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Living with Dilemmas: Greek-Turkish Relations at the Rise of the 21st Century

The Greek-Turkish conflict has been one of the most salient security concerns of the international community since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the post-World War II era, the relationship between the two countries has been characterised by significant tensions that reached their peak in the period following the 1974 Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. Despite the constraints of tight bipolarity during the Cold War, the Greek-Turkish hostility developed and, in few cases, threatened not only peace and stability in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean region, but also the integrity of the Western political and military alliance.

Apparently the vanishing of bipolarity has provided Greece and Turkey with far more opportunities to achieve their diplomatic objectives by taking full advantage of their geo-strategic and geo-economic position. Particularly, a series of developments in the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia have provided the fertile ground for diplomatic manoeuvres which on the one hand, have enabled Athens and Ankara to increase their diplomatic leverage and, on the other hand, have forced them to interpret each others' actions as threatening their own national interests. For instance, the close relationship between Turkey and the Muslim Balkan countries, like Albania and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), has been perceived by Athens as an effort of Ankara to encircle Greece and impose further territorial and other demands on the Greek Government. On the other side, Greek efforts to create alliances with countries geographically located at the periphery of Turkey, and involved in disputes with it, such as Syria, Iran and Armenia, have been perceived by Ankara as an attempt of Greece to „struggle“ Turkey.

The very recent developments related to the Ocalan case have clearly shown how tense the relationship between Greece and Turkey is and how rapidly it can deteriorate. Yet, the involvement of NATO in the Kosovo crisis and the respective positions of Greece and Turkey illustrate how easily their bilateral relationship may be affected by regional and even global developments. In the Greek-Turkish case, domestic issues and external questions are so strongly inter-related that they may provide the fertile ground for a violent conflict between the two countries, which due to their increasing interdependence, may, in turn, have far reaching consequences both for regional and extra-regional peace and stability. But even in the absence of a violent conflict, the „Cold War“ between Greece and Turkey affects international relations, in two ways at least. First, it has a negative impact on the external relations of the European Union (especially on the process of its enlargement); and second, it undermines the smooth operation of NATO's defence strategy and external policy.

After the end of the Cold War, Western states expected, strangely enough, that many interstate conflicts around the world, including the Greek-Turkish one, could be resolved. This expectation obscured the fact that the Cold War ended with one of the involved superpowers defeated and disintegrated. But neither Greece nor Turkey has shown any signs of defeat and disintegration. The non-fulfilment of the above expectation in combination with the increasing hostility between the two countries have led the Western states to view Greece and Turkey even more as „spoiled and irresponsible children“ which play their own games. This image, however, is an oversimplified and dangerous one. It is oversimplified because the Western states ignore the fact that the two countries are subject to the powerful operation of the security dilemma. And it is a dangerous one because treating the two countries equally provides the one that may be revisionist with opportunities to achieve its objectives. One of the consequences of the Western countries' view of the Greek-Turkish conflict is that all

efforts undertaken to bring the two countries together have failed, while the conflict itself has increased in magnitude.

The purpose of this article is to provide an understanding of the Greek-Turkish conflict. To understand the latter's nature, one needs to comprehend the security problematic of Greece and Turkey which is subject to the operation of the security dilemma reinforced by historical grievances and the workings of the defence dilemma. It is also conditioned by the domestic political processes of those countries as well as the cognitive dynamics underlying their decision-making processes. To understand the security problematic of Greece and Turkey one needs first to take account of the political context in which the two countries operate.

The Political Context of the Greek-Turkish Conflict

Because states are political constructs, the international system is the most important part of their environment. Since the claim of sovereignty by states automatically denies recognition of any higher political authority, the international system is, by definition, politically structured as an anarchy. International anarchy is thus a decentralised form of political order that does not necessarily merit the implications of disorder and chaos.¹ The anarchic structure of the international system as well as that of the regional international subsystem in which states are geographically embedded is the primary political context for international security.²

An anarchic structure imposes competitive, self-help conditions of existence on the states within the system and/or subsystem. To say this is not to say that relations between states are inevitably violent under anarchy. Neither is it to say that international anarchy makes co-operation unlikely or impossible.³ Violent conflict is always possible under anarchy, and, in some circumstances, likely. Competition, however, is pervasive and can take political, societal, economic and military forms.⁴

The context of anarchy imposes two major conditions on the concept of security.⁵ First, the dynamics of national security are highly interdependent between states. The idea of security, therefore, refers to the systemic conditions that influence the ways in which states make each other feel more or less secure. Thus, individual national securities can only be fully understood when considered in relation both to each other and to larger patterns of relations in the system as a whole. Second, the practical meaning of security can only be constructed sensibly if it can be made operational within an environment in which competitive relations are inescapable. Among other things, this means that under anarchy, security can only be relative, never absolute.

