The Essence of the Greek-Turkish Rivalry: National Narrative and Identity

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ABSTRACT

The Greek-Turkish dyad is one of the oldest rivalries between neighbours. Since 1999 Greek-Turkish relations are in a state of détente and there have been many attempts to resolve their outstanding differences (Aegean, Cyprus, minority issues) but until now little has come out of these efforts although both sides are committed to an overall settlement. Our thesis is that this lack of progress is due to the fact that various incompatible conflicts are but the tip of the iceberg. The real reasons for the impasse, the essence of the rivalry, are the following ensemble (which is presented in detail in this paper): historical memories and traumas, real or imagined that are part and parcel of their national narratives together with their respective collective identities which are built on slighting and demonizing the 'Other'. Only if this aspect of the conflict is fully addressed will Greece and Turkey be able to settle their 'objective conflicts of interests' and embark on a process of mutually beneficial reconciliation.

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The Essence of the Greek-Turkish Rivalry: National Narrative and Identity

1. Introduction

The Greek-Turkish rivalry is one of the few oldest enduring conflicts between neighbors worldwide. From mid-1999 onwards relations are in a state of détente and there have been many attempts to resolve their outstanding differences (Aegean, Cyprus, minority issues) but until now very little has come out of these efforts and the occasional shows of good will, even though both sides are committed to an overall settlement and a final reconciliation. And the rivalry rumbles on at low ebb in spite of its staggering economic and other costs to both sides (armaments, militarization of border regions, costly over-flights of military aircraft and dangerous dogfights in the Aegean, the spending of valuable diplomatic and other capital that could have been spent more productively elsewhere).

The continuing Greek-Turkish antagonism is perplexing to outsiders who point to the following:

1. The borders between Turkey and Greece have been set, conclusively, at the Lausanne (1923) and Paris (1947) peace treaties; the remaining boundary disputes, namely those in the Aegean, are on water and in the air and are more amenable to a logical and just settlement.
2. There are no claims over the other country's territory as was the case until 1922. Both parties have officially claimed (from 1929 until today) that they harbour no territorial ambitions vis-à-vis the other side. There is little reason not to doubt the sincerity of these claims, that both sides are *bona fide* status quo states (leaving aside the case of Cyprus in

bygone days) irrespective of the doubts that linger on about the true intentions of the other party.

3. There have been two decades of cordial relations (1930s and 1945-54) in addition to the recent detente, as a result of a political will at the highest level, which implies that the road to an eventual rapprochement is far from far-fetched but a distinct possibility worth pursuing.

Yet the Greek-Turkish rivalry drifts on with remarkable abandon. Could it be, as Henry Kissinger had once put it, that the conflict is centuries-old and emotional and defies rationality (Kissinger 2000: 192, 195)?

The first tangible Greek-Turkish conflict following the Second World War was the Cyprus problem from the 1950s onwards. A second objective conflict of interest is the intricate Aegean difference, which includes at least six distinct disputes.[1] Minority questions are also a constant point of friction together with issues related to the Patriarchate in Istanbul. All these questions however complex and of great importance to both parties are resolvable provided there is an abundance of mutual good will and readiness for compromise by both parties.[2]

2. Three Paths Ahead and their Limitations

At the outset it is worth remembering that in both countries there are many experts, diplomats and politicians that regard the rivalry as a given, as inevitable, along existential lines within the logic of Carl Schmitt: 'the Other' (*Andere*) is the great 'Enemy' (*Feind*) that can never be 'a friend' (Schmitt, 1932). Within this perspective, which was dominant in the two publics from

[1] See Wilson 1979/1980; Rozakis 1988: 269-492; Theodoropoulos 1988: 266-300; Pazarcı 1988: 101-20; Aydın 1997: 115-22; Syrigos 1998; Acer 2003; Bölükbaşı 2004; Heraclides 2001, 2010: 167-219.

[2] This has been convincingly argued by specialists on Greek-Turkish affairs and several insiders. See in particular: Wilson 1979/1980: 1-2, 27-29; Clogg 1983: 124-5, 128, 131; Couloumbis 1983: 124-30; Groom 1986: 147-8; Bahcheli 1990: 129-30, 152-4, 192-3; Haass 1990: 59-64; Heraclides 2001, 2010: 151-4, 223, 228-31. Among insiders see former ambassadors Theodoropoulos 1988: 324-5; Stearns 1992: 134-44; Tzounis 1990: 217-21.

1974 until the late 1990s and still far from a spent force, the only realistic strategies are deterrence, diplomatic victories (outwitting and cornering the adversary), the threat of armed violence and other paraphernalia of the traditional realist paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s.

Those in Greece and Turkey that do not regard the Greek-Turkish antagonism as inevitable tend to follow the tradition of soft realism, pluralism/liberalism or constructivism. In practical terms they have tended to follow three paths in their attempt to cope with the Greek-Turkish rivalry.

One path is to put the main emphasis on the settlement of the Cyprus problem that had derailed the cordial Greek-Turkish relations in 1954 and has poisoned them ever since. According to this line of reasoning as long as the Cyprus conflict looms in the Greek-Turkish horizon the bilateral differences would defy resolution. Conversely if the Cyprus conflict was resolved by the reunification of the island than the settlement of the Aegean and other points would be almost a child's play. At political level this approach was first put forward by Greek leaders, Constantinos Mitsotakis (1990-1993) and more erratically by Andreas Papandreou (1985-1988). The Turkish stance for most of the time, prior to the rise of the AKP government (November 2002) was the Bülent Ecevit line, that the Cyprus problem was resolved in 1974. From 2003 onwards primer Recet Tayyip Erdoğan has repeatedly stressed the need to resolve the Cyprus via reunification and more recently has said that with the resolution of the Cyprus problem the other differences would be easily resolved.

