular nature of the school system. The AKP claims it is simply trying to create a system of religious schools

that would teach material similar to that found in private religious schools in Europe. Students will still learn secular material, but would also be able to obtain a religious education.

Many academics in Turkey and the EU member states are concerned that the AKP is allowing too much Islamic influence into the school system.⁴¹¹ The AKP has passed two laws to which academics and the EU particularly object. First, a new law allows the government to appoint members to the board of Turkey's main research agency. Academics note that the appointments that Erdogan has made are politically motivated and that the new law on which they are based may be unconstitutional.

The second law gives the government approval of all university appointments, which has the potential to reduce academic freedom.⁴¹² While the government does not directly control what can be taught, there is a great deal of concern and self-censorship.⁴¹³ Academics fear saying something that could be construed as insulting the state or government and ending up being arrested or jailed.⁴¹⁴

In 2007, Turkey began to implement a National Development Plan with a focus on modernization and reform. The goals are to increase the responsiveness of education to demand, and to enhance the educational system overall.⁴¹⁵ The reforms included establishing a new national qualifications system for vocational learning that incorporated requirements on: licensing, accreditation, assessment, and certification procedures that will be linked to EU standards.⁴¹⁶

All instruction in public schools must be in Turkish. The EU has placed pressure on Turkey to allow schools to provide instruction in a language other than Turkish. In response, Turkey has made minority language schools legal as long as a child attends

Turkish public school as well.⁴¹⁷ The EU has noted that while such schools are legally allowed, there are restrictions in Turkey that often prevent groups from opening non-Turkish language schools.⁴¹⁸ In practice, the schools cannot be opened without NSC approval.⁴¹⁹ This has a chilling effect on some minority groups, especially Kurds. In a further step, while Turkey still mandates that all classes be taught in Turkish, Turkey does allow language classes that teach Kurdish.⁴²⁰

As with many other aspects of Turkish life, the military has played a major role in the YOK. The military created the YOK after a coup in 1980 so that the military could oversee the universities, which had been the center of ideological violence in the 1970s.⁴²¹ The military made the YOK subject to permanent military oversight and control⁴²² and gave itself a seat on the YOK.⁴²³ The EU wanted the military seat removed from the YOK, and Turkey complied, so that no member of the armed forces now sits on the YOK.⁴²⁴

Turkey's educational system has a mixed success record. Turkey has low rates of illiteracy. In the Arab world in 2003, 28% of men and 52% of women were illiterate, but in Turkey the rate was 6% for men and 21.5% of women.⁴²⁵ Enrollment in primary school was up from 90% of children in the 2006/2007 school year to 97% in 2007/2008. Enrollment in preschool was also up 28% over the same period to 25% of preschool-aged children. The government has placed an emphasis on getting children into preschools, and has set a target of 50% of children in preschool.⁴²⁶ Top students perform very well in Turkey, but many students are not well served by the system. Participation in higher education is low by international standards, and only 40% of 20-24 year olds have completed secondary education.⁴²⁷

In terms of scientific research, Turkey has adopted policies that have improved the mobility of researchers and has made efforts to integrate research methods and funding with EU norms. These policies have been very successful.⁴²⁸ Turkey has doubled its science budget because of EU requirements. Turkey also pays for Turkish academics to participate in EU academic programs both in Turkey and in EU nations.⁴²⁹

Despite the increases in standards and adoption of some EU rules, the Turkish education system does not have good long-term planning, and the institutions are not yet desirable and competitive compared to EU schools. The increased ability of Turkish students to get an education in the EU likely damages Turkey's education system, by depriving it of its best students. However, the reforms should help education in Turkey in the long run by improving planning, funding, and standards.⁴³⁰

There is still progress to be made, but Turkey has taken substantial actions towards improving its educational system, and Turkey's policies now better match those of the EU. Additionally, Turkey has taken steps to create greater academic links with the EU by helping Turkish academics participate in ventures with EU colleagues and increasing access to EU universities for Turkish students. These changes have led to greater opportunities for Turkish citizens and an improved overall quality of education in Turkey.

Chapter 8

Economics

In June 1993, The European Council in Copenhagen stated that “membership of the Union requires the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union.”⁴³¹ To obtain EU membership, applicant countries must have economies that satisfy EU norms or must change their economic policies in line with those of the EU. This may include trade policy and economic policies internal to the applicant state.⁴³² Overall, Turkey has handled its economy well since the 2001 crisis,⁴³³ has met economic obligations to the EU well,⁴³⁴ and seen increased levels of growth. There are questions as to whether Turkey’s success is due to its negotiations with the EU or is in spite of these negotiations, and questions as to whether it can satisfy the EU as to its value as a potential member of the European economic community.

In fact, Turkey began to privatize businesses and liberalize its economy not under the AKP or in response to EU demands, but under the guidance of Turgut Ozal. Ozal was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs by the military after the 1980 coup, and would go on to become President from 1983 to 1989. Ozal was instrumental in beginning to open the Turkish economy to the outside world, strongly supported liberal economic policies, and began a large-scale wave of privatization.⁴³⁵ The economic crisis Turkey faced in 2001 led to further changes in Turkish economic policy, this time in the realm of finance.⁴³⁶ Kemal Dervis was the architect of the new

rules. He was given a ministerial position in March of 2001 by then Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. Dervis worked to modify Turkey's banking and finance laws to halt the crisis.⁴³⁷ It is partly due to the changes that Dervis implemented that Turkey emerged so quickly and strongly from the 2008-2009 global economic crisis, and why Turkey did not suffer a banking or finance collapse. While the AKP and the EU support these policies, and have pushed for them to be furthered, they had no role in introducing them.

Many investors and economists are bullish on Turkey and on its continuing growth. Despite this, the EU is concerned that Turkey's economy is troubled and specifically concerned that, as a member of the EU, it would need substantial economic support.⁴³⁸ Turkey's per capita income, roughly \$9000, would make Turkey the third poorest EU nation, behind both Bulgaria and Romania (which also both have smaller populations than Turkey does, and financial support is based in part on population size),⁴³⁹ which complicates Turkey's membership negotiations.⁴⁴⁰ The EU has thus far given over 540 million Euros worth of aid for Turkey as it strives to meet the EU demands.⁴⁴¹ If Turkey joins the EU, it would be eligible for a higher level of assistance than is currently given by EU members to Turkey, precisely because Turkey is economically behind most other EU nations.⁴⁴²

Progress in Fulfilling EU Demands

In the 2008 Progress Report on Turkey's membership negotiations, the EU listed some areas that needed improvement in the economic life of Turkey. These included: removing remaining restrictions on the free movement of goods; removing technical barriers to trade and import license policy; lowering state aid (in industry, energy, and

agriculture); enforcement of intellectual property rights; modifying livestock importation policy and agricultural subsidies; change policies related to maritime transport, civil aviation, road transport, and energy.⁴⁴³ There were also desired structural reforms including limits on public expenditure, financial sector reforms aimed at increasing transparency, and increased fiscal discipline.⁴⁴⁴ Turkey has responded by harmonizing technical legislation, abolishing monopolies, and expanding protection for intellectual property.⁴⁴⁵ Overall, as of 2008, the EU considered Turkey to be making excellent progress in fulfilling EU demands regarding Turkey's economy.⁴⁴⁶

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Turkey has signed many standby agreements (agreements that provide support for a country's balance of payments and international reserves while the country makes changes to its policies to improve the economic situation, with the money being repaid at the close of the agreement) with the IMF. Turkey signed the first such agreement in 1961.⁴⁴⁷ Some of these agreements were cancelled (as late as the 1990s) by the IMF when Turkey failed to make the required policy changes.⁴⁴⁸ Of the 18 agreements enacted since 1961, only 8 ended successfully, with Turkey failing to make the required changes in the other 10 agreements.⁴⁴⁹ The changes that the EU demanded Turkey make in the negotiation process were similar to those the International Monetary Fund (IMF) proposed for Turkey in the 1990s.⁴⁵⁰ These included disinflation and structural reforms, in particular: limits on public expenditure; financial sector reforms aimed at increasing transparency; reform of agricultural subsidies; increased privatization;⁴⁵¹ increased fiscal discipline;⁴⁵² and ensuring the independence of Turkey's central bank.⁴⁵³ Through 1999,

when Turkey applied to join the EU, the IMF changes instituted by Turkey have had a noticeable impact, including lower inflation rates, higher growth rates, and lower debt.⁴⁵⁴

Turkey had a standby agreement with the IMF that ran from May 2005 to May 2008. This agreement was requested by Turkey to help strengthen Turkey's international reserve position and to defend against external economic shocks.⁴⁵⁵ Under the 2005 agreement, Turkey was required to reduce its budget deficit, use concretionary monetary policy to reach inflation targets, and apply "structural reforms including privatization, large scale layoffs in public enterprises, and abolition of any form of subsidies."⁴⁵⁶

Turkey successfully implemented these changes, and the new policies have led to increased transparency in government economic decision making. Turkey also passed a law making foreign and domestic investors equal before the law, allowing foreigners to purchase real estate, and streamlining investment procedures. These measures have led to enhanced economic credibility for the government (in both fiscal and monetary policy). These changes also led to a reduction in interest rates in Turkey, which should spur private consumption and fixed investments, both of which lead to sustained growth.⁴⁵⁷ As a result of implementing the IMF required program, inflation fell to its lowest level since 1986, the public debt-to-GDP ratio has fallen, output growth occurred, and industrial production increased. As a part of IMF mandated changes, and in continuation of Dervis' policies, banks in Turkey are now overseen by an independent government agency, and not by elected politicians, and the new agency has a great deal of regulatory authority.⁴⁵⁸ At the conclusion in 2008 of the 2005 standby agreement the most recent global economic crisis began. In response Turkey started to negotiate a new standby agreement with the IMF. Turkey, however, decided to end discussions on the

agreement in March of 2010 because the Turkish economy did not appear to be as negatively impacted as the government initially feared. This led the AKP to believe no further agreement was needed.⁴⁵⁹

Turkey responded well to the IMF demands for the standby agreement, which was successfully concluded. As noted, IMF requirements overlap with EU demands very closely. The fact that Turkey made changes requested by the EU when the IMF made the same demands raises questions regarding whether the changes Turkey made were as a result of pressure from the EU, the IMF, or both. There is no clear answer.

