Balkan Geometry: Turkish Accession and the International Relations of Southeast Europe

by Ronald H. Linden

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Abstract: *Turkish accession to the EU, long delayed and now apparently stalled, is taking place within a changed strategic situation in the region. The relative shift in importance of the Black Sea and western Balkan parts of southeast Europe, resulting from the post-9/11 shift in American policy and the growth of oil and gas traffic, has put new EU members Romania and Bulgaria into fundamentally new external situations. The international relations of these two states—including their accession to the EU and their ties with the United States, Russia, and Turkey—have been and will continue to be affected by the dynamic of the Turkish accession process.*

> "*Europe has rightly been criticized in the past for not acting while there was still time to stop instability turning into crisis. Too often in the 1990s, Brussels fiddled while the Balkans burned. We must not risk this happening again.*" — Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement

Negotiations between the European Union and Turkey, formally begun in 2005, stalled badly in 2006, suggesting that the process of Turkish accession was likely to stretch forward for years, with the outcome far from certain. This after a decades-long journey during which Turkey repeatedly pressed the organization for a decision and the EU temporized or made preliminary decisions designed to buy time in which to further evaluate Turkey.[1] Over this long period, extraordinary changes have taken place in Europe, not least in the region neighboring Turkey. The end of the Cold War meant dissolution of old political and territorial boundaries

[1] Steve Wood and Wolfgang Quaisser, "Turkey's Road to the EU: Political Dynamics, Strategic Context and Implications for Europe," *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 10 (2005).

and the opportunity to create new ones. A once relatively simple, if tense, lineup of states and alliances is now home to several intersecting political, economic, and military regions of states pursuing not necessarily compatible interests.

This article explores the implications of Turkish accession on two countries acceding to the EU in 2007, Romania and Bulgaria, which are also NATO members and strong U.S. allies, and assesses the possibly conflicting goals of the states and organizations active in this part of Europe.

The Changing Regional Context

During the Cold War, the Balkans (or southeast Europe) and the Black Sea region comprised a neighborhood for Romania and Bulgaria in which it was relatively easy to determine possible conflicts. Romania was bordered on all sides by socialist states, with nonaligned Yugoslavia being the only neighboring country not in the Soviet orbit. Bulgaria, on the other hand, had borders with two NATO states, Greece and Turkey. This, plus different nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories, gave the two countries somewhat different foreign policy orientations.[2] Still, one would have had to travel a considerable distance east, north, or south to encounter a state not part of these Cold War divisions. The likelihood of an EU presence on the Black Sea littoral or of the Black Sea becoming a NATO lake was remote.

Today, the region includes an "old" EU member (Greece), two recently acceded EU countries (Romania and Bulgaria), and three EU candidate countries (Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey). In the "western Balkans" one country (Albania) has signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement, and two more are in various stages of negotiating such an agreement (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia—the latter currently suspended). Talks are partially suspended with Turkey (see below), are moving ahead slowly with Croatia, and have not formally begun with Macedonia.[3] The EU has a ten-year Partnership Cooperation Agreement with Russia providing for four "common spaces" of cooperation, and Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia are foci of the organization's "Neighborhood Policy."

For its part, NATO added Romania and Bulgaria to existing members Turkey and Greece and has special partnerships with both Ukraine and Russia. Virtually all of the rest of the states in the region are working with NATO as part of its Partnership for Peace program. Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania have a

[2] For comprehensive histories of the area see John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and Charles King, *The Black Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[3] Information on the Accession, Candidate, and Potential Candidate members can be found at: the EU website, www.ec.europa.eu. See also European Commission (Brussels), "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007," Nov. 8, 2006.

separate Adriatic Pact with the United States and are likely to be the next states to be offered admission to NATO.[4]

Recently the EU has chaperoned the creation of energy-sharing and free-trade zones in the region as well as a variety of specific security-oriented plans aimed at addressing contemporary threats that might, if left to fester, negatively affect European security.[5] The region's states themselves have set up the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and an array of other regional organizations aimed at jump-starting cooperation around the littoral and its neighborhood.[6] And, of course, Russia has sponsored its own organizational shell, the Commonwealth of Independent States, with the purpose of ensuring a Russian voice in the region's future.[7]

Beyond the international organizations, the status and dynamics of governing authority and of political and economic development is similarly variegated (see Table 1).[8] These range from well-established democracies, such as Greece and Turkey; to relatively new but apparently stable post-communist countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia; to Albania and Macedonia, which, with outside intervention, managed to fend off mortal challenges to democratic development. Other remnants of former Yugoslavia—Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia—are arrayed along a continuum of formal and genuine sovereignty.[9] Two, Ukraine and Georgia, saw successful popular uprisings push the process of democratic political change along. The latter and Moldova are parties to separate "frozen conflicts" which prevent the consolidation of state authority on territory they claim (a description that also applies, only slightly further afield, to Cyprus and Azerbaijan) and gives evidence of Russia's sustained interest in such conflicts.

Changing Significance: The World Comes Calling

The relative significance of the two parts of this "neighborhood" has been reordered in terms of their importance to outside powers such as the EU,

[4] Declaration of the Riga Summit (Nov. 2, 2006), at www.nato.int.

