

**THE MICROPROCESSES OF HEGEMONIC INFLUENCE:
THE CASE OF EU AND GREECE/TURKEY**

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I. Introduction

The peaceful resolution of border conflicts is an important element in the hegemonic order that the European Union seeks to project in its near abroad. The Agenda 2000 released by the European Commission in July 1997 stated that ‘enlargement should not mean importing border conflicts. The process of accession acts as a powerful incentive for the states concerned to settle their border disputes.’ Similarly, the 1999 Helsinki European Council conclusions stressed ‘the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter’ and urged ‘candidate states to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes. Failing this they should within reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice.’ As Pat Cox, the President of the European Parliament, underlined during his recent visit to Turkey, ‘European integration is about conflict resolution.’

In the creation of this hegemonic order where interstate border disputes have to necessarily be resolved,¹ the EU employs both material and ideational/normative forms of influence. According to Diez, Stetter, and Albert (2004), the EU can perturbate outstanding conflicts through four pathways. At the elite level, the EU can employ the carrot/stick of granting/withdrawing membership, candidacy, or association status, or specific benefits associated with those positions to coerce or induce parties to seek resolution of their disputes. Simultaneously, the EU indirectly provides an ideational/normative structure for the rationalization and legitimization of alternative foreign policy options at the domestic elite level. At the societal level, the EU can selectively direct material resources to non-governmental initiatives, which are promoting inter-societal collaboration and advocating peaceful resolution. Simultaneously, the EU indirectly provides a discursive structure (i.e. the discourse of a common European identity) that allows for the re-writing of the identity and conflict discourses at the societal level.

As a step in my ongoing research on the EU’s impact on Greek-Turkish relations (Rumelili, 2003a; 2003b; 2004), this paper draws on newspaper reviews and preliminary

¹ One should be cautious against accepting the resolution of conflicts as a good in and of itself and as the only alternative to violent conflict. Conflicts can also be managed as opposed to be resolved where parties acknowledge the dispute but refrain from using force or altering the status quo.

elite interviews to analyze how the various forms of EU influence directed at the Turkish elite have influenced their decision-making with respect to Turkey's relations with Greece. I am specifically interested in how coercive, inductive, and persuasive forms of EU influence have interacted in shaping elite decision-making in Turkey. The complementary research on how EU influence has shaped Greek foreign policy making towards Turkey will be conducted at a later stage.

In addition to providing a detailed case study, this paper also uses the specific case of EU influence on Greek/Turkish relations to further our understanding of the microprocesses of hegemonic influence at a more general level. While the literature routinely underlines that material and ideational/normative hegemonic influences mutually reinforce one another, there are not detailed analyses of how various hegemonic influences are perceived, acted upon, and manipulated by different elites, and how, through these micro-processes, make an impact in the target states/societies (for a very well-argued criticism which has inspired this study, see Johnston, 2003). The next section of this paper identifies this gap in the literature and outlines the potential contribution of the study at hand. The third section of the paper is the case study detailing how the various forms of EU hegemonic influence with respect to the improvement of relations with Greece were perceived, acted upon, and manipulated by different elites in Turkey after 1995. In conclusion, I identify avenues for further research both for the EU/Turkey-Greece case study and for the general study of processes of hegemonic influence.

II. Microprocesses of hegemonic influence

International relations scholarship is in agreement that hegemony is simultaneously exercised through material and ideational/normative forms of influence. In the former, the hegemonic actor puts in place sanctions and rewards to coerce and induce secondary actors into cooperation. In the context of the threat of military and economic sanctions and the promise of rewards, policymakers in secondary states come to weigh policy options differently, as non-cooperation with the hegemon becomes more costly. In the latter, the hegemonic actor articulates a set of ideas and norms that persuade policymakers in secondary states that cooperation with the hegemon is the rational and appropriate course of action given their identity.

Regardless of whether they subscribe to a rationalist-materialist or a social constructivist ontology, scholars of international relations concede that coercive and persuasive forms of hegemonic influence are both necessary and mutually reinforcing. Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990: 284) argue that while socialization of secondary states does not ‘occur independently of power manifest as the manipulation of material incentives,...socialization nevertheless leads to outcomes that are not explicable simply in terms of the exercise of coercive power.’ Wendt and Friedheim (1995) acknowledge that force is an important mechanism for the manufacturing of consenting identities among subordinate states in order to legitimate relations of dominance. Keck and Sikkink (1998) contend that leverage politics is often a necessary instrument for transnational activist networks to enact social change.

In this paper, I advance the tentative counter-argument that these coercive, inductive, and persuasive forms of hegemonic influence are not necessarily mutually reinforcing in a domestic policy-making setting. This is because coercion, induction, and normative persuasion each are predicated on and serve to reproduce different identity relations between hegemonic and subordinate actors. This is nothing but a restatement of a frequently made argument in the literature that these hegemonic influences of coercion, induction, and persuasion are each effective in cases of different types of states (see Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990) and/or at different stages of a state’s socialization (see Wendt, 1999). I merely bring this argument down to the domestic level and contend that within a domestic policy-making setting there are always (coalitions of) elites who stand in different identity relations with respect to the hegemonic influences. While some elites will identify with the hegemonic actor positively –and to influence them, the persuasive forms of hegemonic influence will be sufficient and the most effective, others will identify with the hegemonic actor less positively and even negatively –and to influence them, the inductive and coercive forms of hegemonic influence will be necessary and more effective. It is certainly the case that the proportion of these coalitions of elites in relation to each other will vary with the nature and extent of the state or society’s international socialization. However, at a given point in time, there will always be this variation.