1 See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 2nd edition (London: Macmillan, 1995); Martin Wight, *PowerPolitics*, 2nd edition (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991); Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Alan James (ed.), *The Bases of International Order* (London: Macmillan, 1973).

2 See Barry Buzan, Richard Little and Charles Jones, *The Logic of Anarchy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, 2nd edition (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), chapters 4 and 5; and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

3 See Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane, „Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy“; Robert Jervis, „From Balance to Concert: A Study of International Security Cooperation“ and Kenneth Oye, „Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy“ all in *World Politics*, vol 38, no. 1, 1985. See also Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) and David Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

4 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, chapter 3.

5 Barry Buzan, „Is International Security Possible“, in Kenneth Booth (ed.), *New Thinking About Strategy and International Security* (London: Unwin & Hyman, 1991), p. 43.

According to the above analysis, the anarchic structure of the international system as a whole and that of the regional international system in which Greece and Turkey are geographically embedded constitutes the primary political context for their national security. This anarchic structure imposes competitive, self-help conditions of existence on them. Although both countries are involved in political and military alliances, institutional constraints and the existence of divergent interests among the countries participating in those alliances have convinced Athens and Ankara that they should rely primarily on self-help policies aimed at meeting the threats that they pose to each other. To say this is not to say that relations between the two countries are inevitably violent or that co-operation between them is impossible. In fact, historically, the relations between the two countries have been characterised both by conflict and co-operation. Because the dynamics of their national security are highly interdependent, the idea of Greek and Turkish security refers to the systemic and other conditions that influence the ways in which the two states make each other secure or insecure. Yet, because the meaning of security is constructed in a competitive environment, the security of Greece and Turkey can only be relative.

Identifying the Greek-Turkish Dilemmas

The use and threat of force are deeply embedded features of anarchic international relations. In the international system, „the primary instrument of order – armed force – is also the primary threat to security“.⁶ Thus, military power lies at the heart of the national security problem. States in anarchy require military power primarily for defence purposes. But once acquired, such power generates a counter-security dynamic of its own that threatens individual states. As it has been argued, „force is an ineluctable element in international relations, not because of any inherent tendency on the part of man to use it, but because the possibility of its use exists. It has thus to be deterred and controlled“. At the same time, military power is important because „those who renounce the use of force find themselves at the mercy of those who do not“.⁷ The deployment of military instruments gives rise to two types of threat: those from the weapons themselves, and those from the fact that weapons are in the hands of other states in the system.⁸ The first gives rise to the „defence dilemma“,⁹ while the second to the „security dilemma“.¹⁰

In this sense, the military power that has been acquired by Greece and Turkey for defensive purposes at least, constitutes, at the same time, the greatest threat to each other's security. In other words, security is desired by both countries, but can never be achieved. Power is sought by them to guarantee it, but the more it is sought, the greater the problems of maintaining whatever levels of power or security are desired. The deployment of military instruments by them has contributed to the rising of their defence and security dilemmas.

6 Robert E. Osgood and Robert W. Tucker, *Force, Order and Justice* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1967), p. 32.

7 Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace* (London: Temple Smith, 1970), pp. 5 and 11.

8 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p. 271.

9 *Ibid.*, chapter 7.

10 *Ibid.*, chapter 8. See also Nicholas J. Wheeler and Ken Booth, „The Security Dilemma“, in John Baylis and N.J. Rengger (eds.), *Dilemmas of World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); H. Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London: Collins, 1951); John Herz, „Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma“, *World Politics*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1950; *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) and *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); Robert Jervis, „Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma“, *World Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1978 and „Security Regimes“, *International Organization*, vol. 36, no. 2, 198.

These two dilemmas, and the interaction between them, express the essence of their national security problem.

The Greek-Turkish Defence Dilemma

The defence dilemma facing Greece and Turkey arises from the nature of military means as they are developed and deployed by them, and only secondarily from the dynamics of their relations. Differently put, the acquisition of military means follows a technological logic that is separate from the patterns of amity and enmity between Athens and Ankara. Although such relational patterns may accelerate military developments, as during crises or arms races, they do not fundamentally determine the scientific, technological and organisational imperatives which drive the acquisition of even more powerful and expensive weapons. Because of the dual use of technology, the two countries cannot escape the military implications of technological progress.¹¹ Whatever the reason of their acquisition, the existence of weapons in each other's hands gives rise to a powerful element in the operation of the Greek-Turkish security dilemma.