Skeptics of this approach (including this author) argue that since the Cyprus question may not be resolved, at least not in the foreseeable future, this approach lacks pragmatism. Obviously it is to the interests of Greece and Turkey to resolve the Cyprus problem in a mutually acceptable way, preferably by reunification in a loose federal framework or if that proves impossible by way of a velvet divorce with the return of some 7-10% of the territory to the

Greek-Cypriots. But it is hardly for the two 'motherlands' to do so. Resolution has to be negotiated and accepted by the two communities in Cyprus; it cannot be imposed by Athens and Ankara, as bitter experience has shown (namely the 1959 Zurich-London Agreements and their attempts in the period 1964-1970, starting with the 1964 US mediation by Dean Acheson) or by the UN for that matter (the attempt of all the UN Secretary-Generals from U Thant in 1964-1965 to Koffi Annan in 1999-2004). The two Cyprus communities or one of them can – and has – repeatedly frustrated reasonable attempts at resolution from 1968-1974 (when the first promising inter-communal talks took place) until today (the recent inter-communal talks from 2008 onward under the auspices of UN Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon). It may well be that the Cyprus problem simply defies resolution via reunification (Heraclides 2011). Thus Greece and Turkey may have to learn to live with a divided Cyprus and not allow their relations to be marred as a result constantly frustrating their attempts at settlement of their many differences. Effective decoupling/delinking is called for: of the Cyprus problem from their bilateral relations that need to be settled once and for all. Put more emphatically, Greek-Turkish relations cannot be a hostage to the Cyprus problem. There is some evidence that this approach has gained ground in both countries from 2004 onwards that is from the final failure of the Annan mediation attempt (the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots in March 2004).

A second path is to tackle head on the various outstanding issues, namely those of the Aegean dispute. At a first glance the complex Aegean conflict appears zero-sum and very difficult to resolve for it involves delicate 'national issues', such as sovereignty, sovereign rights, oil reserves, freedom of the high seas and of the air, access to ports, security and prestige. But contrary to the Cyprus problem where it may well be that 'no solution may be a solution', this is not the case with the Aegean conflict, as seen by the two attempts at settlement (in the period 1975-81 and 2002-3), where the two parties seemed roughly in agreement as to the basic principles and parameters of a just and fair settlement

(Heraclides 2010: 108, 152-4) as well as the more recent talks from May 2010 that appear promising. Arguably the tangible, objective conflicts of interest are not the real reason for intractability but the mutual fears as to the real aims of the other side.[3] In the Aegean plane it needs to be amply demonstrated that Greece does not want to 'strangulate Turkey' by making the Aegean a 'Greek sea'; and Turkey for its part is not contemplating 'grabbing Greek islands'. The resolution of the Aegean conflict is long overdue now after more than a decade of dialogue on the Aegean within a spirit of détente (Heraclides 2010 & 2011; International Crisis Group, European Briefing No64, 2011).

Critics of this approach point out that the attempts of 1975-81 and 2002-2003 led to naught, as did the talks that continued from 2004 to 2009; that one of the parties or both were not ready to take the plunge for a variety of reasons. As for the more recent invigorated talks (from 2010 onward) it appears that Erdoğan is prepared to clinch a deal, but Greece under George Papandreou, who was initially very positive, has settled for a more drawn out process due to the fear of the domestic cost. Moreover with Turkey's EU prospect fading away and EU membership less popular even in Turkey there is little impetus to regard the solution of the Aegean conflict as a priority however helpful it may be in heightening Turkey's credentials for the EU and presenting Turkey as a constructive and friendly state in the region (reinforcing foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's well-known "no problem with neighbours" thesis). But as time goes by least promising is the Greek side due to the country's economic woes that seem unending (Greece is constantly on the brink of bankruptcy since 2009). This dismal state of affairs is hardly conducive to bold conciliatory moves on the Aegean plane for they will almost inevitably be labeled as a sell-out by the opposition and the public given Greece's present weakness and lack of international clout. The economic malaise has led to another negative reaction by Greek nationalists and like-minded "experts": that Greece should

[3] See in particular: Wilson 1979/1980: 1-2,13,27,29; Clogg 1983:124-5,128,131; Couloumbis 1983: Groom 1986: 147-8,152; Bahcheli 1990:129-30,152-4,192-3; Haass 1990:59-64; Stearns 1992:134-44; Heraclides 2010.

appropriate the whole of the Aegean (the traditional Andreas Papandreou line from the 1970s and 1980s) and even beyond in the eastern Mediterranean (around the small island of Kastelorizo) which is supposedly replete with oil and other mineral resources and thus save Greece from bankruptcy. In this context another prospective dispute is surfacing in addition to the other six in the Aegean, the notion of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

But perhaps above all any deal on the Aegean plane entails compromises very difficult to swallow for both parties, not least due to the unrealistic expectations of both sides that have soared through the years due to the jingoist stance of leading politicians and the various extreme views presented in the media by nationalist "experts" in both countries.

A third path is the one of low politics, mainly economic cooperation, contacts, tourism, and extended interaction at sub-governmental level on issues of low politics (Haass, 1990: 63-4; Birand, 1991: 28-9; Hale 2002: 66-7, 178-9). Hopefully after decades of enhanced cooperation that would lead to mutual trust, the Aegean dispute and the other outstanding bilateral differences may become 'desecurited' and more amenable to a settlement (Rumelili, 2007: 107). The outstanding issues of the Aegean and others may appear less salient and some issues may simply disappear from the agenda. At the very least after, say, two decades of contacts, economic cooperation and inter-governmental cooperation on low politics, the two sides may have the luxury to agree to disagree and, if things momentarily turn sour, focus on effective conflict prevention and crisis management.

Skeptics of this approach point out that it remains an open question whether the functional or neo-functional logic can work in such a setting. It is probably too optimistic to regard economic cooperation and other transactions à la Mitrany potent enough to withstand a downward slide in high politics, triggered as a result of an episode in the Aegean that runs out of hand, continued deadlock on the Cyprus talks, a rise in nationalist frenzy in Greece or Turkey or a new

government or governmental coalition that favours antagonism and brinkmanship. Economic transactions are not always "win-win" (the Adam Smith expectation) but can become antagonistic in some areas. It is also doubtful whether economic cooperation can spill-over into high politics along the neo-functional logic, inciting a rapprochement and/or acting as a secure safety net against retrogression (Evin, 2005: 15-17; Öniş & Yılmaz 2008: 125, 131-34; Papadopoulos 2009: 289-314; Heraclides 2010: 226-8).

Why have all three paths defied hopes and expectations until today? This is the case, I would argue, because the Greek-Turkish differences – the objective conflict of interest – are but the tip of the iceberg. What has made these differences impervious to a settlement are (a) the weight of history, mainly imagined history based on chosen glories and traumas that are buttressed by their respective national narratives, (b) coupled with their chosen collective identities which are built on slighting and demonizing the other party. This is the crux of the Greek-Turkish antagonism and less the tangible disputes as such (Clogg 1983: 128; Millas 1991, 2004a, 2005; Heraclides 2001, 2010: 223-4, 231-3; Özkırımlı & Sofos 2008). Only if this aspect of the conflict is fully addressed will Greece and Turkey be able to settle their chronic disputes (bar Cyprus) and embark on a process of mutually beneficial reconciliation.