The coexistence of these different coalitions of elites within a domestic policy setting opens up the theoretical possibility that these various forms of hegemonic influence may interact in a counter-productive fashion in seeking to influence the domestic policy-making process. For example, on the one hand, processes of normative persuasion rely on relations of amity in order to be effective, and cannot substitute for material coercion in affecting policy change under less amicable identity relations. On the other hand, coercion reproduces rival if not antagonistic identities and thus may potentially impede processes of normative persuasion. Similarly, the provision of material incentives may conflict with processes of normative persuasion because it provides a context where the acceptance of material incentives may be delegitimized as a sell-off. The hegemonic influence has to come in a package which includes different forms of influence targeting different groups of elites, or it has to be able to be presented as such by some domestic elites.

Unavoidably, the factors that influence the reception of hegemonic influence are very case-specific. Thus, by taking Johnston's (2003) critique seriously, this paper goes micro in its research design at the risk of violating some disciplinary conventions. In the next section, I discuss in length the domestic reception of various EU interventions to Turkey (1995 to present), undertaken to influence policymaking with respect to the country's outstanding disputes with Greece. I distinguish between interventions on the basis of the relative mix of coercive, inductive, and persuasive influences they embody. I analyze the reactions of policymakers to these various interventions, and how the particular mix of coercive, inductive, and persuasive influences have affected the domestic political balances. I also evaluate the impact of the influences based on the extent of policy change they have been able to generate.

III. Influencing Turkey: Greek-Turkish Disputes

Greek-Turkish relations have for long constituted an anomaly in the security community of Europe. Even though the two states were joined in the North Atlantic Alliance in 1952 and were forerunners in establishing association relations with the EEC in 1961 and 1963 respectively, their disputes multiplied, and conflicts intensified in the course of these institutional relations. War between the two states became very likely on

numerous occasions, during the 1963 and 1967 outbreaks of intercommunal violence in Cyprus, during the 1974 Turkish military operation in Cyprus, which put approximately 1/3 of the island under Turkish control, during the 1976 and 1987 crises over the Aegean continental shelf and finally during the 1996 crises over the Imia/Kardak islets in the Aegean Sea.

The development of both Greece's and Turkey's institutional relations with the EC mostly occurred while the European Community was rather conservative about its potential role in conflict resolution (Stephanou and Tsardanides, 1991). Greece applied for membership in 1975 and became a member in 1981; Turkey applied for membership in 1987, however the Commission's Opinion, while recognizing Turkey's eligibility, recommended the pursuit of a Customs Union Agreement first. Until the 1990s, the European Community was more concerned about keeping Greece and Turkey anchored to the West and managing their rivalry rather than facilitating a resolution of their disputes (Meinardus, 1991).

The literature on Greek-Turkish relations is mostly in agreement that the EU failed to exercise a significant positive influence on the course of Greek-Turkish relations until 1999, except for temporary and tactical improvements (Rumelili, 2004). The EU failed to have a positive impact on the conflicts, and it was often abused as a forum for continued rivalry. However, the literature also points to the positive impact of the EU after 1999, where we observe a promising *rapprochement* between Turkey and Greece founded on the principles and procedures of the EU. Two paths of EU influence are especially highlighted: First, through its longer-term modernizing influence on the Greek political system and culture, the EU is argued to have enabled a fundamental shift in Greek policy towards Turkey (Keridis, 2001; Keridis and Triantaphyllou, 2001). Greece previously used its membership of the EU as a short-term lever against Turkey by threatening to block Turkey's relations with the EU until Turkey reverted from its positions in Cyprus and the Greco-Turkish disputes (Ioakimidis, 1994; Yannas, 1994). The shift to a policy of actively encouraging Turkey's Europeanization and supporting its membership matriculated in the late 1990s and manifested itself clearly in Greece's decision of not using its veto against Turkey's EU candidacy at the 1999 Helsinki European Council. Second, with the declaration of Turkey's candidacy at the Helsinki

European Council in 1999, it is argued that the EU membership carrot has regained its credibility and thus its power to influence Turkey with respect to Greek-Turkish disputes. The Helsinki European Council decisions have also linked progress on Turkey's membership in the EU with the resolution of its border disputes with Greece and put in place a calendar and a framework around which the parties are to carry out their conflict resolution efforts (Kozyris, 2001; Tsakonas, 2001).

While 1999 is thus identified as a turning point in EU's influence on Greek-Turkish relations, this paper focuses on the period after 1995 in order to accomplish certain analytical objectives. I divide the period from 1995 to present into two sub-periods: 1995-99 and 1999-2004. In the period between 1995-99, although the EU was a willing and able hegemonic actor in relation to the Greek-Turkish disputes, the EU's initiatives failed to make a significant impact on Turkish foreign policy and mostly backfired. In contrast, after 1999, the EU's positive impact on Turkish foreign policy became noticeable. Through this temporal comparison, I seek to identify the factors that have shaped both the nature and extent of EU influence on Turkish foreign policy.