Labor Law

Legislation amending Turkey's "Trade Union and Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lockout Laws" has not moved forward. EU norms on the rights to strike, organize, and employ collective bargaining, in keeping with EU requirements, are not respected in Turkey. There remain substantial legal obstacles to the ability of trade unions to argue for their members or call for strikes, and there are numerous reports of workers being fired for joining unions. Enforcement of existing protections is also spotty.⁴⁶⁰ Turkey has, however, made great progress in implementing safety and industry standards in manufacturing and product development.⁴⁶¹

Turkey has also adopted a social security law in line with EU demands, a new law on incentives for research and development, and an employment law aimed at improving labor market conditions.⁴⁶² The employment law was designed to increase job opportunities for women, young people, and people with disabilities. The legislation has successfully increased job opportunities for the unemployed by creating job matching

services; establishing guidance and vocational training; and increasing Turkey's capacity to provide such services.⁴⁶³ Turkey also passed legislation to provide health insurance for anyone under 18, per EU demands.⁴⁶⁴ These new programs have made it easier for companies to hire young or unemployed workers and have likely helped make Turkey's economy more competitive.

Finance

Turkey has made good progress in revising its financial laws, but still has not fully met the EU conditions. The changes that Turkey has made have created a very flexible banking system and economy. The improved flexibility has helped Turkey to build a more stable economy.⁴⁶⁵

In regard to financial and capital services, Turkey has made a large number of improvements. These include: setting up a system to address consumer complaints (out of court), eliminating the maximum limit on investments by pension funds in foreign securities, removing minimum requirements for purchasing Turkish government debt for pension funds, and allowing citizens to buy and sell foreign currency and financial instruments.⁴⁶⁶

Turkey's Banking and Regulatory Supervisory Agency has been strengthened and has improved. The Agency has been granted more independence and has hired better staff in order to comply with EU requirements. Turkey has centralized all banking authorities into the Agency, and has issued clearer reporting standards.⁴⁶⁷ These new reporting standards include rules that require all listed companies to publish yearly and quarterly financial statements that comply with international accounting standards and

international financial reporting standards.⁴⁶⁸ The Agency has used its new authority to introduce higher liquidity requirements, and improve supervisory standards. The advice the Agency has issued during the financial crisis of 2009 and 2010 has helped to keep Turkey's banks solvent.⁴⁶⁹

While Turkey has brought its record keeping into line with European norms, it has failed to update its accounting laws.⁴⁷⁰ Turkey has also failed to remove controls on some forms of significant outward capital movement (e.g., foreign consumer and real estate credits to Turkish residents), and it has not fully allowed foreigners to buy and sell land in Turkey.⁴⁷¹ Further, Turkey still does not allow Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from EU nations in the fields of: maritime transport, civil aviation, ground handling, road transport, radio and TV broadcasting, energy, accountancy, and education.⁴⁷² Turkey has shielded these industries in an attempt to help local businesses grow and in an effort to ensure national security by keeping certain industries out of the hands of foreigners.

Trade Policy

Turkey has made a great deal of progress in regards to trade policy. Turkey has opened public procurement markets, liberalized trade in services, and removed restrictions on “freedom of establishment”⁴⁷³ (which addresses migration for economic purposes⁴⁷⁴). Progress has also been made in regard to the free movement of goods, by lowering the number of assessments upon import of goods and consolidating licensing requirements.⁴⁷⁵ Further, Turkey modified its rules regarding trade with non-EU nations to be more in line with EU regulations.⁴⁷⁶ There are, however, still barriers to trade, including in some areas of the economy that Turkey has not made adjustments to (such as

agriculture), and Turkey has failed to introduce the mutual recognition principle, which states that any good produced in an EU member state cannot be banned from sale in another EU state.⁴⁷⁷

Turkey has implemented legislative changes that make it easier for foreign citizens to conduct business in Turkey. This is true for both citizens who still live in their home countries, and those who move to Turkey.⁴⁷⁸ This was a central demand of the EU. Turkey, however, has not yet implemented requested changes that would ease the burdens on foreigners attempting to open a business in Turkey,⁴⁷⁹ and Turkey still does not have laws that adequately protect foreign businesses from corruption and theft by local partners.⁴⁸⁰

Turkey still has to remove some technical barriers to trade, make its commercial policy better match that of the EU, “align to the preferential customs regime,” and abolish remaining state monopolies and state aid to companies.⁴⁸¹ Turkey failed to meet the EU demand to remove agricultural protections, including guaranteed output prices, import protection, export subsidies, subsidized services to farmers and state involvement in supply.⁴⁸² This is, in part, because Turkey is a heavily agricultural economy, with 40% of its population working on farms,⁴⁸³ and 14.2% of its economic production coming from agriculture, which is well above the EU-15 average of 2.5% and the Accession-10 average of 6.9%.⁴⁸⁴ This has made Turkey reluctant to meet EU demands regarding agriculture, particularly as membership has become a more distant prospect.

The new trade policies Turkey has implemented have made Turkey, in the EU’s words, “marginally” more open to trade from the EU.⁴⁸⁵ After instituting many of the EU’s requested changes, Turkey’s share of exports to the EU rose from 56% of the total

in 2006 to 56.4%. Imports as a percent of total actually declined from 42.6% to 40.4%, but this was mainly due to increased energy costs.⁴⁸⁶ Turkey-EU bilateral trade, however, was worth 100 billion Euros in 2006, which made Turkey the EU's seventh largest trading partner.⁴⁸⁷

Anti-Trust Law

Turkey has made progress in meeting EU demands regarding anti-trust laws by clarifying when fines may be imposed for competition infringements and creating a system whereby a company can know, with some certainty beforehand, how big the fines will be. The competition authority does have adequate staffing and independence. Turkey, however, has not allowed its competition authority to regulate or review mergers between banks that have a market share below 20%. By not reforming this sector, Turkey could harm future competitiveness.⁴⁸⁸

Innovation

Turkey's intellectual property laws are largely in-line with EU standards, as demanded in the accession process, but the administrative capacity to enforce these rules is still lacking.⁴⁸⁹ One particular area in which Turkey needs to change its laws is in regard to trademark protection. The current law is nearly impossible to enforce. The AKP has proposed a solution, but it has not yet been voted on.⁴⁹⁰

Turkey has made progress implementing new laws that allow greater freedom for companies to create technical innovations and in establishing the legal conditions that assist companies in such endeavors.⁴⁹¹ Turkey has also created practices to evaluate the

success of such programs.⁴⁹² However, Turkey has not meaningfully increased the level of technical innovation in its economy due to problems translating its new laws into action.⁴⁹³

Privatization

Turkey's earlier model of growth focused on developing industries with state support. This pattern has begun to change in recent years, and the EU has requested that Turkey continue to privatize more industries and halt remaining state controls on prices of goods from certain industries. In response, Turkey has reduced subsidies for electricity and gas, and is in the process of privatizing both industries.⁴⁹⁴ Turkey has also privatized many other industries including iron/steel production, oil refining, and telecommunications.⁴⁹⁵ In addition, the government has allowed more price liberalization. Turkey, however, still sets the prices for goods from state-owned companies, controls the annual price for a range of crops, places ceilings on the price of breads, and allows the Ministry of Health to control drug prices.⁴⁹⁶ Turkey now allows a Court of Accounts, based on EU rules, to investigate issues related to privatization; "the accounts and financial activities of all public agencies," which includes those related to loans and credits, funds, enterprises, companies, and co-operatives; and the control of state property in the hands of the military.⁴⁹⁷ While Turkey has privatized businesses much faster in the past ten years than at any prior point, Turkey has been reluctant to increase the pace of privatization further because the policy of state intervention was successful early in Turkey's existence in creating high levels of economic growth.