Demonization and threat perceptions are pervasive. On the basis of their imagined history and chosen identity the Greeks (in their great majority) are convinced that Turkey is since 1974 (from the Cyprus mega-crisis) in the throes of 'neo-Ottomanism' and expansionism: to divide the Aegean into two parts and 'ensnare' the eastern Greek islands; grab Greek Thrace, if given the opportunity; and control all of Cyprus.[4] The Turks for their part believe that Greece is swayed (since the mid-1950s) by the irredentist *Megali Idea* (Great Idea) of the period 1850-1922 (whose avowed aim was to conquer as many

[4] Almost all the Greek IR scholars and international lawyers, regard Turkey as threatening towards Greece. Among the moderates see: Veremis 1982; Rozakis 1988; Veremis & Couloumbis 1994; Tsakonas 2010. Among the many hard-liners see: Valinakis 1990; Ioannou 1997; Economidès 1997; Syrigos 1998.

Ottoman territories as possible), though Athens now treads more carefully, not head-on but by using a careful legalistic stratagem, be it in the Aegean (to render it a 'Greek lake') or with regard to Cyprus (union with Greece until 1974, 'indirect union' today via the EU from the mid-1990s onward).[5]

3. Historical Narratives

One of the most enduring beliefs in both countries is that the Greek-Turkish conflict is perennial, almost primordial; its origin and point of no return is to be found in the Middle Ages, at the battle of Manzikert in 1071, between Byzantine 'Greeks' and Seljuk 'Turks' (actually Orthodox Christian *Romaioi* against Sunni Muslim Seljuks); or according to a Turkish view even in distant antiquity in the legendary battle of Troy (with the Trojans presumably ancestors of the present-day Turks).[6]

Along the perennial-primordial perspective the first phase of the encounter between the two peoples ends with the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed II the Conqueror (1453). The second phase is the period 1453-1821, which is portrayed by the Greeks as 400 years of 'Turkish occupation' and 'yoke'; and by the Turks as a model of tolerance and multiculturalism, in which the Greeks (the *Rum* as they called them) flourished as no other non-Muslim community. And the third phase of the clash is the period from 1821 (the start of the Greek War of Independence) until today or until 1999 for the more optimistic.

[5] See for such views the writings of noted Turkish academics and diplomats, including Çağlayangil 2001 [1990]: 237-9; Pacarzı 1986, 1988: 103-4; Bilge 1989: 67-80, 2000; Gürkan 1989: 113-31; Gürel 1993a, 1993b: 163-71; Elekdağ 1996: 33-57; Inan & Baseren1996: 60, 63; Gündüz 2001, 81-101: Arım 2001: 20-3, 26; Acer 2003: 48-9, 61, 143; Soysal 2004: 37-46; Bölükbaşı 2004: 15-35, 42-50, 62-72.

[6] The Troy idea is of course outlandish, but there is an interesting vignette worth mentioning. Mehmed II, years after having conquered Constantinople, visited the legendary site of Troy and is reported to have said: 'It was the Greeks … who ravaged this place in the past and whose descendents have now through my efforts paid the right penalty, after a long period of years, for their injustice to us Asiatics at the time and so often in subsequent times'. This is written in Greek by the official biographer of Mehmed, Mihail Kritovoulos (a Byzantine) in *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*. Apparently Mehmed was aware of a theory upheld at the time by some in Europe that the Ottomans, like the Romans before them, were the descendents of vengeful 'Trojans paying back the Greeks'. See Kafadar 1995: 9 & 150 endnote 12.

Primordialism is not only a popular belief among the two publics, but it is part and parcel of their respective national narratives.

In Greece the dominant narrative is the one conceived by historian Constantinos Paparrigopoulos in the mid-19th century, the idea of over 3000 years of uninterrupted history and of the existence of a 'Greek nation' since the Homeric days. In the mid-19th century this concept superseded the dominant narrative of the years 1821-1850, introduced by scholar Adamantios Korais. According to the first narrative the modern Greeks are 'resurrected' descendents of the Ancient Greeks; that 'Greece' was reborn after its demise in the 4th century B.C. like the mythical phoenix from its ashes. Paparrigopoulos incorporated the Macedonian and Byzantine eras in the Greek narrative and thus was able to achieve historical continuity and also provide a crucial synthesis between Ancient Hellenism and Christianity *cum* Byzantium, which however implausible is the self-evident truth for the Greeks (Nairn 1979: 32, 34; Herzfeld 1982; Veremis 1990: 12-13; Tsoukalas 1999: 11-13; Liakos 2008: 204-13; Özkırımlı & Sofos 2008: 80-5).

From the 1970s onwards there are two other renditions of the Paparrigopoulos scheme with lesser influence: neo-Orthodoxy (theologian Christos Yiannaras and others) which exalts the role of Orthodoxy and of the Byzantine Empire; and a more scientific approach which puts the birth of modern Hellenism in the year 1204 (the Crusader conquest of Constantinople) (historians Apostolos Vakalopoulos, Nicos Svoronos, D.A. Zakythinos, Stephen Xydis and Speros Vryonis). The Paparrigopoulos and neo-Orthodoxy narratives fall under what Anthony D. Smith calls 'continuous perennialism', the view that 'a particular nation has existed for centuries, if not millennia' (Smith 2000: 5). The Korais line is a case of 'recurrent perennialism'; that a nation may disappear and reappear in history (Smith 2000: 5). As for the 1204 school it falls under Adrian Hastings's variant of perennialism that places the birth of some nations in the late Middle Ages (Hastings 1997).

The Turks do not have one dominant narrative but at least four competing ones (Poulton 1997: 101-9, 130-53,181-8; Millas 2006: 5-8; Özkırımlı & Sofos 2008: 27-37, 60-75, 89-101, 123-44, 134-5): (1) the nationalist and pan-Turkic line from the 1910s (Landau 1995: 9-56, 74-97); (2) the Turkish History Thesis (THT), concocted in the late 1920s and early 1930s by lesser Turkish historians under the guidance of Kemal Atatürk (the then dean among Turkish historians, M.Fuad Köprülü kept his distance from the THT, see Ersanlı Behar, 1989: 167-73); (3) the Anatolian thesis of the 1950s and 1960s (classicist Cevat Şakir, novelist Kemal Tahir and several leftist scholars) with roots in the 1920s; and (4) the Turkish Islamic Synthesis (TIS), from the 1970s (historian Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, Muharrem Ergin, Bozkurt Güvenç and others).