In attempting to influence Turkish foreign policy, the EU faces some specific challenges. First of all, due to Turkey's limited and problematic democratization and statist tradition, the positions of the military and the foreign ministry bureaucracy carry a strong weight in the making of foreign policy in Turkey (Heper, 1985; Ozbudun, 2000). Governments or individuals within governments wanting to pursue a policy change often find that they have to negotiate it with these various other actors. Important decisions on foreign policy are taken by consensus in the National Security Council, a body that brings together the President, Prime minister, some key Ministers, and the Chiefs of Staff (Tayfur and Goymen, 2002). In this complex and consensus-based decision-making environment, the EU or any other hegemonic actor cannot simply hope to alter the domestic political balance in favor of pro-reform groups, with the provision of selective incentives. The hegemonic influence has to come as a package that will target different actors simultaneously, or the pro-reform groups have to be able to market it as such to others. The situation is also complicated by the fact that the democratic criteria of the EU have had a divisive effect on this elite structure, by requiring the curtailment of the power of the military and the National Security Council. While Turkey has recently adopted

institutional reforms in the structure and powers of the National Security Council,² it is apparent that the effects of these institutional changes on the actual practices of decision-making will take longer to actualize.

A second set of challenges faced by the EU in influencing the Turkish elite are the prevalent perceptions about EU involvement in Greek-Turkish relations. In general, as an interstate conflict, the Greek-Turkish disputes constitute an issue area where third party intervention is common and generally socially accepted, for example, compared to human rights issues, where external intervention is regarded to be more controversial. However, the EU's intervention attempts in Greek-Turkish disputes have been viewed by most Turkish elites with suspicion and opposition. Greece's membership has created and sustained the understanding in Turkey that the EU cannot be impartial with respect to Greek-Turkish issues. According to Aksu (2001) and Guvenc (1998/99), the fact that Turkey is not a full member of the EU enables Greece to exert pressure on Turkey, thus taking full advantage of its position as a full member. In other words, the EU is perceived as just another platform through which Greece pursues its revisionist agenda with respect to Turkey. Under these perceptual conditions, alternative policies could not be legitimised by reference to the EU, because then their critics would automatically frame them as concessions to Greece.

In addition to the perception of the EU as captured by Greece, the perceived ambivalence of the EU to Turkish membership has also hindered the impact of the EU on Turkish policy. The threats that the Cyprus problem and Greek-Turkish disputes would affect EU-Turkey relations were negatively interpreted as reflections of a European reluctance to take Turkey into Europe (Ugur, 1999). In addition to EU's actions, the perception of the EU as reluctant to admit Turkey was also bred by and, in turn, fuelled a dominant conviction in Turkish political culture, aptly called 'the Sevres syndrome.' Flourishing on the memories of the Ottoman Empire's dismemberment by European powers after WW1, the Sevres syndrome conviction holds that the external world (i.e. the

² In July 2003, the Turkish Parliament passed new legislation that changed the structure of the country's National Security Council in an effort to meet the EU's membership criteria. Under the new law, the appointment of the secretary-general of the NSC will henceforth be done through the president approving a candidate proposed by the prime minister. In addition, the council will gather every two months instead of monthly.

West) is conspiring to weaken and carve up Turkey (Kirisici and Carkoglu, 2003).³ This conviction has naturally hindered the EU's enabling impact and created a special sensitivity in Turkey with respect to equal treatment and uncompromised recognition as a Western country. The implication of this from the point of Greek-Turkish relations, according to Kramer (1991), is that because Turkey is well aware that Greece, unlike itself, is regarded as a natural part of the West and of Europe, it became an issue of utmost importance for Turkey not to be discriminated against in favour of Greece.

Having briefly introduced some essential background information, I proceed to the discussion of specific EU interventions in Greek-Turkish disputes in the period after 1995. In each intervention, I identify the coercive, inductive, and persuasive elements, discuss how these were received by the Turkish elite, and evaluate their impact on policy-making. The *first intervention* is the deal EU struck between Greece and Turkey for the 1995 EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement, where Greece agreed not to veto the Agreement in return for the EU's setting a date for the start of accession negotiations with Cyprus, and Turkey accepted this arrangement. I call this type of intervention *reciprocal carrots*, where the EU offers incentives to both rival parties to accept an arrangement. The *second intervention* is the *normative pressure* applied on Turkey following the Imia/Kardak crisis through declarations made by the European Commission and Parliament. The *third intervention* is the conflict resolution proposal made by Dutch Foreign Minister Van Mierlo as the holder of the EU Presidency. Even though the EU is not technically a third party in Greek-Turkish disputes, this intervention had the typical, detached and procedural, attributes of a *third party mediation*. The *fourth intervention* is the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, which made the settlement of disputes between Greece and Turkey a condition for strengthening Turkey's links with the EU, but did not offer Turkey the carrot of candidacy. I term this intervention *as negative conditionality, weak carrot*. The *fifth intervention* is the 1999 Helsinki European Council, where the EU built on the improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey, and offered Turkey the *positive carrot* of candidacy and put in place a timetable and a framework for the resolution of Greek-Turkish disputes.

³ One of my interviewees also stressed this as the main factor in Turkish political culture (interview #1).

