

**Reconciling the Irreconcilable?**  
*Turkey's European-orientation and the Cyprus policy as a 'National Cause'*

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**Introduction:**

Turkish politics has undergone remarkable changes in the last decade, not only in the areas of democratization, human rights, civil society, and civil-military relations, but also in the way its foreign policy is conducted.<sup>1</sup> The previously conflict-ridden relations with the neighboring countries (Syria, Iran, and, especially, Greece) were gradually replaced by a seemingly desecuritizing attitude that allowed the countries to pursue their security by means of cooperation. With regard to the Cyprus issue as well, there seems to be a departure from the defensive-modernist and securitizing approach of 1990s, which was best characterized by the statement of the then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit that Turkey might as well annex Cyprus if the Republic of Cyprus is admitted to the EU before a settlement is reached.<sup>2</sup> Beginning from 2002, the Turkish government began to take more active and constructive steps in pressing for a solution in Cyprus, resigned from supporting the confederalist approach of the leader of the Turkish Republic of the Northern Cyprus (TRNC), and backed the comprehensive settlement plan presented by the United Nations Secretary General for the creation of a United Cyprus Republic. This indeed fit in the pro-EU stance of the government as Turkey's somewhat compromising attitude contributed to Turkey's receiving a date for opening the negotiations with the EU and led many to view this shift in the behavior within the context of Turkey's Europeanization.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the domestic reforms that took place in the last decade, see, especially, Ziya Öniş, "Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the post-Helsinki Era," *Turkish Studies* 4, 1 (Spring 2003): 9-34; Meltem Müftüler Baç, "Turkey's political reforms and the impact of the European Union," *South European Politics & Society* 10, 1 (April 2005): 16-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Cyprus Mail*, 06.11.2001.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Thomas Diez, "Turkey, the European Union and Security Complexes Revisited," *Mediterranean Politics* 10, 2 (July 2005): 167-180; Bahar Rumelili, "Civil Society and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Cooperation," *South European Society & Politics* 10, 1 (April 2005): 45-67; Ahmet Evin, "The Future of Greek-Turkish Relations," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 5, 3 (September 2005): 395-404; Bülent Aras & Salih Bıçakçı, "Europe, Turkey and the Middle East: Is Harmonisation Possible?" *East European Quarterly* 15, 3 (September 2006): 367-381.

This notwithstanding, these developments do not represent a clear break from the defensive-modernist approach, which becomes especially clear when Turkey's Cyprus policy is situated within the context of Turkey's EU membership. Much of the earlier manifestations of this approach (i.e. Turkey's reactions against the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU, against the installation of S-300 missiles in Cyprus, and against critical arguments with regard to the presence of the Turkish military in Northern Cyprus, Turkey's support for the confederation thesis of the leader of the TRNC and the refusal to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, as well as the strong reservations concerning the role of the EU in the resolution of the conflict) have been seen to represent a 'bullying' and 'blackmailing' behavior that does not accord with a 'European' approach or Turkey's European-oriented foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> Similar observations were also made in relation to Turkey's Cyprus intervention in 1974, which was considered to be a 'deviation', if not a 'partial disengagement' from Turkey's Western orientation.<sup>5</sup> Turkey's refusal to unconditionally fulfill the terms of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement, according to which Turkey has to open its ports and airports to traffic from all the new EU members, including the Republic of Cyprus, provides a recent example of the defensive-modernist approach (albeit 'softer' than it used to be) took. On June 15, 2006, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that Turkey would not comply with the EU's demands to open her ports to Cyprus for trade unless the trade embargo to the Northern Cyprus is lifted, a statement that signaled a 'train crash' in EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn's words, as it would bring about the suspension of Turkey's EU membership negotiations.<sup>6</sup> Instead of yielding to this pressure to prevent a possible 'crash', Turkey has come up with an alternative offer instead, suggesting opening two of its ports to the Republic of Cyprus on the condition that it is followed by some reciprocal action from the Republic of Cyprus. Despite having been

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<sup>4</sup> Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Impact of 'Democratization in the Context of the EU Accession Process' on Turkish Foreign Policy," *Mediterranean Politics* 9, 1 (Spring 2004):108; Costas Melakopides, "Implications of the Accession of Cyprus to the European Union for Greek-Turkish and Euro-Turkish Relations," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (Winter 2006): 73-101.

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Changing Patterns and Conjunctures during the Cold War", *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, 1 (January 2000): 103-139; Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy: New Prospects* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Ian Traynor and Nicholas Watt, "Turkey clashes with EU over Cyprus," *The Guardian*, 16.06.2006, accessed from: < <http://www.guardian.co.uk/cyprus/story/0,,1799567,00.html> >.

seen as a significant step, this swift move was not found satisfactory since it did not represent a major break with Turkey's previous position to put forward additional preconditions to fulfill her treaty obligations.<sup>7</sup>

The present paper investigates the question of whether we should understand Turkey's defensive-modernist approach to the Cyprus issue as irreconcilable with her European orientation: whether a behavior that is not in clash with the EU's stance towards the issue is the only instance where one can talk about the confirmation of Turkey's 'Europeanized' approach and European-oriented foreign policy? Does the European orientation entail a set of actions each conforming to the assumed European behavior, or is it a domestically constructed discourse within which seemingly 'non-European' actions may be also legitimized by arguing to pursue a pro-European policy?

At a first glance, Turkey's hanging on to its 'national cause' of Cyprus even at the expense of derailing the speed of her integration with the EU may seem irreconcilable with her European orientation as it has been a continuous source of tension for Turkey's accession in the EU, which has been seen as the most important civilization project that is "unquestionable."<sup>8</sup> However, instead of evaluating Turkey's Cyprus policy from a pre-given European identity or rationality, I suggest to take the EU-orientation not as a chain of actions that conform to the expected behavior but as a contested discourse which reveals certain constructions of 'Europe' and which legitimizes the 'national policies' in terms of their congruence with the defined European values and the 'domestically owned concepts'. While examining how certain conceptions of Europeanness gets articulated in the concepts that structure the discourse on the Cyprus issue, the paper relies on the premises of poststructuralism and takes the constructions such as 'European identity', 'European orientation', and 'national cause' to be a point of contention rather than being exogenous to the discursive processes.<sup>9</sup> From this perspective, it would be problematic to view Turkey's Cyprus policy as a deviation from the European orientation or to see the defensive-modernist approach as representing a non-European identity, unless such a link

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<sup>7</sup> "Turkey 'will open up to Cyprus'," *BBC NEWS*, 07.12.2006, accessed from: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6216498.stm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Abdullah Gül, "Türkiye için AB bir Medeniyet Projesidir. Tartışılması Mümkün olmayan bir Tercihtir." [EU for Turkey is a civilization project. It a choice that is unquestionable] (May 25, 2003), accessible from <<http://www.akparti.gov.tr>>

<sup>9</sup> Lene Hansen, "Introduction," in Lene Hansen and Ole Waever (eds.) *European Integration and National Identity* (London, NewYork: Rotledge, 2002), p. 5.

is expressly articulated. In pursuing this line of argumentation, I look at how the defensive-modernist and the desecuritizing discourses in Turkey legitimized Turkey's Cyprus policy in relation to Turkey's European orientation (whether Cyprus policy is seen as an anti-European move or an extension of Turkey's European orientation) and how the elements of the domestic repertoire structured Turkey's construction of European identity. It will be seen that while the defensive-modernist discourse has not viewed Cyprus as a national bid against Turkey's European vocation, the desecuritizing approach, on the other hand, employed the same elements as used by the defensive-modernist approach, while attributing a different meaning to each.

