

## **TURKISH-GERMAN RELATIONS: POLITICAL ASPECTS<sup>1</sup>**

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Relations between Turkey and Germany have deep roots and wide ramifications. They are of great importance for the two countries. Our meeting today coming after a decade since the end of the Cold War and the Unification of Germany, presents a good opportunity to look into the essential features of this relationship.

First, I want to propose to you what we should try to avoid in our relationship. One such problem is the following. Sometimes we get the impression that Turkey and Germany are taking the other one for granted. Again, a wrong impression is created when we focus on one single aspect of the relationship. This is the case for instance of the European Union. However, we should never lose sight of the fact that Turkish-German relations are complex relations. Each problem has to be handled within the totality of these relations.

Another problem arises when non-political factors come in and influence political relations. Of course, Turks living in Germany are a major link between the two countries. Also economic and military cooperation, due to their density assume proportions affecting the political scene. The role played by these non-political factors is quiet understandable. What is not acceptable, though, is the influence of extraneous factors such as terrorist and fundamentalist organizations that adversely affect the normal functioning of our relations. Turkey suffered great human and material losses as a result of the activities of these organizations. The prolongation of these organizations is located in Germany. Unfortunately, the German authorities did not prevent their activities. Today when there is a new world-wide determination following the terrible terrorist attacks in the United States, I hope Germany will take the steps which are long overdue.

Now, I would like to come to what we should do to further our bilateral relations. I think it would be important to investigate into the philosophical base on which the two governments would normally operate. I want to propose that we should look at these relations from two different perspectives to determine elements of an eventual philosophical base. One such perspective is the transformation that has taken place in the geopolitical positions of the two countries following the end of the Cold War. Another way of looking at the relationship could be to try to concentrate on the national interests of the two countries.

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The end of the Cold War brought about major changes in the geopolitical positions of the two countries. Germany has been reunited. Turkey's environment has changed.

I served as the Turkish Ambassador in Bonn during the years that led to the unification. They were the most interesting years. One could feel that Germany was changing, that Europe was changing. One could say that even the world was changing.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall it was possible to negotiate the reunification with the Four Powers. Negotiations called 2+4 not only created a new Germany, but it also helped achieve a new order in Europe. The developments that have taken place following those momentous years certainly constitute major changes in the geopolitical position of Germany.

One can say that Germany has been reunited as a result of the new conjuncture, special conditions created by the changes in the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The conjuncture created in Europe produced such a momentum that only a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall Germany was united.

Turkey - and the Federal Republic have been close allies and Turkey supported the process of German unification. I left Germany a few days after the unification ceremony in Berlin. Dr. Lautensciager, Staat Sekretar at the Federal Foreign Office in the farewell luncheon he offered to me said "Turkey and you, supported this process at all times, for which we are most grateful to you. We hope you take with you the message that German unification will enhance stability in the whole of Europe and at the same time release resources for coping with urgent global problems of the future, which all of us must seek to solve."

My purpose in relating these personal reminiscences on a historical episode is not of course to say that United Germany has now additional moral obligation towards Turkey. I simply wanted to indicate that in the words of the German Staat Sekretar of the time Germany would enhance stability in the whole of Europe, certainly including the Eastern Mediterranean.

A parallel development has taken place in Turkey's geopolitical position. After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union Turkey's environment changed. The emergence on the world scene of the Turkish speaking countries of Caucasus and Central Asia presented Turkey with new opportunities as well as added responsibilities. Turkey was in a position to understand the immediate requirements of nationhood in these countries. First, they needed to be firmly established in the international community. Then, they would need trained people, legal infrastructure. But their most pressing problem was in the field of economy. Turkey would, of course, be ready to be of assistance and created a special Agency for this purpose. Turkey also concluded agreements with the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia to create a framework within which the Turkish private sector could operate and invest in

these countries. As a result many joint ventures were realized. Some of them are major projects of infrastructure. Common roots and cultural affinity between Turkey and the countries that I mentioned inevitably led to a close cooperation in the cultural field. As an example I should mention that Turkey is involved in a project to grant ten thousand scholarships for students from these countries.

Turkey, while cooperating closely with the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia, always is cognizant of the fact that they have their own agendas. Kazakstan President Nazarbayev took the initiative to form a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia. In November 2001 the Almati Act will be signed by the leaders of the Participating Countries. Turkey played a major part in the realization of this project.

The rediscovery of oil and natural gas in the Caspian Sea and the surrounding area increased the importance of transportation and transformed Turkey into an energy bridge. Of course, the energy needs of Turkey is a major element in making this bridge factual. Some mega projects involving the transportation of oil and gas from the Caspian basin to and through Turkey have been planned. One of them is the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Project. It envisages the transportation of 50 million tones of oil per annum from Azerbaijan. Kazakstan also intends to supply oil to this pipeline. The feasibility study for the pipeline was conducted by the German company PLE. Presently another phase of the study is underway.