Turkey has made two other changes in regards to private industry that deserve mention. First, Turkey has made obtaining business and operating licenses easier.⁴⁹⁸ Second, Turkey has made progress in regard to harmonizing the professional qualifications needed to work in certain industries with EU member states' rules. This includes minimum standards for medicine, nursery, midwifery, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, and architecture.⁴⁹⁹

Customs Union

Turkey entered into a Customs Union (CU) with the EU in 1995 that removed many tariffs and quantitative restrictions on trade.⁵⁰⁰ The CU applied only to industrial and agricultural products, but did not include the bulk (70%) of Turkey's economic output,⁵⁰¹ so most of Turkey's trade in exports to the EU could not benefit.⁵⁰² The overall impact of joining the CU has been mixed for Turkey. Specifically, joining the CU has had a positive impact on Turkey's trade volume and broadened Turkey's economic diversification in terms of both exports and imports.⁵⁰³ Despite this, Turkey has seen its trade deficit with the EU nations grow since entering the CU.⁵⁰⁴ Further, entering into the CU has led to exchange rate volatility in Turkey,⁵⁰⁵ which has had a negative, though small, impact on Turkish economic growth.⁵⁰⁶

Membership in the CU, for Turkey, has additional drawbacks, as it bars Turkey from entering into economic agreements with nations outside of the EU if clauses of those agreements violate any of the rules in the CU. This meant that Turkey had to cancel a number of trade agreements, including those Turkey had with, among others, the US, China, and regional neighbors.⁵⁰⁷ One example of how this has led to major

problems occurred when the EU banned imports of Chinese textiles that Turkey needed for its textile industry and Turkey had to accept the ban.⁵⁰⁸

Impact on Turkey's Economy of EU Mandated Changes

Turkey has implemented most of the EU-demanded economic changes, and the effect appears to have been mixed. There are a number of reasons for concern. In spite of the recent efforts by the IMF and EU to modernize and stabilize Turkey's economy, it still suffers from frequent crises. This includes cycles of low-growth rates and high inflation.⁵⁰⁹ While all nations suffer from economic crises, Turkey's are more frequent. Since 2001 it does, however, appear that this pattern has been shifting, as is evidenced by Turkey's strong performance in the wake of the 2008-2009 economic crisis. Turkey has seen GDP growth in recent years of between 5% and 9%, but this growth has been interrupted by economic crises in 1994, 1999, 2001,⁵¹⁰ and 2006.⁵¹¹ Inflation has also plagued Turkey. Inflation was at 9.8% in 2006,⁵¹² which was well above the Central Bank's prediction of 5%.⁵¹³ Inflation rose even further in 2008 to 10.6%.⁵¹⁴

Turkey has also suffered from debt and balance of payments problems. Turkey's current account deficit (in millions of Euros) has fairly steadily increased from 1,784 in 1998 to -10,741 in 2000 to -25,401 in 2006 and then -27,547 in 2007.⁵¹⁵ This level of debt is substantial for a country of Turkey's economic size.⁵¹⁶ Unemployment rates have also increased since Turkey began to implement EU changes. The unemployment rate has increased from 1998 when it was at 6.9% to 2003 when it hit 10.5%. Since then the unemployment rate has shrunk slightly, to 9.9 in both 2006 and 2007.⁵¹⁷ While any of

these factors alone might not represent a serious problem in an economy, occurring together, they present an overall picture of underlying instability and weakness.

The political crisis during Gul's presidency illustrates the instability in Turkey's economy. The crisis led to a crash in the following economic indicators: the stock market went down 4% in one day⁵¹⁸ and lost 6.5% of its value over two days;⁵¹⁹ benchmark bond yields rose nearly 1%;⁵²⁰ and the Turkish lira lost 4.5% of its value.⁵²¹ Additionally, Citigroup downgraded its recommendation on Turkish stocks from underweight to overweight.⁵²² While the crisis has ended and Turkey's economy has stabilized, this episode illustrates the dangers still present in Turkey despite EU-mandated changes.

At the same time, there are many hopeful signs in Turkey's economy. Despite some setbacks, Turkey has seen high levels of GDP growth. Turkey's GDP, measured in millions of Euros, has increased from 242,787 in 1998, to 289,446 in 2000, to 480,281 in 2007.⁵²³ GDP growth has averaged around 7% over the last 5 years.⁵²⁴ Per capita GDP has also increased to about \$9,000 in 2007,⁵²⁵ up from about \$6,500 in 2002.⁵²⁶

Turkey's current account deficit has remained fairly steady from 2006 to 2008, at approximately 6% of GDP. In fact, excluding energy, the rate was a healthy 2.8% of GDP.⁵²⁷ Further, Turkey is lowering its public debt into line with EU requirements.⁵²⁸ Turkey actually ran a budget surplus in 2008 and the budget deficit is expected to remain below 1.7% over the next five years.⁵²⁹ Of this, 40% of the current account deficit is funded by foreign direct investment (FDI).⁵³⁰ FDI (in millions Euros) has increased from 838 in 1998 to 16,202 in 2007.⁵³¹ This is a good sign for Turkey's future growth rates as FDI helps to develop facilities and infrastructure Turkey can use in the future. Taking the base value of 100 in 2000, Turkey has increased its industrial production every year to a

new peak of 143.6 in 2007.⁵³² This improved industrial production volume index is an indication of how well EU demanded changes have increased FDI in Turkey.

Troubles with inflation in Turkey have lessened recently. The percent change of the consumer price index in Turkey, while still high, has become far more steady and seen a substantial decrease. In 1998 inflation was at 84.6%, inflation began to be tamed following EU mandated changes and was down to 54.9% in 2000. 2003 saw inflation take a large jump down to 25.3%. In 2007 the rate of inflation dropped down to 8.8%.⁵³³ While inflation is still high, the rate has fallen to a 30-year low.⁵³⁴

Income Inequality

Economic disparity is a growing problem in Turkey.⁵³⁵ As Turkey has developed, new technologies, financial globalization, and FDI have all increased the level of income inequality.⁵³⁶ One reason for this increase in income inequality is that much FDI is directed toward segments of the economy that already have high salaries, such as call centers or high-end manufacturing. In principle, however, foreign trade tends to reduce inequality by providing consumers at all income levels with access to cheaper foreign goods, and allows workers with low skills to find jobs in export-oriented industry.⁵³⁷ Thus over time Turkey should see greater equality in income due to changes made in response to EU membership demands.

Current World Economic Crisis

How the current economic crisis impacts Turkey will be important to understanding how EU policies have impacted Turkey. Turkey has fared well so far in

the current crisis. Banks are healthy, demand has been stable, exports are diversified, public debt is falling, and foreign-exchange reserves are plentiful.⁵³⁸ Further, despite GDP growth of just 0.9% in 2008, and a contraction of GDP by 5.6% in 2009,⁵³⁹ Turkey has come roaring back, with predicted GDP growth of nearly 8% for 2010.⁵⁴⁰ An additional positive sign for Turkey is that it has not needed to sign a new standby agreement with the IMF.⁵⁴¹ There are signs of trouble, however. Turkey's exports mainly go to the EU, which is still in recession; the current-account deficit is growing; and Turkey is still heavily dependent on foreign investment.⁵⁴² This paper was written as the crisis was unfolding, so the extent of Turkey's exposure to the crisis or how it has fared is not yet fully clear.

Conclusion

There are still problems in Turkey's economy. Growth in the main indicators of macroeconomics are still lagging behind other developing countries. Unemployment, inflation, and public debt are still high. There is still too much labor regulation and taxation.⁵⁴³ To keep inflation low, Turkey has had to maintain a very high interest rate, which counteracts progress made to stimulate consumption and investment.⁵⁴⁴

At the same time, macroeconomic stability appears to be increasing in Turkey. In 2007 and 2008, there was market turbulence and a dangerous political climate which impacted the business environment. But Turkey's economy survived with few negative consequences and shows "the economy's improved shock resilience."⁵⁴⁵ The investment atmosphere has improved, with reductions to administration barriers on firms'

establishment and operation, a lower tax rate, a simpler tax system, and the privatization of some state-owned enterprises.⁵⁴⁶

Regarding the impact EU negotiations have had on Turkey's successful economy over the last two decades, progress must be seen in the context that the industries that are growing fastest in Turkey are those that the state poured resources into building from Turkey's founding. The government and private sector worked hard to build those sectors long before EU requested changes were made, so the foundation and commitment were already there.⁵⁴⁷ Nonetheless, it does appear that such sectors have benefited greatly from EU-mandated changes as well as from Turkey's past and ongoing support.⁵⁴⁸

The pace of change in Turkey regarding economic policy appears to have slowed. Turkey had been making solid progress as long as it believed it could join the EU in the near future; however, the rate of change has been decreasing as the EU has pushed membership further back.⁵⁴⁹ Of importance for future actions, Turkey has had to adopt and live under the EU economic rules, but since it is not a member of the EU, it has not had any say in making those rules.⁵⁵⁰ How long it will continue to accept outside influence is unclear. Implementing EU required changes has led to income inequality and upset some traditional industries. It is therefore uncertain whether Turkey will continue to modify its economic laws unless the EU offers concrete assurances of membership. Overall, however, Turkey has seen good economic results since 2001, which gives reason to hope that Turkey will continue to modernize its economy no matter what happens with the EU. Further, while EU reforms have helped the economy, many of the changes the EU demanded were extensions of policies that began under Ozal and

Dervis. Reforms were underway before the EU accession process began, and those reforms helped stabilize and improve the economy. There is thus reason to believe that Turkey was already willing to implement EU reforms, and would likely have made similar changes with or without the EU, because the government already believed the changes were necessary and beneficial.