The Greek-Turkish Security Dilemma

Under anarchy, all states have to look after themselves to ensure their territorial integrity, welfare, and the continued survival of their political and societal values. But taking measures to prevent these things, they risk conflict with other states as all operate in an anarchic environment seeking their own advantage. In this context, seeking power and security for themselves, Greece and Turkey can easily threaten each other's power and security aspirations. As their defence dilemma arises from the fear of war stimulated by the nature of their military means, so their security dilemma arises from the fear of defeat stimulated by the potential uses of military means placed in each other's hands.

More specifically, the Greek-Turkish security dilemma arises from the inherent ambiguity of the two countries' military postures and their foreign policy intentions. This dilemma is the direct result of the difficulty that the Greek and Turkish governments have of unambiguously determining what is „defensive“ and what is not. For example, while Athens declares that the Greek army stationed in the Greek Eastern Aegean islands opposite the Turkish coast of Asia Minor is defensive in character and purpose, Ankara claims that it is offensive in character and its real purpose is to invade Turkey. On the other hand, while Ankara assures Athens that its Fourth Army stationed at the coast of Asia Minor is a training one with defensive orientation and purpose, the Greek Government claims that this army has significant offensive capabilities and that it targets the Greek islands geographically situated opposite that coast. The Greek-Turkish security dilemma is further reinforced by the military presence of both countries in Cyprus (especially of Turkey), the structures of their armies, their political and military doctrines, and the acquisition of more developed and powerful weapon systems.

It is worth noting that it is also possible that only one of the two governments faces the difficulty of distinguishing between „defensive“ and „offensive“ capabilities and intentions, but it nevertheless pretends that it cannot draw such a distinction in order to justify its policies and actions. In any case, the Greek-Turkish security dilemma exists because the military preparations of at least one of those states create an unresolvable uncertainty in the mind of the other as to whether those preparations are for defensive purposes (to enhance its security

¹¹ See Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1987) and Barry Buzan and Eric Herring, *The Arms Dynamic in World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

in an uncertain world) or whether they are for offensive purposes (to change the *status quo* to its advantage).¹²

The security dilemma facing Greece and Turkey is also reinforced by their political positions regarding their differences and the way in which those differences should be resolved. Particularly, Ankara claims that its dispute with Athens includes: the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf, the breadth of the Greek territorial waters and air space, the status of the Aegean rock-islets, the delimitation of the Athens Flying Information Region (FIR) and the Greek area of Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations in the Aegean, and the rights of the Turkish minority living in Western Thrace.

Athens, on the other hand, argues that the Greek-Turkish dispute in the Aegean comprises only one issue, that of the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf, and that all the other issues constitute Turkish unilateral claims which Greece cannot accept. As far as the minority of the Western Thrace is concerned, Greece claims that this is a Muslim and not a Turkish minority. Moreover, in its dispute with Turkey, Greece also includes: the rights of the Greek minority living in Turkey, the rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Constantinople, and the Turkish veto regarding the inclusion of the island of Lemnos in the military planning of NATO. These issues have been ignored by Ankara.

As far as the means for the settlement of the Greek-Turkish differences is concerned, Turkey believes that direct negotiations on all disputed issues is the necessary and appropriate method for resolving them and a prerequisite for peaceful relations between the two countries. Greece, on the other hand, has accused Ankara of having revisionist intentions and has argued that no country can negotiate its sovereign rights and that package negotiations offer advantage only to the claimant. Instead, Greece proposes a common resort to the International Court of Justice, something that Turkey does not currently accept.

The political conflict between the two countries is further reinforced by their positions on the Cyprus problem, the Greek approach to the Kurdish issue, and the Greek stance regarding the entry of Turkey into the European Union. All the differences mentioned above in combination with historical experiences and the fact that both Athens and Ankara are right on some issues (as well as wrong on others)¹³ have helped to magnify the operation of the security dilemma facing the two countries and have caused them to be suspicious of each others' motives and consequently view each other as revisionists.

The Anatomy of the Greek-Turkish Security Dilemma

Within international anarchy, explanations for the behaviour of states are divided into two categories: those that emphasise direct, conscious competition and hostility among states as the prime source of conflict, and those that emphasise the conflict-producing behaviour of states, or patterns of relations in the system, where hostility is unintended.