[5] On energy sharing, see Economic Reconstruction and Development in South East Europe website, www.seerecon.org; on free trade, see Speech by Peter Mandelson at the Launch of the Renewed Central European Free Trade Agreement, Bucharest, Apr. 6, 2006, at: www.ec.europa.eu; and on security, see the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe website, www.stabilitypact.org.

[6] Mustafa Aydin, "Europe's New Region: The Black Sea in the Wider Europe Neighborhood," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, May 2005.

[7] Gabriela Marin Thornton and Roger E. Kanet, "The Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States," in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

[8] On East Europe and the Balkans, see, respectively, Valerie Bunce, "East European Democratization: Global Patterns and Postcommunist Dynamics," and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "Democratization Without Decommunization in the Balkans," both in *Orbis*, Fall 2006.

[9] Gergana Noutcheva, *EU Conditionality and Balkan Compliance: Does Sovereignty Matter?* Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2006.

Table 1. Economic and Political Variation in the Western Balkans and Black Sea Area

	Freedom House Ranking*			EBRD Ranking**			Transp. Int. Ranking†
	Pol. Rights	Civil Lib.	Rating	Lg. Priv.	Sm.	Restruct.	Corr. Perc. Ind.
Albania	3	3	Partly Free	3	4	2	111
Bos.-Herz.	4	3	Partly Free	3–	3	2	93
Bulgaria	1	2	Free	4	4–	3–	57
Croatia	2	2	Free	3+	4+	3	69
Georgia	3	3	Partly Free	4–	4	2+	99
Greece	1	2	Free	NA	NA	NA	54
Macedonia	3	3	Partly Free	3+	4	2+	105
Moldova	3	4	Partly Free	3	3+	2	79
Romania	2	2	Free	4–	4–	2+	84
Russia	6	5	Not Free	3	4	2+	121
Serbia	3	2	Free	3–	3+	2+	90
Turkey	3	3	Partly Free	NA	NA	NA	60
Ukraine	3	2	Free	3	4	2	99

* 1 = Most Free, 7 = Least Free. Source: Aili Piano and Arch Puddington, "The 2005 Freedom House Survey," *Journal of Democracy*, January 2006, pp. 122–3.

** Rankings for Large and Small Privatization, Government and Enterprise Restructuring; 1 = no change from centrally planned economy, 4+ = standards of an industrialized market economy. Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 2005* (London: EBRD, 2005), p. 4.

† Ranking on Corruption Perception Index, reflecting business perceptions of corruption, score range from 1 (perceived as least corrupt) to 163 (perceived as most corrupt). Source: "Transparency International Annual Report 2006," available at: www.transparency.org. No ranking available for Montenegro.

the United States, and Russia. After the collapse of communism, the violent intra- and interstate conflict that characterized the region of former Yugoslavia attracted the attention and power of the EU, NATO, and the United States. The EU's involvement at first was ineffective or worse, encouraging the independence of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia without demonstrating any willingness to protect either the new states or the minorities within them. NATO, meaning effectively the United States, was eventually called on to stop the fighting in Bosnia and later, along with Russia, provided peacekeepers there. It was NATO again that drove Serbia out of Kosovo and enabled the establishment of a UN protectorate in that province, and again it was the United States that provided the force. By December 2004 the EU had taken over both the NATO peacekeeping and the UN policing functions in Bosnia-Herzegovina; it had previously assumed responsibility from NATO for policing a ceasefire and protecting OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) monitors in Macedonia. Neither NATO nor the EU were eager to add Balkan members

(except for Slovenia), and neither evinced much interest in greater involvement in the Black Sea region.

The relative importance of the two parts of this neighborhood has now changed due to several circumstances. The emergence of a kind of stability in the Balkans, the end of open conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo, the stabilization of conflict in Macedonia and, ultimately, the displacement of ruling nationalist regimes in Croatia and Serbia removed the urgency of external intervention and reduced the strategic salience of the region.

More important, though, was the change in global politics wrought by the attacks of September 11. These shifted the United States' strategic orientation toward dealing with terrorist threats and to putting military power in place in Southwest Asia—not just in Afghanistan but also in Uzbekistan, Georgia, and other states previously off-limits to American troop presence. The war on terror dramatically heightened the strategic significance of the Black Sea region and of Bulgaria and Romania. This orientation was reinforced by the United States' decision in 2002-03 to forcibly confront and bring to an end the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. While some European allies, including Iraq-bordering Turkey, declined to support the invasion, Bulgaria and Romania did offer support, and their location heightened their value to the United States, if not to the NATO alliance itself. Thus, though the Iraq War increased the U.S. presence in this region, it also split the EU and put applicants Romania and Bulgaria squarely on the spot.

A development slightly longer in the making, but related to the war in Iraq, is the recognition of the Black Sea region's role as a vital highway for the shipment of increasingly valuable oil and gas. With the end of the Cold War, the emergence onto the world market of Russian oil and the exploitation by several countries of Caspian Sea oil and gas, the place of the Black Sea in the world energy trade grew (see Figure 1). Hence its strategic importance both to the consumers, the United States and the countries of West Europe, and the suppliers, especially Russia.[10]

These developments coincide with another that raised the value of the Black Sea and brought another major power back into play in the region. The last several years have seen both a strengthening of the domestic power of Vladimir Putin in Russia and an increased assertiveness in Russian foreign policy. The days of Gorbachevian acquiescence to Western aims or of Boris Yeltsin's volatility have been replaced by strong Russian assertions in a number of areas. These have included rejection of Western criticism of its domestic policies, affirmation of Russian intentions with regard to nuclear trade and weapons, assertion of the right to involvement in nearby conflicts, and

[10] See the Energy Information Administration's "Caspian Sea," at www.eia.doe.gov. In 2003 the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation estimated that more than 50,000 vessels moved through the Bosporus every year, with 5,000 of them carrying oil or liquefied natural gas. "Black Sea" *Regional Profiles* (2003).