The two main theoreticians of Turkish nationalism (first decades of the 20th century) are Yusuf Akçura (who stressed the ethnic-racial elements of Turkism) and Ziya Gökalp (who stressed common culture and a common belief system) and both were initially pan-Turkists as well. Pan-Turkism and other virulent nationalist approaches have not been able to dominate the scene, save in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War (under the triumvirate of Enver, Talât and Cemal). This brings us to the THT which was to become the official historical dogma. The THT presents a glorious Turkish past since the dawn of history. The Turks are depicted as a very ancient people, as the creators of all the major ancient civilizations in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and beyond, and the quintessential state-builders throughout the centuries. The THT downgrades the Ottoman past, surprisingly even the golden age of the empire (1350-1600). The Thesis was unassailable from the late 1920s until the 1950s. By the mid-1970s it was silently dropped though never officially withdrawn.

Anatolianism reacted to the far-fetched views of the THT, by trying to foster an Anatolian identity, in the sense that the Ottomans and the modern Turks are the cultural descendants of all the civilizations and peoples that had flourished in Anatolia.

The TIS links Turkish identity with Islamic identity. According to the Synthesis, the Seljuks and other Turkic ancestors of the Ottomans converted enthusiastically to Islam, which was suited to their culture and value system and became fervent Muslims and saved Islam from its decline. The TIS reinstates the Ottoman Empire and its heritage, and regards the Ottoman and Turkish legacy and culture superior by comparison to those of other peoples with whom the Ottomans and Turks have intermingled that differ from them ethnically and religiously.

In the Greek case, despite certain disagreements between the dominant Paparrigopoulos narrative and the others, all agree that the Greeks have a history 'as a nation' of at least 3000 years; that the modern Greeks are descendents of the Ancient Greeks; and that the Turks are the traditional enemy and are 'uncivilised', essentially 'barbarians' till this day. They are also in agreement as regards the 'Turkish yoke' that severed the Greeks from their natural environment 'civilised Europe'.

The Turkish narratives disagree as to whether the Ottoman Empire was a great achievement, Turkish or a disgrace to Turkism. But they agree on one point: that it was tolerant to other religious communities and ethnicities, by the standards of the period a 'paradise of cultural pluralism', so much so that the non-Muslims and most of all the *Rum* (the Orthodox Christians subjects headed by the Greeks or Hellenised) and the Armenians thrived even more than the Muslims. Furthermore, all the Turkish national narratives (with the partial exception of Anatolianism) tend to 'forget' the pre-existence of the Ancient Greeks (Ionians) in Asia Minor, downgrade the Byzantine Empire and slight the modern Greeks.

To further underline the role of narratives as a basic source of conflict and ill-feeling between the two parties, let us sketch the dominant highly popular views of the Greeks and Turks regarding the 'Other'.

The dominant Greek view regarding the Turks runs as follows: they are their oldest rivals, the worst and most vicious enemies imaginable, they are 'invaders' (they have taken their ancestral lands) and 'barbarians' to boot. When they finally defeated the glorious thousand year 'Greek Byzantine Empire' (in 1453) they subjected the Greeks to the 'Turkish yoke', to 'four-hundred years of slavery and dungeon', until the Greeks were finally able to free themselves in a heroic struggle for independence (1820s). Then at last the modern Greeks were able to follow their destiny, civilized Europe. In the last decades the aim of 'inherently expansionist and aggressive Turkey' is to grab as much of Cyprus as possible, the eastern Greek islands and Greek Thrace, but Greece will not allow this to happen for after all justice and international law is on the Greek side.[7]

The dominant Turkish view is that the present-day Greeks are descendants of a motley group of Christians living under the decadent and tyrannical Byzantine Empire, who bear no relationship whatsoever to the Ancient Greeks. When conquered they were brought under the just and multicultural rule of the Ottoman Empire whence they thrived. Yet ungratefully and for no real reason they ended up by rebelling, with foreign (mainly Russian) connivance, against their 'benefactors'. Since then they have been on the attack trying to extract Turkish territories along the infamous *Megali Idea,* always with the support of the Europeans (as in the 1820s), going as far as 'occupying and invading' the Turkish Anatolian homeland, to be driven out in the epic Turkish Liberation War. The more recent exploits of Greece as a revisionist state are the attempt to grab the whole of Cyprus, though it was never part of any Greek state, and to expand piecemeal in the Aegean by using legalistic stratagems. But Greece will not succeed in its devious schemes for justice is on the Turkish side and after

[7] For such presentations and their deconstruction see Millas 1991: 24-30; Millas 2002: 119-20 & passim; Millas 2005: 49-52; Papadakis 2005: 14-15 & passim; Heraclides 2010: 233 & passim.

all Turkey is a big and powerful country in the position to frustrate such schemes.[8]

Needless to say this prevailing belief of the Greeks and Turks as nations prior to the age of modernity and of the other as the primary foe and the abode of evil, are later-day constructions. The respective national historical narratives are hardly 'historical' but retrospective; they purposefully forget and ignore affinities, periods of peaceful co-habitation and thriving in common between the two communities, in what amounted, to considerable extent, to a shared 'Ottoman-Levantine heritage' and culture for centuries in the southern Balkans and the Near East (Groom, 1986: 152; Bertand, 2003: 7-28 Millas, 2004a; Evin, 2005: 5; Özkırımlı & Sofos, 2008: 9, 13; Heraclides, 2010: 15-24) a lost world, which ended dramatically within a dozen years from 1912 until 1924: with the 1st Balkan War (1912), the Greek-Turkish War (1919-1922) and the tragic eviction and compulsory exchange of populations of 1922-24 that involved almost two million people (Hirschon 2003; Clark 2006).

4. An Identity-Based Conflict

As Stuart Hall has pointed out, 'identities are constructed through, not outside, difference ... it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the positive meaning of any term and thus its "identity" – can be constructed ... identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render "outside"... The unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as

[8] See Millas 1991: 24-30; Millas 2002: 120; Millas 2005: 54-56; Heraclides 2010: 235. For such view presented as the objective truth see: Bilge 1989: 68-80; Sonyel 1993, 1999; Gürel 1993a; Elekdağ 1996: 34-9, 43; Bölükbaşı 2004: 5-72.

foundational is not a natural but a constructed form of closure ...' [emphasis in the original] (Hall 1996: 4-5).