According to the first type of explanation, which is called the „power struggle“¹⁴, Greece and Turkey can be seen as locked into a struggle for power and domination.¹⁵ This power struggle itself can be of two kinds. First, a struggle in which both states involved are

12 Wheeler and Booth, „The Security Dilemma“, p. 30.

13 See Yannis A. Stivachtis, „The 1982 Law of the Sea Convention and the Aegean Dispute“, forthcoming in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*; „What is the Basic Thinking of the Lausanne Treaty?“, *The 1998 Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* (Ankara, 1999) and „The Demilitarisation of the Greek Central Aegean and Dodecanese Islands“, *The 1999 Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* (Ankara, 1999).

14 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p. 295.

15 See Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 2nd edition (London; Macmillan, 1946); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5th edition (New York: Knopf, 1973) and Michael J. Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

revisionists. In this case, they are assumed to be, at best, opportunistic, and, at worst, systematically aggressive. And second, a struggle in which only one of the states involved is revisionist while the other is *status quo* oriented. However, in order to deal with the revisionist state, the *status quo* country may find it necessary to initiate policies which appear to be also of a revisionist nature. Thus, revisionist and *status quo* states alike may display opportunistic and aggressive behaviour. This creates what has been called the „deliberate security dilemma“.¹⁶

Particularly, a deliberate security dilemma is created in the minds of the Greek and Turkish governments as a result of their conscious actions against each other. These deliberate actions themselves may be of two types. First, they may be from the state that is *status quo* orientated and which adopts deliberate offensive strategies to deter the other, because it sees itself in an adversarial relationship with it. The other state (target state) may be thrown into a dilemma as a result of the apparent contradiction between the declared defensive intentions and threatening military capabilities of the former state. The second deliberate security dilemma may result from the state that is revisionist (wishing to change the *status quo*) and which adopts a posture designed to lull the target state into a false sense of security. Again, the target state may be thrown into a dilemma as a result of the apparent contradiction between the other's declared policy (reassuring) and its actual capabilities and behaviour (threatening). Deliberate security dilemmas of the two types arise not so much from the inherent pressures of the international system, but from the policies of the particular states.

Whatever the type of the power struggle and the deliberate security dilemma, the causes of aggressive behaviour are sought in the domestic political characteristics of Greece and Turkey, in historical grievances, in the personalities of their leaders, and in the patterns of power distribution between them which provide opportunity and/or provoke revisionist ambitions. In this context, Athens and Ankara see their security as derivative of power. If they could acquire enough power, especially military power, to reach a dominating position, they would, by the same token, acquire security as a result.

According to the second type of explanation, which is called the „security struggle“,¹⁷ Greece and Turkey are assumed to be self-concerned, but nevertheless generally well-intentioned, or at least indifferent, towards each other. The causes of their insecurity are sought in the structural and relational dynamics of states and the system, such as their fragmented and incremental decision-making procedures, their misunderstandings and misperceptions, the arms race in which they are involved, and the complexity of their cross-cutting interests and attitudes in a system of high-density interdependence.¹⁸ This type of explanation is also called the „inadvertent security dilemma“.¹⁹

Specifically, an inadvertent security dilemma is created in the minds of the Greek and Turkish governments by their unconscious actions; that is, their failure to act carefully on security matters; their behaving in ways which give unintended signals; and their insensitivity to each other's security needs. As a result of such inadvertent behaviour, the defensive military preparations of one government to enhance its security in an uncertain world (but with no intention of overthrowing the *status quo*) increases the sense of insecurity felt in the other state. Because the latter perceives the defensive preparations of the former as potentially

16 Wheeler and Booth, „The Security Dilemma“, p. 31.

17 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p. 295.

18 See Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); Butterfield, *History and Human Relations*; Herz, „Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma“; *Political Realism and Political Idealism and International Politics in the Atomic Age*; Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*; Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); „Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma“ and „Security Regimes“.

19 Wheeler and Booth, „The Security Dilemma“, p. 30.

threatening and offensive, an inadvertent security dilemma has arisen. This is the original conception of the security dilemma and it is believed to arise out of the very nature of the states system.

In sum, according to the security struggle model, neither Greece nor Turkey may have aggressive designs on each other, but the interplay of fear and mistrust leads to an increase in mutual suspicion and hostility. In consequence, an action-reaction process between them is stimulated, in which the interplay of armaments competition and worst-case forecasting about each other's intentions promotes even higher levels of mutual insecurity.

