Greek-Turkish Relations Towards the 21st Century
A View from Athens

Panayotis J. Tsakonas

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact has led neither to a greater cohesiveness within the remaining alliance (i.e., NATO) nor to a reduction in intra-alliance conflict. In fact, the opposite has occurred. Relations between two allies, namely Greece and Turkey, remain tense in the post-Cold War era, and both countries still maintain an extremely high level of defense expenditures compared to other NATO members.

Scarcely a month after the signing of the Madrid Agreement in July 1997, which at first seemed to constitute a major positive development in the normalization of Greek-Turkish relations, Greece observed a "negative list" of Turkish responses. These included Prime Minister Yilmaz's statement that the principles of international law cannot be applied to the Aegean Sea, the "Joining" or "Integration Agreement" concluded between Turkey and the occupied areas of Cyprus, and the challenge to Greek sovereignty of more than one hundred islands and islets in the Aegean Sea, including the island of Gavdos, south of Crete.

On the other hand, Turkey remained highly anxious, due to Cyprus's purchase and planned deployment of the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missile system. With regard to Turkey's European orientation, decisions made in Luxembourg and Cardiff in January and June 1998 respectively, also further burdened the already tense and fragile Greek-Turkish security agenda, as the postponement of Turkey's accession negotiations remained linked to Greece's deliberate policy of keeping the EU's doors closed.

Constraints on the Establishment of a Security Regime

The current situation in Greek-Turkish relations is not ripe for either a resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict or the establishment of a "comprehensive security regime" in which all major security issues are covered.[1] As a prominent figure of international security regimes put it: "If states view politics as a zero-sum struggle, if they actually desire wars of expansion, if they cannot seek joint gains for domestic political reasons, if they fail to recognize that their policy choices are interdependent, if they cannot distinguish each other's offensive and defensive weapons and military deployments, if they are unwilling to reassure other states by permitting adequate verification, then the prospects for security regimes will be poor indeed."[2] This is undoubtedly the case as far as Greek-Turkish relations are concerned.

More specifically, it could be argued that in the post-Cold War era a number of domestic, systemic, and institutional realities further exacerbate the "security dilemma" between Greece and Turkey and place serious obstacles to the establishment of a security regime between the two countries. [3]

---

[1]For the notion of "comprehensive security regimes," see Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft*, 2nd ed. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 264-5. Security regimes do not constitute any form of agreement or contract, but rather refer to a coincidence of interests between opposing countries. Nevertheless, in order for even tacit cooperation to be maintained between the countries that will create a security regime, it is necessary that quite a high level of reciprocity with regard to participating states' intentions, the integrity of their communication channels, as well as specific values, be attained in advance. See Charles Lipson, "Why Are Some International Agreements Informal?", *International Organization*, Vol.45, No.4 (Autumn 1991), pp. 495-538; and Adam Garfinkle, "An Observation on Arab Culture and Deterrence: Metaphors and Misgivings" in Efraim Inbar (ed.), *Regional Security Regimes* (N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 202.

[2]See Janet Gross Stein, "Detection and Defection: Security Regimes and the Management of International Conflict," *International Journal* (No.40, Autumn 1985), pp.599-617, as quoted in Charles Lipson, "Are Security Regimes Possible? Historical Cases and Modern Issues" in Efraim Inbar (ed.), *Regional Security Regimes* (New York, State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 21. Stephen Krasner's definition of regimes remains the most influential. According to him, "Regimes can be defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of fact, causation and rectitude. Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice." See Stephen Krasner (ed), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 2.

[3] According to Robert Jervis, in order for a security regime to be established between two or more countries, four specific conditions need to be fulfilled: (a) Great Powers must favor its

At the domestic level, one may observe a certain number of incompatible views of security, emanating to a certain extent from a series of internal problems. In the case of Turkey, which is heavily preoccupied with a number of political and economic problems as well as the forthcoming April 1999 elections, internal politics speak for a "many-faced" country in political, economic, and military terms. This has meant a great deal of political fragmentation, especially in the 1990s, which has in turn led to a series of weak and unstable coalition governments over the past few years.

On the other side of the Aegean, it could be argued that, although the Greek political system is still undergoing a significant maturation process, the dominant trend is for a peaceful solution of the Greek-Turkish conflict. Unsurprisingly, one would not find the same degree of unanimity in Turkey, where the use of force, or at least the threat of its use, seems to constitute an integral part of any internal or external policy for tackling difficult situations and solving problems.[4] These facts do not augur well for a rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, since, at least for the decision-makers in Greece, they underline the lack of a credible partner on the other side of the Aegean who will both be able to successfully tackle internal problems and accomplish the difficult task of a rapprochement with Greece.

At the systemic level, the main issue hindering the development of a security regime between Greece and Turkey is one of the *legitimacy of external actors*; more specifically, the ability mainly of the United States, as the sole systemic protagonist in the post-Cold War era, to act as an "honest broker" in the Greek-Turkish conflict. However, the ability of the sole remaining superpower to act as an honest broker is not simply a matter of the confidence, or the lack thereof, of the two countries in its role as mediator; it is also related to the disposition and ability of the US to spend limitless time and effort

---

establishment; (b) war and the individualistic pursuit of security must be seen as costly; (c) common views on security, and (d) lack of aggressive ambitions and/or a desire to change the status quo. See Robert Jervis "Security Regimes" in Stephen Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1982, pp.176-178.