### **Approaches to the Cyprus Puzzle**

Turkey's refusal to comply with the terms of the Additional Protocol may stand as a puzzle from the rationalist perspective which assumes that the 'carrot' of membership and the 'stick' of the suspension of the negotiation process would pave the way to a more compromising approach towards the sensitive issues such as Cyprus, especially after the Republic of Cyprus became a member in the EU.<sup>10</sup> While this puzzle may be resolved within the premises of the rationalist perspective in general, arguing that the Cyprus policy has involved the immediate security interests of Turkey<sup>11</sup>, Turkey's recent modernist twist remains being paradoxical even if one does not assume a pre-given rationality but a pre-given set of European norms and a conforming mode of behavior by the countries that are undergoing a process of Europeanization. This perspective is based on the premise that, as one country gets closer to being a member and socializes into the European norms of behavior, it gradually moves away from a defensive or aggressive approach built on threats towards an understanding of security that is built on mutual trust and cooperation.

According to this approach, acting upon the immediate national security threats is a characteristic of a Westphalian state and does not reflect the contemporary vision of

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<sup>10</sup> Melakopides (2006): 74.

<sup>11</sup> From this perspective some have explained Turkey's Cyprus policy by referring to the changing patterns in the international system. See Aydın (2000), p. 114; Çelik (1999), p. 37. The national security interests of Turkey have also been considered the main reason as to why the Cyprus issue has been seen as a national cause. See, for instance, Aydın (2000), p. 120; and also, Sabahattin İsmail, *150 Soruda Kıbrıs Sorunu* [Cyprus problem in 150 Questions] (Istanbul: Kestaş Yayınevi, 1998), p. 49.

what is 'European'. The Westphalian model (as a sovereign state with exclusive authority within its own territorial boundaries) is a basic concept for describing the characteristics of the state that arguably emerged after the Peace of Westphalia 1648.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it has been the common reference point (especially for the neorealist and the neo-liberal institutionalist approaches) in describing the modern state as a unitary rational actor operating under an anarchic environment and struggling to enhance its welfare and security.<sup>13</sup> The basic norms and values of this system have been understood as the ability to exercise control over the given territory, self-reliance and independence in matters of security and foreign policy, the protection of national security against the potential threats from other states, and the *right* to enter into international alignments<sup>14</sup>, values that are built on the mistrust towards the other countries and the autonomy attributed to the state in general. Juxtaposing these values to those of the contemporary 'Europe', the European Union, it is argued, is the most developed example of a 'postmodern' state system in exhibiting the characteristics of mutual interference in the internal affairs and mutual surveillance, the rejection of force in the resolution of disputes, the growing irrelevance of borders, and representing security through transparency, mutual openness, and interdependence of mutual vulnerability.<sup>15</sup>

In this view, the European Union is also argued to represent a post-modern security community which involves a certain understanding of security (based on desecuritization) and a common security identity based on these 'post-modern' values. Drawing on Adler and Barnett's definition of a 'mature security community'<sup>16</sup>, Ricker argues that the European integration carries the characteristics of such a community by representing an evolution whereby the definition of security exclusively as the protection of sovereign national borders from military threat is replaced by the one that involves

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted here that some scholars oppose the idea that there was ever such a golden age of the Westphalian state by stating that it has never been an empirical regularity in being a confining structure for states: the violations of the Westphalian model has been the enduring characteristics of international politics. On this view see especially, Stephen Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," *International Security* 20, 3 (Winter 1995-1996): 115-151; Andreas Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth," *International Organization* 55, 2 (Spring 2001): 251-287.

<sup>13</sup> Krasner (1995-1996), p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> R. Cooper, *The postmodern state and the world order* (London: Demos, The Foreign Policy Center, 2000), pp: 19-24.

<sup>16</sup> Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp: 50-58.

benefits received from mutual cooperation.<sup>17</sup> Under such a system, she argues, states no longer rely on balance of power mechanisms and deterrence, but develop a high degree of trust, common identity, and a common vision for the future,<sup>18</sup> as the integration is seen as a bulwark against the previous insecurity caused by the balance of power, war, and nationalism.<sup>19</sup>

Another point that concerns us here is how the EU is seen as a desecuritizing actor from this perspective, not only for the countries within but also for those that are in the ‘near abroad’. In contrast to the classical security system based on the Westphalian model, the European post-modern security system involves the non-members that relate to the EU, since the EU is understood neither as a state nor an international organization but as a ‘peace community’.<sup>20</sup> Representing the above-mentioned postmodern values EU is seen as a symbolic power legitimating certain identities and the norms of behavior as the applicant countries socialize into the ‘peace community’ during the process of European integration.<sup>21</sup> According to this perspective, the European integration is assumed to have a ‘catalytic effect’ towards the conflict resolution even in the absence of clear indications of economic benefit,<sup>22</sup> and this desecuritizing impact (as the norm content of the integration) can be sustained only when a respective identity transformation takes place after a period of routinized actions that are taken from an instrumental perspective but nevertheless conform to the content norm.<sup>23</sup>

The problem with this approach is not only that it assumes a certain to-be-acquired European identity and rationality for the countries that are undergoing the process of European integration, but also in that it does not take these constructions a matter of contention. If one moves a step further and takes the European integration and

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<sup>17</sup> Pemilie Ricker, “Security, Integration and identity change,” Working Paper (December 2000), 611, (NUPI) Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ricker (2000), p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ole Weaver, “European security identities,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34, 1 (1996): 103-132.

<sup>20</sup> Ricker, (2000), p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Ricker (2000), pp: 15-16; Michael Williams & Iver B. Neumann, “From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia, and the Power of Identity,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, 2 (2000): 6; Thomas Diez, “The Imposition of Governance: Transforming Foreign Policy through Enlargement,” Working Paper (August 2000a) Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, accessed from <<http://www.ciaonet.working.papers>>, last accessed on 10.05.2007.

<sup>22</sup> Diez, “Last Exit to Paradise? The EU, the Cyprus Conflict, and the Problematic ‘Catalytic Effect,’” COPRI Working Papers (2000b) 4, Copenhagen: Copenhagen Peace Research Institute.

