DPF

TÜRK KAMUOYU VE DIŞ POLİTİKA:

TORTU MU, ETKEN Mİ?

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İçindekiler

T he Cyprus dispute, which can be traced to events of the late 1940s, has becom one of the most intractable regional conflicts of the post-WWII era. Numerous attempts to arrive at a peaceful settlement through mediation or direct talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots have failed.[i] UN Secretary-Generals from U Thant to Ban Ki-moon have been preoccupied with trying to resolve the Cyprus problem; it is the most "frustrating," "thankless," and "impossible job in the world" (Newman 2001: 127). And, not surprisingly, "the rest of the world is fed up with the Cyprus problem," which has become synonymous with intractability (Bahçeli and Rizopoulos 1996/1997: 30; Risher 1992a: 3).[ii]

For the two "mother" countries, Turkey and Greece, the Cyprus problem has been a nuisance at best and a burden at worst. Amicable relations between the two countries had persisted throughout the 1930s and even endured through the Second World War, but came to an abrupt end in 1954. Since then, the Cyprus quagmire has poisoned various attempts by Greece and Turkey to resolve bilateral differences (such as the dispute over the Aegean Sea, among others) and establish friendly relations. Over the last several years, Cyprus has also become a major obstacle to Turkey's EU accession process, much to the delight of many in France, Germany, Austria, and elsewhere in Europe, as well as members of the anti-Turkish lobby in Greece and the anti-EU lobby in Turkey.

In addressing the dispute over Cyprus, I will deal with three main topics. First, I examine certain widely held perceptions and beliefs in Turkey and Greece about Cyprus, in addition to the actions of each country that have harmed the prospects for reaching a settlement in the dispute. Secondly, I refer to the most recent settlement negotiations, the main difficulties involved, and what can be done to invigorate the talks. Thirdly, I address the main obstacles to the resolution of the Cyprus problem, which continue to cast their shadow over the present talks and must be dealt with before a final agreement can be reached.

Mutual Perceptions and Fixations

Scrutinizing Turkish Perceptions

For Turkey, Cyprus presents something of a Catch-22: significant military action seems unthinkable, yet inaction may produce even more dire outcomes. Cyprus is geographically small, but still capable of creating trouble for Ankara, especially in regards to its EU prospects and its international image and clout. A notable Turkish policy shift has occurred since Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit's declaration in 1974 that "no solution is a solution," which essentially meant that the Cyprus problem had been resolved. The shift occurred in 2003, when Erdoğan asserted to the contrary that "no solution is no solution," meaning Turkey would be "one step ahead" in the quest for a settlement. Despite this about-face, however, Ankara's sincere support of a federal solution is still treated with suspicion by most Greeks and Greek Cypriots, and even by many in Europe (Bahçeli and Noel 2009: 236-47). Such is the negative stereotype of Turkey, likely due to its actions in 1974 (namely, the second Cyprus operation it launched in August of that year) and its unconditional support for Rauf Denktaş's intransigence until the spring of 2003.

A widely held view in Turkey regarding the 1974 crisis is that the Greek military had overthrown Makarios III in order to bring about *enosis* (literally "union" between Cyprus and Greece). For this reason, Turkey under Ecevit felt it had no other option than to intervene military. Otherwise, it would have essentially been permitting Greece to encroach upon its southern periphery (Birand 1985: 1-6; Bölükbaşı 1988, 187-90). Following the coup, the Greek Junta and its puppet regime in Cyprus, led by the despicable Nikos Sampson (dubbed the "Butcher of Omorfita" after his heinous acts during the "Bloody Christmas" of 1963), refrained from mentioning union with Greece in an effort to reassure the Turkish Cypriots, who were justifiably terrified. However, there is little doubt that *enosis* was the ultimate goal of the Greek Junta and the EOKA-B.

Another widely held belief in Turkey is that the Greek Junta and the EOKA-B were planning to carry out a mass slaughter, indeed nothing less than the "genocide" of Turkish Cypriots. This belief, understandable as it may be, was likely untrue. There should be little

doubt, however, that the Turkish Cypriots would have suffered under the extreme nationalist Greeks and Greek Cypriots, who despised and hated them.

For those in Turkey supportive of a federal solution, from Özal in the early 1990s to Erdoğan from late 2003 onwards, one of the most commonly held perceptions is that the Cyprus problem could have been resolved had Athens been more resolute in pressuring the Greek Cypriots to reach an agreement.

The events that actually transpired, however, diverge from this Turkish narrative. For over twenty years, from 1954 when Greece internationalized the problem by appealing to the UN General Assembly until the 1974 mega-crisis, Athens had, more often than not, tried to take the initiative in solving the Cyprus problem. It did this either by seeking *enosis*, preferably with Ankara's acquiescence, or the acceptance of another solution (namely, the continuation of independence) arrived at by the two Cypriot communities.

This overall Greek approach was known as the "national center" doctrine, coined by Georgios Papandreou, the Prime Minister of Greece in 1964-65. It claimed that Athens, as "the motherland" of the Greek Cypriots and the center of Hellenism, should have the final say on the matter of Cyprus. The doctrine also asserted that Athens was in a better position to make decisions regarding Greek national interests and the interests of Hellenism as a whole, including, for instance, the fate of the Greeks of Istanbul who had suffered as a result of the Cyprus problem. However, with one short-lived exception, namely, the Zurich-London agreements of 1959, Athens was unable to rein in the Greek Cypriot leader, Archbishop Makarios, who, from 1963 onwards, consistently ignored Athens' various initiatives to broker a solution. Put differently, Makarios is mainly to be blame for the impasse in the attempts to reach a solution from 1964 until 1974. Rarely

was Athens at fault, with the exception of the last period of the Greek Junta under brigadier Ioannidis, from November 1973 onwards. This phase culminated with the Greek and EOKA-B bloody coup against Makarios.