If the threat posed by one state to the other, be it inadvertent or deliberate, is accurately perceived by the potential or actual target state, then the situation cannot be classified as a security dilemma. It is simply a security problem, albeit perhaps a difficult one. Whatever the actual intentions of the state engaging in the military preparations, it is the unresolvable uncertainty in the mind of the potential or actual target state about the meaning of the other's intentions and capabilities which creates the dilemma.

From the preceding discussion it is evident that the Greek-Turkish security dilemmas of whatever variety comprise „dilemmas of interpretation“ (are the other's preparations defensive or offensive?) and „dilemmas of response“ (should the other's military preparations be matched and so risk an arms race and the further build-up of mistrust, danger, and cost, or should a wait-and-see policy be adopted thereby risking exposure to coercion or attack as a result of relative weakness?).²⁰ The interaction of the power and security struggles creates the „power-security dilemma“ which is central to any understanding of the national security problem facing Greece and Turkey.

The distinction between the power and security struggles is important for three reasons. First, it points to fundamentally different explanations for insecurity under anarchy, though the two struggles are in part connected by power. Relative power is zero-sum by definition (Greece or Turkey can get stronger only by making the other weaker). To the extent that security requires relative power, it is also subject to zero-sum logic (Greece or Turkey can be secure only if the other side is insecure). Second, if Greece and Turkey are involved in a tragic struggle for security trapped in an anarchic international system that distorts their legitimate efforts at self-protection into a seamless web of insecurity and conflict, then their mutual realisation of the given situation may lead them to undertake political and military measures to mitigate their security dilemma. On the other hand, if the two countries are involved in a ceaseless struggle for survival and dominance motivated by the pursuit of power, then there is no way out of this situation unless one of them experiences significant defeat. Third, and most important, in case that only Turkey or Greece pursues a revisionist policy, and if that state could be identified, then the international community could retreat from the dangerous policy of treating them equally (something that encourages the revisionist state) and could formulate a more appropriate policy thereby preventing the activities of the revisionist one. But what is clearly distinct in theory is very difficult to disentangle in practice. In the case of the power and security struggles, both the political and military factors that might enable one to distinguish between them, in fact, often work to blur and confuse their boundary.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

Revisionism and *Status Quo* in the Greek-Turkish Conflict

The key political factor in the power-security dilemma concerns the motivation of states and revolves around the traditional distinction between *status quo* and revisionist states. The power struggle emphasises the continuous tension between revisionist and *status quo* states, and assumes it to be a permanent feature of the international anarchy. Explanation of the Greek-Turkish conflict according to this model rests on the assumption that either Greece or Turkey, or both of them, may be revisionist. On the other hand, the security struggle emphasises the tensions that arise even if both states were in some sense *status quo* oriented. In this context, both Greece and Turkey may be *status quo* states although their actions may appear to be of a revisionist nature. Neither struggle would exist in the absence of military forces, but since both states possess armed forces, emphasis should be given to the political dynamics which lead to conflict under those conditions. The problem for Athens and Ankara is how to identify each others' motives and for the international community how to tell whether Greece and Turkey are revisionist or *status quo* states.

There are two reasons for which it is difficult to say with certainty whether the two countries are revisionist or *status quo* orientated. First, like the *status quo* states, revisionist ones also have legitimate national security interests and all share some minimum *status quo* objectives.²¹ Thus, both Greece and Turkey seek to maintain their territory and their political, economic and societal sectors so that they are viable in their own right, and so that undesired changes are not imposed on them by the use or threat of force or by political or economic threats. If revisionist states are assumed to be morally wrong or aggressive by definition, then they simply get dismissed as „the problem“ without having their case considered as a legitimate and persistent part of the security dynamic of the system as a whole. In other words, even if they are *status quo* states, Greece and/or Turkey may be forced by systemic pressures to display revisionist behaviour.

Second, the rivalry between *status quo* and revisionist states can be seen as a way of describing political orientations towards an existing pattern of relations. *Status quo* states set, benefit from and support the existing pattern, while revisionist ones feel alienated from it, threatened by it and oppose its continuation. Therefore, *status quo* states have security interests not only in preserving the system, but also in maintaining their position within it.²² They, therefore, try to maintain the existing patterns of relations in terms of the distribution of power, wealth, productive capability, knowledge, and status.²³ In this way, the *status quo* becomes dynamic (revisionist like), inasmuch as it rides the wave of change rather than resisting it, but static in its attempt to hold on to the existing pattern of relations.²⁴ On the other hand, because they feel threatened by, or at least hard done by the existing *status quo*, revisionist states tend to view security in terms of improving their position within the system. Although they may, for tactical reasons, give temporarily or specifically limited support to policies of stability (*status quo*), they have no long-term or general commitment to it.²⁵

The fact that impulses towards changes and stability cover two dimensions (place in the power hierarchy and attitude towards the dominant norms in the system) creates some confusion in trying to differentiate between *status quo* and revisionist states. Orthodox

21 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 300-1.

