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TURKEY'S EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS AND ITS CYPRUS DILEMMA

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PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

ÖMER TAŞPINAR
Nonresident Fellow, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

HUGH POPE
Turkey/Cyprus Project Director
International Crisis Group

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TASPINAR: Good morning. Welcome to Brookings, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Omer Taspinar. I'm the director of the Turkey Program. It's a great honor this morning to host my good friend Hugh Pope. Hugh is in town for his latest book, *Dining With al-Qaeda: Three Decades Exploring the Many Worlds of the Middle East*. And we're delighted that he's here. He's given many talks about his book. We're not here for his book, but I'm sure he'll be also delighted to answer questions that you have about the Middle East.

The topic of our talk today is Turkey-E.U., with a special focus on Cyprus. And Hugh is the right person to address such an important topic, and I'm glad we managed to have a decent crowd who are still interested in Cyprus and Turkey-E.U. despite all the other attractions surrounding Turkey these days. And Hugh, as I said, is the right person to address this, not only because he's an excellent journalist, but he's also a very strong analyst. He's currently the project director with the International Crisis Group focusing on Turkey-E.U. Cyprus. We joked that he was in charge of the reunification of the island -- the International Crisis Group -- something that we've been waiting for decades.

But most importantly, Hugh -- you see his short bio here -- is the author of many books. In addition to his current book on the Middle

East, Dining with al-Qaeda, he is the acclaimed author of two important books on Turkey and the Turkic world, *Turkey Unveiled*, which I proudly use in my Turkey course at SAIS and National Defense University.

MR. POPE: Probably in photocopies.

MR. TASPINAR: No, no. And the other book on Turkey is *Sons of the Conquerors*. And that's more about Central Asia and the roots of Turkey and looking also at basically the larger Turkey world.

We're delighted to have Hugh with us this morning. And just one administrative note. We will end at 11:30 instead of noon. And Hugh will talk about for 30 minutes, then we'll open this to a Q&A.

So, Hugh, the floor is yours.

MR. POPE: Thanks very much, Omer.

Thanks to Brookings Institution for having me here to talk about my pet subject. Not many people like talking about Cyprus. And it's a fascinating topic and there is hope there and hope of movement.

But I'd like to first of all set the stage a bit widely. Omer was telling me that this audience has not really engaged with the Cyprus question for a couple of years so I'll start by talking a little about Turkey and Europe and why it's an important issue. And then I'll talk about the importance of Cyprus, which is a rather small island of one million people after all. Why should we care? And then I'll tell you a little bit about what's

happened in the talks for the last couple of years and why I think there is something to hope for there.

Now, Turkey, of course, is something of a *sui generis* country. It's very hard to put it in a block. Is it in Europe? Is it in the Middle East? Is it a Eurasian country? Is it part of the Islamic world? It's something that as a journalist I had to deal with the whole time. And there is no easy answer to it. It doesn't fit into any prepackaged format. And I think one should always start by realizing that.

But within those constraints, Turkey is an embedded member of the West and Europe. I think if you look institutionally, Turkey has, since the 1950s, steadily knitted more and more links with the West. They've joined NATO. It's a member of nearly every European organization, from the Council of Europe to the European Song Contest, to the European Football League. And currently, Istanbul is a European capital of culture. This is not a small matter. And it's actually negotiating obviously to be a full member of the E.U. And that is a process that is deeply affected by Cyprus as I'll come to in a moment.

The relationship with Europe, however, has always been problematic and beset by prejudices on both sides. And, in fact, Turkey and the European Union have been negotiating one way or the other for more than 60 years. A lot of the time it's been a bit of a game, frankly. It's like the

old joke about the Soviet Union, adapted for Turkey and the E.U., would run Turkey pretends to join the E.U. and the E.U. pretends to accept Turkey. And that was an extraordinarily clever piece of constructive ambiguity. It allowed both to continue with their respective projects while benefitting without having to commit completely.

But that has changed in the last few years. And what changed was the actual advent of real negotiations to join the E.U. in 2005. At that point people in Europe got scared and they got scared for all the wrong reasons and politicians picked up on it very quickly, especially in France and Germany. And we've seen it come and go in various other countries as well, like Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark. And what happens is that there's a false logic and the European side -- the European public thinks, oh, my god, look, there's 70 million people that are much poorer than we are and they all want to come. Plus they're Muslims and I don't understand Muslims. And I'm fighting about Muslims, and I'm fighting about immigrants, and I'm fighting about my job.

And politicians in Europe are looking for reelection in the short-term. They're not looking at the fact that the E.U. membership of Turkey is at least a decade away. And by the way, I've lived in Turkey for 23 years and it's always been a decade away as long as I can remember.

And I make something of a hobby of talking to Turkish leaders

and asking them, okay, it's 2025. You've fulfilled all the criteria. Everything is going well. The French President sent his plane and they're coming with the Treaties of Nice, Rome, Maastricht, everything else, and you're going to sign and put Turkey fully in the European Union. Would you sign? I still haven't met a Turkish leader who says yes, I would sign. They almost always say when that happens, we'll see. Because for most people in the Turkish elite, the European convergence process is a process, not a goal. The process is a goal in itself. There's not much thinking about the actual joining.

That, however, is changing as I would like to point out because what happened when these politicians like Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel -- there are others, too, in other countries -- have used the E.U.-Turkey process a way of getting votes from scared populations. And in France it's particularly unpleasant because what actually happens is when Sarkozy attacks the Turkey -- E.U.-Turkey process, he is actually raising the image of Arabs and Muslims in French minds quite inappropriately because in France at the popular level there's not much distinction between Turks, Arabs, and Muslims. And he is -- but you can't use Arabs and Muslims that way in the public debate. And he manages to use Turkey as a proxy for that and get votes from the national front.

So what's happened then with someone like Sarkozy taking

on this role of attacking the E.U.-Turkey process is it has politicized the process in Europe, which is a very interesting thing. So whereas in the old days the left wing in Turkey used to attack Turkey on human rights basis, on its authoritarian habits and so forth. Now when they see Sarkozy attacking the E.U.-Turkey process they think, well, hang on. Sarkozy is attacking it; we should support it.

So now there's an interesting dynamic and a very new dynamic in Turkey. You have Europeans speaking up for Turkey in domestic debates. My Swedish friends, for instance, will look at Turkey and say hang on. We -- as Europe with about 500 million people -- we can't stand up in the future against China, India, Russia. We need more people. We need these Turks with us. We need London as our bookend in the West and Istanbul is our bookend in the East. They see the bigger picture. But that's, I have to say, still an elite perspective in Europe, but it's one that I hear quite a lot. And given the fact that Europe is in such confusion at the moment there is -- these elites are feeling more and more the need to speak up about the need to have a more Pan-European ideology. And perhaps that's a hope for the future.