1. Customs Union- Reciprocal carrots:

Even though Turkey's 1963 Association Agreement with the EEC foresaw the creation of a Customs Union through gradual tariff reductions, Turkish governments until the early 1980s had not aggressively pursue it. In 1987, Turkey applied for membership in the EC, but the Commission concluded that Turkey is not ready for membership and proposed the Matutes Package that envisaged the completion of the Customs Union by 1995.⁴ The member states of the EU, and especially Germany, supported the conclusion of the Customs Union Agreement with Turkey. However, during the December 1994 EC-Turkey Association Council meeting, the Customs Union agreement with Turkey was not finalized due to the opposition of Greece. The EU decided to resolve the problem of the Greek veto through a linkage strategy. In March 1995, Greece was induced to lift its veto on the Customs Union with Turkey and on the Fourth EU-Turkey financial protocol with the EU's pledge that accession negotiations with Cyprus would begin six months after the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference.

By linking Turkey's Customs Union with Cyprus' membership negotiations, the EU offered Greece and Turkey reciprocal incentives, and prevented the Greek-Turkish rivalry from impeding EU's stated twin objectives of furthering relations with Turkey through the Customs Union and the resolution of the Cyprus problem through the prospect of EU membership. However, while serving EU objectives, this linkage lacked a persuasive element. Because the issues were not related (and even if they were, they were not presented as related), the linkage lacked legitimacy apart from the fact that it provided a deal between Greece and Turkey. As a hegemonic influence, it was a case of induction in the absence of normative persuasion. Consequently, it encountered a lot of opposition among elites in both Greece and Turkey, who represented the deal as a sell-off. The desire to re-gain domestic legitimacy led Turkish and Greek governments to engage in conflict enhancing communications and actions. The clear result was an intensification of conflict.

As stated before, in this paper I limit my analysis to the reception of EU interventions by the Turkish elite, from whom I have primary interview data. First of all,

⁴ On the development of EU-Turkey Relations, see Muftuler-Bac (1997), Onis (1995; 2000), and Birand (2000) among others.

Greece's intentions in blocking the Customs Union were perceived as hostile across the political spectrum in Turkey. When the Customs Union agreement initially encountered Greek veto in December 1994, Turkey's prime minister Tansu Ciller declared: 'We have a word to the Greek. Our friendship is reliable but they should fear our enmity.'⁵ It was perceived that the unstated policy of Greece was to isolate Turkey by excluding it from Europe and to resolve its disputes with Turkey by using the EU as a lever (interview #1).

EU's linkage between Turkey's Customs Union and Cyprus' membership negotiations was regarded by the majority of Turkish elite as unacceptable. Those in the Turkish Foreign Ministry adhering to a strict legalistic stance, argued that this would be a major retreat from the legal rights accorded to Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot with the 1960 London and Zurich Agreements (interview #1). The Turkish Foreign Ministry, at least until very recently, underlined the clause that 'Cyprus cannot become a member of an international organization that both Greece and Turkey are not members of' to argue that Cyprus cannot join the EU before Turkey. However, there were also elites who perceived the matter otherwise. Interviewee #1, for example, clearly states that he saw no problem in Cyprus joining the EU before Turkey if a prior solution is reached on the island. He regarded a united Cyprus joining the EU to be an asset not a liability to Turkey.

It is indicated in journalistic accounts that the government, resolute in initiating the Customs Union Agreement, bypassed the foreign ministry through various bureaucratic maneuvers (Birand, 2000). However, when the Turkish media released the details of the deal to the public after the Agreement was ratified in the European Parliament in December 1995,⁶ it became the focal point of the opposition. The government was criticized for selling off Cyprus in return for the Customs Union. Already there was a sizable opposition to the Customs Union agreement from big business interests, who were threatened by the lifting of restrictions on imports; and the Cyprus sell-off thesis provided a conveniently legitimate basis to organize opposition. It is interesting that even those who opposed the sell-off thesis did so on the grounds that

⁵ 'Ciller Avrupa'ya Rest Cektı [Ciller Stands Upto Europe]' *Dunya* (Istanbul), 19 December 1994.

⁶ 'Kamuoyundan Saklanan Odun [The Concession Hidden from Public]' *Cumhuriyet* (Istanbul), 10 December 1995.

the Turkish government would not diverge from its stated policies.⁷ The alternative argument that the membership of a reunited Cyprus would be to Turkey's benefit –which according to my interviews was the view of an influential Turkish policymaker- was not even publicly voiced.

The Turkish government realized that the euphoria of the Customs Union Agreement faded too quickly among the Turkish public –even though it was marketed as an important step towards EU membership despite EU statements to the contrary (Birand, 2000). In order to counter the criticisms on Cyprus sell-off and to regain domestic legitimacy, the Turkish government was compelled to make some communications, which in turn fueled the perception of threat in Greece, and hence aggravated the conflict. For example, in June 1995 the Turkish Parliament issued a perennial resolution that it would view the extension of the Greek territorial sea to 12 n.m.s as a *casus belli*.⁸ On Dec. 28th, 1995, Turkey and TRNC issue a joint declaration that Cyprus should join the EU only simultaneously with Turkey and set up an association council that would take measures to achieve partial integration of TRNC. The consequent European Parliament resolution on Turkey 'deplored the declaration made by Tansu Ciller on the possible incorporation of the Northern part of Cyprus into Turkey in relation to Cyprus' future accession to the European Union.⁹

At the end of January 1996, the relations between Greece and Turkey suffered irreparable damage with the eruption of the Imia/Kardak islets crisis. The accident of a cargo boat triggered a territorial conflict about the status Imia/Kardak islets, especially after the story trickled to the media. This time the Turkish Foreign Ministry influenced the decision-making by convincing the Prime Minister that Turkey had perfect legal basis in claiming the Imia/Kardak islets (Interview #1). With the arrival of Greek and Turkish troops to the islets, the two states came to a near-war situation. It is important to note that

⁷ Hasan Cemal (columnist), 'Gumruk Birliği Karsiliginda Satis Yok (No Sell-Off for Customs Union)' Sabah (Istanbul), 12 December 1995.