22 Carr, *Twenty Years Crisis*, pp. 105 and 122 and Richard J. Barnett, „The Illusion of Security“, in C.R. Beitz and T. Herman (eds.), *Peace and War* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1973), p. 285.

23 See Suzan Strange, *States and Markets* (London: Pinter, 1988), chapters 2-6.

24 See Paul Seabury, „The Idea of the Status Quo“, in Paul Seabury (ed.), *Balance of Power* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965).

25 Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1962), p. 18.

revisionism is purely about power and status.²⁶ It involves no major challenge to the principles of the prevailing order, but centres on a struggle within the existing order aimed at producing a redistribution of power, status, influence and/or resources. Such challenges are an inevitable feature of any *status quo*, in as much as the inherent mobility of the distribution of power will always generate a pattern of rising and declining powers.

It is worth noting that while the issue of state size is irrelevant to revisionism, it makes a difference whether the revisionist states are strong or weak powers. Albania, for example, is highly revisionist, but so weak that its opinion counts for little. While weak revisionists may have low influence in their own right, they can make a substantial impact if their revisionism can be aligned with that of a larger power.²⁷ This is the reason for which Greece has perceived the close relations of Turkey with Albania and FYROM as threatening.

The absence of any easily identified political and relational character among the states in the system explains why the dynamics of the power and security struggles become so entangled. Uncertainty as to the nature of other states arises both from the difficulty of judging their true intentions and from the peculiarities of alignment that the system generates. This uncertainty is compounded by the general hazard of life in an armed anarchy, and is the driving force behind the confusion of the power-security dilemma. The security struggle, which is a natural dynamic of an armed anarchy, can easily create the self-fulfilling prophecy of a power struggle. Conversely, an actual power challenge may well be disguised in its early stages as a manifestation of the security struggle. Under such conditions, neither Greece nor Turkey can rely on absolute distinctions between the power and security struggles in relation to the formulation of their policy. Consequently, both find themselves forced to play with caution, suspecting power motives everywhere. This stance has the ironic result of intensifying their power-security dilemma.

The Military Factor in the Greek-Turkish Conflict

The blurring of political identities as between revisionist and *status quo* is matched by a similar confusion in the military sector: how to tell the difference between behaviour aimed at changing the military balance (indication of a power struggle) and behaviour aimed simply at maintaining the military *status quo* (pointing more towards a security struggle).

The military factor concerns not the political motives of Greece and Turkey, but the problems arising from the impact that their military measures have on each other. A desire for defence underlies both struggles, the problem being that defence can cover a wide range of military policies. At a minimum, the defence of the two countries implies preparation for a responsive action that occurs only after a clear attack has started. At maximum, it can involve preparation for forward or pre-emptive action designed either to meet threats which are still remote in time, space or magnitude, or to eliminate all significant sources of opposition or threat. Thus, pre-emption for defensive purposes (*status quo*) may be confused with revisionism. Therefore, at a maximum, defence may be seen by its perpetrators as fitting within the security struggle model, though in practice, and as seen by the other side, such behaviour fits into the power model. The problem is that the ambiguity of military means makes it difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive intentions. Because of the continuous pressure of the technological imperative, the *status quo* behaviour of maintaining military strength is frequently hard to separate from the challenging behaviour of arms racing. The resulting uncertainty leads to endless clashes over policy along appeasement versus

26 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 306-11.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

containment lines. To confuse matters, both struggles can and may operate simultaneously within the given case.

Two ambiguities in the nature of military power work to complicate the distinction between aggressive and defensive behaviour.²⁸ The first is the traditional problem of separating offensive from defensive military postures. Because attack is often a militarily efficient form of defence, and because many weapons can be used for both offensive and defensive purposes, Greece and Turkey are hard put to calculate each others' intentions from the nature of their military deployments. To the extent that intentions are calculated from capabilities, the profound ambiguity of military means pushes them towards worst-case assessments of each others' behaviour. This is the classical formulation of the security dilemma: the measures that one of those states takes to defend itself are seen by the other as potentially aggressive, and responded to accordingly. Those responses raise threats, and so trigger further rounds of responsive armaments. Because military means are ambiguous, the measures that Greece and Turkey take to make themselves secure result in both becoming less secure.