Figure 1. Black Sea Pipelines

Source: Energy Information Administration's "Caspian Sea," at: www.eia.doe.gov.

reassertion of a role in the Black Sea.[11] While all of this increases the stakes in the region, it also, predictably, increases the interest of the United States and some of its NATO partners, as well as applicants Ukraine and Georgia, in countering the growth of Russian influence in the region.

Finally, the world literally (or more properly, littorally) came calling with the completion of the "big bang" of EU enlargement. This phase, begun in 1997, added ten new members in 2004 and promised admission to Bulgaria and Romania. At the same time, the EU began, somewhat belatedly, to recognize the need for a broader policy to cover countries not likely to

[11] Andrew Kuchins, "Look Who's Back," *Wall Street Journal Europe,* May 9, 2006; Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2006. "Russia Seeking Stronger Security in Black Sea Region," Interfax, April 26, 2006 [*World News Connection*, (hereafter WNC) Apr. 26, 2006]. On Russian "soft power," see Andrei Tsygankov, "Projecting Confidence, Not Fear: Russia's Post-Imperial Assertiveness," *Orbis*, Fall 2006; on its nuclear policy see Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "Russian Nuclear Forces," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April 2006, pp. 64–67.

become members soon but with whom it wanted to have influence.[12] In particular it wanted to create an arrangement that would keep the conditionality alive yet allow the organization to remain uncommitted to membership itself. Hence the establishment of the Neighborhood Policy and another covering the western Balkans. Now, with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, the EU for the first time has a Black Sea coast. This is, of course, fortuitous, as it coincides with a vigorous attempt by the EU to "harmonize" its energy trade with Russia and find alternative sources of energy. Twenty-five percent of the EU countries' oil and gas comes from Russia; these figures constitute 30 and 50 percent, respectively, of EU imports from Russia.[13]

The convergence of these phenomena means that what happens to, in, and around Romania and Bulgaria matters to a lot of other countries and organizations. Given all of these factors, it is likely that the fate of Turkey as a prospective EU member and indeed the process of its trying to join is likely to affect Romania and Bulgaria and their ties to these organizations, to Russia and the United States, and with Turkey itself.

From the perspective of international relations theory, these two states' actions pose an intriguing case through which to explore the relative impact of competing expectations. One line of thinking, derived from realist theory, suggests that weaker states such as these two will be inclined to "bandwagon" onto the power of a dominant state like the United States. According to this expectation, Bucharest and Sofia will follow Washington's lead on key regional issues. A contrasting expectation is that weaker states will act with others, like those in the EU, to balance the dominant power.[14] Robert Pape has raised the question of whether recent U.S. policy has prompted or is likely to prompt a policy of "soft balancing" against Washington by weaker states.[15] In this view, states like Romania and Bulgaria will take the opportunity offered by allies or even adversaries of the United States to "push back."

[12] Aydin, "Europe's New Region."

[13] See "EU-Russia Energy Dialogue," *EurActiv.com*, Nov. 28, 2005; and Andrew Monaghan and Lucia Montanaro-Jankovski, "EU-Russia Energy Relations: The Need for Active Engagement," *EPC Issue Paper,* No. 45 (Brussels: European Policy Center, 2006).

[14] See the discussion in Mark Kramer, "Neorealism, Nuclear Proliferation, and East Central European Strategies," *International Politics*, vol. 35, no. 3 (1998); and Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security*, Summer 1994.

[15] "Soft balancing" involves challenging or hindering the actions of the dominant power through the use of nonmilitary means, including coordinated action and international institutions. See Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," and other articles in the Summer 2005 special issue of *International Security*. For a test of the relative power of the "balance-bandwagon dichotomy" using Russia, see Thomas Ambrosio, *Challenging America's Global Preeminence* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

The Response of—and to—Bulgaria and Romania

Because of both their similarities and differences, Romania and Bulgaria form a useful comparative set with which to analyze the impact of changes on states of the region and their policies. Both had been one-party communist dictatorships; indeed, at the time of the upheavals of 1989, both had been effectively ruled by one person for 25 and 35 years, respectively. Neither had significant kernels of a market economy or much Western economic interest, though each had seen periods of substantial Western debt. They were the two poorest states of the Soviet-dominated alliance system in East Europe. After 1989, unlike in Central Europe, direct descendants of—and in fact some of the same people from—the once dominant communist party managed to retain power. The two countries were consistently judged well behind the Central European states in terms of the speed and effectiveness of their democratic and market transitions. In both, the presence of a substantial minority population (Hungarian in Romania, Turkish in Bulgaria) presented challenges to the development of effective democratic governance and of attitudes supportive of such governance.

But the two also brought very different histories to the post-1989 period. While both owed their independence in the nineteenth century to Russian confrontations with Turkey, Bulgaria traditionally viewed Russia as the benefactor of that independence, while Romania saw Russia as a threat. (Much of the territory of what is today Moldova moved back and forth between Russia and Romania in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.) During the Warsaw Pact period, Romania pursed a somewhat different foreign policy—within the parameters of Soviet tolerance. In contrast, Bulgaria was usually strongly supportive of Soviet initiatives.