In the Greek-Turkish context, as Hercules Millas has put it, 'due to historical reasons each party conceives the "other" as a prospective threat or as a challenge to its identity and interprets each of his actions accordingly, creating a vicious circle…' (Millas 2004a: 53). According psychoanalyst and conflict researcher Vamık Volkan by portraying the other side as evil and full of negative traits, one projects those parts of oneself that he/she tries to deny. Projection serves to enhance self-esteem in contrast to the despicable 'other'. In this context, Greeks and Turks have become the 'significant negative other'; they need each other but as enemies. In the identity formation of Greeks and Turks 'chosen traumas' and 'chosen glories' are essential ingredients (Volkan, 1988: 17-59, 99-105; Volkan & Itzkowitz, 1994: 1-12; Dragonas, 2003, 1-15). The famous verse of Constantine Cavafy from another context comes to mind: '...what will become of us without barbarians? These people were a kind of solution'.

It is also worth stressing that the enduring Greek-Turkish rivalry is one of very few instances in history where two national states have gained their independence after a bloody – and in several respects heroic - struggle against 'the Other'. This goes a long way to explaining the tenacity of the rivalry. In their respective wars of independence and other clashes (e.g. in Macedonia in the late 19th and early 20th century and in Cyprus from 1955 until 1974) there were arsons, massacres and other appalling atrocities, and a staggering trail of refugees. Such suffering further galvanised the two peoples as tragic and innocent victims of the other side (Hirschon 2003; Clark, 2006).

In this context it is worth stressing that both sides have a detailed knowledge of the slaughters and other acts of cruelty, deceit, reneging and inhumanity of the other side notably in the course of the Greek War of Independence, the First Balkan Wars (1912) and during the Greek-Turkish War of 1919-1922

("Turkish War of Liberation") or in Cyprus. They tend to exaggerate these acts – and in recent decades they use terms such as 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide' - but by and large and despite many exaggerations and several sheer lies, they are not way of the mark regarding the misdeeds of the other party. But the vast majority of Greeks and Turks are totally unaware of their side's horrifying acts of barbarity in the 1820s, in 1912-1914 and 1919-1922. The very few acts that are acknowledged publicly are downplayed as exceptions to the rule and as understandable reactions given previous discrimination, maltreatment, slaughters and other misdeeds and provocations by the adversary.

On the Greek side, a case in point is the atrocious onslaught of the Greeks and Hellenised Christian Albanians against the city of Tripolitza in October 1821, which is justified by the Greeks ever since as the almost natural and predictable outcome of more than '400 years of slavery and dudgeon'. All the other similar atrocious acts all over Peloponnese, where apparently the whole population of Muslims (Albanian and Turkish-speakers), well over twenty thousand vanished from the face of the earth within a spat of a few months in 1821 is unsaid and forgotten, a case of ethnic cleansing through sheer slaughter (St Clair 2008: 1-9, 41-46) as are the atrocities committed in Moldavia (were the "Greek Revolution" actually started in February 1821) by prince Ypsilantis. Equally forgotten and untold are the arsons, plundering, killings and other acts of barbarity committed by the Greek Army (an organised army and not an onslaught by irregulars) in its Asia Minor campaign, which in the words of Venizelos had 'terribly diminished' the 'moral standing [of Greece] in the civilized family of nations' (see Clark 2006: 55).

On the Turkish side, the killings of high-ranking Greek (*Rum* to be exact) officials of the Ottoman state (including the Patriarch Gregorios V who condemned the Greek Revolution) even though all of them were innocent and not involved in any way in the Greek uprising, the atrocious onslaught of peaceful and affluent island of Chios in March 1822, the similar carnage in

Psara in 1824, the devastating campaign of Ibrahim in Peloponnese in 1925-27 are downplayed as a legitimate reaction to an unlawful uprising against their benefactors by the ungrateful *Rum*. Despicable acts committed upon the entry of the Turkish Army (a regular army and not irregular *chettes*) into Smyrna/Izmir, including the Turkish army's role in allowing the beautiful city of Smyrna/Izmir to burn down, are swept under the carpet and presented as orderly entry with some mishaps that were exceptions and committed by a few individuals as a reaction to what they had suffered at the hands of the Greek invading army in the previous years (from the moment the Greek forces occupied Izmir in May 1919).

4.1 Greek Identity and Demonization of the Turks

In the Greek case the negative image of the Turks as backward, barbarian and prone to committing atrocities is an essential ingredient of the Greek self-image and identity. The objective is oblivion: to forget the skeletons in the cupboard which tell a different story that does not match with the dominant black-white imagery regarding the past (Millas 2004a). In particular the yoke/occupation notion is essential so as to expunge any hint of co-existence and almost partnership between Ottoman Muslims and Greeks (Rum) under Ottoman rule. Any questioning of the yoke idea, say by providing hard historical evidence to the contrary, creates uproar in Greece for it seen as undermining the raison d'être of Greek independence and statehood (Heraclides, 2010: 233-4).9 I

[9] In this regard two characteristic occurrences in recent years are worth mentioning. In 2006-2007, a 6th grade primarily school history text book, written by a group of historians under Dr. Repusi, which presented the Ottoman Empire in somewhat less damning terms (e.g. it undermined, among others, the famous "secret school" idea or the persecution of the "Greeks" *qua* Greeks in the Ottoman Empire) led to an overwhelming condemnation in Parliament, the press, TV and internet for many months. At the end the timid and incapable government of Costas Karamanlis caved in and abolished the book even though it had gone through all the appropriate bureaucratic channels and had been accepted as the textbook for the 6th grade (in Greece there is only one book for each subject contrary to most other countries). The education minister Dr. Marieta Yiannakou lost her job for insisting on retaining the book. A more recent example is the showing of a TV series on the Greek War of Independence, which in its first episodes chose to present the Ottoman state as less than hell on earth, undermined the idea of the secret school and referred to at least one Greek atrocity in the course of the Greek War of Independence, Tripolitza. The main academic advisor of the series is Professor Thanos Vermenis, a

would add another more hidden reason for the need for the 'Turkish occupation/yoke' ensemble: to justify the aforementioned massacres by the insurgent Greeks in the first year of the Greek War of Independence, when no Muslim (Albanian or Turkish speaker) was left alive in Peloponnese.10

The urge to present the Turks as the antipode of civilisation is above all due to the following over-riding concern for the Greeks: by claiming direct descent from 'the classics' (the Ancient Greeks) the modern-day Greeks become one with the 'cradle of civilisation' and via the ancient Greek connection part of European civilisation and culture (Pesmazoglou, 1993: 383; Gourgouris, 1996: 268; Tsoukalas 1999). As the late Stéphane Yerasimos had put it, 'in order to sustain the major argument of being the defenders of civilisation, they must convince themselves and the world of the barbarism of the other … the ineptitude of the Turk to civilisation' (Yerasimos, 1988: 39-40). Another road reinforcing 'Turkish innate barbarism' is the fact that the 'Turk' was for Europe the primary 'Other' and a barbarian one at that for centuries (Neumann, 1999: 39-63). Hence the Greeks as 'full-blooded Europeans' appropriate that aspect of the package as well (Pesmazoglou 1993: 382-3) and regard themselves as the 'vanguard of a European civilization fighting against the barbarians' (Tsoukalas 1993: 66). Moreover the 'barbaric', 'undemocratic' and backwardness' of the Turks and their ancestors (the Ottomans) is essential so as to present the Greeks as the very opposite: modern, progressive, democratic (Tsoukalas, 1999: 7-13; Isiksal, 2002: 121, 124), as true heirs of their ancestors who invented democracy.