[4] For this argument, see the views of former Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Christos Rozakis as appeared in *Ellada, Tourkia kai o Dromos Pros tin Eirinefsi* [in Greek] (*Greece, Turkey and the Path to Peace*), text of a speech delivered in Omilos Provlimatismou gia ton Eksyxronismo tis Koinonias (Association for Thinking on the Modernization of Greek

so that a rapprochement of the two countries can be achieved, at a time when matters of much greater importance, such as the expansion of NATO to the east, are much higher on the US security agenda.

In addition, Greece views the role of the US and NATO in the Greek-Turkish conflict as primarily determined by Turkey's geostrategic importance. These include the strategic interests of the sole superpower concerning access to the energy sources of the Middle East, the preservation of free and unimpeded navigation in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, the "salvation" of the peace process in the Middle East, and the containment of Islamic fundamentalism. In the pursuit of these goals, which extend to the three regional subsystems contiguous to Turkey's geographic position (the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia/Caucasus), Turkey's strategic importance for American interests is more than obvious, while a series of developments in the area (e.g., the Gulf War, Operation Provide Comfort in Bosnia) have rendered the value and importance of the American cooperation with Turkey even greater. However, the US also has to promote stability and development in the Aegean region with a view to rendering it a bridge, as well as a barrier, to the Middle East. This fact mandates that the American superpower maintain strong ties with both Greece and Turkey, as well as constant vigilance, as it is concerned that the deteriorating Greek-Turkish relationship will make these goals unattainable.[5]

In respect of the Atlantic Alliance's role in the Greek-Turkish conflict, the Alliance appears unable to assume the role of guarantor of the two members' borders. Hence, the participation of Greece in NATO is certainly useful as a deterrent factor, a factor of limitation, or one of allied mediation, in an eventual Greek-Turkish confrontation. This was precisely the reason for Greece's reintegration into the Alliance in 1980, but in no case will it take the form of *mediation for the solution* of the Greek-Turkish differences. The initiatives undertaken to date, in the form of a package with a view to promoting Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) between Turkey

---

Society), March 13, 1997.
[5] See the papers delivered by Monteagle Stearns, "The Security Domain: A U.S. Perspective," and Phil Gordon, "The Security Domain: A European Perspective," at the Conference on *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post Cold War Era: Crisis or Detente?* (John F. Kennedy School of

and Greece, are characteristic of US and NATO goal-setting in that they aim at *deterring a Greek-Turkish crisis* and/or *conflict* in the Aegean and consolidating *operational normality* and *cohesion* in the Alliance's Southern Flank. The American proposals, however, in no case touch on the political essence of the Greek-Turkish differences, which according to Greek decision-makers, lie in Turkey's pursuit of revising the status quo in the Aegean.[6]

With respect to the ability and possible role of the European Union to intervene in the Greek-Turkish conflict, it would seem that the EU's position is far from the attainment and promotion of a unified stance that would actually contribute to the reconciliation of the two neighbors.[7] Indeed, despite the fact that a series of EU decisions (i.e., the Luxembourg and Cardiff Summits) reflected certain Greek concerns with regard to Turkey's revisionist attitude (through the adoption of the terms set by the Greek side on the maintenance and reinforcement of Turkey's European orientation), the EU has never decided as a whole to either mediate for a resolution of the conflict or provide Greece with the necessary security guarantees; nor it is expected to do so in the near future.[8]

Finally, a series of certain *institutional* problems, which emanate from a series of gaps and limitations on existing multilateral treaties and are of particular importance, further exacerbate the existing Greek-Turkish security dilemma. A brief examination of the CFE Treaty, the most important post-Cold War agreement on arms control in Europe, illustrates how Greece and Turkey have been able to *quantitatively* and *qualitatively* augment their holdings, due to certain deficiencies within the Treaty stemming from the conditions at the time of its conclusion in 1990.[9]

Government, Harvard University, November 14, 1997).

[6] See the summary of views included in the Discussion Paper of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; *Carnegie Forum on the United States; Greece and Turkey* (Carnegie International Center, Washington D.C., September 30-October 1, 1996), pp. 8-9.

[7] Ibid., p. 11.

[8] See Phil Gordon, *The Security Domain: A European Perspective*.

[9] See Christopher Tuck, "Greece, Turkey and Arms Control", *Defense Analysis* Vol.12, no.1 (1996), pp. 26-28.

For example, although the terms of the Treaty have asked for the reduction of battle tanks (28 for Turkey and 144 for Greece), the Treaty Limited Equipment (TLEs) limits allowed some significant expansion in other areas, such as Personnel Carriers (APCs) and aircraft (Turkey could increase by 1,618 its number of APCs and of its aircraft by 239, while Greece could increase its APCs by 893 and its aircraft by 181).[10] The CFE Treaty has thus sanctioned a general increase in the weapons stocks held by each side, an opportunity that neither side has missed.

Besides these quantitative increases, the CFE Treaty has not halted the development of a qualitative arms race, since it placed limits on the *number* of systems held, but generally not on their *capabilities*. It was thus possible for example, to replace single-barreled artillery pieces with Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) on a one-for-one basis. In fact, it is precisely this gap in the CFE Treaty that both countries have taken advantage of, with the result of further reinforcing their military capabilities, instead of reducing them.