And I would also point out another change in Europe that's happened despite the difficulties of the last four or five years with Europe -- is that the city of Istanbul has become a completely normal place to go, a

city break weekend destination for middle class rich people in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Paris, London. And the streets outside my house on Istaclan Street have never been so full with expensive-looking foreigners. And another interesting part of that is it's very difficult to tell now who is a foreigner and who is the Istanbulite. Istanbul has become a regional center, even perhaps an international hub, and it is changing the way Istanbul is perceived. And I think if you ask most Europeans is Istanbul part of Europe they would say yes. And if you ask Eurostat, the official E.U. agency for this kind of thing, Istanbul is, in fact, the biggest city in Europe. And by the way, there are two other Turkish cities in the Top 10 biggest cities of Europe, to give you a flavor of how things are.

There's also been a change in the debate in Turkey. Seeing this rather insulting language from Europe -- and remember that Europe over the decades has promised to negotiate in good faith with Turkey about its membership -- to see Merkel and Sarkozy basically taking away their country's commitment to that solemn obligation has made people quite bitter. And I think when you see some of that rather extravagant, flamboyant rhetoric from AKP leaders, particularly the prime minister, that appear to be supporting hard-line figures in the Middle East or attacking the West, it is a reaction to that sense of being pushed away. Hang on, look at me, I'm important, too, is part of it.

But I think that you should also be aware that the Turkish domestic scene is not what these extravagant, rhetorical flourishes indicated to be. Turkey is becoming steadily and every passing year more internationalized, more globalized, more Europeanized if you like if you think those words mean the same. And we should not forget that when there's been a lot of articles in the press about Turkey turning away from the West and becoming a Middle Eastern power and Islamist power, this is really nonsense. You just have to look at the economics of it. Half of Turkey's trade is with Europe and always has been. And that -- okay. Turkey has reoriented. It's taken opportunistic advantage of the wealth -- the new oil wealth in the Middle East and the opportunities in Russia and the need to expand into Africa.

And, of course, that's changing the details of Turkey's trade profile. But still, half is with Europe. And more importantly, I think, 90 percent of foreign investment in Turkey last year -- sorry, it was in the European Progress Report last year -- but for 2008, 90 percent of the foreign investment was from the E.U. And if you look at the Turkish Airlines schedule, for instance, and look where the planes go, they're all going to Europe, thick black lines of communication to Europe. Four planes to Zurich. Four planes to Geneva. Four planes to Munich. Four planes to Stuttgart. Every day. And then you look at what's happening in the Middle

East.

Well, actually, fondly enough, where do the four planes a day go to in the Middle East? Tel Aviv, Damascus, Jeddah, Riyadh, Tehran. One or two planes a day. It's different. And that's just the THY schedule. And the charter schedule is even more thickly bound with Europe.

Three or four million Turks living in Europe. Okay. Not fully integrated as Frenchmen or Germans, but as I sometimes put it to my French interlocutors, perhaps we should be a little more sophisticated about how we see the Turks in Europe. A Turkish family living in Lille is quite likely to go and visit their relatives in Amsterdam for the weekend, and then go and see a football match in Cologne, and then perhaps go to Brussels to do some business. And they will not think anything about those European boundaries, which is something that an average European is unlikely to do, and that perhaps we should think of those Turks living in Europe as really pioneering Europeans as opposed to being unintegrated symbols of the past. Of course, that's not a very popular idea with the French. And it's not reflecting the whole reality of the Turkish immigrant community, but I think it's unfair to put them all in one problematic block.

Another thing I would just point to institutionally when people talk about Turkey is this potential rogue state and so forth. Turkey took over a U.N. seat a year ago as a non-permanent member, elected with the

highest number of people, but it was elected from the Western European and others group. That's where Turkey is. Since it has taken that space, U.N. diplomats tell us at the International Crisis Group that Turkey has played a balanced, constructive, and effective role in that seat. Yes. The prime minister of Turkey made a quite dramatic gesture during the disturbances in Xinjiang when China was having trouble with the Uyghurs or the Uyghurs were having trouble with the Chinese. I wasn't there; I don't know. But he said he would take it to the U.N. Security Council. That was the rhetorical flourish. It didn't happen. Nothing like that happened. Turkey -- look at actions more than the words is how I would say to judge it.

Okay. So I hope I've not persuaded you of Turkey's European tendency. And now I'm going to come onto the question of Cyprus.

Now, for reasons that are what Salman Rushdie would call a P2C2E -- a process too complicated to explain -- Cyprus managed to get itself into the E.U. as a divided country with all its problems. And this was something that happened in 2004. All that we need to know about this for the purpose of this discussion is that despite having played a full share in making it a very problematic, difficult-to-solve thing before 2003, Turkey changed its policy in 2003 and 2004 and supported the reunification of Cyprus. They supported the U.N. plan for that, which was also supported by the E.U., and the U.S., and the international community.

The Greek Cypriot side, seeing that it was going to get into the E.U. anyway, and for a number of other reasons which we don't need to go into, voted 76 percent against this reunification plan. The E.U. in its infinite wisdom accepted Cyprus in as a full member, and since then a lot of things have got stuck. Because instead of being a problem external to the European Union, it became an internal problem to the European Union and we can list a number of things that it now blocks.

Omer has stressed to me that I should be clear about what we're talking about. Cyprus is a quite small place of about a million people. About 800,000 in the Greek Cypriot side, the Republic of Cyprus, of whom about 150,000, I believe, are foreign residents. And on the north side there are about 320,000 people. The Turks say there are 23,000 troops -- 21,000 troops of the Turkish Army; about 9,000 members of the Garrison Family. And there are probably 180,000 Turkish Cypriots, of whom 30,000 may have been originally Turkish in the last 30 years. And the rest are what the Greek Cypriot side calls colonists, sent by Turkey to colonize northern Cyprus. I think it's a little bit more -- I think originally it was a bit like that. I don't think it's like that anymore. They're more like guest workers now. But the fact is that of the 320,000 to perhaps 400,000 people in the north half of a mainland Turkish background, half feel themselves to be Turkish Cypriot.

Okay. Now, if -- when Cyprus joined the Union, it joined as a

divided island and the E.U. really didn't know what to do about this. It had tried to put out a reward for the Turkish Cypriots for their positive vote, and it was called the Direct Trade Regulation. And as soon as the Republic of Cyprus joined the E.U., it bought that direct trade regulation and the E.U. language refers to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots because they can't trade directly with the E.U. because they can't get the right stamps. They can't get the right health inspections, and they are subject to external taxes. So it's very difficult for them. It's a very small economy, but, still, it's difficult for them.