Chapter 9

Turkish Foreign Relations

To join the EU Turkey must bring its foreign policy in line with EU norms and expectations.⁵⁵¹ In 2007 the EU stated that Turkey had aligned itself with 45 of 46 Common Foreign and Security Policy declarations from the EU and supported attempts at peaceful resolutions of dangers in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, and the Middle East Peace Process. The EU also approves of Turkey's participation in UN and EU peacekeeping missions.⁵⁵² Despite Turkey's progress, the EU is worried about Turkish membership in part due to foreign policy concerns. Turkey borders on the Middle East, the Caucasus, Kurdish regions, and other hotspots. The EU is concerned that if Turkey joins the EU, conflict in those regions may be more likely to require EU intervention or even spill into the EU. Turkey counters that it can provide a way for Europe to expand EU influence and a way for the EU to enhance the stability of the regions bordering on Turkey.⁵⁵³ While Turkey has made steady progress in aligning itself with EU goals, progress began to slow in 2004, when the EU expressed doubts regarding Turkey's membership and, in addition, the Cyprus issue (discussed more below) took center stage.⁵⁵⁴ If Turkey is rejected by the West, Turkey may seek ties with non-Western powers, and become a less reliable ally for the West.⁵⁵⁵ This section will briefly explore the evolving nature of Turkey's foreign relations, and will focus on a few specific instances that illustrate Turkey's relationship to the West.

Overview of Turkish Foreign Policy

Traditionally, Turkey has followed the general principle that it should embrace the West but not abandon the East. This was done using “conservative nationalism, strict secularism and a strategic alliance with Washington.”⁵⁵⁶ Turkish foreign policy used to be distrustful of other nations and often used hard-power to accomplish its goals.⁵⁵⁷ Further, Turkey’s Ottoman Empire past leads many in the Arab world to distrust Turkey,⁵⁵⁸ further limiting Turkey’s foreign policy options. Turkey’s image in the Arab world has been changing however as Turkey has been attempting to repair relations and has taken a more hostile position towards Israel. In the early 2000s, Turkey shifted to a more EU-centered and more soft-power foreign policy.⁵⁵⁹ Turkey’s foreign policy mechanisms now much more closely follow the EU style of “promoting security through multilateral mechanisms and institutional integration.”⁵⁶⁰ Turkey has used its soft power to improve relations with neighbors, including exporting Turkish TV programs. These shows have become hugely popular in the Arab world and in the Balkans, and have improved Turkey’s image with nations in those regions.

Turkey’s confidence on the international stage has been increasing ever since Turkey modernized its army in 1996. This modernization made Turkey the strongest military force in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.⁵⁶¹ Turkey, however, decided not to use its hard power. Rather, it has been increasingly interested in furthering peace negotiations both with and between neighbors. Turkey attempts to use its soft-power to accomplish such deals by serving as a mediator,⁵⁶² using diplomacy and economic incentives to improve relations with neighbors. The Turkish military has been used for collaborative international peace-keeping activities. Specifically, Turkey has played an

increasing role in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions in recent years including sending troops to Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Lebanon.⁵⁶³ Turkey has also increased economic aid to developing nations as part of the UN Millennium Development Goals.⁵⁶⁴

Along with its peace-keeping responsibilities, Turkey has been taking an increased role in general in the UN. Turkey was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council on October 17, 2008, garnering 151 out of 192 votes.⁵⁶⁵ This is a big accomplishment for Turkey, which served as a non-permanent member in 1951-1952, 1954-1955, and 1961, but failed to gain membership in the 1970s and did not try again until the 1990s, again without success. In 2002 the AKP decided to pursue a seat again.⁵⁶⁶ The campaign represented a new phase of Turkey's foreign policy. This effort was the first "coordinated multi-dimensional diplomacy initiative" Turkey had undertaken in international relations that met with success.⁵⁶⁷ Turkey reached out to nations that it had very little contact with in the past, including in the Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, and South America. Turkey's goal was to show that they would provide a voice in the UN for nations that were often neglected by the West.⁵⁶⁸ Turkey discussed membership using the EU ideal of soft power, but used that soft power to present itself as a semi-Western power.

The driving force behind Turkey's new foreign policy is Professor Ahmet Davutoglu. Davutoglu has served as Erdogan's chief advisor on foreign policy since 2002, and was appointed to Erdogan's cabinet as Foreign Minister in May of 2009.⁵⁶⁹ In 2001 Davutoglu wrote the book (which has not been translated in English) Strategic Depth. In the book Davutoglu argued that a country's value in world affairs is based on its geostrategic location, historical importance, and past ties to other nations. Based on

these criteria, he explains that Turkey has the potential to be an indispensable nation not just regionally but globally. Turkey has a valuable location as it ties the West and East, is the natural heir to the Ottoman Empire, and had friendly relations with the Muslim world. Davutoglu thus argues that Turkey should ally not just with the West, but expand alliances to other nations to help maintain stability and the balance of power in the region. Turkey should depend on no one nation or block of nations. Davutoglu also argues that Turkey should become a champion for former colonies and heal rivalries within the Muslim world.⁵⁷⁰ This view guides Turkey's current government and is largely responsible for Turkey's increased role in the Middle East.

Turkey's increasing desire to forge alliances with non-Western powers also arises from a fear in Turkey that actors in the US, the EU, and Israel have secretly been offering support to the PKK.⁵⁷¹ There does not appear to be much hard evidence that would support these claims, but many people in Turkey persist in believing them. While it is likely that such charges are used to inflame public opinion, such beliefs still impact Turkey's foreign policy.⁵⁷²

Cyprus

In order to gain EU membership, Turkey must recognize Cyprus as an independent state and open its border to ships from Cyprus. The conflict in Cyprus is, in part, related to Turkey's longstanding disagreements with Greece. Cyprus became the location of a proxy war, which ended with the island divided into a Turkish half, the Turkish Republic and Northern Cyprus (TRNC), and a Greek half.⁵⁷³

Despite a long history of conflict, in recent times Greece and Turkey have enjoyed better relations, with Greece supporting Turkey's bid for EU membership.⁵⁷⁴ The Greek Prime Minister visited Turkey in January 2008, which was the first such visit in 49 years. The two countries also opened a new natural gas pipeline to bring gas from the Middle East to Europe.⁵⁷⁵

While Greece and Turkey have improved relations, Turkey and Cyprus have not. Conflict in Cyprus began in 1963 between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The conflict expanded in 1974 when Turkey invaded to support the ethnic Turkish population, occupying the northern half of the island, which became the TRNC in 1983. Currently only Turkey recognizes the TRNC as a state.⁵⁷⁶ The 1960s founding documents of Cyprus stated that the Greek and Turkish populations would have equal political power. The crisis arose when the Greek President of Cyprus (Greeks are the majority of the population) tried to change the Constitution in a way that would have increased the power of Greek Cypriots, but would have harmed Turkish Cypriots. This led to Turkey's military occupation of the northern part of the island.⁵⁷⁷ Turkey used to think of annexing the TRNC and had demanded that TRNC become its own nation, but now Turkey appears to support implementing a peace plan called the Annan Plan and wants to find a compromise solution. The Annan Plan calls for the unification of the island under a federal government similar to that in Switzerland. The Greek and Turkish halves of the island would each receive representation, with a Presidential Council of six members based on population, a President and Vice-President (one from each half of the island) elected by the Council, a Senate with 48 members divided equally between the two halves, and a Chamber of Deputies whose membership would be based on population.⁵⁷⁸

Despite a yes vote from citizens in TRNC, the Annan Plan failed due to a no vote from the Greek Cypriot side of the island. Furthermore, despite the no vote, the Greek side of the island was granted membership in the EU as representing the entire island. This makes the peace process harder as the EU can no longer be a neutral party helping to solve the Cyprus problem since it recognized the Greek Cypriots as the legitimate party when they allowed them entry to the EU.⁵⁷⁹ As all EU membership decisions have to be unanimous, Cyprus can now stop Turkey's accession process at will. This makes for a nearly impossible situation for Turkey.⁵⁸⁰

In response, Turkey refused to extend its application of the Customs Union (which it has to do to gain EU membership) to Cyprus saying it does not recognize the Greek half of the island. The EU has demanded that Turkey recognize Cyprus,⁵⁸¹ and the EU suspended membership negotiations in 2006 because Turkey would not open its ports to ships from Cyprus or open its airport to airplanes from Cyprus. Turkey has stated it will not open its ports until the EU allows direct trade between the TRNC and EU nations, as the EU promised to do in 2004 but has yet to implement.⁵⁸² Turkey also demands that the EU help to end the isolation of TRNC, and provide promised economic aid to TRNC.⁵⁸³ Part of the reason the EU has failed to meet their promise is that Cyprus has blocked EU attempts both to open borders to trade from TRNC and to the dispersal of aid.⁵⁸⁴

As punishment for failing to open its ports and airports to ships and planes from Cyprus, the EU has suspended eight chapters up for negotiation. These chapters include: free movement of goods; right of establishment and freedom to provide services; financial services; agriculture and rural development; fisheries; transport policy; customs

union; and external relations.⁵⁸⁵ In an attempt to diffuse the conflict, in 2007 Turkey offered to open its ports temporarily to ships from Cyprus, with the expectation that the EU would be willing to make concessions regarding trade with TRNC. The EU rejected the offer and saw Turkey's proposal as a "disruptive tactical move" and not a real attempt to further negotiations.⁵⁸⁶

The suspension of the chapters does not mean that no progress can be made on membership talks. Only the areas suspended cannot be negotiated at the moment. Turkey can also continue to take steps towards meeting EU requirements in the suspended chapters that had been negotiated previously. Along these lines, Turkey has, in fact, pressed ahead and stressed its commitment to joining the EU.⁵⁸⁷ The EU states that suspension should not create a significant obstacle to eventual Turkish membership as the EU assumes that Turkey will eventually comply with EU demands. The EU assumption may not be accurate, however, as Turkey has not indicated it is interested in meeting EU demands related to Cyprus.