In addition, the move towards qualitatively and quantitatively better forces was aided by NATO's Cascade Program,[11] under which Greece and Turkey became the principal recipients as the countries with the largest stocks of old TLEs. It is characteristic that, with regard to the volume of weapon systems, by the end of 1992, Greece and Turkey were the *greatest importers of military material worldwide*. As a result, through NATO's Cascade Program, which was completed in 1995, Turkey's modern military materiel (TLEs) *grew by 25%* (!) over 1990 levels, the year that the whole process of arms reduction in Europe was launched through the CFE Treaty.[12]

Last but not least, another serious gap in the CFE Treaty is that it does not apply to naval forces, which, given the strategic importance of the Aegean Sea to both sides, is

---

[10] See S. Koucik & R. Kokoski (eds.), *Conventional Arms Control: Perspectives on Verification* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994), pp. 27-30.
[11] After the Cold War's end, NATO policy made provisions for the transference of the comparatively more sophisticated weapon systems of certain countries (e.g., United States, Germany), which had to be reduced under the CFE Treaty, to those NATO member-states that had obsolete weapon systems, in order to streamline the latter. NATO's Cascading Program has in fact violated the spirit of the CFE (namely to build-down offensive capabilities), since it simply transposed the problems from the former Central Front to the flanks.
[12] See S. Koucik & R. Kokoski (eds.), *Conventional Arms Control: Perspectives on Verification*, op. cit., p. 36.

a major shortcoming. The result has been a naval arms race occurring at a time when Russia has ceased to be a major player in the Aegean, and, as a consequence, Greek decision-makers are inclined to think that the focus of Turkish naval policy is primarily Greece, and vice versa.

The Greek-Turkish Arms Build-Up

Where are the consequences of the existing and still deteriorating Greek-Turkish "security dilemma" reflected? Mainly, onto an *arms build-up* which, as is well known, has very much gone against the European trend. As a result of the Turkish announcement in April 1996 of a ten-year $31 billion armament program, Greece responded in November of that year with a $14 billion (4 trillion drachmas) program for the next five years, 1996-2000.[13]

Greek defense expenditures are approximately 5.6% of GNP ($5 billion), the highest among NATO members, while Turkey's are approximately 4.5% of GNP ($7.5 billion).[14] Military expenditures constitute a heavy burden for the Greek economy, at a time when Greece is implementing an economic austerity program in order to join the next phase of European Monetary Union.[15] Defense expenditures are, to a certain extent, responsible for the country's budget deficit, as well as Greece's low level of social services. According to Greek decision-makers, the existing arms race has also resulted in an imbalance of power in favor of Turkey, Greece's inability to keep up with the current arms race, and the risk of Greece distancing itself from EU convergence prerequisites. On the other hand, the existing arms race places a very heavy burden on Turkey as well, which is faced with chronic high inflation and serious social and political problems.

---

[13] See the *White Paper of the Hellenic Armed Forces: 1996-7*, Hellenic Ministry of National Defense, p.107. According to this document, "1.95 trillion drachmas is expected to be disbursed until 2000, immediately after the placing of orders, and the remaining according to deliveries."

[14] As noted by a DPC report, "[Greece's] defense effort in terms of inputs was one of the best in the Alliance" (*Enhancing Alliance Collective Security: Shared Roles, Risks, and Responsibilities in the Alliance*, A Report by NATO's Defense Planning Committee, Brussels, December 1988, pp. 13 & 50). See also Van Coufoudakis, "The Essential Link-Greece in NATO," *Southeast European Yearbook 1988*, ELIAMEP, p. 19.

[15] For the implications of the enormous defense expenditures on investment expenditure as a share of Greece's Gross Domestic Product, see C. Kollias and A. N. Refenes, "Modelling the Effects of Defense Spending Relations Using Neural Networks: Evidence from Greece," *Peace*

Many Greek officials and analysts, however, believe that the Turkish civil-military establishment maintains a relatively free hand in imposing extremely high defense expenditures on a weak society.

In addition, Greek policymakers see Turkey's significant military capabilities as backing its "non-friendly" intentions. It is worth noting that, since 1991, Turkey has launched an impressive modernization program of its armed forces. It has acquired advanced fighter (a fleet of up to 320 F-16s) and transport aircraft, attack and transport helicopters, Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles (AIFVs), Multiple Launcher Rocket Systems (MLRS), frigates, submarines, etc., and it has also developed the capability of co-producing some of these weapon systems. Such a sizable increase in military expenditures, in an era when other European states, the US, and Russia have been cutting their defense budgets in an effort to benefit from the "peace dividend," is a cause for concern for neighboring countries, including Greece.[16]

It is worth pointing out here that the full implementation of Turkish armament programs threatens to fundamentally alter the Greek-Turkish balance of power, despite Greece's economic sacrifices. Moreover, when the outside powers who are arming the two states in their arms build-up (e.g., Norway, Denmark, Germany, US) attempt to link further arms exports to, for instance, improvements in human rights, or efforts to enhance regional stability, both countries proceed to the "diversification of their arms procurement networks"—which simply means that they turn to other suppliers.[17]

---

[16] Turkey's decision to domestically produce such sophisticated equipment entails considerable financial sacrifices. The cost of the modernization program would probably exceed $50 billion for a period of fifteen years (in addition to "regular" annual defense expenditures), and this figure does not include "regular" annual defense expenditures, all of which unambiguously reflect Turkey's priorities and perhaps potential intentions.