The Greek Cypriot side argues, well, they can trade across the Green Line. That should be good enough for everybody. Why not? They can still get their goods to market. That's not the full side of the story. There's a very good -- if anyone wants to follow it up -- there's a very good paper on this by the PRIO about the Green Line intra-separate trade. There are a lot of problems resulting from prejudices. You cannot sell Turkish-labeled stuff in the south. There have been problems with shipping things onward from the south. And as a result there's been a real sense of letdown in the Turkish Cypriot community. We tried to do the right thing and we're still being punished.

The European Union views the Cyprus as fully inside the European Union. Its territory is inside the European Union, but it doesn't -- it

recognizes that there are two administrations, but without recognizing the Turkish Cypriot administration. So they have -- the Greek Cypriot side did eventually allow an E.U. financial package to be released to the Turkish Cypriots -- about 259 million Euros. It's a lot of money in north Cyprus and it eventually was able to be committed to all kinds of projects.

But aside from that, the Turkish Cypriots did not benefit much from the E.U. directly. However, they did get -- the ones who were real Turkish Cypriots according to the Greek Cypriot point of view -- did get E.U. passports. Republic of Cyprus passports. About 100,000 of them today have the right to those passports.

Now, how this changes the dynamic of Cyprus now is that the Turkish Cypriots -- the real Turkish Cypriots as it were have the passports and so they didn't -- they have an escape route if they don't -- if they don't want to get passionate about the process that's going on and the reunification process which I'm about to talk about. They have an alternative. They have a passport to leave. And the huge disappointment of 2004 has made it very difficult to get anybody interested on the Turkish Cypriot side about the process.

I think I've run a little bit ahead of myself. Let me just go back to why it's important. The -- currently, the Cyprus problem is closing down half of the negotiating chapters between Turkey and the E.U. The four that

are left to open are very difficult chapters requiring expensive deep changes in Turkey for no obvious return for Turkey. We're talking about very difficult changes to the actual structure of the Turkish government and society. The other 18 -- or 16 to 18 which are brought by Cyprus are much easier. And the reason that these chapters are important is that every six months, in order to keep the process going, you need to open a chapter symbolically to show the people of Turkey that there's a process going on. That the goal is there. The game continues. And that can't happen if the Cyprus process is blocked.

If anyone cares about cooperation between E.U. and NATO, that can't happen as long as Cyprus is a member of the E.U. -- the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the E.U. and Turkey is a member of NATO. They block everything. And that -- people exaggerate probably the impact of it, but it's symbolic. In Afghanistan, E.U. and NATO structures cannot really talk to each other officially. And in the Balkans, too, there are E.U.-NATO arrows which cannot progress properly.

I think that the bigger problem of the blockage in Cyprus is that both communities have a sense of unfinished business. The Greek Cypriots have the fact that they've been deprived of their property. Three-quarters of the north -- of the Turkish north side of the island is originally owned by Greek Cypriots. And they have not got any compensation for that -- or very

few of them have. They have Turkish troops in the middle of their capital. They have the ghost town resort called Varosha as a kind of negotiating chip back in 1974. And that sits there empty with food still in the fridges and legendarily breakfast set on the tables still sitting there since 1974; cars in garages. That's not coming back.

And above all, there's a sense of insecurity that the kids in the Greek Cypriot side of the island don't really have a really broad future in front of them in an island that is basically living as a gated community or even a ghetto at the far eastern end of Europe. So that is an issue for them.

The Turkish Cypriots, obviously we've talked a bit about their isolation. The Turks have the road to Europe blocked. The Greeks of Greece, they have a problem, too. They have a huge financial crisis and yet their spending on military affairs is about 5 percent of their budget. Very high by European terms. And the main reason is that they have to keep defending the lines in the sand or in the sea or in the air in the Aegean, which Turkey constantly prods to remind Greece that it's unhappy about the situation. And I'm pretty sure from my contact in Ankara that until Cyprus is solved, Greece and Turkey cannot solve their Aegean issues. It's the keystone of change there.

I think also there's another long-term result of that E.U.-Turkey friction that resolves from a failure to solve Cyprus in that it gives more

arguments to those who would present there being a clash of civilizations, that Muslims and Christians can't come to terms. And I think that a Turkey that is pushed away from Europe, as it is being by the Cyprus problem, is going to be a country where it's much easier to make those arguments.

So what's happening now? Two years ago -- we had five years of real stalemate after the joining of the island to the E.U. where nothing much was going on. We had some very sterile discussions between the hard-line Greek Cypriot -- late Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, and the Turkish Cypriot administration, which had supported the reunification of the island or a compromise reunification of the island.

Then, I think that the Greek Cypriot community saw the problem. They saw that time was not on their side. And in very important elections in January 2008, two-thirds of the Greek Cypriots voted for compromise-minded candidates. One of them, the Cypriot communists, Dimitris Christofias and another from another party who was even more outspoken about the need to compromise.

In the end, President Christofias won. Almost immediately things started happening. There was a definition -- another definition of how the future reunified Cyprus would look. Since the 1970s, there has been an idea that will be bicomunal and bizonal. They added the ideas that there would be a single international personality and that there would be two

constituent states.

Okay. Everyone argues about these theoretical terms. But anyway, the point is they were able to agree on the ideas. More crossing points opened up on the front lines. And I should say that very peaceful frontlines on Cyprus. The main difference between the sides when you cross over, which can be done in, what, 10 seconds is that only south side you have an S-class Mercedes taxi of 2-year-old vintage, and on the north side it's a 5-year-old vintage S-class Mercedes. They're quite prosperous and well-off by international standards. It's quite a luxurious conflict in some ways.

But the point is that there is this unresolved thing that's still there. And Christofias and Talat started meeting. And in September 2008, they went into full-scale talks and it's run by the U.N. Very important. The U.N. has a legitimate facilitating role. But it's changed since the 2004 Annan plan process. In the Annan plan, Turkey, in an extraordinary gesture for Turkey, which as we know is a very controlling kind of country, they said, okay. The U.N. can fill in the blanks.

And at the time the Greek Cypriots agreed to that as a conflict but resolution method. And the U.N. did fill in the blanks and we came up with the Annan plan. The Greeks had predicted it because they said that the filling in was unfair. So this time around they decided that the two sides

would talk without any filling in by the U.N. The U.N. would just sit there. And we appointed a facilitator, Foreign Minister of Australia, Alexander Downer. And he has just done that. He's just sat there. And when things weren't happening -- and in fact, most of the time he would say, okay, you can't agree on that? All right. I'll move to Australia. I'll be back in two weeks.