<sup>23</sup> Diez, (2000a), p. 12.

the identity formation along this process as a dynamic discursive construct that depends on the way the 'postmodern' norms outlined above resonate with their domestic counterparts<sup>24</sup>, however, one does not need to choose between the material interests of the power holders and the extent to which the European identity has become a properly internalized social reality. Indeed, such a dichotomization is not even relevant. What is relevant is how the existing elements of the domestic discourse are linked to the elements of the integration discourse and what type of identity is constituted by means of this 'translation'.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, Diez argues that the very existence of alternative constructions may facilitate the 'bridge' between the so-called European norms and the domestic ones if there are discourses within the domestic system that are not opposed to the norm of desecuritization.<sup>26</sup>

Much can be found to confirm such a discursive change that is peculiar to Europeanization as discussed above in the context of Turkish foreign policy, as long as Europeanization is seen as a long term *process* and not as an *outcome* that shows a complete 'fit' between the pursued policy and the desired action or the total elimination of the 'national' from the domestic discourse. In this regard, neither the discourse of the EU countries could be expected to be *beyond* the modernist discourse to represent an ideal postmodernist view on security<sup>27</sup>, nor could the applicant countries be categorized to represent the totality of the modernist discourse. Given that the foreign policy discourse and the identities involved therein are all contested and that "there is no underlying principle of fixing - and hence constituting the whole field of differences"<sup>28</sup>, so long as one stays at the level of discourse, one cannot expect to find a homogenous construction of what the European integration means, as well as whether the material concerns prevail over the ideational ones, or whether the securitizing tendencies prevail

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<sup>24</sup> On this view, see Diez, "Europe as a Discursive Battleground: European Integration Studies and Discourse Analysis," *Cooperation and Conflict* 36, 1 (2001): 5-38; and Ole Wæver, "Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory: The case of Germany and Europe," Working Paper (November 1996), accessed from: <<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/wao01/index.html>>.

<sup>25</sup> Diez, "Speaking 'Europe': the politics of integration discourse," *Journal of European Public Policy* (1999): 606. See also Thomas Diez, "Europe as a Discursive Battleground: European Integration Studies and Discourse Analysis," *Cooperation and Conflict* 36, 1 (2001): 5-38; and Wæver (1996), <<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/wao01/index.html>>.

<sup>26</sup> Diez (2000a), p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> See Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (2002); Diez (2000), p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 111.

over the desecuritizing ones in an applicant country. Since both the securitizing and desecuritizing discourses co-exist instead of representing isolated periods of construction, a nationalist twist in the course of Europeanization could then be argued to decelerate (if not to reverse) this discursive change whereby post-Westphalian meanings are attributed to the modernist elements that are available in the domestic repertoire.

While contesting constructions of the Cyprus policy and the European identity may be present at a given time in this regard, viewing the European-oriented behavior only in the context of the desecuritizing approach may be misleading, since it evaluates the foreign policy actions not in their discursive context but in terms of their fit with the values they are assumed to represent. Indeed, if one takes Europeanization as a process of linking the modernist elements to the European values without assuming a pre-given European identity, Turkish foreign policy can be argued to have long been Europeanized. While remarkable changes have taken place in the last decade, the confirmation of such a desecuritizing tendency should not come at the expense of overlooking how the defensive-modernist approach in the Turkish context may also have pursued a pro-integration discourse. Having discussed the Westphalian/defensive modernist and post-Westphalian/postmodern elements understood in the context of Europeanization, the task ahead is therefore to analyze how each of these approaches in the Turkish context have legitimized Turkey's Cyprus policy, how they defined the European identity, and last but not the least, whether they have identified the Cyprus issue as the confirmation of or a move against Turkey's European vocation.

### **Main Concepts of Turkish Foreign Policy:**

The official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that “[g]uided by the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey has been pursuing a policy of ‘Peace at Home and Peace Abroad’ since the establishment of the Republic in 1923.”<sup>29</sup> The statements made in the government programs also reveal that continuity, rather than change, seems to represent the main parameters of the Turkish foreign policy. The main principles of the Kemalist foreign policy are reassured to have been kept intact. There is a general consensus on defining these principles as ‘full-independence’, an objective that

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<sup>29</sup> See <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr>>

originated during the Independence War; the principle of ‘peace at home, peace in the world’, which is taken as the non-adventurist and the non-aggressive characteristic of the Kemalist foreign policy; the principle of ‘adherence to the international law’, which is seen as dependent on the former principle; and ‘civilizationism’, which is also defined as ‘raising Turkey to the level of the contemporary civilization’.<sup>30</sup> Based on these principles, Kemalist foreign policy, situated under the motto of ‘peace at home, peace in the world’, has been characterized as pursuing a pacifist, rationalist, and a non-submissive policy, protecting the national honor and interest, exemplifying a model to all the oppressed nations, and increasing respect for Turkey among the Western states. It has been a long tradition to state in the government programs that the foreign policy of the government would advance the Kemalist foreign policy by following the ‘peace at home, peace in the world’ principle and by adhering to the principles of independence, sovereignty, respect for territorial integrity, and non-interference in internal affairs.<sup>31</sup> However, these objectives have also been identified by the political elite as part of the traditional foreign policy without making a direct reference to Kemalism.

Taken as such, the concepts attributed to the Kemalist foreign policy show similar patterns with the values of the Westphalian state discussed above. The emphasis on the independence, non-interference in domestic and foreign affairs, equality (reciprocity) and freedom of action in the conduct of the foreign policy reflect the vision of the state as a sovereign entity that acts upon self-reliance and independence in matters of security and foreign policy. While on this basis one could argue that the Kemalist foreign policy concepts provide the defensive-modernist character of the Turkish foreign policy discourse, the principles of pursuing ‘peace at home, peace in the world’, serving as a model to the oppressed nations, and raising Turkey to the level of the contemporary

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<sup>30</sup> Turhan Feyzioğlu, “Atatürk’ün Dış Politikasının Özellik, İlke ve Amaçları” [Characteristics, Principles and Objectives of Atatürk’s Foreign Policy], in *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, Atatürk Türkiyesi’nde (1923-1938) Dış Politika Sempozyumu: Bildiriler* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1984), pp: 1-11

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, “I. Ecevit Hükümetinin Programı (26 Ocak 1974-17 Kasım 1974) [The Program of the Ist Ecevit Government (26 January 1974-17 November 1974)], in Nuran Dağlı, and Belin Aktürk (eds.) *Hükümetler ve Programları II 1960-1980* [Governments and their Programs II 1960-1980] (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1988), p. 248; Kenan Evren, “Press Conference of General Kenan Evren, Head of State, Chief of General Staff and Chairman of the National Security Council of Turkey” (September 16, 1980), in *12 September in Turkey: Before and After* (Ankara: Ogun Kardeşler, 1982), p. 298.

civilization, on the other hand, do not reveal a conception that is based on self-reliance *as such*. Yet, suffice it to argue here that their meaning (just as it is with the other principles) depends on how they are defined in the Turkish foreign policy context.

### **Defensive-Modernist Approach:**

At the core of the defensive-modernist approach lies an emphasis on the concepts of sovereignty, national security and freedom of action. Cyprus has been seen as Turkey's national cause due to its strategic location and, hence, importance for Turkey's national security, as well as due to its role in preserving the balance of power between Greece and Turkey. The *Enosis* (the unification of Cyprus with Greece) as an imminent possibility haunted this approach in disrupting this balance, hence posing a threat against Turkey's strategic interests in the region, to the degree that the accession of the Republic of Cyprus in the EU was seen as just another version of *Enosis*.

In seeing the sovereignty not only from a territorial perspective but also as the capacity for the formulation and the implementation of foreign policy, this approach furthermore rejected the intervention of the EEC and later the EU countries to the conflict or their claims regarding Turkey's role in it, albeit not seeing the Cyprus policy as a bid to be played against the EEC/EU but as a policy to be respected, given Turkey's legal and, for some, historical rights. As the EEC and the EU have been viewed as a Western organization, which Turkey had a *right* to join but was rejected for other security and political reasons, the consequent European identity constructed by this approach has therefore been limited to the values of anti-colonialism, democracy and security. On the other hand, the 'European Community', although viewed with suspicion, has not been perceived in antagonistic terms but was rather viewed as an untrustworthy ally.