[17] For these remarks, see Christopher Tuck, *Greece, Turkey and Arms Control*, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

Toward a "Limited" or "Transparent" Security Regime

Because of the complexity of the security dilemma in Greek-Turkish relations, and given that the current situation is far from mature for a resolution of the conflict, the two countries must, as soon as possible, find a way to avoid the catastrophic losses they will be confronted with should the existing relationship spin out of control. To this end, the establishment of a "limited" or "transparent" security regime[18] in the area of arms control appears to be the only way for the two countries to avoid the catastrophic losses[19] that would result from war, and manage two particular kinds of gains; namely, crisis stability[20] and arms race stability[21].

It must be stressed at this point that the establishment of an arms control regime does not imply the cessation of conflict over basic political issues. What such a limited security regime can do, however, is to encourage and, most importantly, *institutionalize* cooperative outcomes, by making rational propositions that will make both sides realize that the costs involved in continuing the current competition exceed the benefits or

---

[18] See Gregory Flynn & David Scheffer, "Limited Collective Security," *Foreign Policy* (1990), pp. 77-96, and Condoleeza Rice, "SALT and the Search for a Security Regime" in Alexander George, Philip J. Farley & Alexander Dallin (eds.), *U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons* (N.Y., Oxford University Press, 19988), pp. 301-3. On limited security regimes between adversaries, see Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Beyond Deterrence," *Journal of Social Issues*, no. 43 (1987), pp. 56-63

[19] One may argue that the catastrophic losses that would have occurred for both Greece and Turkey, as well other outside powers, in case of a war would, *inter alia*, refer to a serious undermining, if not collapse, of NATO's Southern Flank and a negative impact on the implementation of the EU's Mediterranean policy. In addition, in case of armed conflict and widespread destruction in the non-military sector, there would surely be a need for additional economic assistance to be provided to Greece by the EU. Furthermore, as Theodore Couloumbis and Louis Clarevas stress, "Even if Greece or Turkey were to secure some marginal territorial gains after some initial battles, a chain of revanchist conflicts will surely follow, classifying both countries as high-risk zones with a devastating impact on their economies and societies." See Theodore Couloumbis & Louis Clarevas, "Proposals for a Greek-Turkish Reconciliation," in *Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Peaceworks no. 17, USIP, Washington D.C., August 1997), p. 36.

[20] *Crisis stability* refers to the ability of an adversarial military system to remain under political control, even when decision-makers take the possibility of war into account.

[21] *Arms-race stability* refers to the propensity of a system to avoid a spiraling armaments dynamic. Needless to say, the lower the degree of arms-race stability, the higher the probability that the states involved will carry out an arms race against one another, with the amount of available resources constituting the only limit to their military expenditures. See, among others, Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* Vol.30, no.2 (January 1978), pp. 167-214.

possible payoffs either country could achieve if a more cooperative relationship were chosen. Thus, limited security regimes are vehicles that can bring about the *limited* learning that is a necessary, although not sufficient condition for conflict resolution.[22]

As was made evident from the previous analysis, a comprehensive security regime between Greece and Turkey will be a very long time in coming. Nevertheless, it is possible to think of an advancement of *a limited* or *transparent* security regime that could form the basis for a stable and less dangerous relationship. This regime would aim at the *regularization* of the two states' action with regard to a specific "issue area," that of arms control, which can, at a first stage, concern the agreement between the two opponents on the adoption of specific measures that would eliminate the possibility of "surprise attack" and promote stability (crisis stability) through the prevention of war caused inadvertently by miscalculations and/or accidents (accidental war).[23]

At the same time, a *limited* or *transparent* security regime may constitute the most appropriate substratum for "the next step" in Greek-Turkish relations, since it may go beyond the limited field of a stability that would solely concern weapons procurement (i.e., arms-race stability). In other words, the establishment of a *limited* security regime is expected to accelerate the "learning process"[24] in the competitive Greece-Turkey relationship and to lay down the preconditions for the attainment of *political stability*. This concerns the absence of the very motives that might lead two countries into crisis and possible war, and may be achieved by: eventually changing the very rationale of the competitive relationship, resulting in war not appearing that attractive a solution, functioning as a "learning process" that will re-determine the misperceptions of the one

---

[22] The proposed limited security regime must also carry the potential both to *foster better stabilization of the conflict* and *facilitate the conditions for its resolution* and, thus, minimize the risks inherent in any institutionalization of a conflict; namely, that the states involved might think that the benefits of institutionalization outweigh the benefits of resolution of the conflict.

[23] See, among others, Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York, Pergamon, 1961), pp. 9-17, and Barry Blechman, "Efforts to Reduce the Risk of Accidental or Inadvertent War" in Alexander George, Philip J. Farley & Alexander Dallin (eds.), *U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons*, op. cit., pp. 466-81.

