



Guest Editorial

Turkey and the New Challenges to European Security

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The ESDP is of the utmost importance for all of us in Europe, since it presents new opportunities as well as challenges for all European countries in safeguarding the security and stability of our continent. Therefore, we should spend all efforts to provide for necessary mechanisms and rules that will embrace all European states in an inclusive fashion in order to achieve an effectively functioning ESDP, and in order to avoid creating new dividing lines in European security.

In this respect, I believe that we are indeed at the crossroads of determining the fate of the European security architecture. In addition to the bitter lessons we have learned through the challenges faced during the last decade, in particular in the Balkans, the recent heinous terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against American targets in New York and Washington should lead us to think again about our basic assumptions as regards the international security environment.

Following the end of the Cold War, the general feeling was that the threat against the territories of NATO countries had practically disappeared. Therefore, while preparing for future contingencies and training our forces to that end, the emphasis was put primarily on the requirements for meeting the challenges of international crisis management, peacekeeping and peacemaking operations rather than national defence or territorial defence as such.

However, the recent terrorist attacks against the USA have, in a very bitter fashion, reminded us that there continue to exist threats directed against our territories, albeit in new forms such as international terrorism, and that territorial defence must remain our first and foremost goal. Therefore, following the dramatic events of 11 September, our perception of the international security environment should be reconsidered, taking into account the fact that the view suggesting that the territories and populations of states in the Euro–Atlantic area are not directly threatened is no longer valid. NATO's decision to invoke Article Five of the Washington Treaty in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks is a clear testimony of this. I believe that in view of these recent developments, NATO–EU cooperation and the participation of

non-EU countries in the emerging European defence structure should also be considered with a new perspective.

This perspective requires, as a first step, a new and more realistic threat assessment which should take into account the threats emanating from terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as cyberwar, some of which have only been considered as topics of an academic nature but in any event not as concrete threats that could have a dramatic impact on the security of the Western countries. This has been demonstrated already by the barbaric attacks in the USA.

Taking into account the indivisibility of security and the requirement for common and sustained efforts to counter these new threats, the new perspective should be built on an even more inclusive approach in order to avoid new dividing lines in European security and defence. In this respect, we should, on the one hand, avoid attributing lesser roles to certain countries on the basis of the artificial criteria of whether they are members of a given organization or not, and, on the other hand, we should prevent tendencies for a division of labour among European organisations in the field of European security.

We should seek real cooperation between all Allied countries, as well as between NATO and the EU. Accordingly, all institutional priorities and discriminative approaches should be left aside in order to establish a comprehensive and implementable system which will enable us to make the optimum and most effective use of our existing military capabilities against the new threats.

Therefore, I believe it is high time to deploy creative thinking for involving all European countries in any European security and defence structure and also for finding ways and means for enhancing practical and institutional cooperation between NATO and the EU.

However difficult and complicated a task this might sound, our efforts towards achieving these goals will not, in essence, be one of creating a completely new concept. We should take into account the fact that we already have the necessary foundations, as was laid down at the highest level at the Washington summit meeting of the Alliance's Heads of State and Government in 1999.

The underpinning concepts that emerged after lengthy deliberations in Washington were that, on the one hand (and in accordance with the principles of cooperation, complementarity and non-decoupling), NATO would support the EU's efforts aimed at the establishment of ESDP and, on the other hand (and in line with the principles of inclusiveness and the indivisibility of security), the EU would include non-EU European Allies in their project.

In this context, while recognizing the EU's intentions to have an autonomous capacity that will enable the EU to take decisions and approve military actions where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily as an Alliance,

the Alliance's Heads of State and Government in Washington have underlined the preservation of NATO's primary role in the maintenance of security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, the preservation of the Transatlantic link, and the establishment of a sound and effective relationship between NATO and the EU as some of the basic principles of future NATO-EU relations.

To pave the way for the smooth and effective achievement of these objectives, our Heads of State and Government also decided that cooperation between NATO and the EU should be built upon the already existing mechanisms between NATO and the WEU, in the context of the development of the ESDI within the Alliance.