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well-known historian with impeccable credentials as a mainstream realist scholar of Greek-Turkish relations (a soft realist as in the case of Theodore Couloumbis, his collaborator in the think tank ELIAMEP). The uproar this time though considerable is more nuanced given the fact that it is shown by a private TV channel and in view of Veremis's reputation as a mainstream figure of the intellectual establishment.

[10] These gruesome incidents may be unknown today to but a few Greeks but they were of course well known to the Greeks of that period, who when asked about the fate of their former neighbours, with whom they previously lived amicably, a typical reaction was that 'the moon devoured them'. See St Clair 2008 [1972]: 1.

I suspect that there is also another reason for the Greek need to present the Turks as abominable creatures likely to commit the most terrible of crimes against humanity, from Chios and Psara in the 1820s to the 'second invasion' in Cyprus 1974. This done, it seems to me, so as to expunge – by an act of projection – the crimes of the Greeks against humanity in the 1820s in Peloponnese, in 1912-1913 (Balkan Wars) and in 1919-1922, not to mention the ill-treatment of the Turkish-Cypriots from December 1963 until November 1967.

Greece is self-defined as the quintessential country of 'civilisation and history'. The end result of this self-identity is a haughty cultural arrogance and megalomania that in fact conceals an 'existential insecurity' that breads a defensive nationalism. By having chosen to identify themselves with the venerable Ancient Greeks as well as with the other major European civilisations (the British, French, Germans, Italians and so on) instead of with peoples and countries of their own size (for instance the Danes, the Hungarians or the Bulgarians), the Greeks of today end up feeling miserable by comparison. This is combined with an acute feeling of being alone in the world, of being 'a brotherless nation', even though Greece is in the EU family (the EU may appear less of a family in recent years, but this Greek perception was already entrenched in the 1980s). Most Greeks feel that they are constantly threatened by outside forces, foremost of all by Turkey, which *inter alia* is seen as having set up a menacing 'Muslim Arc' in the Balkans against Greece. The other neighbours of Greece are barely less hostile most of the time (with the exception of Bulgaria in the last decades). And there are also various other 'anti-Greeks' (*anthellines*) to reckon with, 'the scheming Americans, British and other western Europeans' (today with Greece near bankruptcy the Germans have also joined the rank of anti-Greeks), presumably 'constantly preoccupied with Greece', day and night in the business of 'conspiring to injure Hellenism' (conspiracy theories abound even among intellectuals and academics). The injustice of it all – according to the great majority of Greeks – is that instead of

being admired, cherished and always supported (by virtue of being 'the descendants' of the original civilisers) the opposite is the case. As Nicos Mouzelis has sarcastically put it, the Greeks are utterly shocked when they discover that for some reason other states fellow a foreign policy aimed at safeguarding their own national interests instead of basing their foreign policy on the Greek national interests (Mouzelis 1994: 44). As for the Turks they are 'the favourite child of the Americans' and of several western European states (Mouzelis, 1994: 42-3; Frangoudaki & Dragona 1997; Tsoukalas, 1999: 302-3; Heraclides 2001: 68-9).

As regards the Aegean region (islands and sea) in particular it has become part and parcel of Greek national identity. According to the Pararrigopoulos grand narrative, the European and Asiatic parts of the Aegean were Greek territory since time immemorial and remained so until the fall of the Byzantine Empire. Hence the Aegean was unredeemed Greek territory until the Balkan Wars. Today Greece regards itself as a quintessentially Aegean country. The Aegean Sea and its islands became central in Greek representations. This shift in Greece's definition from a successful northward expansion until the early 20th century to the Aegean as an 'incontestable territory' in present-day self-representations, goes a long to explaining the great sensitivity of the present-day Greeks in the Aegean dispute vis-a-vis Turkey (Sofos and Özkırımlı 2009: 29; see also Wilson 1979/1980: 3,29). Thus even the mention of the obvious fact that the Aegean happens to also be a Turkish sea (since Turkey is after a littoral state of the Aegean) is regarded as outrageous by the great majority of Greeks and as a major provocation.

4.2 Turkish Identity and Demonization of the Greeks

The Turks return the Greek compliment regarding barbarity and backwardness. It is claimed that the Greeks have committed an array of slaughters and other atrocities since 1821 (Millas, 1991: 26-7; Bölükbaşı, 2004: 13, 22, 32, 45-6);

that Greek society is ultra-nationalist; that the Greeks suffer from a deep-seated neurosis towards the Turks (Volkan & Itzkowitz, 1994: 37-46, 181-3) and a 'pathological enmity' (Bölükbaşı, 2004:42). Moreover the Greek state is being run by the 'backward Greek Church' and its obscurantist priests (Berkes, 1984: 125-38), a Church, which is the 'bastion of the 'Megali Idea' which is still very much alive in Greece till this day (Bölükbaşı, 2004: 42). This is probably intended as a rebuttal of the Greek (and European) claim that they are 'barbarians' and 'terrible Turks'. Moreover the knowledge of the acts of barbarity committed by the other side that are little known in Greece or in the rest of the world (save by a handful of specialists) leads to outrage and a sense of being unjustly treated by their reference group, the 'Europeans'. In particular the Turks cannot forgive Europe for 'saving' the Greeks in their 'unlawful rebellion' and doing so, among others, on humanitarian grounds, as if only the Ottoman Turks and Egyptians under Ibrahim had committed slaughters and atrocities in the 1820s.