*Cyprus as a strategically important territory and the concepts of national honor and sovereignty:*

From the start of conflicts in Cyprus in the 1950s, Cyprus has been seen a matter of Turkey's own security problem due to its strategic location for Turkey; hence, 'not letting it go to the Greeks' was perceived as '*the national cause*'. This approach considered *Enosis* to pose a threat not only to the Turks living on the island, but also to

the national security interests and the ‘existence’ of Turkey. On this view, İsmet İnönü, the former Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition party (Republican Peoples Party), stated in 1956: “It is obviously a security cause for us to ensure that Cyprus does not pass on to the hands of Greece.”<sup>32</sup> By the same token, Bülent Ecevit made a similar remark in 1998 that Cyprus is so strategically important for Turkey that even if no single Turkish Cypriot were living on the island, Ankara would still not remove its troops from the Northern Cyprus.<sup>33</sup>

Considering Cyprus as a ‘national cause’ was also legitimized via the idea of merging one nation under a single territory, which manifested itself in viewing the Turks living on the island as “a part and an extension of the Turkish nation”<sup>34</sup>, and considering the territory of Cyprus as an extension of Turkey’s territory. In this sense, while fighting against the *Enosis* plan of the Greek Cypriots and hence ‘saving’ the Turkish Cypriots from colonization formed one element of the ‘cause’ that was seen as Turkey’s “honor debt”<sup>35</sup>, exercising control over the Cyprus territory because of its strategic importance for Turkey constituted the second dimension of it. While exercising control was interpreted as preventing the realization of *Enosis*, and in this aim supporting the federation and, later, the confederation claims of the Turkish Cypriots, it was also represented as exercising full control over the whole territory, best expressed in the remarks of Alparslan Türkeş, the Head of the Nationalist Action Party, who defined the Cyprus cause as the “Independence War of Turks against the Greek imperialism.”<sup>36</sup> The following notes of Türkeş, where he explains as to why Cyprus should belong to Turkey, are illustrative of how the defensive modernism of this approach turns offensive:

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<sup>32</sup> İsmet İnönü, “C.H.P. İstanbul İl Kongresindeki Söylevi” (27 Ekim 1956) [“Speech delivered in the Istanbul Provincial Congress” (October 27, 1956)], *Muhalefette İsmet İnönü (1956-1959): Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Mesajları, Sohbetleri, ve Yazıları* [İsmet İnönü in the Opposition (1956-1959): His Speeches, Statements, Messages, Conversations, and Writings], in Sabahat Erdemir (ed.) (Istanbul: Ekicigil Matbaası, 1959), p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Hansjörg Brey, “Turkey and the Cyprus Question,” *International Spectator* 14, 1 (January-March 1999): 111.

<sup>34</sup> Nihat Erim, “Nihat Erim’in Dış Meseleler Konusundaki Genel Görüşme Sırasında Konuşması,” (Millet Meclisi, 9.1.1963), Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Cumhuriyet Arşivi [“Speech delivered by Nihat Erim during the general meeting regarding the Foreign Policy Issues,” (The General Assembly, 9.1.1963), The Republic of Turkey General Directory of State Archives The Republican Archive] Ref. No: 030/01/50/299/3, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> Alparslan Türkeş, *Dış Politikamız ve Kıbrıs* [Our Foreign Policy and Cyprus] (Istanbul: Orkun Yayınevi, 1979), pp: 191, 192.

A military plane that takes off from Greece cannot return to Greece after bombarding Ankara or Erzurum. But whoever has the island acquires the opportunity to bombard Ankara and Erzurum and go back...In addition, the fact that 130.000 Turks live on the island makes the island an important territory for Turkey. Last but not the least, Turkey has historical rights over Cyprus. Cyprus has never belonged to Greek sovereignty...Hence, the most fair solution would be to hand Cyprus to Turkey.<sup>37</sup>

No other solution will satisfy Turkey or ensure its security and protect its existence.<sup>38</sup>

While *Enosis* was considered as an imminent possibility until mid 1970s, the events that took place in 1990s and especially the EU application of the Republic of Cyprus once again triggered the same narrative. In December 1993, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus launched the Joint Defensive Dogma with the aim of defending the Hellenic space against Turkey which involved joint military exercises and the construction of a military base.<sup>39</sup> When the Republic of Cyprus announced its decision to deploy S-300 missiles with a range of 150 km in 1997, this once again turned the Cyprus issue into the main security problem for Turkey<sup>40</sup> and produced a vigorous response by the Turkish Army that this attempt would be perceived as a *casus belli* and that a preventive bombing would take place.<sup>41</sup> Pursuing the national security interests of Turkey and her historical and legal rights this time involved a reactionary integration with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Foreign Minister announced that any attack against the TRNC would be perceived as an attack against Turkey and that Turkey would go ahead with her plans to integrate Northern Cyprus should the EU launch accession talks with the island's Greek Cypriot government.<sup>42</sup>

It was within this context that, when the European Council's Luxembourg Summit of 1997 declared that the EU would start the accession negotiations with Cyprus

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp: 276, 277.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>39</sup> Semin, "Cyprus Obstacle to Turkey's Road to Membership in the European Union," *Turkish Studies* 4, 1 (Spring 2003), p. 59.

<sup>40</sup> Cem, in *Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem*, pp: 3-4. See also Cem, "Turkey: Setting Sail to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Perceptions* 2, 3 (September-November 1997): 91.

<sup>41</sup> Suverierol (2003), p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> Similar declarations followed before the European Council's Luxembourg Summit in 1997, finally leading to the establishment of the Association Council between the TRNC and Turkey, working on a partial integration at the economic, military and foreign policy levels. See "T.B.M.M'nin 21 Ocak 1997 Tarihli Kararı," [The Decision of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey dated as January 21, 1997]; cited in İsmail (1998), p. 364. Shortly after this declaration, the Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem also assured the Turkish Cypriots that Turkey indeed wanted the independence of TRNC to survive but in case they needed to join Turkey under the conditions of tyranny and pressure, the choice was in their hands. Cited in Ibid., p. 383.

and excluded Turkey from the list of the candidates for the next round of enlargement, the integration plans between the TRNC and Turkey were accelerated. The first meeting of the Association Council between two countries took place on the date the EU began negotiations with Cyprus, as a symbolic response to the Summit's decision.<sup>43</sup> This 'balancing' attitude against the accession of a 'dangerous and illegitimate' state to the EU further involved a different interpretation of the principle of 'peace at home, peace in the world', expressed through the support for the confederation thesis of the President of the TRNC:

First of all, we see that the existential interests of Turkey lie in both seas; we see the most crucial energy crossroads in both the Aegean and the Eastern part of the Mediterranean. When we say Mediterranean, we naturally see Cyprus. In this context, we consider the claims regarding the future of Cyprus and the policies towards a confederation to be important; and equally important is to find the power within ourselves to resist the policies of any state, and especially the policies of Greece ...and not to give any concessions on that...We will not step back from our national interests and we will continue pursuing these goals, contributing to the general peace... 'Peace at home, peace in the world' is not a product of a passive policy but an active one that can transcend itself... a positive, bold step that is oriented to building the future.<sup>44</sup>