Romanian politics and history also produced a different view of the United States and NATO after 1989. While in that country there was a high degree of public and elite consensus on joining NATO, Bulgarian attitudes were more ambivalent.[16] Because of this, Sofia is generally considered to have "lost seven years" of preparation for possible membership during the 1990s, while Romania was the first to join NATO's preparatory Partnership for Peace program.[17] As for the EU, both Romania and Bulgaria indicated a preference for joining as soon as possible, signed trade agreements, and then applied to join in 1995. In this case all significant political parties in both countries were supportive of such moves and positive views of the EU were among the highest in the region.

[16] Blagovest Tashev, "In Search of Security: Bulgaria's Security Policy in Transition," in Tom Lansford and Blagovest Tashev, eds., *Old Europe, New Europe and the US* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005).

[17] Jeffrey Simon, "Bulgaria and NATO: 7 Lost Years," *Strategic Forum* 142 (1998); Zoltan Barany, *The Future of NATO Expansion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 124–216.

Both European organizations responded coolly to Romanian and Bulgarian overtures. NATO did not invite either to join in 1997, though U.S. President Bill Clinton visited Bucharest soon after the Madrid NATO summit that July and offered some words of praise. That same year the EU made it clear that, in its view, Romanian politics had only begun to make progress with the election of the center-right government of Emil Constantinescu. The European Commission began to evaluate both countries in 1998 on their progress toward meeting the Copenhagen criteria, the basic eligibility for EU membership, and in adopting the practices and laws necessary to implement the *acquis communautaire*. Its annual reports on each were detailed and critical, with both countries making slow progress in the areas of administrative reform, independence of the judiciary, restructuring of the economy, and treatment of their Roma (Gypsy) populations. The Commission was especially negative in its comments about slow progress against corruption in the government and the economy.[18] Still, in 1999 both were invited (along with Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania) to begin negotiations. But the expectation was that membership for Romania and Bulgaria would not come before 2007—not 2004, the date set for the others.

Dramatic global and regional changes gave Romania and Bulgaria the opportunity to demonstrate their *bona fides* as prospective allies, though more for NATO than for the EU. Both sent contingents to Bosnia, allowing them to gain experience in NATO peacekeeping and show their capacity to be security contributors.[19] During the 1999 war against Serbia both states allowed U.S. overflights of their territory and denied this to Russia. Both participated in the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo and acted as "de facto allies." Even more significant, after 9/11, both supported the U.S.-led action in Afghanistan and allowed their countries to act as transit bases for U.S. forces heading to and from southwest Asia. Romania prepared and sent more than 800 troops to the region. As a reward for such support and in recognition of the changed geostrategic significance of the two countries, both were invited to join NATO at the Prague summit in December 2002.

Much more complicated and problematical for both states, but especially for Bulgaria, was the 2003 Iraq War. Both states supported the United States, in some instances along with others, such as through the February 2003 "Vilnius Statement" of ten NATO candidate countries urging UN Security Council action against Iraq. At other times, with both the EU and candidate members split and the United States pressing once again for basing rights, the two states' positions (especially that of Bulgaria, as president of the Security Council at the time) left them vulnerable to criticism. In Bulgaria in particular, neither NATO nor the Iraq War was popular. Along with the strident

[18] The Annual Reports are available at: www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement.

[19] Jeffrey Simon, *NATO Expeditionary Operations: Impacts Upon New Members and Partners*, Occasional Paper, No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2005).

U.S. position on the International Criminal Court and pressure on states to sign Bilateral Immunity Agreements exempting U.S. personnel from its jurisdiction, differences over the war left these two candidates wondering if there would be consequences for their EU membership application in 2004.[20]

That year the EU decided that both would be subject to "enhanced monitoring" and would have their cases reviewed again in 2005 for possible membership in 2007. "Safeguard" clauses were included in their accession instruments that gave the EU the option of delaying membership by a year. In October 2005 the Commission issued a frank report on both countries and said that decisions on their membership would not be made until after another report was issued in the spring of 2006. At that time, the EU punted yet again, saying that both countries could be offered admission if they met certain conditions. After still another report at the end of September 2006, the EU formally admitted the two countries but with a string of "accompanying measures" designed to ensure continued vigorous work on corruption and the justice system, against organized crime in Bulgaria's case and high-level corruption in Romania's case. Further reporting will be required in some areas and an unprecedented specific threat to withhold agricultural payments was made to both new members.[21]

The EU's hesitancy on Romania and Bulgaria stands in contrast to NATO's relatively expeditious action on them and can be attributed to several factors, some of which may relate to the Turkish accession process. For one thing, by most economic indicators, Romania and Bulgaria were substantially further behind the central European states. On measures of GDP *per capita*, level of foreign investment, as well as broader indicators of breadth and pace of reform, the two were in a different category.[22] Politically, the continued powerful presence of forces from communist times, pressure on the media, and uncertainty about the robustness of democracy, not to mention a certain amount of guilt-by-association with the troublesome "Balkans," hurt these states' cases. As potential members, these two states seemed to have much greater needs than their former fraternal allies. The European Commission had good reason, for example, to worry about their ability to effectively utilize aid, to deal with corruption, and to establish and protect an effective eastern border. To some extent also, the two states held each other back. At various

[20] Ronald H. Linden, "Twin Peaks: Romania and Bulgaria Between the EU and the United States," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Sept.-Oct. 2004.