Which was a very interesting tactic because it's forced both sides to see that no one from outside is going to help them this time. It's up to them and it especially has had the interesting effect that Alexander Downer is still viewed as a legitimate facilitator. He has not been attacked by anyone because there's been nothing really to attack. He's not tried to make piece of anything dangerous like that. And the process got into a series of -- I don't think you need to really go into the details of it, but there were six main chapters and one extra chapter about government economy, E.U. relations, dealing with the population issues which was code for the settlers, and other areas of the discussions. The most difficult one which they started on was the governance -- the governance and power sharing. The Greek Cypriots very early on made some very interesting concessions. They said the 50,000 Turkish settlers or immigrants could say. And they also said we will have a rotating presidency, which is a big concession. I mean, it's 80 percent Greek Cypriot, remember, and they were going -- they

said there can be a Turkish Cypriot bylaw ruling on a rotating basis.

And in return, very recently only, there's been a concession from the Turkish side. They said, okay, we'll agree to the Greek Cypriot idea that there should be cross-voting so that each community has a small say in who gets elected on the other side. But they will still elect these two figures separately.

During these talks I think that the two people who are doing the negotiations for the two communities, the two presidents -- on one side Cristofias; the other side Mehmet Ali Talat -- have a very good understanding of each other. They are old friends. They have a very similar left wing ideology. They're quite suspicious of each other now because there's been unhappiness. But I feel that despite all those understandings and the quite significant areas of agreement, that negotiations never moved past first base. And I would say that it took me a long time to realize this. If you can believe it, I wrote three long reports on Cyprus in the last two years, and the arguments are so blindly obvious that all sides win from an agreement and everyone loses significantly economically and for security reasons from a failure to agree, it seemed to me that these arguments must win. But it wasn't happening. People were not convinced.

There's very little excitement about these talks on the island. No one actually sells the idea that there's a great dawn for Cyprus coming.

Great cynicism. And I kept wondering what this was about. And I -- because all the Greek Cypriots I would speak to individually understood how much they needed normalization with Turkey and all the Turkish officials I would speak to when the sort of position -- positions have been set out and set aside would also understand the need for solving the problem. In fact, as someone -- as one of the very few people who actually goes to talk to both sides, I'm convinced that if you blindfolded both sides you would come - - they would -- I asked them what can you live with really? They would actually have a quite similar set of what they could live with, which is actually roughly what we have today, frankly.

I mean, it's not an unhappy island in general. But when it comes to the big questions, when it comes to the jointly expressed question, the communal policies, especially the Greek Cypriots have a sense of terror, I would put it, of Turkey. They are so frightened of Turkey. But when it comes to communal decision to come to terms, they look together and rode out the Quills like a hedgehog will go into their shells like tortoises. They don't want to discuss because they don't want to discuss. Because they don't believe that Turkey is serious about implementing an agreement and withdrawing the troops and being sincere in wanting to come to terms.

And it's the same thing in Ankara. They do not believe that the Greek Cypriots are ready to come to terms on any level that is acceptable to

Turkey. And I'm sure I was not the only one who was telling both sides of it. If you have this problem you don't -- I believe you that you want this agreement, but you know, the other side doesn't believe that you want it. And I know that embassies were saying the same thing. The U.N. was saying the front thing. And eventually I think that between all of us we got to the situation where finally the Turkish prime minister invited a group of Greek Cypriots to Turkey to meet him.

And I was lucky enough to be invited to watch this and it was extraordinary. The prime minister sat down in his grand reception chamber next to the Dolmabahçe palace in Istanbul and immediately said, "I want you to know that I want a deal. I want to implement that deal. And if we have a deal on the island, I will withdraw the troops."

And the Greek Cypriots were looking at him open-eyed. One by one they stood up and asked questions in a pretty moderate manner given the history of the conflict and in an empathetic manner. The Turkish prime minister relaxed and he stayed an extra half-hour, mingled with them, and it was quite clear that indeed the problem -- the real problem is a huge monumental lack of communication between the two sides. Because, you know, when I sat on the bus going away afterwards, the Greek Cypriots were saying to each other, you know, he really meant that, didn't he? Yes. This is a breakthrough. This is historic.

Turkey had been saying that since 2004, but they hadn't been saying it directly. And that's still not happening directly. However, this was a breakthrough, and there have been a number of other rays of hope. For instance, the Greek Cypriot archbishop who has for years been the most convinced opponent of any concessions to the Turkey side wrote a letter to the Turkish prime minister asking if he could go and visit a monastery on the northern side. Something must have happened. There must have been some communication. He went, accompanied by a Turkish Cypriot official, and he didn't say anything horrible. In fact, it all went quite well.

We've seen the Greek Cypriot side also expressing the idea of agreeing to a multilateral forum, which would include Turkish Cypriots, Greek, Turkey, and the Greek Cypriots in some format. The format is still not decided. This is what needs to happen next. There has to be a meeting in which all the principal parties of this dispute meet and talk and there is a long-lived process. Turkey has to convince the Greek Cypriots directly at the leadership level and as of state bureaucracies that they are not aiming for an independent tax republican or Cyprus, but they'd really like to help the Turkish Cypriots get into the E.U. with their full rights and with a mutually agreed framework. But that can only be done by the president or prime minister of Turkey, I'm convinced. And the Greek Cypriot side have to be ready to believe that this is not a gambit for the victimization of the

independence of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus, which is not going to happen.

And I think that the Greek Cypriot side is seeing that the wall is coming closer. Because if there's an election this month in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, which is focusing a lot of minds and is also actually holding up the process a bit at the moment, in which the Turkish Cypriot leader, who has done so much to support the peace process, may lose his job just because the Turkish Cypriots and the habitants of the North, are just bored and fed up. And it's a very dangerous moment because, of course, if he is kicked out as the proponent of compromise settlement, that will be a signal to people that, hang on, who is really pushing for a solution here? Because Turkey has done a lot to try to make this solution happen. And this will damage the image of that. And I think that if there can be a multilateral process involving everybody that's going on soon, that will make any change of government in the Turkish Cypriot less damaging because if this doesn't happen, everyone will lose. I cannot see the U.N. trying to get a fifth round of talks going, fifth major round on a bicomunal, bizonal settlement which no one can agree on. I mean, why should anyone do that?

The Greek Cypriots, as I said, will keep -- the Turkish troops will remain. They will not get the territory back. About 8 percent of the island is on the table from the Turkish side. They will not get easy

compensation for their lost land. And they will carrying on being, as I said, this ghetto and isolated community on the Eastern end of Europe. Plus, they should remember that they've had five years where they were making a big fuss in all councils in Europe. And the Europeans that I speak to are increasingly frustrated and fed up with this one issue country. That is going to be difficult for them to sustain. They're going to become isolated in Europe.