[24] See George Breslauer and Philip Tetlock (eds.), *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Co., Westview Press, 1991), and Joseph Nye, "Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes", *International Organisation*, no.41 (Summer 1987), pp. 371-402.

state vis-à-vis the other; and creating new opportunities as well as mechanisms through which the two states will attempt to settle their differences.[25]

It should be pointed out that "a relatively developed arms control regime"[26] already exists between Greece and Turkey, in the sense that both countries are particularly familiar with issues of transparency and confidence building, in that they have both signed a series of arms control agreements, including the Treaty on the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), that of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Vienna Documents, and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. These are agreements that compel both countries to exchange detailed information on the stockpiles and procurements of their weapon systems. Moreover, in regard to the more recent history of the two countries, other elements that could be mentioned as integral parts of this "relatively developed security regime" between Greece and Turkey are the Papoulias-Yilmaz Agreement on Confidence Building Measures, better known as the Vouliagmeni Memorandum (May 17, 1988, Athens), as well as the Agreement concerning the Guidelines for the Prevention of Accidents and Incidents on the High Seas and in International Air Space (September 8, 1988, Istanbul). Similar "elements of security regimes" existed between the US and the

---

[25] A limited security regime can be very useful after its establishment, particularly during periods of relatively unconstrained rivalry, because it can provide regulation; encourage and institutionalize cooperative outcomes; play a moderating role; codify mutual vulnerability (the link between offence and defense) and parity, rather than military superiority, as the pillars on which arms cooperation would rest; solve the defection problem, due to improvement on each side's information about the behavior of the others; provide (and promote) balanced and reciprocal agreements; aid in the negotiation of cooperation in another issue-area; and last but not least, intensify the *learning process* in the conflict which, in turn, will allow each side to change its mode of thinking, redefine its goals and means in the conflict, and, most importantly, change its attitude toward war, by dismissing the use of war as a legitimate political means to accomplish its incompatible objectives in a conflict. See Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984); idem, "Reciprocity in International Relations", *International Organization* no.40 (Winter 1986); Peter Haas, *Saving the Mediterranean* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1990); John S. Duffield, "International Regimes and Alliance Behavior: Explaining NATO Conventional Force Levels," *International Organization*, no. 46 (1992), pp. 819-55; Idem, "Explaining the Long Peace in Europe: the contributions of regional security regimes," *Review of International Studies* Vol. 20, no. 4 (October 1994); Stephen Krasner, "Regimes and the Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables" in S. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1983).
[26] See Christopher Tucker, *Greece, Turkey and Arms Control*, op. cit., p. 23; and Thanos Dokos & Panayotis Tsakonas, *The Formation of Greek Procurement Policy: Problems and Prospects*, (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, mimeo, 1998)

Soviet Union during the Cold War era, according to which the two parties were committed to show self-containment and respect of the vital interests of the other part.[27]

However, although one may agree that a series of "good things" might happen *after the establishment* of a limited security regime between Greece and Turkey (the solution of the defection problem being the most serious gain for both countries), the establishment of a limited security regime *in the first place* is still questioned. In other words, How and why can a limited security regime between Greece and Turkey be created in the first place, given that it will be the product of an earlier bargain between the two countries to cooperate, as well as the distributional politics surrounding it. In neorealist logic, this can only happen when one condition is fulfilled; namely, when *a balanced distribution of gains* is achieved.[28] And if balanced or reciprocal agreements are the key to successful cooperation, then the functions of regimes that promote such balance are important.

Therefore, only when Greek-Turkish negotiations are based on balanced exchange agreements that will promote the achievement of a balanced distribution of gains (or at least when these gains are perceived as such by policymakers on both sides of the Aegean) will there be a desire for reciprocity and equivalence. In fact, the discussion of the proposals that follow regarding a set of measures the two states can adopt, is based on this particular precondition and could be negotiated by Greece and Turkey so that a balanced distribution of gains could be achieved.

---

[27] See the Agreements on Basic Principles (May 1972), and the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War signed in 1973; A. George, P. Farley & A. Dallin (eds.), *U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons*; and Roger E. Kanet and Edward A. Kolodjiej (eds.), *The Cold War as Competition: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

[28] In the neorealist line of reasoning, states are always seeking to compare their absolute gains with those of other states (relative gains argument). Cooperation is therefore difficult, even when all sides can achieve absolute gains, *because no state wants to realize fewer absolute gains than any other.* See Joseph Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1990). This in fact seems to be the case of Greek-Turkish relations and the essence of their "security dilemma" relationship; namely, that both states' central concerns are *fear of cheating* and, most importantly, *fear of strengthening the other*.

Reducing Tension Between Greece and Turkey. Some Indicative Proposals

As the permanent settlement of the Greek-Turkish dispute is, unfortunately, not perceived as realistic in the short-term, a short reference to its roots is necessary at this point. They include—not necessarily in order of importance—the following:

(1) Competition for regional influence in the Balkans and, to a lesser extent, the Black Sea & Eastern Mediterranean;

(2) The burden of history;[29]

(3) Turkey's revisionist policy (at least as perceived by Greek decision-makers), as manifested by the statements of political leaders, their actions, and the Turkish Armed Forces order of battle.

As a result of the above factors, over the past thirty-five years there have been three major crises in Cyprus, another three in the Aegean, and a number of "hot" incidents. Furthermore, Greece and Turkey have been and still are engaged in detrimental political-diplomatic competition in both NATO and the EU.