[21] European Commission, "Accompanying Measures in the Context of Bulgaria's and Romania's Accession," (Brussels, Sept. 26, 2006).

[22] In 1998, for example, the GDP's per capita of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were 53, 54 and 70%, respectively, of the average of the three poorest EU countries. Bulgaria's, by contrast, was 44% and Romania's, 30%. Marek Dabrowski and Jacek Rostowski, *The Eastern Enlargement of the EU* (Boston: Kluwer, 2001), p. 3. Cumulative FDI for Romania and Bulgaria for 1989–97 totaled $149 and $147 per capita, respectively, compared to $321 for Poland, $823 for the Czech Republic and $1,667 for Hungary.

times one or the other seemed "ahead," judging by the annual reports of the EU. For example, Bulgaria was declared to be a market economy in 2002, Romania in 2004. Bulgarian citizens were included in the EU's visa-free regime before those of Romania. On the other hand, in the May 2006 commission report, Romania was judged to have made more significant progress than Bulgaria, especially in the fight against corruption.

Overall "enlargement fatigue" has also been cited as a cause for Brussels' greater caution with these two states. Public opinion in the old member states has never shown much enthusiasm for enlargement, and among candidates, Romania and Bulgaria are among the least favored. A 2006 *Eurobarometer* poll showed less than half of the people in the EU 25 favoring further enlargement, with the results highly skewed. People in the new member states are more favorable toward further enlargement, but in the UK, Germany, and France, for example, supporters account for only 43, 36 and 31 percent of respondents, respectively. Among candidate members, Bulgaria receives the support of 46 percent and Romania 43 percent overall, with support dropping even in recent member states. European leaders acknowledge that the organization has not "sold" enlargement effectively to an increasingly skeptical public.[23] After the French and Dutch votes against the proposed European constitution in May 2005, they could hardly do otherwise.[24]

It is also possible, but harder to prove, that the EU's disinclination to welcome Romania and Bulgaria might have something to do with these states' unwillingness to line up solidly with some major EU members against the United States on the war on Iraq. During the formal accession process the foreign policy of the two prospective members has not been the crucial issue—except indirectly, for example, in assessments of their ability to implement the EU's common border-control system. However, ability to undertake obligations under CFSP is one of the guiding Copenhagen criteria, and the French, always alert for what they see as undue U.S. influence, were especially critical of the two Balkan candidates.[25]

A Turkish Factor? Possible Impact of the Turkish Accession Process

While Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952, the process of adding Turkey to the EU has been a long one and the horizon is not yet in sight.

[23] Speech by Peter Mandelson to the Business Community, Bucharest, Apr. 6, 2006, at www.ec.europa.eu; Martin Winter, "'No Political Project Can Exist Without Borders'—Belated Skepticism About Enlargement," *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, Jan. 28. 2006 [WNC, Jan. 28, 2006].

[24] "Reason to Worry," *Economist*, June 4, 2005; "The End of Enlargement?" *Economist*, July 16, 2005.

[25] President Jacques Chirac famously said that the East European states had "missed a good opportunity to keep quiet," singling out Romania and Bulgaria as "particularly irresponsible." "Chirac Lashes out at 'New Europe,'" CNN, Feb. 18, 2003.

Turkey first formally applied to the European Economic Community in 1959 and signed an association agreement in 1963. After the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and a military coup in 1980, relations were essentially frozen until 1986, when the EU finalized plans for a customs union with Turkey. That took effect in 1996, but both the EEC and its successor, the EU, rejected full candidate status for Turkey. Turkey thus fell behind the East European states (as well as Cyprus and Malta) that began accession negotiations after the Helsinki European Council in 1999. After a flurry of reform measures were passed in Turkey, the EU finally decided in December 2004, that, subject to several conditions, accession negotiations would begin in October 2005; these were expected to take a decade.[26] A year later, in its first comprehensive report since formal negotiations began, the Commission recognized progress in some areas but was critical across the entire range of accession criteria, including the judicial system, human rights (including freedom of expression, rights of women and minorities), civil-military relations and most economic criteria.[27] Formally, negotiations were frozen on eight of 35 chapters of the *acquis* in a dispute over Cyprus (see below). In practical terms, movement forward ceased. Whether or not Turkey ultimately accedes, the implications of the Turkish accession process add a new dimension to the international relations of Bulgaria and Romania in several areas.

(1) *The Long Road to Brussels*: To what extent is the EU's tough stance on Romania and Bulgaria a product not just of "enlargement exhaustion" but of an enlargement fear that is derived from concerns about Turkey? To some extent the concern about Turkey reinforces general concerns about enlargement, with Romania and Bulgaria being in the spotlight at just the wrong time. After all, the admission of Romania and Bulgaria also began with vague promises in 1999. The nearest date for possible Turkish accession, 2014, is seven years away from the present; Romania and Bulgaria joined eight years after their invitation. David Phinnemore argues that while the EU reaffirmed its commitment to Bulgaria and Romania, it significantly stiffened entry requirements and added the possibility of real delay in membership to the process with other candidates, especially Turkey, in mind.[28] The Commission's evident exasperation with the two candidate members, plus the French and Dutch anti-constitution votes, indicate that fear of applying the "Romania/Bulgaria model" to Turkey may have rebounded to hurt these candidates.[29]

[26] Wood and Quaisser, "Turkey's Road to the EU"; Gulnur Aybet, "Turkey's Long and Winding Road to the EU: Implications for the Balkans," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, April 2006.