However, the Nice Summit decisions of December 2001 diverted attention from the decisions adopted at the Washington Summit and disregarded to a large extent the existing mechanisms in the WEU and those between NATO and the WEU. In fact, Associate Members of the WEU such as Turkey have enjoyed substantial rights and privileges, ranging from attendance at practically all military and civilian staff level meetings (as well as at meetings at the ambassadorial and ministerial levels) to participation in all military activities, including the right to participate, if they were so to choose, in possible WEU-led operations with the same rights and responsibilities as the full Members of this organisation. They were also full members of WEU bodies such as WEAG.

All these rights and responsibilities were overlooked in the Nice Summit decisions. In this context, the Nice decisions, although foreseeing the participation on non-EU European Allies in EU-led operations that made use of NATO assets and capabilities, fell short of envisaging effective participation of those countries in the planning, political control and strategic direction of such operations, as was provided for in the WEU.

As to autonomous EU operations, the Nice provisions are even more restrictive in nature and envisage the participation of non-EU European Allies only after a decision by the EU Council. This in practice means that even a single EU country, if it so wishes, could block an invitation to a non-EU European Ally like Turkey to take part in any given autonomous EU operation.

Therefore, the Nice decisions could be considered as backtracking in comparison to the Washington decisions and require revisiting in order to bring them more in line with the latter.

I would like to emphasise that, as a non-EU European Ally, Turkey has supported and continues to support the ESDP process. We will continue to honour our commitments stemming from the Washington decisions that, along with all Allies (including the eleven that are at the same time Member States of the EU) were undertaken at the highest level. We continue to believe that a stronger Europe, supported with the necessary assets and capabilities, would not only contribute to the maintenance of European security, but would also

constitute an important and valuable addition to our overall efforts of meeting the new challenges to peace, stability and security in the entire Euro-Atlantic area, especially from terrorism.

We firmly believe that one of the requirements for all of us in the development of an effective ESDP is to ensure that all European Allies become a part of this process and be given the opportunity to assume their deserved rights and responsibilities. This is also underlined as one of the basic requirements to ensure a sound and effective security mechanism in the Strategic Concept of the Alliance. The valuable experience, military assets and capabilities of these countries, as well as their vital geostrategic positions, are just impossible to neglect and doing so will only undermine our efforts towards strengthening European security.

Given its geographical location, the participation issue is of the utmost importance for Turkey. In this regard, the proximity of Turkey to potential crisis areas testifies to the fact that the participation issue is not of an academic nature for Turkey, but is directly linked to her national security concerns.

Turkey's basic expectation from the EU is the adoption of any necessary provisions that will enable the participation of non-EU European Allies in EU operations (including preparation and planning, political control and strategic direction) if that operation makes use of NATO's assets and capabilities or if and when these countries raise their concerns that the envisaged EU operation is in their geographical proximity or might even have an effect on their own national security interests.

It is also essential to establish all necessary arrangements for enabling the non-EU European Allies to participate in EU exercises (including preparation and planning) in order to ensure full operational coherence and effectiveness in any future EU operation.

There have been some positive developments in this regard, including a number of informal contacts between Turkey and some EU countries to find a common understanding that will take into full account the provisions of the Washington and Nice decisions. We hope that we will reach a final solution that will be satisfactory to all concerned in the near future.

In this context, I would like to underline the fact that, contrary to suggestions put forward by some that the development of NATO-EU relations is being blocked by Turkey and that, as a result of this stance, the EU has had to develop its own autonomous capabilities, we have in fact significantly taken forward work in many areas of NATO-EU relations, as identified at the Washington summit. We have prepared a number of documents that will provide the necessary basis for a sound and effective NATO-EU relationship, if and when the participation issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all European Allies.

I should like to stress yet again that Turkey is ready to contribute, as she has done during the last fifty years, to all efforts aimed at preserving security and stability on our continent. I believe that Turkey's constructive stance within the Alliance and the work conducted to meet the Washington mandates constitute a clear demonstration of Turkey's determination to this end.