The main Turkish concern that is a cause for intense insecurity and has a bearing in Turkish self-identity is holding on to their territory and issues of sovereignty (Millas, 2004a: 55). This is due above all to being "burdened by memory of territorial losses" (International Crisis Group, No 64: 2) from the days of the Ottoman Empire, many of which were territories that were annexed to Greece, from 1830 until 1920. This is related to another surprising perception: that even though they have lived in the region for centuries (as Ottomans and from 1922 as Turks), they have a sense of not being an 'autochthonous element' of the region but the 'latest comers' (Soysal, 2004: 42).[11] Thus until today the Turks commemorate the conquest of Constantinople (every 29th of May) with great fanfare as if it was an event of recent history (and of course make no reference to the three-day plunder and destruction that followed the capture of the great city). As in the early days of Turkish

[11] The well-known Greek reference to 'lost homelands' regarding Anatolia exacerbates this Tutkish *Angst* and the belief that Greece remains irredentist till this day. See for instance comments in Bölükbaşı 2004:42.

nationalism even today many Turks feel more at home with the steppes of Central Asia as the land of their forefathers, or even the beyond, the unknown as homeland. As put by Gökalp in his famous 1911 poem 'Turan': 'For the Turks Fatherland means neither Turkey nor Turkestan; Fatherland is a large and eternal country – Turan'. Moreover the Turks are more insecure than the Greeks at to their national identity because their sense of identity evolved belatedly and initially they were 'a state in search of its nation' (Kadioğlu, 2009: 122).

The greatest Turkish traumas are the aforementioned gradual territorial losses and the final abrupt loss of empire (with the first blow against the Ottoman edifice coming with Greek independence in 1830) and the 1920 Sèvres Treaty (the harsh and unfair carving up even of Anatolia proper in the Paris Peace Conference) coupled with the invasion of the Greeks (a former 'subject people') with Allied approval into the Turkish heartland in 1919-22. This has given rise to the 'Sèvres syndrome', the fear of amputation and dismemberment of the motherland (Soysal, 2004: 41; Kirişçi, 2006: 32-8), which is regarded even today as the hidden agenda of the Greeks, but also of many Europeans (in this light EU membership is seen as catastrophic by many in Turkey today). Another phobia is the 'Tanzimat syndrome', portrayed as a generous offer of reforms in 1831-1876 that instead of stemming the tide of nationalist uprisings and foreign interventions did the very opposite, ultimately leading to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire (Yılmaz, 2006: 29-40).

As in the Greek case, Turkish narratives are not devoid of megalomania, as seen especially in the case of THT. But Turkey's arrogance is not so much cultural, though the Turks deservedly take pride in Ottoman and Turkish cultural achievements (Volkan & Itzkowitz, 1994: 47-52). It is mainly the arrogance of power by comparison to other smaller neighbouring countries, such as Greece. This attitude is derived from the *gravitas* of the imperial

Ottoman past and Turkey's sheer size, military prowess and geopolitical clout.[12] This hardly disguised sense of superiority conceals a sense of inferiority, almost of powerlessness.

Apart from the almost paranoiac fear of amputation, the Turks like the Greeks are prone to belief in 'elaborate conspiracy theories depicting a world ganging up on them' (Kirisçi, 2002: 40-1). In their great majority they are convinced that they have no true supporters world-wide (even though they have Turkic brethren across Asia). 'The Turks have no friends' is a well-known Turkish saying. Turkey is 'surrounded by evil enemies' (Kirisçi, 2002: 46; Gundogdu 2001) in what is a very difficult neighbourhood. The counterpart of the 'Muslim arc in the Balkans' of the Greeks is the notion of 'Orthodox encirclement', by Greece and its various allies who happen to be Orthodox (Gürel, 1999a: 126). More generally the majority of Turks feel that they remain the 'hated Other' of Europe (as was the case during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment), the abominable 'Great Turk', contrary to the Greeks who are the 'spoiled child of Europe'. Greece was created by outside forces and from then on until today continues to be supported by them (see Gürel, 1999a: 14-17; Bölükbaşı, 2004:12-15, 23-4, 33-4).

4.3 Additional Caveats

On the whole the Greeks are obsessed by Turkey, by 'the danger from the East' (from Turkey). There is a paranoiac fear of Turkey (Mouzelis, 1994: 24-6; Heraclides, 2001). The dominant stereotype is that Turkey is equipped with an aggressive and bloodthirsty army (Cyprus-1974, the Kurds thereafter); and that the military continue to call the shots on vital national issues, in what is an ultra-nationalist society in the throes of militarism (Millas, 2005: 25-6).

[12] For haughtiness regarding Turkey's geopolitical power see Ilhan 1989 (Ilhan, a former general, is a prolific author and lecturer on Turkish geopolitics) and more recently Davutoğlu, as an academic, before becoming foreign minister in 2009. See Davutoğlu 2001. For a critique of such approaches see Bilgin 2007: 740-56.

The Turks for their part are not equally obsessed by the Greeks nor are they equally fearful of the Greeks militarily (Gürel, 1993b: 163). At times Greece seems more of a nuisance than a real threat (Ergüder, 2002: 13-14; Belge, 2004: 29). But by and large, the Greeks are regarded as aggressive nationalists. As a former Turkish diplomat has put it, 'The so called "Turkish threat" is … intended to serve as a smokescreen' for Greece's attempts to 'monopolize the Aegean' (Bölükbaşı, 2004: 66). The Greeks - according to most Turks - have deep-down not abandoned the irredentist Great Idea, as seen in the case of trying to annex Cyprus until 1974 (Bölükbaşı, 2004: 43-8).

The main Turkish fear of the Greeks is that they have extended international connections, including the very active Greek diaspora, especially in the United States (Kirisçi, 2002: 43; Bölükbaşı, 2004:17). Greek diplomacy and the Greek lobby in the United States and elsewhere have done their utmost to harm Turkey, to smear its reputation and diminish its international standing (Gürel, 1993b: 167; Soysal, 2004: 43). Thus it would seem that the Greek fear of the Turks is more at the military-security level, while the Turkish fear is more at the diplomatic and international influence-propaganda plane. When it comes to a real military threat, Turkey is more fearful of an internal threat, from the PKK, but here again the Greek connection comes in (alleged Greek support to the PKK until early 1999).

Another difference between Greeks and Turks is that Turkey and the Turks form an essential part of Greek self-identification, as the 'negative Turk'. In the Turkish case this is the case but only in part (Isiksal, 2002: 1-8). The Turks are in need of a number of other negative 'Others': foremost of all (until recently, with the AKP Government and especially from 2009 with Ahmet Davutoğlu as foreign minister) the Arab world, which is seen as backward, undemocratic and prone to religious fundamentalism (Bozdağlioğlu 2003: 111-15) and to some extent the Iranians, the Armenians and the Russians. Turkish hate and animosity towards the Greeks is more nuanced. The Turks far more than the Greeks have been known to toy with the 'black top enemy image': that

politicians in Greece are responsible for kindling the flames of animosity; that the Greek people, if left to themselves, would be amicable toward the Turks (Millas, 2005: 30-1). In addition, the Turks are far more prone than the Greeks to refer to common 'tastes, habits and behaviour', not least in cuisine (Ergüder, 2004: 13-14; Belge, 2004: 13), but also in folklore, music, dance and use of common words despite their obvious cultural differences based on language and religion (Volkan & Itzkowitz, 1994: 191). The Greeks abhor any such allusions, as do the Turkish-Cypriots when the Greek-Cypriots remind them of cultural similarities and lack of conflict between 'Greeks' and 'Turks' in the island until the early 1950s.

