

Turkey and the EU: The Consequences of a Stalled Process

Talking Points for CSIS Roundtable

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Stalled EU Process is Harming U.S. Interests

- Stalled process compromises the U.S. vision of a widening Europe that is increasingly integrated economically and politically.
- More broadly, as Turks feel excluded from Europe, it diminishes Ankara's willingness to cooperate with the U.S. and NATO. This extends to practical security cooperation and current military operations.
 - Turkey has blocked conclusion of a NATO-EU security agreement because it does not want to grant Cyprus access to NATO information and operations as long as Turkey is excluded from EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) discussions and the European Defence Agency (EDA). The agreement would allow for easy exchange of classified information and ease operations in the field.
 - Turkey has, on occasion, slowed issuance of NATO orders for Afghanistan operations over concerns that they would compromise their position on limiting NATO cooperation with the EU.
 - This is understandable politically, but it is diminishing overall effectiveness of combined NATO-EU missions and the security of EU personnel in the field. Ad hoc arrangements are no longer adequate.
- On Libya, Turkey's "zero problems" regional strategy, along with its desire to maintain good relations and growing economic interests with Arab neighbors, are the major motivations of Turkish reluctance to fully participate in coalition actions to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973. However frictions with Europe, particularly France, as the leading opponent of Turkish EU membership, have complicated efforts to enlist Turkish support for coalition actions.

- Turkey has expressed support for UNSCR 1973, but contends that it only authorizes humanitarian actions to ensure the safety and well-being of the Libyan people. Ankara contends that coalition military actions have exceeded the scope of the UN mandate.
- Excluded from the March 19 Paris leaders summit, Turkish leaders have chafed at France assuming the posture of “enforcer of the UN Security Council.”
- Turkey refused to support NATO assuming command-and-control of the no-fly zone and other coalition military operations in Libya. Turkey did agree to provide six naval vessels to support the NATO task force that is enforcing the UN-mandated arms embargo on Libya including through interdiction of vessels.

U.S. Strategy

- Important to keep hope alive in Turkey about deepening integration into Europe to help advance reforms that would strengthen Turkish democratic governance and its long term effectiveness and willingness as a partner in advancing mutual European, U.S., and Turkish interests *vis à vis* Eurasia, the Middle East, and various global issues.
- Senior Turkish officials have used the metaphor that the EU is Turkey’s “dietician,” in that the accession negotiations include the positive “menu” of things Turkey should do to remain “healthy and fit.” In turn, the United States is Europe’s “conscience” in the process, with a duty to remind Europe why Turkey’s “health” and further integration into the EU serves many common transatlantic interests.
- No doubt that U.S. pressure is resented in some European capitals. But the U.S. engagement bolsters the efforts of those in the EU (the UK and a number of northern European governments) who support Turkish EU membership and the process of widening Europe.

- Many European officials have told me privately that if the U.S. stopped being an advocate of Turkish membership, the process might collapse.
- The current EU and Turkish strategy of sustaining the process by opening one of the 35 chapters of the EU *acquis communautaire* during each EU presidency could soon reach a dead end.
 - Thirteen chapters have been opened and seventeen are blocked (8 frozen by the EU Council in 2006 due to Turkey's lack of progress in implementing the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement, five are fenced off by the French because they relate to full membership, and another four are blocked by Cyprus and other members).
 - Only three chapters have cleared the preliminary screening process and are unencumbered. During the Belgian presidency that ended in December no chapters were opened for the first time since the process began in 2005.
- The best way to advance Turkey's relations with the EU would be to solve the deadlock over Cyprus, which provides a high-profile justification for slowing the EU accession talks.
 - The EU lost its leverage with Cyprus in 2004 when it granted it EU membership without resolving fundamental issues on the island.
 - Washington does not have much leverage with Nicosia, which fears its interests being swept aside in U.S. efforts to pursue larger strategic interests with Turkey.
 - There is still scope for continued U.S. support to the UN-brokered intercommunal talks and for certain policy initiatives. But the prospects for progress are not good.
- The U.S. should support other steps to deepen Turkish integration into European institutions and cooperation that can complement discussion of accession chapters.

- A good example are the efforts of EU High Representative Ashton and NATO Secretary General Rasmussen in the run up to NATO's November 2010 Lisbon Summit to broker a deal whereby Turkey would allow for completion of a NATO-EU security agreement if the EU allowed Turkey to have a close relationship with the European Defence Agency (EDA), established in 2004 to coordinate the EU's defense capabilities and procurement.
- Cyprus and other EU countries blocked the deal, which would have facilitated both significant improvements in EU-NATO cooperation and development of EU common foreign and defense policies.
- Collapse of the accession negotiations in the next few years would have very damaging consequences for U.S. and transatlantic interests.
 - Europe would lose support of a critical ally in a region vital to its national and energy security.
 - Nationalist and illiberal political forces in Turkey would likely gain strength and trigger even more obstructionist policies concerning NATO-EU cooperation and within NATO itself.
 - Relations with the United States could also be damaged, and Turkey's efforts to deepen ties with other international partners, including Russia and states in the Middle East and Asia, would likely accelerate.
- If the accession process unravels over the next 10 to 15 years, the consequences might be less severe depending on the evolution of the EU itself. The development of a "multi-speed Europe," with various levels of political, economic, and social integration under the Lisbon Treaty could provide a soft landing for a failed or truncated Turkish accession process whereby Turkey, as well a number of other European states, would be integrated to some but not all elements of the EU.