The issue of Cyprus has presented a major obstacle in EU/Turkey relations. Turkey has been angered by EU policy. The failure of the Annan Plan due to the resistance of Greek Cypriots (who knew that they would become EU members no matter how they voted, and thus had little incentive to make concessions) was a major setback. Turkey feels that it was mistreated by the EU when the EU voted to allow the Greek part of the island to join the EU in violation of EU law (Article 22 of the Zurich and London Agreements of 1959).⁵⁸⁸ The case of Cyprus is a prime example of how the EU has driven Turkey away from the West.

Israel

Turkey is one of the few Muslim nations to maintain positive relations with Israel. A major reason Turkey has had good relations with Israel is because Turkey saw such an alliance as bringing Turkey closer to the West.⁵⁸⁹ The EU approves of Turkey's positive relationship with Israel, and Turkey's ties to Israel have helped further Turkey's candidacy.⁵⁹⁰ While maintaining good relations with Israel, Turkey has tried to ensure positive relations with Arab nations as well. It has been difficult for Turkey to maintain a delicate balance between Arabs and Israel. Such efforts have been undertaken by both secular and Islamic leaders.⁵⁹¹ Due to Turkey's hard work, Turkey is the only Muslim nation that has good relations with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas.⁵⁹² However, recently, the positive relationship between Israel and Turkey has begun to deteriorate.

When the AKP was first elected in 2003, Erdogan refused an invitation from the Israeli Prime Minister to go to Israel and instead invited members of Hamas to come to Turkey. He also rejected a meeting with the Israeli Labor and Trade Minister the following year.⁵⁹³ The AKP also accused Israel of sponsoring "state terrorism," which harmed relations with both Israel and the EU.⁵⁹⁴ Israel in response reduced the level of military cooperation it gave to Turkey.⁵⁹⁵ One example of how extensive the damage has become came in July of 2008, when Israel conducted military exercises with Greece instead of Turkey.⁵⁹⁶

Israel and Turkey have experienced tensions in the past, but none that have rivaled the current spats over Israel's war in Gaza in 2008 and the sinking of a ship trying to break Israel's blockade of Gaza in 2010. When the Gaza war broke out, Turkey felt

betrayed. Erdogan visited Israel just days before the assault on Gaza in an attempt to broker a peace deal between Syria and Israel. Turkey believed it was close to securing such a deal, but the Gaza assault ended negotiations.⁵⁹⁷ Erdogan described the war as “an act of disrespect towards Turkey.”⁵⁹⁸ In fact, Turkey had warned Israel before it invaded Gaza that such an action would lead to, in the words of Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Ali Babacan, a “very serious” response.⁵⁹⁹

When the war was underway, Erdogan harshly verbally attacked Israel. This led to further tensions between the two nations. Erdogan’s words also began to call into question his intentions towards Israel. It appeared to many outside observers that Erdogan wanted Turkey to sever most relations with Israel, and many observers were concerned that some of his language might incite anti-Semitism (although there does not appear to have been any noticeable rise in anti-Semitism in Turkey).⁶⁰⁰ While Erdogan’s words did appear extreme, the National Security Council (NSC), which has been a strong supporting voice for Israel in Turkey, expressed concerns over the death count in Gaza, and called for a stop to military actions, for aid to be allowed into Gaza, and for diplomacy to be undertaken.⁶⁰¹ The whole government apparatus in Turkey turned against Israel’s actions.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Erdogan and Israeli President Shimon Peres had a heated conversation during a moderated debate regarding Gaza, and Erdogan stormed off the stage. Erdogan later claimed that he left the stage because he did not believe that the moderator was treating him fairly, but Erdogan offered strong criticism of Israel during his time on stage. After the incident, Peres called Erdogan to apologize for any misunderstandings, and both men claim the incident is

behind them.⁶⁰² It is not clear, however, if this is really true and Erdogan has continued his criticism and has been praised in the Arab world for his actions.

Turkey is also one of only a very few nations that recognize Hamas as the government in Gaza. Turkey's position is that Hamas is the democratically elected government and thus must be recognized and dealt with. This has been both a thorn in Israel's side, and an opportunity. Turkey has urged Hamas to disarm, moderate, and enter peace negotiations. Turkey has also told Hamas it will have to agree to a truce with Israel before the Israeli embargo can be lifted.⁶⁰³ During the conflict, Turkey put pressure on Hamas to stop firing rockets into Israel,⁶⁰⁴ and offered to place troops along the Israel/Egypt border in Gaza as neutral observers.⁶⁰⁵

In the Gaza conflict, Turkey played a mixed role. Turkey did not fully abandon Israel as an ally, but did issue harsher criticism than in the past, and broke off some diplomatic relations. A much more severe crisis, however, appears to be brewing. Turkey has closed its airspace to Israeli military flights after Israel conducted a raid on a flotilla, from Turkey, attempting to smuggle goods into Gaza. Nine activists were killed in the raid, and Turkey has threatened to sever ties altogether with Israel over this incident.⁶⁰⁶ Notably, the Israeli flight denied access to Turkish airspace was carrying over 100 military officers on the way to a tour of memorial sites in Auschwitz, Poland.⁶⁰⁷ Turkey has demanded an apology from Israel and compensation for the families of those killed. Turkey is particularly incensed because this is the first time since the Republic's founding that Turkish citizens have been killed by a foreign nation outside of war.

Turkey has been criticized by EU states for not making an effort to stop the Turkish flotilla. It appears that the AKP was aware ships were leaving, knew what their

goal was, had given unofficial backing to the mission, and was aware Israel would not let the ships enter Gaza. The AKP claims it could not stop the ships from sailing because the flotilla was run by an NGO. This is not a convincing argument, however, because Turkey interferes with NGOs, particularly Kurdish ones, all the time.⁶⁰⁸ This incident demonstrates a turn away from the alliance with Israel, and the EU, by the AKP.

Turkey's participation in the peace process between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators is also indicative of a growing divide between Israel and Turkey. Turkey was originally invited to take part in the peace process by the US, the EU, Israel, and the Palestinians before the summit in Annapolis in 2007. This was the first time Turkey has been seen as a major player in the quest for peace. Turkey viewed the invitation as acknowledgement of Turkey's growing clout on the world stage.⁶⁰⁹ Turkey had been involved in negotiations before, but none had made much progress. In those previous dealings, Turkey had taken a very evenhanded approach with Israel and the Palestinians, which was a major part of the reason Turkey was invited to Annapolis. Soon after arriving, however, the AKP began to insist that any peace with Israel must include "justice to the Palestinian's rights."⁶¹⁰ This was a substantial change from Turkey's past policies when Turkey simply supported peace.⁶¹¹

The view of Turkey's population towards Israel has also shifted. In a 2000 poll, 60% of Turkish voters wanted Turkey to take a more active role in supporting Palestinians against Israel.⁶¹² This number rose to 66% in 2003 and to over 80% in 2004.⁶¹³ The Turkish people have mixed feelings, opposing Israel's treatment of Palestinians, but respecting Israel's democracy and military successes. In a 2004 survey,

2/3 of Turkey's citizens said Turkey should side with Palestinians over Israel, but the same people showed a high degree of tolerance for Jews in Turkey.⁶¹⁴

The Turkish-Israeli relationship is still highly advantageous to both parties, and will likely endure. The military in Turkey highly values Turkey's alliance with Israel, and will likely do anything they can to ensure the relationship continues.⁶¹⁵ Turkey's military sees Israel as a source of high-tech military equipment, an emissary to the US, and an ally against hostile neighbors. The military also views Israel as an ally in repressing Islamic political forces.⁶¹⁶ This may be one of the reasons the AKP has allowed a more negative relationship with Israel to appear. Of concern too, as the role of the military has been decreasing due to EU-mandated changes, the military has been less able to direct Turkey's foreign policy towards a closer alliance with Israel.⁶¹⁷

Overall, Turkey's alliance with Israel is fraying. The AKP government has been using harsh language in condemning many recent Israeli actions, and has begun to freeze military and diplomatic cooperation. At the same time, Turkey's government insists that their issues are with the Israeli government, not Israeli citizens or with Jews. Actions are also underway to repair the relationship. Turkey and Israel have been holding secret talks between high level officials in both governments to try to repair the relationship.⁶¹⁸ Further, AKP comments regarding Israel's actions towards the Turkish ships in Gaza have been condemned by many groups in Turkey. Even an influential Muslim cleric blasted the flotilla organizers and criticized the government's reaction.⁶¹⁹ Despite the secret talks, Turkey has clearly taken a more negative stance towards Israel, which represents Turkey's drift away from the West in the foreign policy arena.