The Turkish Cypriots will be scattered to the four winds. Already they are only half the population of the north; the other half being people from Turkey. I think they're going to use those European passports to go elsewhere as the dynamic, which I think is going to be -- become dominant is that the Turkish and Cyprus, already a very heavily part of Turkey, will become even more a part of Turkey. And Turkey is not going to tolerate the extraordinarily spendthrift ways of the Turkish Cypriot government. If they spend a billion lira, which is about \$800 million every year, I think that Turkey is going -- if this process goes into the long grass, Turkey is going to tighten the screws on that and it's going to get -- demand some good governance on the Turkish Cypriot side. They're currently about half or perhaps double half as much, or double as rich as the mainland Turks. And I think that that proportion will decrease.

But above all from my perspective as someone covering

Turkey and Europe, if there is no solution then the E.U.-Turkey process goes from the fridge into the freeze. And I don't think anyone will know how to get it out.

MR. TASPINAR: Great. Thank you, Hugh. Excellent presentation. Very comprehensive with the background, as well. I'm sure there will be lots of questions. And we'll open up for the Q&A very soon. But let me ask you a technical question.

When the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the European Union with this large wave of enlargements to Eastern Europe, Central Europe. Turkey signed the additional protocol of Ankara to the Customs Union and, at least to my knowledge, committed itself to open its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot products. And that basically has not happened. Turkey is reluctant to open its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot products and that gives ammunition to the Greek Cypriot government, the Republic of Cyprus, for blocking the aid to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

So if we are to understand their narrative, they're saying, look, we are in the E.U. now. This is a club. And Turkey is not even acknowledging our existence. Forget about recognition; it's not even opening its ports and airports to our products. So they have this narrative of basically Turkey should comply also with its international obligations.

In that sense there is this Greek Cypriot side to this story. And I guess part of the reason why they're unable to trust Turkey is that there's this perception that Turkey is not committing itself fully to this process. And they keep asking why Turkey needs to have 35,000 to 40,000 troops on the island. Wouldn't it be a nice gesture from Turkey to unilaterally withdraw a few thousand troops at least to gain the moral high ground on this issue. And this is not happening as well, despite the fact that Turkish foreign policy appears to be very self confident with the Ayatollah now having this vision of Turkey as a regional superpower. Turkey is not acting as a country that seems to really have confidence enough to withdraw a few thousand troops from Cyprus.

So could you address these two issues and then we'll open it up to Q&A.

MR. POPE: I think right now it's important to keep the focus on the talks, the U.N.-facilitated talks. I think that unilateral confidence-building measures is not the time -- that's not the way to breakthrough. That will, in fact, I think draw attention to the troops. A crisis group being quite pragmatic, some reports we say, yes, this is the time to do a symbolic withdrawal and other times we say -- we don't mention it. I mean, of course it would be good to withdraw troops, but would now be the time to play that card?

Right now it's very difficult. We don't know what's going to happen on the 18th when we have these elections. I think that doing anything before then is going to be difficult. But as soon as the elections are over, Turkey has to capture the Greek Cypriot imagination somehow. Is it by guided visits to Varosha for previous owners? Is it meeting Greek Cypriot politicians? Is it -- I believe the Greek Cypriot archbishop is coming to Istanbul. Is there a potential for doing something there?

But having seen that meeting between Greek Cypriot Civil Society and the Turkish leaders and seeing what a huge impact it has to have direct communication about what the two sides really want and knowing that individually Greek Cypriots are fully convinced that normalization with Turkey is in their economic and social security interests, I think that these talks have to be made to work. I think fiddling of the details is not -- this is not the moment. And I think that the Greek Cypriots really need to be aware that the Turkish side, as far as I understand it, is ready to withdraw troops according to the schedule that they will agree much faster than that very long and unsettling. I mean, it was a very long process in the Annan plan. It was what they agreed on those days so that was it, but it was 12 years or something before they got down to the minimal garrisons from the previous era.

And I think that once the Greek Cypriot government is

convinced that the Turkish government will really withdraw all the troops -- because that's what they care about, or down to the last 650, or whatever it is they agree -- and that Turkey will agree on some new Treaty of Guarantee. And again, Turkey is not saying what it will do publicly because it's such an important card in their hand. But if anyone looks at our last report called "Cyprus" -- on September 30th it came out -- we have a proposal for how you could change the Treaty of Guarantee, change its name for security implementation, break it down. Some bits would be done locally. Some remedies would be local, some would be E.U., some would be U.N. And perhaps, as a last resort, you could have a line saying if the Greek Cypriots had attacked the Turkish Cypriot side, then Turkey has a right to defend the Turkish Cypriot side. That is the bottom line that Turkey needs to be able to show its public opinion, and Turkish Cypriots want that by the way.

But it's no longer the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. But, of course, we wrote that. I've never seen a criticism of that by Turkish officials. But the Greek Cypriot side, because they don't hear the Turkish side, they don't understand that there is that flexibility there at the end of the day. And that's what -- the light at the end of the tunnel is there, but neither side can see it. And that's the tragedy of what's been happening.

MR. TASPINAR: What about trade with Cyprus, opening

Turkish ports and airports?

MR. POPE: Well, there's a lot of interesting rumors that perhaps there will be -- that the Lisbon Treaty arrangements in Europe, because it's a trade issue, it could come up for qualified majority voting in Europe and, therefore, that 2004 Direct Trade Regulation might come up again and be passed. Of course, the Republic of Cyprus is trying to block that, which I think it would be most unfortunate. I think the Republic of Cyprus should seize this opportunity to find a way, as you said, to open the ports. That would be a good step to normalization, which would allow both sides to start meeting each other formally and officially.

And I would point to what happened between Turkey and Armenia. Now, the nationalists on both sides have now got a hold of this process, but I would point to last year. After only eight years of getting to know each other, the Turkish and the Armenian governments signed two sets of protocols on opening the borders and normalizing and establishing diplomatic relations, opening their border. Excellently balanced protocols. The solid middle ground of both countries were behind that and that was the result of the two sides meeting and talking over a period of years and winning each other's confidence.

I think in 2000, if you had said that there were such protocols that would be signed in 2008, you would have been sort of given 10 to 1.

But it can happen. And what's mad about it is these two countries -- these two -- the Greek Cypriots and the Turks are so close to each other and yet they know each other so little.

MR. TASPINAR: Great. Let me remind our audience that Hugh is coming up with an International Crisis Group Report on Turkey Middle East -- Turkey and the Middle East in the next week or so?

MR. POPE: Next 10 days or so, yes.

MR. TASPINAR: Next 10 days or so. So, okay, Nevzer. Not one question? One question. Could you identify yourself, please, also?

MS. STACEY: I am Nevzer Stacey, president of HasNa, Incorporated. We do work in Cyprus and Southeastern Turkey.