The burden of history and the ghosts of the past are one of the major causes of the lack of trust between Greece and Turkey. Historical animosities do play a significant role. Greeks and Turks are classic examples of rival peoples (one can think of several other examples, including French and Germans, and Russians and Germans). We cannot afford to be prisoners of the past, however. History should be our guide, not our prison.

Suspicion concerning the other side's motives is deep-rooted in both popular opinion and the media; this in turn affects, and at times even drives the respective governments. This intense distrust on both sides of the Aegean prompts many observers to call for a reduction of mutual suspicion as the essential first step toward peace and stability. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Reduction of suspicion is a long-term process, and, as such, is beyond the time-horizon of most, if not all, governments.

---

[29] As the Carnegie Endowment Discussion Paper describes the situation, "For Greeks and Turks, the past involves a pervasive underlying historical legacy of nationalistic, ethnic and religious emotions drawn from: A millennium of Muslim-Orthodox conflict; 400 years of Ottoman rule over Greece; and a century of bitter fighting and cruel atrocities from Greece's declaration of independence in 1821 through to the battles in Asia Minor in 1922. From the sweep of this history come stereotypes of alleged ethnic behaviors, Greeks and Turks locked in "age-old" enmity and the clash of their civilizations". See *Carnegie Forum on the United States, Greece and Turkey*, op. cit., p. 3.

There is also a basic lack of knowledge among the Greek and Turkish people about each other on issues other than foreign and security policy, including culture and religion.

As a consequence, it seems that to have even a minimal chance of success, any effort for the reduction of tension and the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations should be *as well-prepared as possible*. Therefore, a number of *preconditions* should exist. These include:

- The avoidance of high expectations, as subsequent failure may have very negative consequences for bilateral relations;

- The existence of strong leadership in both countries. This does not necessarily mean a repetition of the Venizelos-Ataturk era, but at least a coalition with a comfortable majority, a relatively small number of partners, and a degree of ideological homogeneity;

- A relative military balance;

- The active and balanced involvement of international actors (mainly the US, NATO, EU) in the confidence-building process;

- The absence of certain types of regional disputes which, by default, might drag the two countries into opposite camps;

- An understanding of the political and economic costs of the continued confrontation by both leaderships;

- The lack (or low importance) of domestic factors contributing to the continuation of the conflict, such as serious domestic political, economic and social problems that cannot be dealt with efficiently by the government, which may then be tempted to resort to a "foreign policy adventure" to draw attention away from the domestic problems;

- Finally, the political will on both sides to improve bilateral relations in a non-violent manner,[30] which is the *sine qua non* for the success of all such endeavors.

---

[30] The majority of Greek analysts question Turkey's willingness to improve its relations with Greece.

What Set of Measures?

It is our belief that a set of three particular types of measures could constitute the integral parts of a limited or transparent security regime that could be adopted by Greece and Turkey, with the aim of managing both crisis-stability and arms-race stability, as well as avoiding the catastrophic losses of a war. Steps towards these measures are *necessary—but not sufficient—conditions* for the resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict, though it seems probable that any improvement in relations between the two and the implementation of any of these measures will remain hostage to another incident in the Aegean or on Cyprus. Nevertheless, Greece and Turkey could proceed to adopt the following measures:

- *Tension reduction measures, without a formal agreement*;
- *Formal military confidence-building measures*; and
- *Soft security confidence-building measures.*

Tension reduction measures, without a formal agreement. Such measures could be agreed upon without extensive negotiations and might include transparency and some restraint CBMs.[31]

- A hot-line between Prime Ministers and perhaps between Chiefs of Staff (although not between Chiefs of Armed Forces General Staff, because of the different levels of authority). This might not solve any problems or play a role in avoiding or de-escalating a crisis, but it cannot hurt. The establishment of mutually acceptable (or mutually understood) crisis-management procedures also needs to be considered;

- Re-activation of the Wise Men process under the auspices of the EU;

---

[31] As mentioned in the previously cited Carnegie Endowment Discussion Paper, "Some have suggested that CBMs be viewed as measures that concede principle or would reduce pressure to go to the negotiating table. In fact, however, certain CBMs (sometimes referred to as "military" CBMs) are designed to avoid incidents or conflict in ways that scrupulously preserve principle for both sides. They reduce political pressure only in the sense that they take the sides out from "under the gun", thus creating a sounder, more acceptable basis for negotiating. Such "conflict avoidance" CBMs can provide emergency communication capabilities, agreed rules of the road, and transparency; in sum, measures to avoid miscalculation and expedite negotiation". See *Carnegie Forum on the United States, Greece and Turkey*, op. cit., p. 6-7.

- Implementation of the Papoulias-Yilmaz Agreement (by agreeing to a more equitable geographical definition) and its use as a basis for further discussions;

- In the context of this Agreement, extending the moratorium on exercises in the Aegean to four months;

- The demonstration of additional good will by both sides by discussing the NATO Secretary-General's proposals on CBMs;

- The annulment of *casus belli* statements for reasons other than violation of sovereignty;[32]

- The cessation of bellicose and provocative statements by all officials. (Both sides engage in such activities. However, while Greek statements are infuriating to the Turkish side, some statements from Turkey express a threat to Greece's territorial integrity. It should be pointed out in this context that claims on islets poison the atmosphere unnecessarily and that claims on inhabited islands ring alarm bells for even the most moderate Greeks;)[33]

- Both countries should stop vetoing each other in NATO fora, when infrastructure funding is involved. NATO's new command structure should be established and put in place as soon as possible, with a spirit of good will and reason from all parties involved;

---

[32] Since September 1994, and shortly before the entry into force of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, which calls for a territorial waters width up to twelve miles, the then Turkish Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller, and other senior government officials explicitly and repeatedly stated that such an extension by Greece would be considered a *casus belli*. This then became official policy through a Resolution of the Turkish National Assembly.

