

SPEAKING POINTS
INTERVENÇÃO ANA CONFERÊNCIA IEEI
TURKEY-EU LISBON OBSERVATORY

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- When we reflect on Turkey's contribution to Europe's security, we should keep in mind the following facts and figures:

1. It shares land borders with countries that are decisive for the security of the Middle East: 500km with Iran, 330km with Iraq and 820km with Syria;

2. Its large population (71.000.000) and booming economy make it an important regional power;

3. Its army is the second biggest in NATO (with about 500.000 active troops), it is modern and capable, and the country spends 3% of its GDP on defence (in comparison, the US spend 3,8%, the UK 2,3% and France 2,4%);

I.

- The added value of Turkey for the EU in the field of security is well-known, but not without some qualifications:

Generally, I agree with what Joschka Fischer said in an article published in the Turkish Daily *Hürriyet* in September 2004:

"In order for the EU to be powerful and for our children and grandchildren to live in peace, Turkey needs to be a member of the EU."

1. In a time when relations with Islam (both as a global religion, and as a political force) have become decisive, Turkey could add - and, in fact, already adds - an important set of diplomatic, cultural and political tools to the EU's external action; however, the Turkish Republic is the culmination of a very particular historical development and it is not clear that Turkish accession to the EU would be seen as an example to follow

by other Islamic countries (especially in the Arab world) trying to cope with the twin challenges of democratic change and the role of religion in society;

2. The main immediate threats to European security come from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan; any meaningful European role in the fight against the proliferation of WMD, terrorism and drug trafficking, will have to include Turkey and its important diplomatic ties and experience [Turkey is a key transit country for Afghan heroin]; because of Turkey's particular relationship with Israel, it could play a mediating role between Jerusalem and Damascus and/or Israel and the Palestinians; however, this mediating role will always be limited by Turkey's inability to legitimately represent the Arab world;

3. Turkey has the second-largest land forces in NATO after the USA, and ranks 5th in terms of naval forces; it has 10,5% of NATO's fighter jets, 20% of cargo planes and 22,5% of inventory jets; Ankara can be decisive in closing the glaring capabilities/expectations gap affecting ESDP, which will continue to grow in the years to come; Turkey has shown in the past, namely in the Western Balkans and Afghanistan, that it is a reliable provider of troops to UN-backed international peacekeeping; in Afghanistan in particular, Turkey took command of ISAF for a period of 8 months in 2002-2003 and again in February 2005;

4. Last but not least, Turkish contribution in the military-industrial domain could be very useful, and the country's participation - from the start - in the A400M programme is a sign of its commitment to the European defence industry.

II.

Although Turkey is certainly a potential asset for the EU in the field of security, **Europe will never be willing to import insecurity with Turkish accession. In other words, as long as Turkey does not solve its Kurdish problem; as long as its bilateral relationship with Iraq is not stabilized; as long as it doesn't normalize its relationship with Armenia; and, as long as it doesn't withdraw its troops from Northern Cyprus, EU leaders will be unable to sell Turkish membership as a security-plus to their citizens** - quite apart from many other factors influencing Turkish accession, such as democratization, the creation of a market economy, or human rights.

III.

One of the useful ways to measure the future utility of Turkey for EU in the field of security is to analyse its present behaviour. While Turkey's active participation in virtually all ESDP missions is certainly laudable, and indicates a commitment to a Europe of Defence, **EU-NATO cooperation has long been suffering from Turkey's intransigence concerning the application of the Berlin Plus arrangements.**

Turkey is determined to participate in ESDP decision-making procedures. But Ankara feels that it is not consulted properly by the EU on defence matters, despite its important contributions to ESDP. Berlin Plus was already meant to accommodate Turkish fears that its ability to have a say in non-NATO European defence matters would decrease after the WEU was virtually absorbed by the EU.

While in the WEU "*associate members [like Turkey!] would take part [in the decision-making process] on the same basis as full members in WEU military operations to which they commit forces*", the incomplete transfer of the WEU institutional set-up to the EU has entailed "*an effective downgrading of Turkey's status in European security affairs.*"

- **Very simply, Turkey, as a non-EU member has not been offered participation in ESDP decision-making procedures - which it did have in the WEU.**

One of the important practical consequences of Turkey's dissatisfaction with the status of its participation in ESDP decision-making **is last June's decision by Ankara to go back on its commitment to contribute with air and naval units to the Battlegroup concept of the EU.** Tomur Bayer, Director General for international security issues at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs justified this decision with the Union's failure to ratify the technical arrangement that was to allow Turkey to take part in the activities of the European Defence Agency, and with problems encountered in the application of agreements on the participation of third countries in ESDP operations.

But of course the most negative consequence of Turkey's insistence that all contacts between EU and NATO take place under Berlin Plus, is the exclusion of the two only EU members that are neither NATO members nor members of the Alliance's Partnership for Peace.

- *The result is predictable: the EU cannot accept that Cyprus and Malta be excluded whenever terrorism, Afghanistan, Kosovo, or Darfur are discussed, which means that NATO and the EU can only meet on these issues informally, or staff-to-staff.*
- *Turkey's actions work as a serious break on EU-NATO relations, and, more importantly, they put European, American, but also Afghan and Kosovar lives at risk, since the two organisations are unable to seriously coordinate their actions in providing security to their own people in uniform and to those living in the countries they are trying to stabilize.*

Making sure the right security arrangements are in place between ISAF and the EU's police mission in Afghanistan, for example, has been a nightmare and has seriously undermined the international community's reputation in the country.

If Turkey's defence establishment were truly committed to EU membership, they would try their best to solve any ambiguities in the country's participation in ESDP through patient negotiation.

- *The EU perception is that Turkey very often uses ESDP as a hostage of the EU membership negotiations and it is not a coincidence that the latest tensions (such as Turkey's announcement it was downgrading its participation in ESDP) came immediately after Sarkozy's victory...*

This is a mistake.

- *The best way for Turkey to be a full member of ESDP is for Turkey to join the EU. And every time Turkey uses its participation in ESDP to pressure the EU it shoots itself and its supporters within the EU, in the foot.*
- In other words, the whole *theoretical discussion* about Turkey's security value for the EU is *secondary to a more important practical debate: how best to move Turkey closer to EU membership.* Every time Turkey stands in the way of EU/NATO cooperation on Afghanistan, Kosovo, or the fight against terrorism; every time it reacts to Cyprus' destructive veto of Ankara's participation in the EDA with a counter-productive punishment of the EU as a whole; every time it expresses its scepticism about

ESDP generally, *Turkey is sacrificing a long term goal that will hand it true influence over the future of the Europe of Defence - EU membership - for short-term point-scoring against some real and imaginary enemies.*