About a month ago, I was at Georgetown University. I had the pleasure of hearing the ambassador from Cyprus talk about the island. He made a statement, of course, saying that the troops in the north should leave the island, but his ultimate goal was a demilitarized island. Yet, he never mentioned the British bases. And I don't see any writing about those either anywhere. Could you comment on that, please?

MR. TASPINAR: As a Brit.

MR. POPE: Yeah. A lot of historical writing about the origins of the Cyprus conflict. Some people believe that it was all a British plot to try to divide and rule and keep the bases. And some people say the same thing

about the Annan plan process: Who won there? The British bases got into the European Union officially.

Still, there is an interesting issue because actually it's the one issue that unites both the Turkey Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. They both want those bases out.

MR. TASPINAR: So much for British imperialism.

MR. POPE: Well, I think the British are only keeping them on for the Americans. I don't think Britain needs them. But I think even in the '70s Britain was trying to close them down, but realized that they were one of the key things they brought to the alliance.

The interesting thing that Britain has done is to say, look, if you two or you five or however many people are going to agree on the supplement, then we will give back half of the base area. Now, the base area is about 3 percent of the island of Cyprus and they're going to give 1-1/2 back. And, of course, everyone will then have to decide who takes it. And our position is, look, what about having -- well, our suggestion is why not have some jointly run national parks -- the Karpas Peninsula, there's another one in the south -- and then maybe this new land from the British base areas could all be federally run areas? And that's -- but that's such a detail. The key thing is learning to trust each other. That's what needs to happen.

MR. HARATZEM: Thank you. I'm Artzen Haratzem from Voice of America Armenian Service. Thank you for the presentation first of all.

Well, just about four months ago, five months ago, November 1st across the street at the school of Advanced International Studies. Turkish Prime Minister Mr. Erdogan announced that don't expect Turkish troops to be withdrawn from he Cyprus during this year or anytime soon.

So from one side there is direct talks where there seems to be some confidence that there can be some progress on the withdrawal. From the other side we hear a lot of rhetoric from Washington which talks the other.

Also about the Iranian and Turkish relationship, it seems like the protocols are going nowhere and we're at the edge of going to a major disaster diplomatically because I do believe that there was major progress on both sides, but it seems like it's going backwards.

So this inconsistency of the Turkish foreign politics, which is zero problems with the neighbors, seems to be actually creating gaps in the communication. And I would be happy if you would comment on this.

Thank you.

MR. POPE: I think you're very modest in saying that's a gap in communication. But you're right. I mean, these are two issues that are

the most important things for Turkey. The relations with the Organization of the Islamic Conference are interesting, but that's not core. The relationship with Cyprus governs the relationship with the European Union. The fixing the Armenian question is the key to good relations between Turkey and the United States. And also the people involved much closer and it's much more important to solve those ones than all the exciting facilitation efforts around the region that Turkey is pursuing.

And yes, there are contradictory messages coming out. I think Cyprus is a little more time sensitive in some ways. Up until last month I thought that. But now the Armenian question is coming back with a vengeance. The contradictory problems are a problem and it makes it difficult to explain to people what the underlying thrust of Turkish policy is. And I would just say that I think that the protocol signed by the two sides are being defended, as much as is humanly possible by the bureaucracy. They can see that this is the best thing they managed to get for any years. It's a way forward on the question of the genocide. It's a way forward on proving - - giving a signal. The Cypriots are watching the Armenian question like hawks. If they see Turkey backing away from a deal on Armenia they think, uh-oh. Now, we're listening to them. They're saying that they're going to do a deal with us. They're promising they'll implement it, but what happened to those protocols?

So, yeah, it's really important to keep them on course. There's a lot of politics involved. But, you know, on the Armenian question, the important thing to remember is that the moderate center backs those protocols and that the -- letting those protocols go is giving in to nationalists, both in Turkey and in Azerbaijan and on the Armenian diaspora and in Armenia. It gives -- it hands the question back to the radicals and makes it all much more complicated and difficult to solve and to solve the real problems for ordinary people in Armenia. You know, they need to trade with Turkey. They need to work in Turkey with proper rights and not be threatened and so forth. And similarly, on Cyprus what Cyprus needs to get its economy -- it's economy is okay on the south, but look at what happened when Turkey and Greece normalized: huge boom in trade and investment.

And studies show that within seven years on Cyprus after a solution, Cyprus would add 10 percentage points to its national output within 7 years at a minimum just if they followed the pattern that was established from Greece and Turkey. So I think politicians should keep their eye on the fruits of it and not give in to all these nationalist reflexes. But, of course, I'm a conflict resolution NGO speaking. I would say that.

MS. DUNN: Thank you so much for giving this talk. I'm Sarah Dunn. I'm a student at McDaniel College. And I have a question about the extreme nationalism on both sides in Cyprus, kind of the historic nationalism

and trying to move away from that. And I see beyond the more concrete political issues that the identity issue of the Cypriot people has been a major factor in the conflict. And I was wondering if you see kind of a goal, as Talat had once said, of having a Cypriot national identity, if that goal is too far gone now or if it's still kind of a hope in order to reunite the island.

MR. POPE: That could be a goal, but it would be wrong to use that creation of a Cypriot identity as a way of excluding other factors. The Cyprus problem is incredibly complex. There are at least seven parties involved one way or another. And, of course, the Greek Cypriot community being 80 percent, 20 percent with the Turkish Cypriot community, wants to have -- just to draw a line around Cyprus and keep it all as just those two parties. But that doesn't fly.

I mean, in 1974, why did the 1974 invasion happen? Because Greece did a coup to annex the island. Greece has a historic involvement. The British bases, we've talked around them, they're there. The U.N. has a role as the facilitator. And you can't solve it without reference to these powerful outsiders who have interests. And I'm sure that President Christofias hasn't both the pragmatic thing of let's keep it amongst ourselves and maybe has an idealistic memory of identify politics from his, you know, where he studied and everything. But that is -- it would be naïve to think that you can exclude everyone else from the talks, especially when there are

agreed treaties. I mean, these 1960s treaties are international treaties. You can't just sort of ignore them.

MR. GEORGE: Thank you. Mustafa George from TRNC, Washington office.

My question would be inspired by an article that I have recently read in The Wall Street Journal. The article was suggesting that the postponement of Turkey's membership to the European Union is not actually affected by the Cyprus problem, but rather affected by the fact that the country is overwhelmingly Muslim, 99 percent. And having said that, this was a fact that is being used by European politicians. Can we conclude that Cyprus is being a secondary factor rather than being a primary factor in Turkey's membership process?