[33] As one analyst points out, "Turkish official declarations, usually making headlines in Greek mass media, have been intensifying Greek fears. For instance, the Turkish Prime Minister Demirel stated in 1975 that "...half the Aegean is ours. Let the whole world know that this is so...We know how to crush the heads of our enemies when the prestige, dignity and interests of the Turkish nation are attacked". Turkish officials' references to a "growing Turkey" and to the 21st century as the "era of Turkism" have further escalated concern. Moreover, direct challenges (e.g., "The group of islands that are situated within 50 km of the Turkish coast… should belong to Turkey"), as well as indirect questioning of Greek sovereignty over the Aegean islands, have been viewed with great alarm. See Yannis Valinakis, *Greece's Security in the Post-Cold War Era*, SWP-S394, Ebenhausen, April 1994, p. 30. See also, A. Platias, "Greece's Strategic Doctrine: In search of Autonomy and Deterrence" in Dimitri Constas (ed.), *The Greek Turkish Conflict in the 1990s*, Macmillan, 1991, p. 93.

- Reduce intelligence activities in each other's territory, as well as other low-intensity conflict activities, if such activities indeed take place. Also, limit the behind-the-scenes role of consulates in sensitive regions;

- Promote a tacit agreement between Navies on incident-prevention in the Aegean.

Finally, the agreement for the establishment of a Multinational Balkan Peacekeeping Force, with the participation of units from both Greece and Turkey, is a positive development and a step in the right direction. However, it is rather premature to take it for granted, and it remains to be seen whether the concept of a Balkan peacekeeping force can be successfully implemented.

Formal military confidence-building measures, which would include constraint CSBMs.[34]

- Limitation of land and air forces might be unacceptable to Turkey, as her current relations with her eastern neighbors are rather uneasy. However, naval arms control should be more acceptable as the only serious naval "opponent" for the Turkish Navy is the Greek Navy. As there is a general balance between the two Navies today, the two sides could conceivably agree to a ceiling of large surface units (for example: 15) and submarines (for example: 8-10);

- Turkey's landing fleet, which is deployed in a threatening manner opposite the Greek islands, can easily be moved or reduced without any impact on Turkish security or military capability. Turkey could move the fleet to the Black Sea, or, either at the same time, or after an agreed period of time, numerically reduce it;

---

[34] C*onstraint CSBMs* constitute a category of arms control measures. Since they actually *limit military operations*, as opposed to the "transparency" CSBMs, which merely subject these operations to prior notification or observation, they are more intrusive and inherently more difficult to negotiate. See Lynn M. Hansen, "The Evolution from Transparency to Constraints", *Disarmament: A Periodic Review by the United Nations*, Vol.13, No.3, 1990, pp.61-76. See also Stanley Sloan & Sawtell Mikela (eds.), *Confidence-Building Measures and Force Constraints for Stabilizing East-West Military Relationship in Europe*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1988.

- The idea of moving all heavy military equipment to a point at least 300 kilometers away from the Greek-Turkish border in Thrace needs to be examined. Only troops with light equipment would be allowed in this *force-limitation- zone*[35];

- In Cyprus, a number of CBMs could be discussed (in the framework of the military dialogue promoted by the UN), along with the issue of the demilitarization of the island. With regard to this, UNFICYP could be replaced by NATO forces (perhaps 20,000 troops, plus an international police force that includes 5,000 Turkish soldiers and 3,000 Greeks), and thus, a formal commitment by the US and NATO would be undertaken. Both communities would join the EU, NATO and the WEU, and at least one British military base would be transformed into a NATO base.

Soft security confidence-building measures, with emphasis on the so-called bottom-up approach, or people-to-people contacts.

- Promote and strengthen bottom-up approaches: regular meetings between professional associations, labor unions, businessmen, journalists, academics, ordinary citizens;

- Rewrite the history books to reflect a more balanced account of the two countries' history and relations;

- Discuss the role of the press and mass media, and their impact on bilateral relations;

- Promote educational exchanges and cooperation in tourism;

- Promote cooperation between police forces against organized crime, drug trafficking, and migration; environmental cooperation in the Aegean; and possible cooperation in NBC nonproliferation issues;

- As a consequence of the successful implementation of some of these measures, Greece should not only withdraw its objections, but actually support Turkey's

---

[35] In July 1991 Greece proposed the creation of an "area free of offensive weapons", including battle tanks, attack helicopters, armored combat vehicles, artillery and combat aircraft in the region where the Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greek borders meet. Later, Bulgaria put forward its own proposal, suggesting troop withdrawals from an eighty-kilometer zone along both sides of the divide between Bulgaria and its NATO neighboring states, namely Turkey and Greece. Turkey turned down both proposals, which appeared to be incompatible with its own strategic choices.

candidacy for membership to the EU and the WEU. Also, the Greek lobby in the US should adopt a considerably less hostile attitude towards Turkey.