Iraq

Due to its struggle with domestic Kurdish groups, Turkey did not have good relations with Iraq, which is home to many Kurds. These relations have been improving however. In March 2007, Erdogan hinted that Turkey might establish diplomatic relations with Iraqi Kurds. The military, however, said no such relations would be considered.⁶²⁰ Soon after, the situation with the Iraqi Kurds degenerated and the issue was put on hold. This is still a topic that is very uncomfortable for Turkey, which has suffered repeated attacks from across the border.⁶²¹

In response to such attacks on Turkey, the military discussed launching operations into Iraq. The attempt to gain EU membership, however, is a big constraint on Turkey's taking action in Iraq as the EU opposes such a move.⁶²² Despite this, Turkey began bombing PKK targets in Iraq in December 2007 and then invaded with ground troops in February 2008.⁶²³ Turkey continued to engage in military actions against Kurdish groups in Iraq into 2009.⁶²⁴ Such military actions have met with a mixed response from the EU. While the EU officially condemned the actions, the EU did not seem interested in making the assault a central issue in negotiations.

Despite the military actions in Iraq, Turkey has begun to demonstrate an interest in improving relations with Iraqi Kurds and their government. Turkey has increased official contacts with Iraqi officials and begun to make contacts with the Kurdish regional government.⁶²⁵ Turkey has started negotiations to help decrease the frequency of terrorist attacks with the Iraqi Kurdish region's Prime Minister. Turkey has also sent the Turkish counsel-general to an event with the Iraqi Kurd government where the Iraqi Kurd flag was flying.⁶²⁶ Turkey also played an important role in improving the security

environment in Iraq. Turkey has longstanding relations with Sunni Muslim groups in Iraq from the days of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey used those ties to help push Sunni terrorist groups towards peace.

Overall, Turkey's relations with Iraq present a mixed picture of Turkey's evolving relations with the West. On one hand, Turkey launched a military invasion of Iraq against the wishes of the EU. On the other hand, Turkey has followed the military operations with a drive towards peace and reconciliation that the EU supports.

Syria

Ethnic identity is very strong in Arab states, which can make nations with Arab majorities wary of alliances with non-Arab states.⁶²⁷ This can be seen in the example of Jordan. In 1998, Turkey's Prime Minister at the time, Mesut Yilmaz, traveled to Jordan to discuss political and military relations. Jordan viewed better relations with Turkey as being rational to help defend Jordan against any external threats. Arab nations, including a vocal Syria, viewed Jordan's actions as a betrayal of Arab identity. The pressures on Jordan worked, and they backed away from a formal alliance or much closer ties with Turkey.⁶²⁸ After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Syria tried to escape the Ottoman past and create an Arab identity, which led to a rejection of all things Turkish.⁶²⁹

Beyond the Ottoman past, there have been two main points of tension between Turkey and Syria. One is water. Turkey and Syria have battled over water rights to the Euphrates River. Each country has attempted to dam the river against the wishes of the other country.⁶³⁰ The second tension has been over Syrian ties to Iranian and Palestinian militant groups, and most vexing to Turkey, the PKK.⁶³¹ Turkey and Syria suffered a

freeze in diplomatic relations in 1984 when Syria decided to back the PKK and agreed to provide safe haven to PKK leader Ocalan.⁶³² Syria also supported a training base for the PKK in Lebanon.⁶³³ In response, in 1998, after years of violence arising from Syria's support of the PKK, Turkey threatened to invade Syria if it did not expel Ocalan. Syria did so,⁶³⁴ after which, relations improved, and the situation improved further in 2000 with the partial collapse of the PKK.⁶³⁵

Relations improved drastically after the election of the AKP, and in 2004, for the first time since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, visited Turkey.⁶³⁶ Opposition to the Iraq War, which many EU member states also opposed, united Turkey and Syria further. Turkey's refusal to allow the US to attack Iraq from Turkish territory further improved relations.⁶³⁷ While such stances were approved of by the EU, Turkey did not pressure Syria to withdraw from Lebanon as most Western nations wanted.⁶³⁸

Syria has faith that Erdogan can bring peace to the region and help Syria become more involved with the rest of the world. That is why Syria, over the objections of the EU and Cyprus, recognized the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 2008 and opened trade relations with TRNC.⁶³⁹

Turkey has used its increasingly close diplomatic relationship with Syria to push Syria towards peace with Israel.⁶⁴⁰ One danger from Turkey's diplomatic war of words with Israel is that it may end the peace process between Israel and Syria that Turkey initiated. Turkey has helped broker peace between Syria and Israel both because it wants to be seen as the nation that succeeded when so many other countries failed, and because

it wants increased stability in the region. The US and Iran have opposed this initiative, but the EU has been supportive.⁶⁴¹

In improving relations with Syria, Turkey has drawn closer to a non-Western power. While the EU has not supported some of the actions Turkey has taken to gain closer cooperation with Syria, Turkey's desire to have cordial relations with Syria fits with EU goals. The EU has also been trying to improve its relations with Syria and end Syria's status as a pariah state. Thus Turkey's policies in regard to Syria should not be seen as Turkey moving too far away from the West or the EU.

Iran

At the end of the Cold War with the collapse of Soviet power around Iran's borders, Iran and its neighbors, including Turkey, began to compete for influence in the region. In the end, Turkey was more successful, which has led to tensions between Iran and Turkey.⁶⁴² Turkey has, however, in recent years been attempting to improve relations with Iran.⁶⁴³

Relations between Turkey and Iran have been tense since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Turkey's secular forces fear Iran's radical version of Islam. Further, the majority of citizens in each country follow a different branch of Islam (Sunni in Turkey and Shia in Iran).⁶⁴⁴ Historically, there have been conflicts between Sunni and Shia, and it is possible that religious issues could divide Iran and Turkey.⁶⁴⁵ Iran used to support the PKK against Turkey out of hatred for Turkey's secular model and in the 1990s the PKK had about 1,200 fighters in Iran.⁶⁴⁶ Relations recently have thawed, however.

Iran and Turkey began to improve relations in 1996, establishing a joint oil pipeline, but this was soon halted as the military in Turkey in 1997 declared Iran a threat and began the ouster of the Turkish Prime Minister, Erbakan of the Welfare Party.⁶⁴⁷ Iran, however, began to turn against the PKK in 2000 in search of better relations with Turkey. The AKP expressed interest in improved relations when it was elected in 2002.⁶⁴⁸ Senior leaders in Iran began making visits to Turkey in 2003 and Erdogan went to Iran in 2004.⁶⁴⁹ Iran and Turkey met in 2007 to address concerns regarding drug smuggling, organized crime, and anti-terrorism. No agreements were reached, but the meeting was important as it demonstrated Turkey's growing closeness to Iran.⁶⁵⁰

Trade and energy issues were two main reasons that Turkey sought closer relations with Iran. Bilateral trade increased from \$1.2 billion in 2002 to \$2.4 billion in 2003, and has continued to rise.⁶⁵¹ Turkey has used improved relations with Iran to help secure Turkey's oil needs. Currently, Russia and Iran are the only suppliers of natural gas to Turkey. Iran, aware of this, has offered Turkey a "privileged status to get gas that includes partnership offers for drilling oil and gas reserves."⁶⁵² Iran and Turkey have also signed an agreement to ship some natural gas to Turkmenistan via Turkey.⁶⁵³

Turkey has stated that it does not want Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, but Turkey does not believe Iran is attempting to build nuclear weapons, and opposes sanctions or military action.⁶⁵⁴ There is no modern history of armed conflict between Turkey and Iran, but Turkey does not want to see the balance of power in the region shift towards Iran (currently Turkey has a vastly superior military).⁶⁵⁵ Turkey has stressed instead that the troubles with Iran must be solved with diplomacy.⁶⁵⁶

Up until 2010, Turkish policy towards Iran on the nuclear issue was very similar to the EU model. Both Turkey and the EU want to maintain stability in the region and thus oppose military action. At the same time, Turkey and the EU both stated they did not want Iran to have nuclear weapons, which would change the balance of power.⁶⁵⁷ Turkey even hosted a meeting between Iran and the EU to find a solution, but to no avail. Turkey is trying to push Iran into behaving more cooperatively and has stated its support for a peaceful Iranian nuclear power program.⁶⁵⁸

There is, however, concern in the West that Turkey will provide an outlet for Iran to escape sanctions. This fear appears to have been confirmed in the most recent UN Security Council vote. Turkey was one of just two nations (along with Brazil) that voted against imposing sanctions on Iran over its nuclear weapons program.⁶⁵⁹ The EU was in favor of such sanctions. Turkey claimed that it voted against sanctions because it believes that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful, and Turkey believes that it and Brazil can strike a deal with Iran regarding the program. Turkey argued that sanctions would simply harm the negotiations. Turkey's new policy represents a major break with the EU and a substantial move closer to a country antagonistic to the West. Part of the reason Turkey may have backed Iran is that Turkey has grown more dependent on Iranian oil, and is also reluctant to upset a new friendly nation.⁶⁶⁰

Overall, there are reasons to believe that Turkey's alliance with Iran does not represent a rejection of the West, but other reasons to believe it does. One reason relations between the two nations improved was due to an alliance over economic and energy issues.⁶⁶¹ This can be seen as just a natural extension of economic needs for both

nations. These closer ties could also be a reason for concern, because if Turkey becomes too dependent on Iranian oil, Turkey could be reluctant to upset Iran.