One could possibly argue that such a security-oriented interpretation should be interpreted within the context of the uncertainty with regard to Turkey's future with the EU. However, even after the acknowledgement of Turkey's candidacy to the EU during the Helsinki Summit in 1999, acting on the same narrative of resistance to the *Enosis* resulted in suggesting a similar 'solution' for dealing with the problem, which was expressed in the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's remarks that, in case Cyprus becomes a member of the EU before a settlement, Turkey might as well go and annex Cyprus.<sup>45</sup> Yet the securitization of the opening of the accession talks with Cyprus did not parallel a securitization of Turkey's EU vocation, nor were the 'balancing' reactions used as a bid against the EU. The following remarks of the Foreign Minister of İsmail Cem are illustrative in this respect: "We have no tendency or intention to use Cyprus against the

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<sup>43</sup> See, İsmail (1998), pp: 362-363. See also Korkmaz Haktanır, *A Time to Remember* (Gazimağusa: Eastern Mediterranean University Center for Cyprus Studies Publications, 1999), pp: 28-34; Erol Manisalı, *Dünden Bugüne KIBRIS* [CYPRUS from the Past to the Present] (Istanbul: Çağdaş Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 120.

<sup>44</sup> Cem, "Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem'in 'Politika'nın Nabızı' Programına Verdiği Mülakat, 17 Ocak 1999" [Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem's Interview on the 'The Pulse of Politics' Program, January 17, 1999], in *Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem*, p. 658.

<sup>45</sup> *Cyprus Mail*, 06.11.2001.

EU in our evaluation of the problems between the current situation of Cyprus and the EU.<sup>46</sup>

*Europe as an unreliable ally and the concepts of 'independence' and 'non-interference in domestic and foreign affairs':*

Emphasis on the sovereign rights of Turkey in relation to Cyprus also paralleled a stress on Turkey's ability to implement an independent and non-submissive policy within the context of Turkey's relations with the EEC/EU. According to this perspective, Turkey, as a sovereign state, the Europeanness of which was not seen dependent on complying with the demands of the EU but was considered to be a cultural, historical and geographical reality, should be able to maintain its freedom of action, also in the context of its integration with the 'Western Europe.' Legitimizing this need through its representation as a matter of 'independence' and 'national honor', Bülent Ecevit said:

In order to improve our links with the West, Turkey should take its place within the integration in Western Europe while maintaining her freedom of decision and movement...But it is dangerous for the E.E.C to be a burden for Turkey as much as Turkey's being a burden for the E.E.C....Turkey might be drawn into a position that it needs to pay this burden by sacrificing from its national honor and independence. That is why it may gradually become more difficult for Turkey to maintain its relations.<sup>47</sup>

This defensive position with regard to Turkey's independence and national honor, and the modernist view of the integration as a process of participating in an international organization that is based on the principle of 'equality' involved the rejection of EEC/EU's interference in the Cyprus conflict. Ability to resolve the disputes on its own was not only seen as a matter of an honored stance but also as the only means to achieve a permanent resolution of the issue:

Turkey and Greece cannot solve their problems and the Cyprus dispute cannot be resolved under the shadow of others. History bears witness to that because whenever other countries were involved in the Turko-Greek differences the Turks and Greeks ended up in conflict. But whenever they were left alone to settle their own differences they showed great ability to do so. So the

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<sup>46</sup> Cem, "Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem'in Cumhuriyet Gazetesine Verdiği Mülakat, 17 Ağustos 1997" [The Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem, with the daily *Cumhuriyet*, August 17, 1997] in *Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem*, p. 60.

<sup>47</sup> *Ak Günlere* [To White Days], Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi 1973 Seçim Bildirgesi [Republican People's Party 1973 Election Declaration], p. 223.

elimination of outside interferences is essential for a solution of problems between Turkey and Greece and for the resolution of the Cyprus issue.<sup>48</sup>

The same narrative was rearticulated in 1997 in the Foreign Minister İsmail Cem's words when he accused the EU of disregarding the international agreements on Cyprus and taking side in the conflict by opening the full membership negotiations with the Greek Cypriot Administration. He stated that this interference in the conflict would "overshadow" the continuation of the talks between the two communities under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary General.<sup>49</sup>

In viewing the EU as not being an impartial player and reassuring Turkey's intentions to resolve the conflict, this narrative not only rearticulated the suspicions with regard to the EU but also reconstituted Turkey's identity as being pacifist and adherent of international law. While Turkey was consistent and sincere in her intentions to both integrate with the EU and resolve the Cyprus issue, this 'peaceful' step was blocked by the EU which ignored the Greek Cypriots' role in the conflict and made the revision of Cyprus policy a condition for Turkey's membership in the EU. For Kenan Evren too, who was the former Chief of the General Staff and the President of Turkey in 1980s, the approval of the Preliminary Draft of 26 March 1986 by the Turkish side on the one hand, and the rejection of the document by the Greek side on the other, was a proof of the tendency of Greeks to perpetuate the conflict as well as a support for the claim that Turkey was not insistent on keeping the troops but sincere in her will for the permanent solution in the island.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, the solution, sincerity, and consistency were dependent on, as later stated by Cem at a conference, taking the Cyprus issue outside of the framework of Turkey's future EU accession.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ecevit, "Turkey's Security Policies: Address Given at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, May 15, 1978," in *Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit Speeches* (Ankara: Torunoğlu Ofset, 1978), pp: 23-24.

<sup>49</sup> Cem, "Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem'in İlk Basın Toplantısı, Hedef: 21. Yüzyıla 'Dünya Devleti' Olarak Ulaşmak," [The First Press Conference of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem] (July 18, 1997), in *Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem*, pp: 3-4. See also Cem, "Turkey: Setting Sail to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> Evren, "Fransa'da Yayımlanan *Politique Internationale* Dergisi Muhabirinin Sorularına Verdikleri Cevaplar," [His responses to the Journal of *Politique Internationale*, published in France] (February, 11 1987), in *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Başkanı Orgeneral Kenan Evren'in Söylev ve Demeçleri (9 Kasım 1986-9 Kasım 1987)* [Speeches and Statements of General Kenan Evren, the Head of the State of the Turkish Republic (9 November 1986- 9 November 1987)] (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1987), p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> Cem, "The EU's Conceptual and Political Horizons (Article published in *EU Quarterly Review*, Brussels, October 1999 – Excerpts), in *Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 163.

Cyprus issue, from this perspective, was one of the cards the EEC/EU was unfairly playing to distance Turkey from her European orientation. The following speech of Evren is illustrative: “They are trying to make us disincline from our European vocation by demanding that we remove our military forces from Cyprus...See how they are interfering in our domestic affairs?”<sup>52</sup>

Here we see a clear indication that Turkey’s holding on to its Cyprus cause was not viewed as a departure from her European-orientation but that the EEC was considered to pursue a clandestine plan to push Turkey off this path. The above-quoted statement also shows how the emphasis on non-submission, sovereignty, and non-interference in domestic affairs is revealed in the representation of Cyprus as a local problem in which the EU had no right to interfere. While the European-orientation was associated with ‘reaching the level of the contemporary civilization’<sup>53</sup>, the interpretation of this maxim remained modernist as the EEC was not understood in its post-sovereign unity, but just as another Western organization among those that Turkey joined since the end of the Second World War.