⁸ This resolution was issued right after the Greek Parliament ratified the 1985 Law of the Sea Treaty, which grants states the right to extend their territorial waters upto 12 n.m.s. Turkey has lobbied to make the Aegean Sea an exception in the Treaty, but has failed. The timing of the ratification by Greek Parliament –immediately following the Customs Union deal- is also interesting, and may have something to do with the reception of the Customs Union deal domestically.

the crisis was defused by US intervention, and the EU's role was negligible (Gordon, 1997/98). Later, Turkey developed the Imia/Kardak issue into a broader dispute about the status of islets and rocks that were not explicitly ceded to Greece by international treaties. The Turkish military disputed even the status of the island of Gavdos just off of Crete, by opposing its inclusion in NATO exercises. Especially, this questioning of the status of Gavdos is currently regretted by most of the Turkish elite and regarded them as extremist (Interview #1 and interview #3).

In short, the EU intervention in Greek-Turkish relations in the form of offering reciprocal incentives did not lead to an improvement in bilateral relations. Though the EU's long-term perspective may have been the resolution of Greek-Turkish disputes and the Cyprus problem by strengthening both Turkey's and Cyprus' links with the EU, the linkage between these issues did not assist this perspective. The linkage lacked a normative basis, apart from give-and-take, and therefore had very little persuasive appeal in Turkey. While the linkage empowered the hardliners in their critique of the Turkish government, it also compelled the government to engage in conflict-enhancing gestures and communications in order to regain domestic support.

2. Normative Pressure:

Following the Imia/Kardak crisis between Greece and Turkey, various organs of the EU adopted communications, which were mostly in support of the Greek position. The European Commission expressed its solidarity with Greece and pointed out that 'Turkey's Customs Union with the EU was intended, among other things, to promote Turkey's relations with Europe in the context of respect for international law and the absence of the threat or use of force.' A European Parliament resolution expressed concern over Turkey's territorial demands and stated that Greece's borders constituted EU borders as well. In Turkey, these statements were largely perceived as taking place under Greek initiative and pressure (Birand, 2000). However, the EU was also resistant to Greek attempts to tie the implementation of the financial aid promised to Turkey in the context of the Customs Union to conditions on Greek-Turkish disputes. When the Council of Ministers rejected such a motion by Greece at the end of February 1996, Greece blocked the first financial assistance package that granted Turkey \$250 million

⁹ 18 January 1996, European Parliament Resolution on the Situation in Turkey.

and the release of the EU Mediterranean Aid Program. In response, the EU reminded Greece that its attempts to block the financial aid to Turkey might affect the negotiations on Cyprus' accession. Finally, in July 1996, Greece was persuaded to lift its veto on the MEDA funds in return for a European Union statement issued by the Council of Ministers urging Turkey to appeal to the International Court of Justice over Imia and show respect for EU's external borders.¹⁰

Prior to my interviews, I argued that these EU communications failed to influence Turkish policy because they were perceived as Greece's doing. However, some of my informants have indicated that the widespread international criticism following the Imia/Kardak crisis led the government into launching a peace proposal initiative to Greece (interview #3). More accurately, while there was a core group within the Turkish decision-making elite that stressed the necessity to improve relations with Greece (interviewee #1), a second group of elites were normatively pressured with the rising international criticism (interviewee #3). Hence, in a press conference, Turkish Prime Minister Yilmaz called for unconditional talks with Greece to sort out problems relating to the Aegean, and marking a significant departure from the established Turkish policy, indicated Turkey's willingness to take the issues to the International Court of Justice if the talks were to fail.

In short, the normative pressure put onto Turkey by the EU, because it was also coupled with widespread international criticism, succeeded in convincing a second ring of elites of the necessity to modify Turkey's position regarding the method of resolution of the Aegean disputes. Nevertheless, the impact of the EU's normative pressure remained limited to certain sectors of the elite. Others continued with conflict-enhancing behaviors, by, for example, expanding the dispute about the status of islets and rocks in the Aegean Sea. These conflict-enhancing behaviors were further legitimized domestically by Greek vetoes on EU financial aid to Turkey, and EU communications, which were in support of the Greek position. In other words, the normative pressure of the EU did not convince the sectors of the elite who perceived the EU as captured by Greece, but rather served to justify their perceptions. As a result, Turkish policy towards

¹⁰ 15 July 1996 European Union Statement.

Greece following the Imia/Kardak crisis oscillated between provocative and conciliatory gestures.

According to my informants, Turkey's peace proposal was welcomed within the EU (interview #1). Especially, the two step structure, involving first negotiations on all issues followed by adjudication of unresolved issues, was liked. One of my interviewees proudly referred to the fact that the Helsinki Council decisions also adopted the same two-step model (interview #1). It is also apparent that the EU's position on the resolution procedure of Greek-Turkish disputes changed gradually after 1996. For example, the European Union statement issued by the Council of Ministers in July 1996 stated that 'the cases of disputes created by territorial claims, such as the Imia islet issue, should be submitted to the International Court of Justice.' The direct submission of the disputes to the ICJ was the preferred conflict resolution mechanism of Greece. Turkey, on the other hand, preferred the resolution of the issues through bilateral negotiations. On the other hand, the Dutch Foreign Minister Van Mierlo's proposal in April 1997 adopted the two-step structure (negotiation-adjudication), as I am going to discuss in the next section. The Luxembourg Council decisions of December 1997 again leaned towards the Greek position by urging the 'settlement of disputes, in particular, by legal process, including the ICJ.' As stated before, the Helsinki Council decisions of December 1999, however, adopted the two-step compromise structure.