MR. POPE: That's a very good question. It's a chicken and the egg thing. Is Cyprus the cause or the result of all these problems? Who was hiding behind the Cyprus dispute? Who in the 1980s and 1990s was hiding behind Greece when Greece was playing the same role in pushing Turkey away? I would urge you just to look at the politics of it.

As I try and point out in my book, Dining with al-Qaeda, looking at Islam as an analytical tool leads you into error because it is not. Islam is a religion. It's not an objective thing that can be universally applied to understanding. And I think that if Turkey had a GNP per capita income of

\$40,000 a year, we wouldn't hear any of this Muslim stuff. And if Europe got in a fight with Russia about something big and suddenly Europe needed Turkey again, just like it needed Turkey in the Cold War, and as the former president Suleyman Demirel used to say, during the Cold War they never called us Muslims. You know, it's an excuse not to do something. It's also based on real fears in Europe. I'm not denying that those fears are real, but, I mean, they're not based on reality; they're based on misunderstanding of what Turkey really is.

MR. LARIGAKAS: Thank you, Mr. Pope. Nick Larigakis with the American Hellenic Institute.

It is also important to note, of course, that on August 14th of 1974, when the second and more brutal invasion took place which solidified the division of the island as we know it today, after the legitimate government of Cyprus was restored within a week after the right wing coup from Athens and with that of Mr. Nikos Sampson, but, be it as it may, Washington doesn't like history too much. Let's talk about contemporary times.

And regarding these negotiations, it is argued that the process should be one of ownership of the Cypriots for the Cypriots. I would think you would agree for that. However, it's also been said that -- and relating to what -- how Turkey is -- needs to be supportive of the entire process. And

you've alluded in your comments that you feel strongly that Turkey has given positive nature towards the whole process. But it's been said that Mr. Talat in the end really does not negotiate for himself and does get a lot of his negotiating orders, if you will, based from Ankara. How would you answer that? Do you believe that's the case? Do you think Mr. Talat, when he goes to the negotiating table with Mr. Christofias, President Christofias, that he actually does negotiate on behalf of the Turkey Cypriot community?

MR. POPE: Thank you. I think on the question of the Cyprus for the Cypriots, I think I go back to my answer -- to the student who asked me whether it's possible to just draw a line around Cyprus and pretend it's in the South Pacific and that everyone on it can negotiate between themselves for a settlement. It's not that easy. There are other parties who are involved. You know, the bases are there. The Treaty of Guarantee is an international instrument and there are areas where Turkey is involved where Greece and Britain have a say. And I would also say that in relation to what -- who Mehmet Ali Talat represents, yes, he does consult with Ankara very clearly. He goes to Ankara to talk to them.

By the way, President Christofias goes to Greece quite often as well. I agree that it's a completely different relationship and that the Greek Cypriots did not need Greece today. But, you know, there are quite a few Greek flags still flying in front of public buildings and all over the Greek

Cypriot part of the island as well, just as Turkish flags fly in the north of the island. And it's difficult to draw a line between the two, but I would say that from my personal experience of talking to Turkish officials that on local issues, Mehmet Ali Talat is the lead partner. He works sometimes late into the night and early in the morning. He's the guy that's passionately trying to do it. While I have to say that the Dimitris Christofias has spent quite a lot of time traveling around the world. And I think that one should respect the real work that Mehmet Ali Talat has put into this process.

At the same time, with a garrison of however many troops it is -- is it 43,000 as the Greek Cypriots say or is it 21,000 as the Turkish side says which I think is slightly more realistic? But anyway, somewhere between those two it is, that's for sure. When you need to do things, like open board appoints and get things done, of course, that has to be coordinated. And as far as I can see, the Turkish Foreign Ministry is 100 percent behind trying to solve this problem and are trying to help Mehmet Ali Talat get to a solution. As far as far as I know when Prime Minister Erdogan was talking to the Greek Cypriot visitors, he was reading from a prepared set of notes, talking notes. These are prepared by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. There's a state there that is engaged in trying to help solve it. On a day-to-day basis I think it's Mehmet Ali Talat. On strategic direction, yes, Turkish Cypriots are isolated and small and don't have many resources.

And I think they do draw on some of the expertise in Turkey. But I think in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, if there are five people involved in the Cyprus thing I would be astonished. You know, it's not like the whole day is -- and Turkish media? You may have seen Turkish media. Once a month maybe a page 16 story on Cyprus. It's not an issue in Turkey. And that's another question. I would say that, you know, don't think that Turkey is sitting on this problem and just trying to control it and maliciously do something. That's not how I feel it.

SPEAKER: As a follow-up to that, do you see a monolithic Ankara on this question or is there a civilian military divide? And if you could compare AK Party's position with CHP-MHP on this question of Cyprus as well.

MR. POPE: Ankara is never monolithic on these things. And it's the same thing on the Greek Cypriot side. The Cyprus question a kind of national question. And yes, there's a different proportion in each of the parties, but on the whole, both points of view tend to be present in all organizations. I have had interviews with AK Party ministers who say, well, if it's not solve in a few years let's just annex it. Okay? That's AK Party. But the Greek Cypriots think that AK Party white; military black. And that's not how it is.

As I said, you know, I would say that the foreign ministries,

historically very close to the military and to strategic thinking. And they are helping because they can see it's blocking the European power. And it's going to be a terrible problem if it's not solved soon. And no, it's not monolithic. And the Greek Cypriot Side has to realize that they're friends of a solution in Ankara are in all the institutions. Obviously, less in the military and far less in something like MHP or CHP, but still, there's nothing black and white about the process.

MR. HOLMES: Jim Holmes, American Turkish Council.

Hugh, would you be willing to compare America's role past and present and comment on whether America's role today is providing any genuine added value to the negotiations?

MR. POPE: It's been a constant question during the last two years of talk. Should the United States appoint an envoy? Should it be pushing for a solution? I think in the end it's been good that there hasn't been such a person because of the psychological aspects of how this has to be solid between Greek Cypriots and Turks face-to-face. I think that an American envoy, even though there's a huge gap in communication between the two, he would have become the target of and the excuse for doing nothing. He would have been seen as the imperial intervener.

What America and everyone should be doing is getting ready for the moment which I hope that these signs we're seeing of Greek Cypriots

and Turks sort of reaching out to each other -- of course, it's not -- it's really early days, but as soon as the two sides start really negotiating on the give and take of the issues which are between the various baskets -- there are six baskets of issues and they're individually insoluble, but between the two they could trade concessions and reach a solution pretty quickly; they know each other -- at the moment they start doing that, then the international community has go come in and tell the Cypriot people this is exciting. You're making history. There is a rosy future if you join together. We will be behind you. We will make sure that all sides implement this deal, whatever it is. I think that's when the United States and the rest of the international community can do most help.