The second ambiguity arises because the technological imperative drives a continuous improvement in the performance of weapons. This means that the military sector possesses an independent dynamic that functions regardless of the nature of the Greek-Turkish political relations. Since military capability is common to both the power and security struggles, the fact that it is subject to a dynamic which is separate from the intentions which govern those struggles easily confuses the security signals that Greece and Turkey try to send to each other. Fear of defeat governs both struggles, driving the two countries to maintain military forces that are somehow proportional to their perceived threats of attack. Each of them, therefore, needs to keep an eye on how its military capability relates to that of the other. Because military power is relative, Greece and Turkey are sensitive to changes in their relative capabilities. Such changes may occur because one of them has decided to try to change the military balance, or because it needs to bring its armed forces up to date. Weapons become obsolete as technological advances open new opportunities in design and performance. Since newer generations of weapons are invariably more potent in performance than those they replace, „the other side“ may have difficulty distinguishing between changes designed to maintain military strength, and those designed to increase it. In other words, modernising changes made in response to the endlessly advancing frontier of the technologically possible may be confused with changes made with a view to shifting the balance of military power. Because the military idiom is similar, the political differences are hard to read, and prudence dictates caution about benign assumptions. New technologies will continue to open up new military possibilities regardless of whether military applications are intended or not. Since Greece and Turkey will remain responsible for their defence, they cannot escape from the pressures that these options create.

Notable attempts have been made to draw conclusions about the motives of the states by exploring the nature of their military capabilities.²⁹ It has been argued that when offensive weapons are dominant, and the difference between offensive and defensive weapons cannot be distinguished, incentives to acquire offensive weapons will be high, and the situation will be very unstable, with the power-security dilemma operating at full pitch. When offensive weapons are dominant, but the difference between offensive and defensive weapons can be distinguished, the situation is less tense, and aggressive states can be identified as such by the weapons they acquire. The spoiler is that if the offensive advantage is great, a passive defence

28 Ibid., pp. 312-3.

29 Jervis, „Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma“. See also Richard Rosecrance, *International Relations: Peace or War?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), pp. 65 and 300.

option will not suffice, and even *status quo* states will be obliged to acquire offensive weapons.³⁰ When the defence has the advantage and the difference cannot be distinguished, the power-security dilemma operates, but is moderated by the fact that arms acquisitions produce more security for their owners than insecurity for others. When the defence has the advantage and the difference can be distinguished, the situation is very stable, with aggressors automatically revealing their intentions by the nature of their military deployments, and the uncertainties which produce the security struggle kept to a minimum. However, strategic, systemic, and sub-systemic factors currently mitigate against this approach to the Greek-Turkish case.³¹

Another proposition regarding the identification of the motives of Greece and Turkey draws on the level of their military spending. Arms races are not all of the same intensity.³² A low-density arms race might be hard to distinguish from maintenance of the military *status quo*. In such a case, military expenditure could remain at a constant and moderate proportion of the Gross National Product (GNP). A high density arms race, by contrast, would look more like a mobilisation for war, with military expenditure either rising as a proportion of GNP, or else hovering around some high proportion. Although Greece and Turkey spend a considerable percentage of their GNP for military purposes, this spending is constant (though very high) and, therefore, one cannot draw any definite conclusion about their motives.

Policy-making Processes and the Greek-Turkish Conflict

Because policy has a powerful impact on security problems, the policy-making process itself becomes a major factor in the overall character of the security problem of Greece and Turkey. If both states could possess perfect information, they would understand each others' positions and motives and would be capable of making rational decisions based on this information and understanding and would be free to make and to implement these decisions. But the policy-makers in Athens and Ankara are partially informed, do not fully understand each other, are capable of only limited rationality, and are highly constrained in what they can do. As a consequence, many factors within the policy-making process have a considerable influence on policies.

Policy-makers in both countries are subject to the operation of cognitive dynamics which interfere with accurate threat perception, thereby intensifying the security dilemmas facing Athens and Ankara. Those cognitive dynamics include: „*ethnocentrism*, that magnifies misperception, stereotyping, and nationalist rivalries; *doctrinal realism*, which exaggerates the conflictual character of the Greek-Turkish relations; *ideological fundamentalism*, that heightens ‚us‘ and ‚them‘ attitudes; *strategic reductionism*, which takes the politics out of the Greek-Turkish relations and reduces it to questions of military balance or imbalance; *worst-case forecasting*, that can magnify mutual fears; *secrecy*, which increases suspicion and the difficulty of accurate threat assessment; *zero-sum thinking*, that promotes alarmism and rules out significant co-operation; and *implicit enemy imaging*, which leads to mutual suspicion whatever the character of their actions or non-actions“.³³ In their varying susceptibility to these aggravating factors, some national élites in the two countries will be more prone than others to intensify security dilemmas.