[27] European Commission, "Turkey 2006 Progress Report, " Brussels, Nov. 8, 2006, at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/.

[28] David Phinnemore, "Beyond 25—the Changing Face of EU Enlargement: Commitment, Conditionality and the Constitutional Treaty," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, April 2006, esp. pp. 15–19.

[29] "EU Warns Turkey To Step Up Reforms," AFP, May 19, 2006 [WNC, May 19, 2006].

For the United States, a strong supporter of full membership for all three states,[30] EU hesitancy (or, in the case of Turkey, disinclination) on membership challenges a major U.S. goal for the region. It threatens to keep out, significantly delay, or ultimately treat quite differently states that have been supportive of the United States and its major foreign policy initiatives and are hosts to its troops and bases. To the extent that this occurs, it weakens a "southeast Europe" anchor of transatlantic relations and mutes what might be a supportive voice in an organization of which the United States is not a member.

(2) *Weak Enforcement*. A critical weakness in the whole EU accession process has been the absence of enforcement mechanisms once a state becomes a member. This is one reason why membership conditionality is the most powerful of the weapons in the EU's arsenal.[31] It is applied before states become members. Afterwards, little can or has been done to states that backslide. The EU's unwillingness to punish Germany and France for violating eurozone criteria on budgetary deficits while rejecting tiny Lithuania's application to join is illustrative. Even more germane, and likely to be troublesome for the region, is the case of Cyprus. Unlike NATO, the EU admitted the country "as a whole," but with the *acquis* "suspended in the north." In fact, the EU did what it said it would *not* do in East Europe: import ethnic or border conflicts. Now it is clear that the organization has few instruments at hand to exert pressure on the Greek Cypriot community to accept the UN sponsored "Annan" reunification plan, which it rejected in 2004, or to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot population, which voted to accept the plan. Despite Turkish demands, Cyprus has resisted efforts in this direction and threatened to veto negotiations with Turkey unless it opened it ports and airports to Cypriot shipping. Ankara does not recognize Cyprus but Brussels is insisting that Turkey, as a candidate country, treat the EU member "normally" in all respects.[32] In December 2006 Ankara's offer of a partial opening of ports failed to persuade the EU. Negotiations were frozen on eight chapters of the *acquis* and unlikely to come to fruition on the others as consensus is required to close chapters. Brussels has resorted to trying to persuade both sides to submit the case to the European Court of Justice. Turkey accepted the idea; Cyprus did not.[33]

What does this mean for Romania and Bulgaria and their broader ties? First, it may be coincidental, but at precisely the same time as the EU was

[30] "US Welcomes EU Expansion and Calls for More," *euobserver.com,* Sept. 27, 2006.

[31] Milada Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage & Integration After Communism* (Oxford University Press, 2005); Frank Schimmelfennig. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe : Rules and Rhetoric,* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[32] European Council Decision of Jan. 23, 2006.

[33] Daniel Dombey and George Parker, "Success of Turkey Talks 'Vital to Whole World,'" *Financial Times*, Sept. 8, 2006; and Daniel Dombey and George Parker, "EU Stalls on Cyprus To Keep Talks with Turks Alive," *Financial Times*, Sept. 6, 2006.

frustrated by its weak post-membership leverage in the Cyprus case, it chose to announce that unprecedented strict conditionality would apply to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, including measures that will apply even after membership is granted.[34] Second, the issue may become a possible point of conflict between the EU, which wants to pressure Ankara, and NATO and the United States, which certainly do not. As new EU members, Romania and Bulgaria will be expected to support EU pressure on Turkey on this issue, but as neighbors, U.S. allies, and fellow NATO members, there will be pressure on them not to do so.

(3) *Demonstration Effect*. Given the softness of support for enlargement and the weakness of post-admission enforcement mechanisms, is the EU using the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to demonstrate to Turkey that it can and will be firm with candidate members in areas of reform? In this view, insisting on strict compliance by these two countries sends a signal as much to Ankara as to Bucharest or Sofia. The day that the May 2006 Commission report was published, enlargement commissioner Olie Rehn indicated that the EU action on Bulgaria and Romania "could also serve as a signal for Ankara to redouble its reform efforts."[35] It was also seen this way by some members of the European parliament—a body which also needs to approve all enlargements. Speaking of criticism of Romania in April, Dutch parliamentarian Arie Oostlander said "If by criticizing, we can accelerate the reforms in Romania, Bulgaria, or Turkey, we must do that."[36] Conscious of its own growing Muslim population and Turkish sensitivity to any suggestions of second-class status, the EU may be demonstrating firmness with Bulgaria and Romania, non-Muslim countries, in order to avoid the charge that it is utilizing more exacting standards with Muslim Turkey than with other prospective members. "[I]f the EU is seen to be 'lenient' with Romania over some aspects of the Copenhagen criteria," writes Gulnur Aybet, "then this could lead to tensions within Turkey if at the same time negotiations with the EU are not going well."[37] The EU's toughness toward Romania and Bulgaria may also be aimed at other potential candidates. As Michael Emerson puts it, "The Romanian case will no doubt be cited in the future by other candidate states with relatively weak standards of public governance, e.g., from the Balkans, with the argument 'we are up to Romanian standards, are we not?'" [38]

(4) *Bilateral Ties and Domestic Politics*: Bulgaria and Romania have very different histories of relations with Turkey. Bulgaria has an 800,000-member

[34] George Parker and Daniel Dombey, "Bulgaria, Romania To Face 'Tough' EU Entry," *Financial Times*, Sept. 5, 2006.