Notwithstanding its suspicious view of the EEC/EU, the defensive-modernist discourse on Cyprus did not constitute an anti-European identity, perhaps because this would delegitimize the Western-oriented foreign policy seen as an extension of the Westernizing reforms of Atatürk. Rather, the European-orientation and the European identity were seen as having domestic origin, which were pursued despite the EEC/EU’s ‘insincerity’. In this regard, Cem noted: “Turkey has already been European for 700 years. It does not have a problem or an obligation to have its Europeanness verified by foreign countries.”<sup>54</sup> Thereby, both Turkey’s Cyprus cause and the European orientation were reconciled by virtue of having a domestic origin and being ‘deserved’. A similar view was reverberated in 2004 in the words of Deniz Baykal, the Head of the Republican

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<sup>52</sup> Evren, “Sivas’ta Halka Hitaben Yaptıkları Konuşma” [Public Speech in Sivas] (June 22, 1987), in *Speeches and Statements of General Kenan Evren* (9 November 1986- 9 November 1987), p. 269

<sup>53</sup> Evren, “Federal Almanya Resmi Ziyareti Sırasında Alman Dış Politika Derneğinde Yaptıkları Konuşma,” [Statement delivered at German Foreign Politics Association during his official visit to Federal Germany], (October 18, 1988), in *Speeches and Statements of General Kenan Evren* (9 November 1987- 9 November 1988), p. 396

<sup>54</sup> Cem, “Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem’in İlk Basın Toplantısı, Hedef: 21. Yüzyıla ‘Dünya Devleti’ Olarak Ulaşmak,” [The First Press Conference of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem] (July 18, 1997), in *Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem*, pp. 1-2. See also İsmail Cem, “Turkey: Setting Sail to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” p. 89.

People's Party. Stating that Turkey should not open its ports to Cyprus given the uncertainty as to the arrival of yet other demands by the EU, he said that Turkey should be able to stand up and say that both the EU membership and Cyprus are Turkey's rights.<sup>55</sup>

### **'Desecuritizing' Approach**

In contrast to the defensive modernist approach discussed above, the desecuritizing approach to Cyprus dissociated the Cyprus issue from Turkey's national security matters. Removing the national security dimension out of the dynamics and the solutions proposed to deal with the issue was hence at the core of this approach. While this approach tended to revise the 'national cause' from a 'national security-free' perspective and legitimize it in terms of defending the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots, the most radical attempt to desecuritize the Cyprus policy as the 'national cause' was undertaken by Turgut Özal, the former Prime Minister (1983-1989) and President of Turkey (1989-1993), although his initiative did not gain lasting resonance in the Turkish foreign policy discourse. Instead of revising the 'national cause' in terms of the other concepts available in the domestic repertoire at the time, he employed these concepts to suggest that Turkey should remove its troops from Cyprus which perpetuate the crisis in the name of 'national cause'.<sup>56</sup> Defining Turkey's national interest in terms of enhancing the economic welfare of the country, he said:

Turkish foreign policy needs to be based towards achieving economic development. It is unfortunate that the Cyprus issue has captured our attention for the last fifteen years and gauged the overall foreign policy. Now is the time to remove it from the number one priority of the foreign affairs. We have to turn ourselves to the changing world and calculate which policies can benefit us the most.<sup>57</sup>

Notwithstanding the omnipresence of the economic arguments in relation to the Turkish foreign policy, this however did not capture the foreign policy domain with regard to defining the Cyprus policy as a 'national cause', escorting Turkey's European

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<sup>55</sup> Deniz Baykal, "İçine girdiğimiz yeni dış politika dönemi, talimat alma, söz dinleme, uyum sağlama, boyun eğme dönemidir"[The new foreign policy era that we have entered is a period of taking instructions, harmonization, and submission" (February 17, 2004), retrieved from <<http://www.chp.org.tr>>

<sup>56</sup> Özal's interview with Mehmet Barlas, cited in Mehmet Barlas, (ed.) *Turgut Özal'in Anıları* [Memoirs of Turgut Özal] (Istanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1994), p. 131.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp: 180-1.

vocation as the other top priority goal. While defining the issue as a matter of protecting the rights and the interests of Turkish Cypriots has been as dominant as considering it within the framework of Turkey's own national security interests, removing the 'national' from it did not circulate in the discourse of other Turkish politicians, even among those that defined it outside of the security agenda.

*Protecting the Rights of the Turkish Cypriots as a 'National Cause' and exporting 'peace' and 'democracy':*

The Cyprus intervention of 1974 was not only considered as posing a grave threat against the regional and national security interests of Turkey, but also, and predominantly as an operation that takes the peace and democracy at home to Cyprus. Redefining Turkey's 'national cause' as the protection of the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots, the government program of the Justice Party stated: "In order to resolve the Cyprus question, which is our *greatest national cause*, in a way that ensures the rights and interests of the Turkish community is an unchanging objective of our government... It is inconceivable that Turkey will be ignorant to Turkish Cypriots' colonization.<sup>58</sup> The following remarks of Bülent Ecevit prior to the operation are also illustrative of how representing the Turkish Cypriots as 'oppressed' by the Greek dictatorship reconstituted Turkey as an 'emancipator' and a 'hero' that was driven by the sole purpose to democratize and hence rescue the one in need:

The victory to be achieved in Cyprus will not be a victory for the Turkish nation alone, but will also be the victory of democracy over dictatorship; it will be the triumph of freedom over oppression.<sup>59</sup>

In a similar vein, Ecevit stated the following on another occasion: "The R.P.P. believes that Turkish Cypriots also have the right to free democracy, which Turkey considers to be indispensable."<sup>60</sup> This was in line with how the 'peace at home, peace in the world' principle was defined prior to the operation. The election declaration of the Republican People's Party stated that the party would "realize 'peace at home, and peace

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<sup>58</sup> "III. Demirel Hükümeti (6 Mayıs 1970-12 Mart 1971)" [IIIrd Demirel Government (6 March 1970- 12 March 1971)], in Dağlı and Aktürk (1988), p. 125. Italics added.

<sup>59</sup> *Milliyet*, 21.07.1975.

<sup>60</sup> *Milliyet*, 23.07.1974.

in the world' not through pressure, punishment or fear, but through freedom, love and respect.”<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, viewing the legitimization of the operation via the concepts of freedom and democracy to be within in the desecuritizing category may be found misleading in that it did not escape from securitizing, in the above quoted case, the Greek dictatorship and Turkish Cypriots' colonization. On the other hand, it is remarkable how the 'problem' was not seen as a matter of Turkey's national security and, how the ideas that were associated with the Western identity resonated with the concepts available in the domestic agenda as well as the language used in relation to Turkey's Cyprus policy. The following remark reveals how the concepts of democracy and freedom with an emphasis on 'the aim of spreading them' were also used to redefine the common identity shared within the Western alliance:

Our friends in the West have usually evaluated Turkey according to the contribution that Turkey might make to collective defense through the bravery of our people, but I think Turkey deserves to be evaluated according to other criteria as well, particularly according to the criteria of her success in democracy because, after all, our alliance is not merely a military alliance....It is an alliance aiming at strengthening and spreading democracy and freedom.<sup>62</sup>

In this regard, the redefinition of the 'national cause' in the 1960s and the 1970s in terms of protecting the interests and rights of the Turkish Cypriots was not immune from either the values attributed to the Western community or the concepts in the domestic repertoire, which were revised to integrate these concepts. While the above-quoted reference situated these values within a general 'Western' identity which was a concept of the Cold War politics, specific references to the European identity were also abundant during the same period which employed the concepts of spreading the freedom and democracy, defining them as an extension of Turkey's civilizationist goal. The following statement delivered by another Turkish politician in 1967 also shows how the 'national security-free concepts' used to define the EEC were seen reconcilable with Turkey's 'domestic' goals and hence with Turkey's national identity:

Great Atatürk's direction to be followed by the Turkish Republic in political, economic and social justice terms is the pathway towards the West...For Turkey the E.E.C. is a real success of the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ak Günlere* [To White Days], Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi 1973 Seçim Bildirgesi [Republican People's Party 1973 Election Declaration], p. 213.