And, of course, but now, yes, talking behind the scenes perhaps they can help out. I haven't seen America being very prominent on this issue and that may have been a gap, but unfortunately, that's the situation. Very few people are passionate about Cyprus.

MR. TASPINAR: In front of you.

MS. RIFFEL: Thank you. I'm Helen Raffel. I'm a retired economist and I apologize for my abysmally low knowledge of the Cypriot problem.

But I'm wondering whether you haven't perhaps downplayed the fact that the E.U. population in general is worried about two things with

regard to Turkey and perhaps the Greek Cypriots have the same attitude towards the Turkish Cypriots. One is the rapid rate of population growth of the Turks compared to the Europeans who have even perhaps a slightly negative population growth rate.

And secondly, the tension between the secularists in Turkey itself and the Islamists. I've heard on the radio just this morning that the relatively secularist Alavi branch that call themselves Muslim are not accepted as Muslims, and they represent about a third of the population of Turkey itself and have been victimized by the staunch Muslim population -- the non-Alavi population. And perhaps the European population is reluctant to have a rapidly growing Islamic part of their E.U. that might even overwhelm the European population by the end of the century.

Is the tension between secularism and Islamism and the relative population growth rate a factor in the acceptance of Turks?

MR. POPE: Yeah, you're right, that's the European perception. And as I'm trying to say, it's -- what you say is true in a way. I'm not sure about the use of the word "Islamist," but -- an Islamist Turkey coming, but I would just put it to you that you have the same misperception on the perception side. They see that on the high streets of almost every small Turkish town now European banks. You know, European products are everywhere in Turkey. You may not know that your Turkish yogurt is

made out of Dutch yogurt culture, but it is. The cows you see in Turkey are made from sperm from Dutch cows. You know, the integration of the two is enormous. And Turks feel threatened by this commercial penetration of Turkey. And, yes, there -- and the immigrant population in Europe from Turkey has not been the best ambassador for what the best of Turkey can be, and that is a perception that needs adjusting.

But I think that for me the huge problem is when I go to talk to European politicians saying much like what you heard me say today and they say -- and I say to them you must present things differently. It's not fair how you are presenting it and you're increasing conflict in this domain. I mean -- and they always say yes, I agree with you; yes, I see your point. But you can't say that and get re-elected. And so that's a deeper problem that I don't think any of us here can immediately snap our fingers and solve. But there's the short-termism of politicians using fear as a political tool. And, you know, there's fear of Europe in Turkey, too, which Europeans would be astonished to hear about.

And as far the knowledge of Cyprus, by the way, I would not be modest. Having spent the last three years looking at Cyprus so intensively, I don't think a day has gone by that I have not learned something new about what happened in 1913. You know, it's a most thoroughly examined subject.

SPEAKER: On this question of Islam and secularism in Turkey, my sense is that Europeans sometimes have this image of Islamists in Turkey, for the lack of a better term -- I think they use the term "Islamists" for the current government -- are anti-E.U., but the secularists are by nature the Kemalists, the pro-Westernization, pro-E.U. camp. Do you agree with this European assessment that somehow there is a black-and-white structure to this in terms of who is more pro-E.U. in Turkey, the Islamists are basically against and the secularists are pro?

MR. POPE: No, no, I don't agree. It's more complicated than that. If you look at the first years of the AKP government, 2002 to 2005, they were the most convinced Europeans you ever saw, perhaps because they thought that Europe would protect them from the Army, which, as we've seen, was to some degree plotting against them, and clearly an exaggerated charge sheet, but there was something going on then. And the Army is historically very powerful. The tragedy in Turkey for me is that there was a recent poll which showed that 50 percent of the population saw themselves as what they called Ataturkists, which I thought was an interesting new definition for us to play with.

SPEAKER: What's the percentage?

MR. POPE: Fifty percent. And as opposed to Kemalists because being a Kemalist sort of implies that you're authoritarian and

militaristic, as well as being secular, but being Ataturkist is somehow cuddlier.

MR. TASPINAR: It's lost in translation to Europeans probably.

MR. POPE: Yeah. Well, I would just say -- and that 50 percent of the population has a broadly secular universally globalized outlook and often lives in Istanbul. They have no political representation at the moment because the current political system doesn't encourage involvement of young people in politics. Parents in Turkey do not tell their children to go into politics because it is a dirty business. They are more or less not going into the mafia. And instead they told them to go off and become directors of Turkey programs and Brookings.

SPEAKER: I think it's the same in the United States.

MR. POPE: But the AK Party has a very efficient vote-winning machine that none of the secular -- more secular parties has bothered to create for themselves. And the reason that they don't do it is that no one can get the excitement to go in. And why did the AK Party do it? Because they were hungry. They wanted power. They wanted to get something. They were being denied power and now they got in and it's their turn. And they're filling -- like every government before them they're filling the bureaucracy with people from their party. They're giving contracts to their friends. And they're saying it's our turn now.

That is not unusual in Turkey. Of course, the losing side is sore about it, but the answer is not to call in the army. The answer is to get out and get that 50 percent of the population that wants a more secular flavor in politics. To get them mobilized and behind them. But the structure of the political laws makes it very difficult at the moment.

MR. TASPINAR: We have time for one more question.

MR. SINJAR: Thank you. My name is Ysja Sinjar, former Turkish foreign officer and retired from the World Bank, also.

Don't you think that if we take a long view, Europeans should be able to overcome the fear of Turkey since throughout their history, despite all the bloody wars and religious conflicts, they've been able to solve or to overcome the internal fears. Protestants, Catholics, Germans, French, British, French -- they have all kinds of wars. Now, the European Union is called a peace project. Why shouldn't they be able to accept Turkey in the long-run probably as part of that peace project? They have that capacity if you take that capacity from the history of Europe.

MR. POPE: That's an idealistic position and I would love it to be true. And I think as someone brought up in Europe for quite a while, I think that, you know, European populations have a lot of accepting to do at home first. I mean, this idea that Europe is going to be eternally what it was at the peak of its developments in the '50s and '60s and then denying what

is happening in European cities, which are so -- it's not just Turks. There's all kinds of people from all over the world in them. How is Europe going to readjust its self-identity for the future? And how is it going to deal with not just Turkey, but the whole north Africa is very close to Europe and many north Africans in Europe, too. And Europe has to find a way of integrating that into its story. And not enough people are trying to do that.

And I'm glad you see this capacity in Europe to do it. And I wish I could help it, but it's there. It's there. I agree with you, it's that. But politics tend to encourage people to go to the tribalism and the reference points of the past. And that I think has to be confronted. But I'm not a European politician so I can't do it.

MR. TASPINAR: Hugh, thank you for ending on this idealistic note. And thank you for a fabulous and very timely presentation. Thank you all for coming.

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