[35] "Rehn Says Turkey Must Press Reforms To Avoid EU Clash," Reuters, May 17, 2006.

[36] Rompres, Apr. 26, 2006 [WNC, April 26, 2006].

[37] Aybet, "Turkey's Long and Winding Road," p. 80. Aybet suggests that the EU's postponing of negotiations with Croatia in March 2005 was taken by Turkey as a similar signal.

[38] Michael Emerson, "Vade Mecum for the Next Enlargements of the European Union," *CEPS Policy Brief*, December 2004.

Turkish minority, and the unofficial Turkish party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, has been a part of several governments. Bulgaria's history is replete with references to the "Turkish yoke," and relations were seriously strained during the communist period by an aggressive assimilation campaign. In June 2005, a nationalist party that had not existed before, Ataka, scored well enough in the elections (8 percent) to become the fourth-leading party in parliament. Its leader, Volen Siderov, received nearly one-quarter of the votes in a presidential election runoff in 2006. The party's campaigns utilized, among other things, a strong anti-Turkish component. Romania's view of Turkey is more benign, and there is neither a border nor a significant minority to provide a point of conflict.

To date both countries have indicated their support for Turkish membership. This might work to their benefit with regard to the EU insofar as the EU recognizes a need to enhance its presence in the Black Sea area and insofar as it is officially favorable toward Turkish membership. On the other hand, to the extent that the EU is still struggling with issues raised by previous expansion and challenged by the prospect of Turkish membership, Romania and Bulgaria might move to distance themselves from Ankara in order not to suffer unduly from the EU's enlargement fatigue—i.e., they might move from acting as a lifeline to Turkish membership to acting like the last ones on the lifeboat. Already there is some evidence of this. In May 2006, the center-right Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB) came out against Turkish membership in the EU, explaining that if the EU "compromised" and let Turkey in before it fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria, it would import ethnic conflict and tension, slow down European integration, and expose Bulgaria to the possibility of some 15 million Turks emigrating to Bulgaria.[39] Ivan Kostov, a former Bulgarian prime minister and leader of the DSB, said that if this happened, Bulgaria would be stuck on the "poor periphery" of Europe.[40]

> Admitting Turkey in its current condition—with its huge territory, underdeveloped infrastructure, very low standard of life, large agrarian sector with as many people employed in it as in the whole European Union itself—would pose serious problems to the well-being of the European Union itself. The European Union won't be capable of continuing its integration in the same manner as before, it also won't be capable of integrating Turkey with its current institutions and capabilities. That is why the concentric circles will appear and Bulgaria will find itself in one of the outer layers of the European Union.[41]

Kostov also suggested that support for Turkish membership had hurt Bulgaria's own chances for membership in the EU. The DSB listed several ways

[39] "Position of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria on Turkey's Negotiations for EU Membership," at www.dsb.bg.

[40] "DSB: If Unprepared, Turkey's EU Membership Would Strongly Harm Bulgarian Interests," Bulgarian News Agency (BTA), May 2, 2006 [WNC, May 2, 2006].

[41] Interview with Ivan Kostov from "Panorama" on Bulgarian National Television, published at the DSB website, transcribed by BTA, May 5, 2006.

in which Turkey fails to meet the Copenhagen criteria and went on to accuse the Turkish government of using Turkish communities abroad to interfere in other countries' affairs.[42] This was an attack on the Movement for Rights and Freedoms—a member of the governing coalition with the Socialists and the National Movement Simeon II—and an evident attempt to steal some voters back from Ataka.[43] In this particular "two-level game," domestic politics might complicate Bulgaria's ties with both the EU and Turkey.

But in Romania, where no politically significant Turkish minority exists, the concern about being lumped in with Turkey was also evident. In January 2006, Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu worried that if Romania did not make the cut in 2007, there could be "incalculable political consequences" because of increasing pessimism about enlargement. Referring to the EU's discussions about Turkey, he said, "one does not wish for Romania to be introduced in a group with problems":

> I do not want to wait and see which are the tendencies of the European public opinion on enlargement, because as you know, there are countries where enlargement is regarded with reticence, and this tendency does not seem to die down unfortunately. I do not want us to enter an unfavorable political circumstance, in which even the text of the Accession Treaty may be questioned.[44]

Economic ties might work against such distancing. Turkey is the fourth leading trading partner for both Romania and Bulgaria and a major source of investment in Romania. But as the Bosporus becomes an increasingly problematic transit point for Europe's oil from Russia, both countries will become competitors with Turkey itself (and its Baku-Ceyhan pipeline) for alternative pipelines routes. In April 2006, Russia's oil transport giant, Transneft, announced intentions to shift major oil exports from tankers through the Bosporus to a proposed pipeline through Bulgaria to Greece.[45]

This double-bind pulling them in both directions is likely only to get worse. Both Romania and Bulgaria have to apply the full EU border protocol upon admission—it is not optional. As Poland and Hungary have found, this can cause substantial harm to cross-border economic ties, especially those with ethnic links. Thus, whether it feels held back by Turkey or not, Bulgarian accession without Turkish membership is likely to hurt both border traffic and trade.