I find it interesting that my informants stress that the Helsinki Council decisions reflect their initial compromise proposal. This indicates that the relation between the EU and Greek-Turkish disputes has been a two-way street, where the EU has also been persuaded by the suggestions and proposals of the conflict parties. It also shows that the EU influence on Greek-Turkish disputes has not been perceived as an imposition by at least some decision-makers and more as a dialogue.

Following the Imia/Kardak crisis, Greek-Turkish relations oscillated between periods of progress and regress. After Turkey's Prime Minister Yilmaz's proposals, Greek Prime Minister Simitis reciprocated by stating his government's willingness to discuss air-space/air-control issues over the Aegean. This also marked a departure from the classical Greek position, which refused to discuss 'unilateral claims against Greek sovereign rights.' At the end of April, Greek and Turkish foreign ministers met during the

Black Sea Economic Organization session in Bucharest and agreed to meet again in Berlin in June. Meanwhile, Greek and Turkish diplomats began discussions to prepare the groundwork for the Berlin meeting. However, at the end of May, Greece pulled out of the talks, protesting the inclusion of 'islets and rocks' in the talks. Relations soured first in June with the dispute over the inclusion of Gavdos in NATO exercises, and then in August with the killing of two civilian Greek-Cypriots and the injuring of others by Turkish security forces at the buffer zone during demonstrations against the Turkish occupation. In November 1996, Greece endorsed a new armament program for the modernization of its armed forces, and in January 1997, Greek-Cyprus admitted that they have signed a contract to purchase surface-to-air missile systems from Russia. In reaction, Turkey sent two warships to TRNC. In March 1997, relations warmed again as Greece agreed to some confidence-building moratoriums on military exercises, lifted its veto on the participation of Turkish forces in NATO supported WEU operations in Europe, and Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos made a very strong statement supporting Turkey's EU vocation in the context of the exclusionary statements made by European Christian Democratic leaders¹¹.

3. Third Party Mediation:

A third intervention of the EU in Greek-Turkish conflict followed up on these signs of improvement. In order to find a solution to the continuing Greek veto on the EU financial package offered to Turkey, the Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo, as the holder of the EU Presidency, put forth a proposal for the establishment of a committee of Wisemen to study the pending bilateral problems between Turkey and Greece. The initial idea was that Greece and Turkey would each propose a 'wiseman' from a third party to form a committee, the committee would then study the bilateral problems, identify possible solutions, and then refer the problems that cannot be resolved to the International Court of Justice.¹² Ankara welcomed the plan; Greece rejected the participation of third party specialists. However, right after the protocol on the establishment of the Committee

¹¹ On 4 March 1997, Wilfred Martens, former prime minister of Belgium stated at a meeting of European Christian Democratic leaders that 'Turkey is not a candidate to be a member of the EU, short-term or long.' For Greek foreign minister Pangalos' statement, see Eleutherotypia (Athens), 19 March 1997.

was signed, the Simitis government in Greece was challenged domestically with respect to its position on Greek-Turkish issues. 32 Greek MPs from the governing PASOK party addressed an open letter to Simitis stating their opposition to any discussion on the substance of the Greek-Turkish problems and the lifting of the Greek veto on Turkey in the EU.¹³ The opposition stemmed from their belief that the discussions would grant Turkey a diplomatic victory. As a result of this pressure, the Greek government adopted communications that diluted the committee of wisemen proposal. First, it was stated that the committee would only discuss process, and not the substance of the problems. Later, the proposal was further diluted when the Greek Foreign Minister proposed that the committee should not engage in any joint discussion and communicate their opinions via van Mierlo.¹⁴

This third intervention of the EU is unique in the sense that it is a typical third party intervention that does not utilize EU's instruments of hegemonic influence over Greece and Turkey. No explicit link was made by van Mierlo to Turkey's membership prospects, nor to Greece's status within the Community. The power of the proposal solely derived from its persuasive element, that it was an innovative and worthwhile idea to pursue. In this regard, a key factor for its effectiveness was that it was launched during a period of progress in Greek-Turkish relations. However, the domestic opposition that the proposal encountered in Greece indicates that its persuasive power was limited only to a certain sector of the elite. Because this paper does not analyze the reception of EU's hegemonic influence in Greece, I can only advance preliminary hypotheses at this stage. I hypothesize that because the proposal lacked a complementary structure of incentives, it was not able to draw in elites who were outside the immediate circle of the persuaded.

Following van Mierlo's initiative, Greek-Turkish relations continued their improvement, even though the Greek veto on EU funds to Turkey remained. Based on a US initiative, the two countries signed the Madrid Declaration during a NATO meeting in July 1997, where they expressed 'their commitment to peace and their respect for each

¹² 'Mierlo Nabiz Yokluyor [Mierlo is Feeling the Ground]' Milliyet (Istanbul) 2 April 1997.