<sup>62</sup> Ecevit, "Statement to the Press at National Press Club", Washington D.C., June 1, 1978, in *Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit Speeches*, p. 159.

democratic order. The reason why Turkey takes part on the side of the E.E.C. without hesitation is because it shares the same ideal and understanding of democracy with it. The economic order the E.E.C. represents is the one that Turkey chose for itself. Turkey believes that this order, which gives priority and great value to the individual and private entrepreneurship, is the one that will take the nations to welfare and happiness.<sup>63</sup>

This narrative was reproduced in the discourse of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the present Turkish Prime Minister and the Head of the Justice and Development Party (JDP), who stated: “We do not see membership in the EU as a goal but as a means to raise the Turkish people to the level of the contemporary civilization which they deserve.”<sup>64</sup> While viewing the European vocation within the context of ‘reaching the level of the contemporary civilization’ reconstituted the old narrative, Erdoğan added new concepts to this chain by arguing that “what makes Turkey European is the fact that Turkey embraces the values that Europe represents: mainly, the participatory democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, human rights, secularism, and freedom of thought and conscience.”<sup>65</sup> Again, as before, it was underlined that Turkey could help the strengthening and the spread of these values by serving as a model to the other countries.<sup>66</sup>

It is interesting to observe how the pro-EU stance of the party also involved supporting the integration of the Turkish Cypriots within the EU under a unified Cyprus Republic and providing a desecuritizing view on the Cyprus policy. The party undertook to initiate a new understanding of the Cyprus issue, called as “the policy of solution.”<sup>67</sup> This approach suggested that Turkey should take an active role as a guarantor state in resolving the conflict, and push for an immediate settlement instead of viewing the issue from the security angle.<sup>68</sup> While this desecuritizing take was not ‘new’, it definitely diverged from the Cyprus policy of the previous government. Similar to Özal’s approach

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<sup>63</sup> *Milliyet*, 17.05.1967.

<sup>64</sup> Erdoğan, “Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Türkiye’de modernleşme ve demokratikleşme sürecinin miladıdır”, [Turkish Armed Forces constitute the beginning of the modernization and democratization process in Turkey] (May 29, 2003), accessible from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Erdoğan, “Başbakan Erdoğan: Kıbrıs Konusunda Çözüm Siyaseti İzleyeceğiz” [Prime Minister Erdoğan: We will pursue a policy of solution as regards Cyprus], (October 17, 2003), accessible from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

<sup>68</sup> Erdoğan, “AK Parti Başkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın Kurucular Toplantısında Yaptığı Konuşma,” [the Head of the JDP Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s Talk on the occasion of the Founders’ Meeting], (February 1, 2003), accessible from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

to the issue, Erdoğan argued that a policy that resists any compromise and that is centered on Turkey's national security interests has been contrary to Turkey's goals, exacerbating the settlement of the conflict, leading to further isolation of the Turkish Cypriots instead of bringing peace, and becoming an ever-existing obstacle for Turkey's EU membership.<sup>69</sup> However, in contrast to Özal's suggestion to remove the Cyprus policy from the 'top agenda', Erdoğan did not see a reason to de-nationalize the 'cause' while desecuritizing it. In this context, "to demand a solution" meant not only protecting the interests of Turkey but also "safeguarding the future of the Turkish Cypriots."<sup>70</sup>

In defining the Annan Plan, which aimed at the integration of Cyprus into the EU as a unified state, as an extension of the harmony of civilizations thesis, this discourse integrated yet another concept that fit the idea of pluralism which Europe was argued to represent.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, seeing its support for both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots in their goal of reaching the EU standards as an extension of its own goal of reaching the level of the modern civilization, Turkey would not only contribute to the strengthening and the spread of the European norms and values<sup>72</sup> but would also, as stated by Erdoğan during his visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 2002, "prove the world that democracy and Islam culture can coexist."<sup>73</sup>

*Revising the concepts of 'full independence', 'sovereignty', and 'non-interference in domestic affairs'*

While the defensive modernist approach employed the concept of non-interference in the domestic affairs within the context of EU conditionality, and suggested for annexing Cyprus if the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU as a representative of the whole island, removing the security dimension out of Turkey's Cyprus cause did not allow for such an option. While the EU conditionalities were also desecuritized from the latter approach, the interpretation of non-interference in the

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<sup>69</sup> Erdoğan, "AK Parti Başkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Kurucular Toplantısında Yaptığı Konuşma,"[the Head of the JDP Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Talk on the occasion of the Founders' Meeting], (February 1, 2003), accessible from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Abdullah Gül, "Dışişleri Bakanı Gül, Kıbrıs Eylem Planını Açıkladı"[Gül, The Minister of Foreign Affairs declared the Cyprus Action Plan], (January 24, 2006), accessed from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Erdoğan, "Erdoğan'ın KKTC Ziyareti," [Erdoğan's Visit to the TRNC] (November 16, 2002); accessible from: <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

domestic affairs was removed from the context of Turkey's accession to the EU. The concept was emphasized in relation to the sovereign rights of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, refraining from deciding on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot state. Responding to a question whether Turkey would intervene after the Greek Cypriots voted no in the referendum for a unified Cyprus, Erdoğan said: "Cyprus is an independent state. As an independent state it will give its decisions itself. We cannot intervene."<sup>74</sup>

As it was articulated by the leader of the government party in 1967, the individualist values were given the priority by the JDP in defining the values Europe was seen to represent. While the security dimension was also absent in the earlier forms of this approach, the change in the discourse of JDP from its earlier versions involved the juxtaposition of security-related values to those that were based on individual rights:

Our party sees Turkey's full membership in the EU as a natural consequence of our modernization process...The ideological attitudes of the anti-EU segments of the population with regard to national sovereignty, national security, national interest, national and regional culture hinder the realization of the Copenhagen criteria. Our party subscribes to the view that replaces these concepts, which aspire to maintain the bureaucratic and statist tradition, with a democratic, civilian and pluralist understanding that ascribes a higher value to the individual and that which is centered on the participation of the public.<sup>75</sup>

Here we also see how this approach diverges from the defensive modernist approach in the way it interprets the concepts of 'full-independence' and 'sovereignty'. While the defensive-modernist approach defines these concepts as the ability to employ a foreign policy independently from the interferences of other states, according to the desecuritizing approach, these principles are not seen irreconcilable with having a common policy with other states. As the remarks quoted above show, the desecuritizing approach employs the 'sovereignty' and 'independence' concepts in relation to the rights of the Turkish Cypriots rather than focusing on how EU's interferences in Turkish policy impinge upon the sovereign rights of Turkey.