5. Attitude Change, Paradigm Shift

For the Greek-Turkish rivalry to be overcome and their differences settled, opening the road to a lasting reconciliation, there is an urgent need for attitude change and paradigm shift. Above all the undermining of their respective national mythologies is in order that will also find its echo in the school-texts of primary and secondary education. This is a delicate matter and should be done with the utmost of care, for a more likeable 'Other', worthy of recognition and respect is difficult to accept for it puts into doubt the cherished but insecure national identity and self-worth of the Greeks and Turks respectively, which is built, as we have seen, to a large extent on belittling the other side. Thus, in the first instance, a frontal attack on national narratives, for instance by presenting in detail 'our' extended gruesome acts against innocent unarmed people of the other side in the course of 'our glorious' war of independence, is inadvisable, at least in the first instance for it would tarnish 'our glories irrevocably and damage self-worth and self-esteem. Probably a more pragmatic goal is to embark upon partial changes of the enemy image, by subtly undermining the extreme in-group - out-group polarisation, by among others familiarity with other side, reliable information and increased contacts.

As for contacts and greater familiarity, the totally unexpected popular Greek reactions to the August 1999 earthquakes in Ismit and the wider Marmara region which lead to 'seismic diplomacy' (Ker-Lindsay, 2007: 39-89) is revealing. All of a sudden the Greeks saw through television and in the press, real Turks, in flesh and blood. The concrete Turks were very different from the imagined abstract Turk that the Greeks expected to see; they saw normal human beings suffering. Thus for the first time the image of the Turk 'became blurred' (Millas, 2004b: 23).And the Greeks instead of celebrating for the Turkish disasters (as one would have expected given the level of enmity) they lend them their support. On the Turkish side the Turks could not believe their very own eyes: the Greeks who supposedly hate them and want to do them harm came to their support and was vividly moved by their suffering (Gundogdu 2001). The episode was replayed in reverse three weeks later (in early September), when an earthquake hit Athens. Put differently, the respective original abstract images of what is a Turk or a Greek were so unreal and abominable that almost any contact with real Turks and Greeks respectively could not but have a positive effect, undermining, at least for a while, the negative stereotypes (Heraclides, 2002: 19).

Ideally of course the two sides should be able to arrive at a new sense of collective identity and self-worth which is self-standing and does not need downgrading the out-group so as to appear convincing to the ingroup.

From the perspective of International Relations, Greek-Turkish relations are in need of a paradigm shift along Kuhnian lines or critical thinking along the lines suggested by Alexander Wendt.[13] What is in essentially a Schmitt paradigm needs to give way to a liberal, constructivist or reflectivist paradigm. A variant of the Schmitt approach is *Realpolitik*, still in vogue in Greece and Turkey, mainly the deterrence-security line and diplomatic pressure to corner the adversary, along zero-sum, win-lose thiking. Beneath the veneer of what is

[13] For an insightful presentation of the Greek-Turkish thaw of 1999 with the use of Wendt's critical thinking and transformation, see Gundogdu 2001.

regarded as hard-nosed realism, such strategies conceal ethnocentric ‘patriotic moralism’ (Forde, 1992: 62), a ‘moral crusade’ (Mitchell, 1995: 27) where ‘our side’ is always right and just and the other side always on the wrong.

I would suggest a seven-pronged strategy intended to gradually overcome the Greek-Turkish rivalry.

One strategy could be to begin by showing how factually erroneous are certain perceptions of the other side and of its motivations in specific historical cases, past or present. For instance one could present the three crises regarding the Aegean, where the two sides reached the brink of war (in August 1976, March 1987 and February 1996) and indicate beyond reasonable doubt that misperception and misjudgment reigned supreme, with neither side wanting the crisis in order to test ‘the enemy’, gain advantage or use brinkmanship tactics.[14]

Then one could reveal the other side's suspicions and paranoiac fears of ‘us’ and then compare them with ‘our’ own, thereby amply revealing similarities (mirror images) and subtle differences. This input would hopefully temper either side's *Angst* and may, incidentally, reinforce one's collective ego by indicating how threatening one can be to the other side. More crucially it will put into question the pervading image that the other side is a constant threat and expansionist to boot.

A parallel third road is to elaborate on the various mutual misperceptions manifest in all acute conflicts, such as the belief that the other side is far more hostile and the (mis)perceived greater cohesion and coordination of the adversary in what is a well-thought out and unflinching strategy aimed against ‘us’ (Jervis, 1969: 239-54).

[14] For a balanced and revealing presentation of the 1987 and the 1996 crises see Vathakou 2003: 70-110, 200-22.

A fourth step is to present, with revealing examples, the pernicious role of the press and media in both countries, with its selective, biased and often highly emotional and often inflammatory reporting and editorials.

A fifth step is to reveal the ‘security dilemma’, namely the armaments, which are in place purely for defensive purposes, are seen as offensive in nature (Tsakonas 2001).

Sixth, the fifth step could be coupled with a presentation of the malign role of ‘groupthink' (Janis 1972) when hawkish views prevail as well the danger of ‘self-fulfilling-prophesies' when constantly following a worst-cost scenario.

And finally, once the recipient, Greek or Turk, is presumably less simplistic and bipolar in his/her approach, to engage in a bit of shock treatment, by first of all referring to specific acts of barbarity and cruelty by ‘civilised’ peoples (the British, the Americans, the Italians, the Spaniards or the Germans) and then make the extremely painful but ultimately necessary step to refer to at least some of the many despicable acts committed by Greeks and Ottomans/Turks respectively in the last 200 years. The aim is to indicate that acts of barbarity are not characteristic of ‘our’ enemy as the quintessential barbarian but acts committed even by peoples who regard themselves as ‘civilised’ and humane. Both sides (and all sides in violent conflicts) have at some historical point been cruel and beastly and in many instances have acted in a particular way – however condemnable and inhuman – in a war of liberation, for reasons of the state, for reasons of survival as they saw it, or to create a ‘pure ethnic state’ via ethnic cleansing.

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