¹³ 'Simitis'e Mektuplu Tehdit [Threat to Simitis Via a Letter]' Milliyet (Istanbul) 22 April 1997.

¹⁴ 'Atina Cark Etti [Athens Turned Around]' Milliyet (Istanbul) 24 April 1997.

other's sovereignty, for international law, for international treaties and for each other's legal and vital interests in the Aegean. They also committed themselves not to use violence and not to take unilateral actions.' The joint pledge to refrain from violence and from unilateral actions was crucial because in effect it amounted to the freezing of Greece's right to extend its territorial waters and to Turkey's lifting of its *casus belli*.

However, the Madrid spirit between the two countries did not last for very long. The downturn was mainly triggered by developments in EU-Cyprus and EU-Turkey relations. A week after the Madrid Declaration, the European Commission released the Agenda 2000, which did not list Turkey as a candidate to the EU, and indicated that membership negotiations with Cyprus were to begin in December. In reaction, Turkey enacted a partial integration agreement with Northern Cyprus. This constituted a major divergence from the Madrid Agreement, and therefore adversely affected Greek-Turkish relations. The November summit between Greek and Turkish prime ministers failed to make any breakthrough in reducing the tensions.

4. Negative Conditionality/Weak Carrot:

In the run-up to and the aftermath of the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, the ambiguity surrounding Turkey's membership prospects in the EU emerged as an exacerbating factor in the Greek-Turkish conflict. Previously, I had mentioned that it is a prevalent perception among the Turkish elite that the EU is ambivalent towards Turkish membership, and that this hinders the potential impact of the EU on Turkish policy. When the EU similarly experienced and expressed a great deal of ambivalence in whether to declare Turkey as a candidate in the run-up to the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, this ambiguity disabled the EU from making a positive impact on Greek-Turkish relations. Various statements from EU officials and the Luxembourg Council decisions identified the Greek-Turkish disputes as an impediment to Turkey's candidacy and made the establishment of stable and satisfactory relations with Greece a condition for the strengthening of Turkey's links with the EU. However, these linkages established between Turkey-EU relations and Greek-Turkish disputes did not prod Turkish policymakers into aggressively seeking a solution to their disputes with Greece. Instead, the EU's conditions about Greek-Turkish and Cyprus issues were negatively interpreted as reflecting the European reluctance about ever admitting Turkey as a full member. In

addition, Greece was perceived as taking advantage of this European reluctance and imposing its own terms of the dispute on the EU.

In short, the weakness of the membership carrot made possible the interpretation of the EU's conditions as excuses. This dismissive and distrusting attitude towards the EU's conditions can be clearly seen in the domestic repercussions of various EU communications. When the European Commissioner for External Relations Hans Van den Broek visited Turkey in November 1997 to discuss Greek-Turkish and Cyprus issues, he was reported in Turkish dailies as asking for 'concessions', without clarifying the decision to be taken in Luxembourg about Turkey's membership prospects. A foreign ministry official was quoted as having commented on the visit as: 'We know what they want, we are not going to give it; even if we were to, it is not clear what we are going to get in return.' Turkey's deputy prime minister Ecevit accused the EU of falling victim to Greece and Cyprus' 'Pan-Hellenic' aims and threatened to partially annex TRNC if the EU began accession negotiations with Cyprus.¹⁵ When it became clear that the EU was not going to grant Turkey candidacy status, Turkish officials threatened that the EU will have to find 'another country to discuss Cyprus, Greek-Turkish, and human rights issues.'¹⁶ This 'threat,' more than anything, indicates that Greek-Turkish issues, when put forth as a reason for excluding Turkey, bred a defensive attitude among Turkish policymakers.

What was wrong in the EU's Luxembourg intervention? Why did the linkage with Turkey's membership prospects in the EU failed to produce an impact? In the discussion of the previous EU interventions, I underlined that the EU's main instrument of hegemonic influence –the carrot of strengthening relations with the EU- serves to induce a second group of elites, who are not otherwise normatively persuaded of the necessity and desirability of policy change. This broadens the coalition of pro-reform groups domestically. However, when this carrot is withdrawn or loses its legitimacy in the eyes of its potential recipients, the pro-reform coalition immediately loses the second group of

¹⁵ 'AB'ye Kararlı Mesajlar[Resolute Messages to the EU]' Milliyet (Istanbul), 1 November 1997.

¹⁶ 'Almazsanız Film Kopar [If you do not Take us in, the Show will End]' Milliyet (Istanbul), 2 December 1997.

elites and, as a result of the arising prevalent defensive attitude, even risks losing some of the normatively persuaded.

Following the Luxembourg Summit, Greek-Turkish relations entered a period of flux, as the Greek and Turkish policymakers oscillated between conflict-enhancing and conflict-diminishing actions and communications. Turkish Foreign Minister announced, immediately following the Summit, that Ankara would proceed with the integration of the TRNC when EU began accession talks with Cyprus. Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos, on the other hand, declared his government's willingness to submit all Aegean issues to the ICJ, indicating a major modification of the previous Greek position that did not regard the issues, other than the continental shelf, as legitimate. However, Pangalos also rejected a series of proposals that Turkey made to Greece in February 1998 towards the settlement of the Aegean problems and in April 1998 blocked all EU financial aid to Turkey. In June 1998, Greece began joint military exercises with the Greek-Cypriots and Turkey sent fighter-jets to TRNC in retaliation. The relations between the two countries hit a remarkable low when Turkish security forces captured the Kurdish rebel leader Ocalan in Kenya on his way out of the Greek embassy. After the incident, the Turkish President Demirel declared Greece to be an illegal state.¹⁷