In Lieu of Conclusion

Should we expect a rapprochement between Greece and Turkey anytime soon? We are not very optimistic. Is the international context reasonably favorable to such a rapprochement? The EU is not speaking with a single voice on EU-Turkey relations, or on Greek-Turkish relations. As for the US, Kosovo and the Middle East are its current priorities, while the recent domestic crisis has weakened its ability to intervene effectively in various regions around the world.

Is the domestic context in Greece and Turkey favorable to a rapprochement? In Greece, Prime Minister Simitis' top priority is the improvement of the economy and Greece's full participation in the European Monetary Union. However, he is a moderate and would be willing to make a sincere effort for the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations.[36] In Turkey, there is a coalition government in a pre-election period. The elections could take place as early as April 1999, or as late as sometime in the year 2000. Until the elections, it would be very unlikely for Prime Minister Ecevit, a known hard-liner, to willingly engage in serious discussions with Greece on bilateral relations or the Cyprus issue. Even after the election, this might not be feasible if there is again a multi-party coalition with little homogeneity like the present one. Indeed, recent polls indicate that the political scene in Turkey will not change significantly after the elections.

---

[36] The current Greek government has repeatedly expressed its willingness to improve relations with its eastern neighbor. The sole requirement set by Greece is respect of international law and agreements. Despite some lessening of tensions (mainly as a result of U.S. and NATO efforts, which resulted in the Madrid Declaration and in negotiations for the implementation of CBMs in the Aegean), the majority of Greek analysts and government officials find little reason for optimism about the Greek-Turkish relationship. Therefore, if no improvement in bilateral relations takes place, Greece's strategy will continue to be a mix of *internal balancing* (the strengthening of its Armed Forces through increased emphasis on quality, with the adoption of a modern strategic and operational doctrine, emphasizing combined/joint operations, improved personnel training and acquisition of modern weapon systems, including smart weapons and, especially, force multipliers) and *external balancing* (its membership in the European Community/Union and the WEU), with the aim of effectively deterring the perceived Turkish threat.

Therefore, we are rather pessimistic on the probability of formal military confidence-building measures, or—an even more remote possibility—the resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict.

On the other hand, it seems that the new military leadership in Ankara wishes to avoid high tensions in Greek-Turkish relations and concentrate on the perceived domestic Islamist problem. Given the considerable influence of the military in Turkey, this would facilitate agreement on some tension-reduction proposals, such as those outlined here. And, of course, the two sides can always continue to engage in their bottom-up, or people-to-people activities.

What does the above analysis suggest about the nature of the limited or transparent security regime to be created between the two antagonists and the role of international actors in this? A security regime between Greece and Turkey certainly cannot be imposed; and tacit regimes have their limitations. It would seem that a viable security regime will only be arrived at through negotiations. "Gentle" pressure from the US and the Europeans, especially on the non-cooperating party, would, under certain circumstances, facilitate the negotiating process.

Let us conclude with four considerations:

(1) Is it feasible to de-couple the Aegean and Cyprus? This might be possible, at least to a certain extent, in terms of implementing agreed CBMs, but the situation in the Aegean has a direct impact on the situation in Cyprus, and vice-versa. And it is rather unlikely that fundamental progress towards a comprehensive Greek-Turkish settlement (i.e., the establishment of a comprehensive security regime) will be achieved without a just and mutually acceptable solution of the Cyprus prickly problem, excluding both *Enosis* and *Taksim*.

(2) The political and economic costs[37] of the Greek-Turkish conflict for the chief protagonists (Cyprus included), as well as NATO, the EU and the US, are considerable.

---

[37] As already stated, Greek and Turkish defense expenditures constitute a very heavy burden for both economies, at a time when Greece is trying to improve its economy in order to participate in the European Monetary Union. Turkey is also faced with chronic high inflation and serious domestic social and economic problems (which contribute to the increase of popular support for the Islamic Refah Party). One should also take into consideration the diplomatic and economic

One cannot overemphasize the fact that a war between Greece and Turkey, whether it involves Cyprus or not, would be a disaster for NATO and the West. Furthermore, a limited 24- or 48-hour conflict should not be seen as the only, or even the most probable scenario. Crises have their own dynamic, are very difficult to control or contain, and escalation would be more likely than not. An armed conflict between Greece and Turkey would result in the collapse of NATO's Southern Flank and would severely disrupt the Alliance's efforts to play a meaningful role in the post-Cold War world. It is also likely that there would be widespread destruction in both countries as a result of such a conflict.

(3) CBMs between Greece and Turkey would contribute significantly to the reduction of tension and of the probability of unintentional/accidental war, but will not address the underlying causes of the Greek-Turkish conflict. The two sides should therefore agree that the fundamental principle guiding Greek-Turkish relations is respect for international law and agreements, such as the Lausanne Treaty. For any other bilateral differences concerning issues not covered by the Lausanne Treaty, especially those of a territorial nature, Greece and Turkey should go to The Hague.

(4) Our final observation is that it is much easier for the stronger side in a conflict to make the first substantive move, especially if this is the side that appears unhappy with the status quo. Having said this, the other side should be prepared to recognise such a gesture and respond in kind, without delay.

---

costs (of missed opportunities) as each side continuously tries to undermine the other in what is seen as a zero-sum game.