Improving relations with Iran provide other opportunities for Turkey. Turkey may be able to increase its influence with Iran's friends and thus expand trade and influence with those nations. Turkey may also be able to serve as a negotiator between Iran and the West, which would increase Turkey's standing on the world stage.

Turkey's military is still hawkish on Iran, but the civilian leadership does not appear to share that view.⁶⁶² The AKP has desired a decreased reliance on the West for Turkey's security, leading Turkey towards better relations with other allies, such as Iran. This appears to be in part just a desire from Turkey to increase the number of friendly nations, and in part a fear that if the EU rejects Turkey's membership, then Turkey will be vulnerable to security threats.⁶⁶³ It is not yet completely clear what the intentions of either Turkey or Iran are, but if relations with the EU continue to degrade, Turkey may turn to Iran to gain greater security and influence in the world.⁶⁶⁴ Turkey's vote in the UN Security Council provides clear evidence that such a concern should be taken seriously.

Russia

Turkey and Russia have traditionally been enemies stretching back to each nation's imperial days, when the empires were frequently in conflict. Russia wanted access to the Black Sea that Turkey was blocking and this led to many wars between them. The Cold War also drove them apart as Turkey was the first line of defense for Europe and the first and last line to the South of Europe. Disagreements continued into

the 1990s over the Balkan wars and the conflict in Chechnya (the people in Chechnya are mostly of Turkish decent). Turkey's membership in NATO makes Russia distrustful.⁶⁶⁵ Any potential thawing of relations could be seen as being similar to France and Germany's reconciliation after World War II.⁶⁶⁶

Relations began to improve after the collapse of the USSR, concomitant with the improvement of US/EU–Russian relations. Russian hostility, at least for a while, to NATO also subsided. This allowed Turkey and Russia to begin to talk.⁶⁶⁷ Turkey and Russia grew closer after the Luxembourg Summit, when Turkey began to look to other nations for alliances. Turkey signed an arms deal with Russia and pledged closer ties.⁶⁶⁸ Since 2003, under the leadership of the AKP, Turkey has begun to develop much closer bilateral relations with Russia.⁶⁶⁹ Turkey and Russia have even carried out yearly joint military exercises in the Black Sea, which began in 2004.⁶⁷⁰

Another reason Turkey and Russia began to improve relations was economic. Turkey was searching for new markets at the close of the Cold War, and Russia wanted to provide one. Russia invited Turkish business and investment in order to help liberalize Russia's economy.⁶⁷¹ Russia quickly became one of the major importers of Turkish goods, and Russia is the main exporter to Turkey of natural gas.⁶⁷² Bilateral trade has risen from \$10 billion in 2004 to \$25 billion in 2007.⁶⁷³ Russia and Turkey have also worked together to develop oil pipelines that will help bring Russian gas to the Middle East.⁶⁷⁴

An area of enhanced cooperation is in the field of terrorism. In the past, Turkey and Russia had both offered minor support for terrorists in each other's country (PKK in Turkey, rebels in Chechnya in Russia), but each country halted such activity out of fear

of greater incidents of terrorism in their own countries, and in the interest of fighting Islamic extremism.⁶⁷⁵ Neither side wants to support radicals and have that blow back into their own country. In fact after 9/11 the two sides met to discuss how to stop terrorism between their countries.⁶⁷⁶ Both nations are fearful of Islamic extremism (the rebels in Chechnya are Islamic). Russia likes to cite Turkey as an example of what a successful Muslim nation should look like.⁶⁷⁷

In the field of foreign relations the two nations have also found some common cause. Both nations opposed the Iraq war. Turkey and Russia both want to maintain their commercial ties with Iran and Iranian firms. This has in general led both nations to view Iran's nuclear program as peaceful, not as a weapons program.⁶⁷⁸

The war in Georgia was challenging for Turkey to manage diplomatically, and Turkey did not take a clear stance on the conflict.⁶⁷⁹ NATO, of which Turkey is a member, condemned the attack, as did the EU. Turkey did not. Turkey wanted to form closer relations with Russia, and knew condemning the war would harm that effort.⁶⁸⁰ Turkey has also opposed allowing Georgia to join NATO, as it views the move as provocative to Russia.⁶⁸¹ Turkey did not offer its support for the war, however, as Turkey sees Georgia as a useful country in that Georgia creates a buffer between Turkey and Russia in case of a dispute. Turkey also did not want to sever relations with Georgia, because Georgia provides Turkey with a valuable trade route to move oil and gas supplies.⁶⁸²

To help improve stability in the Caucasus, Turkey has proposed a regional cooperation scheme that would include Russia, called the Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform.⁶⁸³ This group, which included other nations in the Caucasus region,

was proposed to help address future concerns. Turkey's proposal, however, has appeared to many to be an attempt to promote peace while appeasing Russia, and is likely unrealistic.⁶⁸⁴

There are still considerable tensions remaining in the relationship between Russia and Turkey. Russia is wary of Turkey because so many of the nations that were part of the Soviet Union are populated by people of Turkish decent.⁶⁸⁵ Both Turkey and Russia have attempted to exert influence in the former Soviet republics, which has led to tensions.⁶⁸⁶ This is despite the fact that Turkey has had little success in forging closer ties with the former Soviet nations. Turkey has in fact thus turned away from attempting to improve relations with these nations and moved towards focusing on Russia, as Turkey sees far more economic and geo-political benefit from allying with Russia.⁶⁸⁷ Russia does not approve of a gas pipeline Turkey is building, as it bypasses Russia. Turkey believes that Russia is sending far too many ships through the Bosphorus.⁶⁸⁸

As with Turkey's relations with other nations, there are reasons to think Turkey's relations with Russia might or might not represent a break with the West and the EU. Turkey's new friendship with Russia makes sense for Turkey. Turkey has gained a valuable trading partner, a useful strategic ally, and a security partner to help ensure Turkey's borders are safe from internal and external threats. None of these represent an inherent reason to think Turkey has taken steps away from the West. Instead, all fit with Turkey's policy of having good relations with all neighbors.

There are, however, important reasons to think that Turkey's improved relations with Russia are a reaction to the EU and a partial rejection of the West. Turkey and Russia have a "shared disillusionment with the United States and European policies and

attitudes, as well as increasing common ground on issues in the broader Black Sea region and further afield in the Middle East.”⁶⁸⁹ Of major importance, after a meeting following 9/11, a very prominent Turkish general, Major General Tuncer Kilinc, said that Turkey should abandon the EU and forge an alliance with Russia. Major General Kilinc made the statement both out of fear that Turkey would become a target for terrorists if it maintained relations with the West, and over severe frustrations with the EU membership process.⁶⁹⁰ The friendship between Turkey and Russia began to strengthen quickly following the EU decision at Luxemburg in 1997. Turkey’s changing relationship with Russia has the potential to cause problems for the EU on its borders by strengthening Russia’s hand in EU affairs.⁶⁹¹ It seems highly unlikely Turkey will abandon the West entirely for Russia in the near term, but without more concrete promises by the EU, Turkey may see Russia as its best chance to be a power on the international scene.⁶⁹²

Conclusion

Turkey has begun to forge closer alliances with non-Western states. Clearly Turkey is in part responding to rejections by the EU and setbacks in Turkey’s EU membership process, as the case of the Luxemburg Summit and Russia demonstrates. Robert Gates, America’s Defense Secretary, has expressed concern that Turkey is moving eastward due to the way the EU has treated Turkey, and many other high-ranking policy officials in America and the EU have expressed similar concerns.⁶⁹³ Of course, if Turkey moves its priorities and policies to be in line with the EU in its attempt for membership, it will have to abandon relationships the EU does not approve of to meet the requirements for membership.⁶⁹⁴ Turkey might be approaching non-Western states for

alliances because Turkey does not wish to be rejected from the EU and be left with no other allies.