(5) *Balkan Geometry*: If exacerbated, the Turkish accession issue could put Romania and Bulgaria in a difficult position between the United States and

[42] "Position of the Democrats."

[43] Kostov repeated this charge during the presidential elections. Interview with Ivan Kostov from "24 Hours," published at the DSB website, Oct. 24, 2006

[44] "Prime Minister Tariceanu: Unless We Join in 2007, We Can't Be Sure We Will Do It in 2008," Rompres, Jan. 10, 2006 [WNC, Jan. 10, 2006].

[45] *The Russia Journal*, Apr. 12, 2006, at www.therussiajournal.com. For a description of proposed pipelines in the region see Energy Information Administration, "Southeastern Europe," March 2004, Country Analysis Briefs at www.eia.doe.gov.

the EU, as the International Criminal Court and Iraq War did. Washington is a strong supporter of EU membership for Turkey, but given the nasty exchanges on the issue of the Iraq War and later revelations about alleged CIA-run detention centers in Romania (which prompted an EU investigation), Romania and Bulgaria will want to avoid being seen as doing the bidding of the United States within the EU. In the aftermath of the Iraq debate, Vice President of the European Parliament Catherine Lalumiere described Romania as a "Trojan horse" for the United States.[46] Both countries were careful to adhere to the EU position on the ICC, at some short-term cost to Bulgaria (a cutoff of military aid). It is possible that these two new members will find themselves caught between U.S. fervor for Turkey and EU hesitation on Turkish membership.

This squeeze is likely to get worse as recognition of the strategic significance of the Black Sea reinforces the "cultural" (i.e. Muslim) argument in Washington. Recently the United States reached basing agreements with both Romania and Bulgaria. As before, this was more controversial in the latter case,[47] but the U.S. orientation is not likely to be reversed. From the political, military, and energy perspectives, American interest in this part of Southeast Europe will likely be increased by several recent developments. First, the course of the fighting in both Iraq and Afghanistan suggests the continuing need for the presence of American troops in the region, making the presence of basing facilities in NATO countries close to the fighting even more important. Second, the rise to salience of the threat of an Iranian nuclear capacity increases the importance of nearby bases for intelligence gathering, remote observation, and possible deployment of inspectors or even combat forces. Third, the possibility of a return to some sort of conflict in the Balkans as a result of Serbia's continued disintegration cannot be ruled out. While Montenegro's declaration of independence did not produce intercommunal fighting and was accepted by Belgrade, a similar reaction is not likely on Kosovo. Moreover, the implications of independence for the less than 700,000 Montenegrins is not likely to be lost on the nearly two million Albanians in Kosovo. In this case, final-status negotiations have failed and the UN Security Council must decide on a plan. The violence that erupted there in March 2004 demonstrated the volatile nature of this apparently zero-sum situation.

Fourth, Russian efforts to use its huge energy resources as political and economic weapons—for example, its trade sanctions against Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and its differential pricing of natural gas to post-Soviet states—have stimulated countries in the region both to push harder for NATO

[46] Cited in Mihail E. Ionescu, "Romania's Position Towards the Evolution of the Transatlantic Link after 11 September 2001," in *Old Europe, New Europe,* p. 274.

[47] Veselin Toshkov, "Bulgarians Protest U.S. Base Deal," AP, Apr. 27, 2006; "Bulgaria Has Benefited and Will Continue to Benefit From US Bases," *24 Chasa,* May 8, 2006 [WNC, May 8, 2006].

membership and to try to reenergize their own alliance possibilities.[48] At the same time, both Romania and Bulgaria have been careful to try to cultivate good ties with Moscow in order to ensure themselves a piece of the lucrative energy export trade and, in Romania's case, improve the chances for a favorable future situation for Moldova.[49]

At it stands now, EU hesitation on further enlargement threatens to become *immobilisme*. Turkey has received sharp criticism and repeated warnings and now finds its negotiations stalled. The German chancellor and the French prime minister, along with most EU publics, have voiced deep concerns over Turkish membership. And the EU, already prolonging its own self-declared "period of reflection" after the Dutch and French constitutional votes, has begun to fret about its "absorption capacity."[50] But circumstances may not allow such a calm period for Romania, Bulgaria, or their U.S. ally. The issue of Turkish membership comes at a time of heightened attention to Romania and Bulgaria's "neighborhood." As long as these dynamics continue, the two countries' own concerns about their place in Brussels will push them in one direction while their U.S. security ties and their place in a changing strategic geometry will push them in the other.

[48] "Russian trade sanctions against Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine," *CEPS Neighbourhood Watch,* April 2006, pp. 13–14; "Analysis: Energy Dependence and Supply in Central and Eastern Europe," *EurActiv.com*, May 15, 2006; Liz Fuller, "Georgia: Is Tbilisi Moving Toward NATO Membership?" June 2, 2006 RFE/RL.

[49] "Traian Basescu Says Extraordinary Efforts Are Made in Relation with Russian Federation," Rompres, Apr. 17, 2006.

[50] "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007," Annex I.