30 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p. 314.

31 Yannis A. Stivachtis, *The Limitations of Non-Offensive Defence: The Greco-Turkish and Middle Eastern Cases*, forthcoming (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2000).

32 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 314-5.

33 Cited in Wheeler and Booth, „The Security Dilemma“, p. 40.

Political Processes and the Greek-Turkish Conflict

The prospect of rationality is further diminished by the nature of the political process itself.³⁴ The internal political process of both Greece and Turkey is a dynamic, potentially unstable and normally fractious system of relations among contending interests. Neither of the two states is a unitary actor. Within each of them exist many sub-national actors which do not only have an interest in national security but other interests too.

Specifically, the appeal to national security as a justification for actions and policies which would otherwise have to be explained is a political tool of immense convenience for a larger variety of sectional interests. Because of the leverage over domestic affairs, which can be obtained by invoking it, an undefined notion of national security offers scope for power-maximising strategies to political and military élites. Cultivation of hostile images can justify policies with deep implications for the conduct of domestic political life, while threats coming from „the other side“ are often real enough to make their exaggeration credible.

National policy-makers are required by their position and by the nature of their powers and responsibilities to take a predominantly national view. Because security is seen primarily in terms of national power by both policy-makers and strategists, an unhelpful uniformity has dominated. Academics who have been concerned with security have been largely locked into a power view of it and have influenced the formulation of security policy in two ways. First, by serving as advisers to various decision-makers; and second, by influencing the opinion of the new generations to whom they serve as instructors.

Moreover, government bureaucracies of various kinds (defence ministry, foreign ministry, finance ministry etc) participate in security policy-making, and each of them brings to the process its own mix of interests. Even within the same ministries different departments may have competing views and interests. Newspapers are also interested in the subject of national security, but are constrained in what they report by their need to sell their product to readers and advertisers. Because of their commercial interests, newspapers distort the public view of what is important in national security, focusing attention on short-term issues and military means while largely ignoring longer-range and more abstract issues.

Political parties suffer almost of the same dual interest pressures as the media. Whatever one side advocates, the other can make a plausible case against on grounds of waste, cost, militarism, risk or ideology. Some parties may support certain security policies because they provide employment in politically sensitive areas. Thus, weapons might be produced or acquired more for reasons to do with the domestic political economy than for reasons deriving from the international situation. Finally, industrial and commercial organisations within or outside the countries concerned also have interests in security policy, and again these interests mix with their other concerns to produce distortions in rationality. There is a common interest between governments and arms manufacturers. First, the desire to maintain a sufficient national capacity, and second, governments are concerned with the maintenance of the quality of their military equipment to the general standard prevailing in the international system (technological improvement).

34 Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 348-55.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to provide an understanding of the Greek-Turkish conflict by explaining the operation of the dilemmas facing Athens and Ankara. Its target was to point out the irrelevance and danger of the Western image of the two countries as being „spoiled kids playing their own games“. The international community should understand that the situation facing the two countries is far more complex than the above image wishes to describe. In fact, the Greek-Turkish relations are a reflection of the most essential problems in international relations.

Athens and Ankara are subject to dilemmas to which there are not obvious and easy solutions. Their problem is to decide whether they are involved in a power or a security struggle and then adopt the appropriate security policies. Because of the complex cognitive problems mentioned earlier, however, identifying the situation accurately might be difficult, while a wrong interpretation of the situation may have grave consequences for their national security. One of the two governments, which objectively is in a security struggle, for example, may misperceive it and as a result choose to emphasise a power struggle response. The latter might include offensive weapons and doctrine. In this case the result might be to exacerbate tension further, by placing the target government under intolerable strain because of the putative threat to its own defence forces. If both parties in a security struggle emphasise deterrent postures as a result of making worst-case assumptions about each others' intentions, the outcome will be arms-racing, more fear and arms-racing, and less security for both at progressively higher levels of cost and destructive power. Worst-case forecasting has a propensity for being self-fulfilling.

Because the power and security struggles cannot be distinguished reliably, the national security policy of Greece and Turkey cannot rest on the relatively clear and straightforward principles that can be derived from either in isolation. The problems and policies that were mentioned earlier will, therefore, be maintained for the years to come despite the fact that the recent earthquake in Turkey has brought the two countries closer.

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