The actions of the EU are not the only factor determining how Turkey will respond to Western and non-Western nations. The shift in Turkey's foreign policy may come from religious conservatives who do not want Turkey to join the West, but instead want Turkey to turn towards other Islamic nations and non-Western powers. Erdogan may be responding to electoral pressure, but may, as he claims, have no intention of abandoning the EU.⁶⁹⁵

Independent of the EU, Turkey has developed what has been called a "zero problems" approach to relations with its neighbors based on the vision of Davutoglu. Turkey views its zero problems approach as one in which Turkey attempts to forge alliances with all nations in its region, which includes Europe, Russia, and the Middle East. When Turkey has not been able to improve relations, it has sought to ensure stability in the region and suppress any hostilities. Turkey began to pursue such a policy in 2003, which led Turkey to take a more active role in relations with neighboring nations in order to keep troubles from arising and ensure stability. It is actually a similar policy to that which the EU follows. The difference between the EU's zero problems approach and Turkey's is that Turkey sees itself as a central country in the world, not just a bridge state.⁶⁹⁶ Turkey's new confidence coupled with the zero problems approach has led to better relations with Iran, Russia, and Syria.⁶⁹⁷

Overall, it is not clear what direction Turkish foreign policy is headed. On the one hand, the AKP has continued to state that it desires Turkey to join the EU and forge closer relations with the West. On the other hand, Turkey has begun to form alliances

with non-Western states, and strained relations with Western nations and allies. It is clear that the EU has pushed Turkey into closer relations with non-Western states, but it is not clear that EU actions will lead Turkey to abandon the West. It is more likely that Turkey will continue to pursue its zero problems policy by maintaining alliances with both Western and non-Western nations.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

“Turkey offers the West an enormous opportunity to demonstrate to the peoples of other Muslim states hungry for modernization, political change, and economic dynamism that adherence to the principles of openness can bring about all those, and more, positive results. If the invitation never comes, the message is the opposite: our model of development is not for you.”⁶⁹⁸

Turkey has made substantial progress towards meeting EU demands in just over a decade. Turkey has moved towards the creation of a modern economy; markedly improved freedom of speech and religion; increased protections for minorities; outlawed torture; improved its education system; curtailed the role of the military in government; and increased the quality of democracy. While not all attempts at change have been successful and not all successes have been immediately good for Turkey, the changes have helped create conditions that are likely to improve life in Turkey in the near future. Despite this impressive progress, Turkey continues to face obstacles to EU membership.

Turkey has tried for years to join the European Union, and has been told repeatedly that it was on track to acceptance, if only it would fulfill various, sometimes shifting, requirements. Recent events have made Turkey's path to the EU more problematic. These recent events include missteps, discussed in this paper, by both the

EU and Turkey. Rejected by the West, Turkey has begun to seek ties with non-Western states.⁶⁹⁹ According to Stephen Kinzer in his book Reset: “Europe is slamming its door in Turkey’s face. Turkey...is responding by seeking friends elsewhere.”⁷⁰⁰ While procrastination by the EU has clearly played a role in Turkey’s attempts to form alliances and friendships with non-Western states, it is not the sole factor. Turkey “has matured as a country and now has the self-confidence to play a global role.”⁷⁰¹ Turkey’s new foreign policy stems from Turkey’s sense that it should be a major player on the world scene, and from Turkey’s desire to ensure stability and peace in the regions surrounding Turkey. Turkey’s new outlook is driven by a combination of EU rejection, a sense of growing influence, and attempts to achieve the zero problems ideal.

What Will Be the Ultimate Impact of the EU Stalling on Turkey?

Turkey had been promised in 2004 that its candidacy would be judged only on the progress Turkey made in implementing reforms, not on the Cyprus issue.⁷⁰² Thus, the EU’s decision to suspend many aspects of Turkey’s accession negotiations in 2006 over the Cyprus issue has led to an acute and large decline in the power of the EU to effect change in Turkey. The EU decision harmed the ability of the AKP to enact more changes because it has undermined the likelihood that progress will be associated with eventual success. The release of progress reports used to be a major event in Turkey leading to much debate, but starting in 2007, the release of the reports did not draw much attention in Turkey.⁷⁰³ As Kinzer wrote: “As Europe’s change of heart, or true intentions, became painfully evident during the first decade of the new century, the pace of reform in Turkey slowed. That, in turn, gave Europeans more reason or opportunity to criticize Turkey.”⁷⁰⁴

There are also questions regarding whether the AKP was intending to push for further reforms after the EU did not support some of the AKP's domestic goals. The EU appears to be pleased with the slow pace of progress because it means the EU does not have to make any final decisions regarding Turkey's candidacy.⁷⁰⁵

Currently, the EU is making large demands while offering no guarantees, which makes it less likely that the EU will be able to induce further changes in Turkish policies.⁷⁰⁶ For the first time in membership negotiations with any nation, the EU has created an accession process that has no timetable for completion and has long transitional periods. The EU has imposed stricter requirements on Turkey than on any other state, including the number of factors that must be addressed, limits on benefits Turkey will receive upon membership, and restrictions on freedom of movement for Turkey's population.⁷⁰⁷ In addition to limiting what Turkey might gain from the EU, the EU strategy is to limit the impact on the EU of Turkish membership. When this is coupled with the difficulties the Turkish government faces in pushing through changes, it does not bode well for the future ability of the EU to determine lasting change in Turkey.⁷⁰⁸

The problems with the accession process are increasingly disruptive and harmful for Turkey. For years, the EU has been the principal outside force pushing Turkey to complete its march toward democracy. Certainly, Turkey does have its own reasons to broaden minority rights, lift restrictions on free speech, and end military influence in politics. Domestic forces pushing for a more democratic and stable Turkey were crucial to many advances. The possibility of EU membership, though, gave Turkey an especially powerful incentive to continue to modify its policies. As the prospect of meeting EU

demands and achieving EU membership has faded, so has the pressure for reform.⁷⁰⁹

This can be seen by the backlash from both the AKP and nationalist forces in Turkey against the EU and the West.

Some EU member states have further complicated the situation. Some EU leaders have been proposing a so-called “special status” or “privileged partnership” for Turkey in lieu of full membership. What exactly such a status means is unclear, but it would encompass closer relations and harmonization of laws between the EU and Turkey than exists now, but less than full membership. Erdogan has ruled this option out as completely unacceptable.⁷¹⁰ Such a proposal makes clear to Turkey that not every state in the EU would welcome it, under any circumstance.

Can Turkey Sustain Progress and Change?

With the prospect of EU membership fading, will Turkey continue to make changes, and can it sustain the changes it has made. Some argue that the answer is no. One reason for worry is that if the EU rejects Turkey, it would remove a key impetus for reform, insult the Turkish people and government and lead to more influence for the extremists.⁷¹¹ Rejection would appeal to some, but could demoralize much of the population.⁷¹² Gul has stated he is concerned that young people are turning away from the West due to EU actions.⁷¹³ Policies of delay have strengthened opponents of reform in the past, and if Turkey is rejected, those forces may become stronger.⁷¹⁴ If Turkey makes all the reforms the EU requires and still does not gain admission to the EU, the reforms may leave Turkey crippled. Unable to use the NSC to defend itself or maintain its secular nature because the military will be too weak,⁷¹⁵ Turkey, on the doorstep of

Europe, could become an Islamic state and join the ranks of unstable Middle East nations.⁷¹⁶

Despite these concerns, there are many who believe that Turkey is on an irreversible path towards becoming a modern international state, and that Turkey will continue to make substantive and progressive changes no matter what the EU's final decision is. It has been the goal of Turkey to be Western since its founding, and nothing may deter Turkey from that goal.⁷¹⁷ The AKP government, and Gul in particular, has said that no matter what, Turkey will continue to modernize and make EU reforms.⁷¹⁸ Even if the AKP loses power, the governments before it made EU reforms,⁷¹⁹ and governments that follow will probably pursue reforms as well. Finally, given the wishes of the majority of Turks, it is unlikely Turkey will destabilize if rejected by the EU, and there is even less chance that Turkey will join the radical Islamic world. Turkey has no connection to that way of thinking, either historically or in the present day.⁷²⁰ Most Islamic groups, including the AKP, oppose radical Islam and violence.

Both sides paint vivid pictures. One side says Turkey is on an irreversible course towards Westernization, the other side sees a fragile nation that could fall to radical interests. Neither extreme is probable, but the first scenario seems more likely to predict the future.⁷²¹ Turkey has made amazing progress towards a more open, stable, democratic society. Of course, the changes have not taken hold so strongly that progress could not be partially reversed.⁷²² Turkey has experienced setbacks in its drive for Westernization, and rejection may lead to setbacks again. Nonetheless, its history and interests suggest that it is highly unlikely that Turkey would become an extremist Islamic bastion or abandon relations with the West.

Conclusion

NATO membership in the 1950s helped Turkey to develop and focus inward by providing it security. EU membership could open Turkey and the Muslim world to Western life, democracy, and further development.⁷²³ If EU membership for Turkey is rejected, the most likely outcome would be for progress to slow temporarily in Turkey, but Turkey desires to become an important nation on the world stage. If Turkey is to fulfill that role, its leaders believe Turkey must continue to make reforms along the lines the EU has proposed.

Some have argued that the changes Turkey has made so far do not represent substantial progress and that Turkey cannot succeed in becoming Western because it is starting from such a different set of traditions. However, all Western nations are not alike in their traditions or their current nature. Also, the Western nations did not start the way they are now, and it is unfair to think Turkey cannot follow a similar path to modern statehood. For those who argue Turkey has not made much progress toward this goal, the question comes to mind: how much more can any nation be expected to do in a decade? Turkey's progress, while incomplete, has been remarkable.

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