

## “TURKEY OR CANADA? THOUGHTS ON EURABIA, EURUSSIA AND EURMERICA”

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Forget the ratification vote, history will remember October 2004 as the month when Turkey's bid to join the European Union vanished forever. Ignore the carefully orchestrated choruses of approval and the expensively purchased public affairs advice. It's done. Except, that is, for the ten more years of misleading the Turks. The events of this October have set up a potentially disastrous crisis in 2015. This was the month that the Turkey debate moved from technicalities about negotiations to the substance of the political decision: 'Does Europe want to welcome Turkey?' The answer is no. Hidden behind whatever platitudes may have recently been conveyed, the unspoken reality is that there is no bankable majority for approving Turkish membership. Not now, and not in ten years time. This is a decision unlike the recent 'do you – don't you accept Slovakia' as long as Mr Meciar is a potent force? This is closer to General de Gaulle's veto of the United Kingdom's first application for membership. It is about what kind of 'Europe' Europe wants to be. Simply put, Turkey is too big, too poor and too other.

David Phillips of the Council on Foreign Relations, writing in Foreign Affairs in September, makes the case for America's interest in seeing Turkey admitted to the EU. He says nothing, however, about potential benefits for the European Union from Turkish membership. He may be an advocate for membership, but he does concede that the current Turkish administration is quietly reducing the role of women in public life: *“Critics argue that Erdogan's recent disavowal of Islamic symbolism is only technical. Erodgan's clique has quietly and consistently removed women from government positions, and few women candidates appear on the AKP candidate lists”*.

American desires notwithstanding, the killer blow to Turkey's hopes was delivered by President Chirac. If, as he insists will be the case in France, the issue is to be decided by the citizens of Europe in referenda, rather than by political elites in parliamentary ratifications, there is little doubt that in ten years time the answer will be a bloody and Islamophobic No. How much better it would be to admit now that Europe's past quasi-promises are not, and will not, be deliverable. Europe should be starting today to build a real relationship with the Turks; one that could serve as a model for similar tailor-made arrangements with the Ukraine, Algeria, Egypt and the rest of Europe's Near Abroad.

Why then does the myth of Turkish membership survive so powerfully in some circles? The truth is that the Euro-sceptic chorus so hates the European Union that it is prepared to risk continued deceit leading to a damaging explosion. For example, Anatole Kaletsky, writing in the Times on 7<sup>th</sup> October, was starkly explicit. The Turks should be welcomed because *“Turkish membership will make even more unattainable the dream of a federal European state, for which public support has been dissipated by the Continent’s economic and political failures”*. He makes the electorally unlikely claim that *“hostility to centralisation could translate into positive support for Turkey among the millions of EU citizens who will see it as the ultimate insurance policy against federalist ambitions in Brussels”* ... *“the fact is that, far from preparing the EU for the future, the Constitution will have to be torn up if Turkey joins. Turkey’s rapidly growing population, which will overtake Germany’s by 2015, will give it more votes under the new Constitution than any other nation. Since an EU with Turkey as the single most powerful member would make no sense to anyone, including even the Turks, enlargement would mean completely re-writing the Constitution just five years after the new arrangements are supposed to come into force. While conspiracy theorists suspect that the Constitution was drafted to block Turkey’s accession, it looks increasingly like Turkey will sabotage the new Constitution.”* He then proceeds to mutter about Saudi money and Wahhabi influence and to speculate on the prospects of making the whole Mediterranean basin more European, only to conclude that such an integration would be a huge and dangerous provocation to Osama bin Laden.

Behind this contradictory tissue of Euro-sceptic arguments there lies a fundamental confusion about the choices which face Europe. Europe can be itself – a continent whole and free – but other options are possible. It could choose a policy of deliberate merger with the Arab world to create by expansion and immigration a ‘Eurabia’. It could opt to embrace Putin’s Russia, aligning the Caucasian world against Islam in the Greater Middle East and Central Asia, to create a ‘Eurussia’. I find neither of these options attractive.

If the Euro-sceptic Right is prepared to claim that Turkey is Europe rather than Asia Minor, why then cannot we contemplate merger with another continent? In this context I have a modest proposal for solving our current Transatlantic difficulties. Why not admit Canada to the European Union? The Canadian Federation could join either as individual provinces or just as English and French speaking Canada. Voila! No more problems with Quebec! The Canadians are commendably multi-lateralist and close to the European Union’s policies in many areas. Their membership, and that of Iceland and Norway, would enable a rational, environmental policy to be hammered out for the North Atlantic and the Arctic.

Indeed, why stop at Canada? Why not invite California to join the Union as well? Governor Schwarzenegger could then become President of the European Commission, rather than having to undertake the more difficult task of changing the US Constitution to become President in Washington. For reasons of geographic tidiness it would make good sense to also then offer membership to Oregon, Washington State and Alaska. Indeed Hawaii might enjoy a reversion to British sovereignty, and would provide a good venue for European Parliament Study Days.

Many good things would flow from such an arrangement. The world would be spared the imbalance of a single super-power, an arrangement that is always either tyrannical

or provocative of instability. The resulting multi-polar world would have at its heart a multi-lateralist union. For reasons of geographical accuracy and political palatability it might be wise to drop the word European. 'Eumerica' would be less protectionist than either the existing European Union or the existing USA. It would reach out to the Chinese and Japanese across the Pacific. Of course there might be some resistance from George W Bush at such a reversion to the status quo before the Louisiana Purchase. Doubtless Karl Rove and colleagues would salivate at Republican Party prospects for winning endless elections in the residual "Heartland America". The money intended for Star Wars could instead be spent fortifying Niagara Falls and the tunnels through the Rockies. This 'modest proposal' should in no sense be seen as the dismemberment of the United States. Rather, one should see it as Atlantic Federation in easy stages, bringing to fruition at last the 1939 dream of Clarence Streit and the Atlantic Federalists. Here is a project worthy of the long overdue reconciliation between European and World Federalists.

Benjamin Franklin is reputed to have advised the Founding Fathers not to adopt the eagle as the national symbol of the new Republic. He found it too warlike for the spirit he sought to culture in a people newly liberated from a European tyranny. He suggested instead the bountiful turkey, arguing that the turkey was domestic, useful and native to North America. Instead the new Republic endowed itself with classical paraphernalia and set off down the road of manifest destiny. As we await the outcome of the US election let us at least be grateful that no one has yet suggested adopting a European bird.

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