In this regard, having a more compromising attitude on Cyprus has not been seen as pursuing a submissive policy towards the EU, or as being undertaken only for the sake of becoming a full-member, but as an extension of Turkey's 'domestically owned'

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<sup>74</sup> Erdoğan, "Bavulumuzu Toplamak Yok", [We will not pack up our bags], (December 14, 2002), available from: <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

<sup>75</sup> "Herşey Türkiye İçin", AK Parti 2002 Seçim Beyannamesi, ["Everything is for Turkey", the 2002 Election Declaration of the JDP], pp: 8-9, retrieved from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

concepts. Hence, from this approach too, there is no incompatibility between Turkey's European vocation and the Cyprus cause by virtue of this link and because both serve to reach the same goal. In this respect, choosing one over the other is not necessary. The remarks of the Speaker of the Government in response to the accusations by the opposition leader also confirm this point: it was stated that blaming the present government for selling the Cyprus cause for the EU goal is not acceptable because the government does not face a dilemma of choosing between Cyprus and the EU.<sup>76</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

This paper has mainly argued that it would be problematic to see Turkey's European vocation and the Cyprus cause as representing divergent paths of development if one takes the European integration not as the conformation of a country to a pre-set European norm or rationality but as a contested discursive process whereby the values attributed to European orientation and identity resonate with the concepts available in the domestic repertoire. Remaining at the level of the discourse has led us to pursue a different form of inquiry as to whether certain policies represent a deviation from the general foreign policy orientation and how the identity construction takes place along this process. Hence the paper proceeded to show how the European identity was discursively constructed, instead of examining the degree to which a proper European identity has taken place in the Turkish context. Thought of this way, it would be erroneous to conceptualize a securitizing discourse as a representative of a non-European identity, and, in the same vein, conceptualize a desecuritizing discourse not to have involved the so called modernist elements available in the domestic repertoire, unless such a link is clearly made in the discourse.

Drawing on this insight and based on the differentiation made between the Westphalian and post-modern forms of state, we have examined the main legitimating criteria for both European orientation and the Cyprus cause in both the defensive-modernist (representing the Westphalian discourse) and the desecuritizing (representing the post-modern discourse) approaches in the Turkish foreign policy context. Indeed,

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<sup>76</sup> "Bakanlar Kurulu Toplantısı," [The Cabinet Meeting], (December 11, 2006), accessed from <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>

such a differentiation has not proven unproblematic either, as these discourses were not mutually exclusive. Yet, our categorization mainly centered on how the former defined the Cyprus issue as a matter of Turkey's own national security and had a reserved stance against the involvement of the EU in the issue, and how the latter sought to remove the security dimension out of the definition of the Cyprus as a national cause and Turkey's European orientation. We have seen that both of these approaches employed the concepts of 'reaching the level of the contemporary civilization', 'full-independence', 'peace at home, peace in the world', 'sovereignty', and 'non-interference in the domestic affairs' while they attributed different meanings to them. We have also seen that the legitimization of the Cyprus cause and Turkey's European vocation in terms of these concepts, as well as their translation in terms of the values attributed to European integration, did not permit viewing the Cyprus cause and Turkey's European vocation as separate paths to be chosen over the other.

A more national security-centered interpretation of these concepts paralleled the securitization of the EU accession of the Republic of Cyprus and the involvement of the EU in the conflict. On the other hand, despite its offensive overtures at times, this approach did not suggest an alternative to Turkey's European vocation, but rather saw it as a just right, pursued despite the surreptitious efforts by the EU to exclude Turkey. By contrast, the desecuritizing approach argued for the need to move away from this narrative as it was seen as derailing both the solution of the Cyprus issue as well as Turkey's aspiration to be a full member of the EU. Yet, as our discussion showed, this approach was not immune from the concepts used by the defensive-modernist approach either, but merely constructed a different narrative out of them.

As to whether the recent desecuritizing approach of the JDP can be seen to represent a sustainable process, further remarks can be made here. While the desecuritizing approach had long been present in the Turkish foreign policy discourse, it is legitimate to submit to the view that it gained more resonance after a clear time table was set for Turkey's EU membership. Yet one should not read this as the dependence of the discourse solely on the dynamics between the EU and Turkey, although Turkey's securitizing approach reached its peak either when Turkey was long far from acceding in the EEC (1970s) or excluded from EU's enlargement framework (1997 Luxembourg

Summit). The remarks made after the suspension of the EU negotiations have confirmed this line of argumentation. Stating that even if the negotiations ended in a deadlock Turkey would still not move away from its European vocation or from the Copenhagen criteria but continue its way by calling them ‘Ankara Criteria’ instead, the Prime Minister Erdoğan reaffirmed that Turkey’s European orientation was not limited to being accepted by the EU as it saw the EU as a *means* to ‘reach the level of the contemporary civilization goal’ that has been set long before the EU integration. It would then be fair to argue that not the prospect for membership but a peculiar interpretation with regard to the ‘domestically owned concepts’ serve as an ‘anchor’ for Turkey’s ‘Europeanization’.

Indeed, the recent developments showed that one should not take this peculiar interpretation for granted as an inevitable move towards a gradually more compromising attitude towards the Cyprus issue or an incremental divergence from the defensive-modernism that has at times entered the discursive repertoire of the present government. Just as the discourse of the JDP has provided a desecuritizing approach to the Cyprus cause immediately after it came to power, hegemonizing the concepts of EU integration by translating them in terms of the ‘domestically-owned concepts’, it has not refrained from hegemonizing the nationalism of the opposition party after being accused of changing the foundational principles of the Republic. This is not surprising at all, given its oft-stated aspiration to be *the* ‘center’ party of Turkey. JDP’s fight against the accusations of the opposition party that the JDP’s policy on Cyprus has sold the Cyprus cause for the EU goal which led Turkey to lose its freedom of movement in the international arena has finally been crystallized in a rather defensive modernist statement in the program of the 60<sup>th</sup> government, which states:

As a result of our active policy on Cyprus pursued as of 2002, Turkey, which has long been beleaguered by the international pressure regarding Cyprus, has gained a great capacity for maneuver in the international arena without making any concession on our national interests. Until now, not a single soldier has been withdrawn from Cyprus, and not even a square meter of territory has been given away.<sup>77</sup>

In the light of what has been argued above, it can be claimed that while a move from a defensive modernist interpretation in the course of European integration is not a smooth or intractable process, its sustainability does not only depend on who

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<sup>77</sup> 60. Hükümet Programı, [The Program of the 60<sup>th</sup> Government], (31.08.2007), accessed from <<http://www.akparti.gov.tr>>

hegemonizes the domestically-owned concepts but also which meanings are seen as more legitimate in the domestic context. The above-quoted statement reveals that a total removal of the defensive modernist approach to the Cyprus issue does not seem possible given the present discursive dynamics in Turkey. On the other hand, as the present paper has pointed out, the consensus on associating Turkey's European vocation with the maxim of reaching the level of the contemporary civilization shows that viewing the Cyprus cause as a policy to be pursued at the expense of deviating from the European orientation is also not discursively possible. However 'European' it may be, it can be pursued only *despite* the EU.