5. Positive Conditionality/ Strong Carrot:

Following this low point, Greek-Turkish relations experienced an upswing. In June 1999, the foreign ministers, Papandreou and Cem, met in New York on the margins of a UN meeting on Kosovo. Later, they exchanged letters regarding possible cooperation avenues on secondary issues. When these fledgling initiatives were the outbursts of popular empathy following the twin earthquakes in Izmit, Turkey and in Athens, in August and September 1999, respectively. According to Gundogdu (2001), the earthquakes allowed both leaders 'to claim a popular mandate for changing policies historically supported by a large majority on both sides.' The period after 1999 witnessed significant bilateral cooperation between Greece and Turkey in various secondary issues, such as tourism, energy, illegal migration, and culture. Despite the fact that there is yet to be concrete action in the resolution of the Aegean border disputes, there are clear

¹⁷ 'Atina Teror Destekcisi [Athens Supports Terror],' Cumhuriyet (Istanbul), 23 February 1999.

indications that developments that would have easily escalated into crises in the past are now carefully contained by the elites.¹⁸ The post-1999 Greco-Turkish rapprochement has survived political change in Greece and Turkey, and a period of political instability in Turkey.

Without going into details of the rapprochement process, I would like to discuss the impact of the EU intervention, the 1999 Helsinki Council decisions, on the Turkish elites attitudes and approach to the rapprochement process with Greece. The 1999 Helsinki European Council declared Turkey to be a candidate of the EU, and urged candidate states to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes. Failing this, the candidate states are required to bring the disputes before the International Court of Justice within a reasonable time. 2004 is identified as the latest date by which the European Council will review the situation and the repercussions of the disputes on the accession process. As an EU intervention, the Helsinki Council decisions differ from the previous because it offers the strong carrot of candidacy and incorporates a positive conditionality. Even though the terms of the Helsinki Council decisions did not differ greatly from previous EU statements on Greek-Turkish issues, the candidacy carrot ensured that this time the conditionality regarding the Greek-Turkish disputes is accepted by Turkish policymakers. The Helsinki Council decisions also helped consolidate the rapprochement process with Greece. Although the initial contacts were made before the Helsinki Summit, the bilateral cooperation agreements were concluded after. The talks on the Aegean are progressing at an exploratory level between the two foreign ministries, the results of the negotiations are kept secret from the public in the two countries, but it is known that the committees have held 30+ meetings so far (interview #2). A promising sign has been that Greece and Turkey have recently in September reached an accord on the Aegean civil aviation paths.

My informants in the Turkish Foreign Ministry all readily pointed out the fact that the rapprochement process with Greece started a half year before the Helsinki European Council; this reflects, they argued that the starting point for Turkey is not to improve

¹⁸ This is indicated, for example, by how the airspace violations issue between Greece and Turkey was handled in June 2003. For further information, see my commentary in EUBORDERCONF Newsletter 2 available at www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk

relations with Greece in order to strengthen links with the EU, but rather to reap the mutual benefits that will accrue to the two countries as a result of cooperation (interview #2). However, they went on to assert that the impact of the EU on relations is ‘undeniable,’ that there is clearly an ‘EU dimension’ to Greek-Turkish relations. Even though some referred to the timetable created by the EU as ‘artificial’ (interview #2); nevertheless, it was clear that this time table determined much of the Foreign Ministry’s schedule and efforts. Among positive implications of the ‘EU dimension,’ my informants mentioned the recently instituted INTERREG program between Turkey and Greece (interview #4). An interesting argument was that the strong civil society support for the improvement of relations with Greece in Turkey is primarily motivated also by the ‘EU dimension.’ (interview #2) However, it seems that the ‘EU dimension’ is also a source of concern for Turkish policymaking. One informant pointed out the fact that a lot (too many?) issues of grave importance to Turkish foreign policy –such as relations with the EU and the US- hinge on Turkey’s relations with Greece, and that Greece has the upperhand in this relationship because it is a member of the EU. Another informant pointed out that the perception created at the societal level is that Turkey is solving its problems with Greece because of the EU, and argued that this may become a serious problem if the negotiations with Greece encounter severe problems and set-backs (interview #2).

It is currently difficult to make any predictions with regard to the outcome of the negotiations on border disputes with Greece. Much of it depends on whether the Cyprus issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of the two sides. The way the Cyprus issue and its linkage with Turkey’s EU accession process are debated among the Turkish elite show some encouraging and some discouraging signs. On the one hand, the strong carrot of beginning accession negotiations with the EU have pulled a great bulk of the Turkish elite towards advocating a solution to the Cyprus problem. That Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdogan was able to get the consent of both the President and the Chief of General Staff to initiate the most recent negotiation process on the island also attests to the power of the EU carrot (interview #1). On the other hand, the primary mechanism of EU influence remains inducement, the circle of elites who are normatively persuaded to seek a solution to the Cyprus problem (on the basis of the Annan plan) –although it too has grown-

remain small in relation. This situation maintains the danger that the currently displayed will and momentum in the Cyprus issue by the Turkish elite remains dependent on positive signs from the EU, and a downturn in Turkey's membership process can easily unravel the coalition of consensus (interview #3).

IV. Conclusions:

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