As to natural gas, there is the Trans-Caspian Natural Gas Pipeline project to bring the Turkmenistan gas. Another project concerns the sale and purchase of Azeri natural gas by Turkey.

Now we can look at the Turkish- German relations from the perspective of national interests.

I will focus on a subject which should concern the Mediterranean policy of Germany; that is the question of Cyprus. For Turkey Cyprus is a national problem. To what extent the national interest of Germany could be affected by Cyprus, it is of course up to the German participants to judge. I'll try to present to you the Cyprus question in the context that may help such a judgement: this is the security in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The security situation in the Arab-Israeli sub-region of the Eastern Mediterranean is unraveling every day and for almost a year before our eyes. The catastrophic situation does not need further explanation. It only emphasizes the volatility of the whole Eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish-Greek sub-region enjoys relative peace thanks to the balance originally established in the 1920's by the Lausanne Peace Treaty. This balance must be preserved for the sake of the region's security. As far as Cyprus is concerned this balance was again confirmed in the 1960 Treaties. Since then, many developments regarding the island took place. The balance was upset many times, the Turkish side tried to restore it. All these previous experiences took place mostly under the cold war conditions when Third World, Non-Aligned

Countries played the game of Archbishop Makarios and his successors. At the end of the Cold War it was thought that people would not risk playing games on a such sensitive issue anymore. Much to our regret, however, other more responsible players came into the picture and disrupted the fragile balance that existed in the island. Let me explain.

In 1963 the Greek Cypriots, in a terrorist act, attacked the Turkish Cypriots and ousted them from the government. UN General Assembly was ready to endorse Non-Aligned draft resolutions hailing such attacks. Again in 1974 Greek officers on the island toppled Makarios and declared the annexation of Cyprus to Greece. An EOKA terrorist was made President of the Republic. Turkey basing itself on Article 4 of the Treaty of Guarantee has taken military action in Cyprus. A Turkish- Greek war was nearly averted. Subsequently, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom met at the Geneva Conference and adopted a Declaration in which they noted the existence in practice in the Republic of Cyprus of two autonomous administrations that of the Greek Cypriot community and that of the Turkish Cypriot community. In this way the balance upset in 1964 was on the way to be restored. Intercommunal talks between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots continued within the framework of the good offices of the UN Secretary General. However the talks did not produce any results because of the intransigence of the Greek Cypriots who were again counting on the support of the Non- Aligned. They continued to use the UN General Assembly as a tool and the Turkish Cypriots were forced to proclaim the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. That was again a move to redress the balance between the two sides. The intercommunal talks continued under the previous format.

But this time the Greek Cypriots would try to get the support of the European Union in which Greece was already a full member. They took the step that would cause the final blow. They applied for full membership in the European Union. The application was accepted by the EU despite the Turkish objections. Negotiations toward that end with the Greek Cypriots started. The political and legal aspects of the Turkish objections are quite when known. I want to explain today the security implications for the Eastern Mediterranean. You will no doubt remember the crisis that erupted in 1997 over the purchase of Russian missiles by the Greek Cypriot Administration. Since 1993 Greek Cypriots had established with Greece a "Joint Defense Doctrine". They had accelerated the build-up of arms and armed forces in Southern Cyprus: Russian - made T-80 tanks, the construction of air force and navy base for use by Greece. In January 1997 they decided on the purchase of S-300 long-range anti-aircraft missiles from the Russian Federation. This missile system with a range of 150 km constituted a direct threat not only to the security of the Turkish Cypriots but to the security of Turkey itself. It threatened the security of Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to preserve the balance in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, decided to take all necessary measures. They decided that any attack against the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will be considered as an attack against Turkey.

In 1998 the Greek Cypriots constructed a military base in Paphos for the deployment of combat aircraft, thus adding a highly destabilizing dimension to the military equation in the island and the region. This has brought the parties to the threshold of another crisis, since the 1960 Treaties of Guarantee and of Alliance stipulate that no threat could be directed from Cyprus against the security of the Guarantor Powers.

In 1999 Greece and Greek Cypriots decided to deploy the S-300 missiles in the island of Crete. I wonder whether the European Union countries are aware of these security burdens that the Greek Cypriot Administration carries with it?

For all these reasons, Germany also should have a fresh look at the problem I want to believe that Germany can at least say what the LTN Secretary General declared in his statement of 12 September 2000. The Secretary General said he concluded that the equal status of the parties should be recognized in the comprehensive settlement. It is up to you to make the judgement I mentioned at the beginning of this subject.

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