Since 1974—with the return of Greece to democratic rule under the astute Konstantinos Karamanlis—Greece abandoned the national center line. Henceforth, the approach that has consistently been followed by Greek governments without exception has been one in which the Greek Cypriots make their own decisions, with Greece almost blindly accepting these decisions and providing the Republic of Cyprus with unfailing support. Under the populist PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement[iii]) government of Andreas Papandreou (1981-1989, 1993-1995), this policy of projecting a common front became even more automatic, especially when the Republic of Cyprus followed an intransigent line.

Why did Greece abandon the "national center" approach? There are at least three identifiable reasons: (1) Recurring Greek governments were deeply apprehensive of the detrimental impact Cyprus could have on their domestic politics;[iv] (2) The predominant belief in Greece since 1974 has been that the Greek-Cypriots ought to decide their own fate (after all, it is their future state which is at stake) and, if they do not behave pragmatically (so as to accept a federal solution), they ought to handle the responsibility for the permanent division of the island on their own; and (3) The Cyprus Republic is an independent state, and should not be pushed around, in contrast to the secessionist "illegal" Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) that is pushed around by Turkey.

Scrutinizing Greek Perceptions

For the great majority of Greeks, the elites and the public alike, the failure to resolve the Cyprus problem is to be blamed entirely on the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, not only until 2003 when Denktaş held sway, but even today. Odd as this view may seem in Turkey, it is mainly due to the fact that, until very recently, very few Greeks were aware that the Greek Cypriots were also responsible for several lost opportunities to arrive at a

settlement. This include not only the rejection of the Annan Plan in April 2004, but the first inter-communal talks between Clerides and Denktaş from 1968-74, as well as Boutros-Ghali's "Set of Ideas" in 1992. Moreover, most Greeks until recently could not grasp that from 1975 onwards the indigenous Turkish Cypriots were genuinely supportive of reunification. This view was represented by the opposition of the Republican Turkish Party and the Communal Liberal Party to Denktaş.

From 1983, when the TRNC declared autonomy, until early 2004, Greece could fairly convincingly hold Denktaş responsible for the impasse given his legendary intransigence. Greece regarded Ankara as equally responsible for the impasse, as a result of the aforementioned Ecevit dictum that seemed to prevail most of the time. The Greeks, including many specialists, are seemingly unaware that Turkey's role in the dispute is far more complex. For example, there was a significant lack of enthusiasm in Ankara for the unilateral declaration of independence of the Turkish Cypriots led by Denktaş in November 1983 (Bahçeli 1990: 124). Also Turgut Ozal put forth bold initiatives to reach a federal solution in the early 1990s, which the Greek government imprudently rejected and Denktaş, having a great deal of influence in Ankara, was able to derail (Hale 2002: 253; Robins 2003: 83, 131).

A lesser-known episode also deserves mentioning, one in which Ecevit proved to be considerably more compromising than he was alleged to be by his critics. At his two-day meeting with Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis in Montreux in early March 1978, Ecevit suggested at the end of the meeting that if a joint communiqué was to be issued, it should mention the settlement of Cyprus within the framework of a federal solution. Karamanlis, who wanted to stand clear of the Cyprus question, pointed out that he preferred the focus to be on the Aegean dispute. In the end, no joint communiqué was issued, though the two leaders seemed to have agreed that Cyprus would have been left out in any case. Of course, this initiative on the part of Ecevit may have been aimed at placating Washington, given the US arms embargo that was vexing to Turkey at the time. Thus, a conciliatory move on

the Cyprus issue was bound to make the Carter administration more prone to lifting the embargo.

On the whole, however, the Greek claim regarding Denktaş's role and the overall Turkish support of Denktaş's intransigence is hardly far-fetched. This leads us to another well-known Greek fixation: that the Turkish Cypriot leader was a puppet of Ankara who acted in alignment with the Turkish government and military. Put differently, the Turkish government and military were thoroughly supportive of Denktaş's intransigence. Though the role of the military was never in doubt, Greece was apparently unaware that the relationship between the Turkish government and Denktaş, especially from the late 1970s onwards, was a case of the tail wagging the dog. Denktaş was able to wield his great prestige and influence in Ankara to successfully frustrate any Turkish initiative aimed at reunification of the island within a federal framework.

When Denktaş gradually lost power between 2003-2004 and the more moderate Mehmet Ali Talat took over (first as prime minister and then as president), the AKP, by mid-2003, had made its famous *volte face* in its Cypriot policy and stepped up its support for the Annan Plan, which Denktaş regarded as anathema. This switch left the Greek Cypriots, then under their intransigent president Tassos Papadopoulos, speechless. They regarded the Turkish move as either a ruse or an ephemeral ploy aimed at securing its own accession to the EU. Even today, the majority of Greeks and Greek Cypriots continue to doubt Turkey's sincerity in wanting a settlement and the Turkish Cypriots' desire for reunification. They were also skeptical of Talat's moderation, accusing him of being "another Denktaş." To the extent that it is supportive of a solution, Ankara should make this support as clear as day, as it did in 2004. By taking the initiative in reaching a settlement, it can once again prove the Greek and Greek Cypriot hard-liners wrong.

These fixations and misperceptions linger on in Greece and among the Greek Cypriots. A hardline Turkish cynic might call this approach deliberate and self-serving, a smokescreen created by the Greek Cypriots, who deep down do not desire a solution along federal

bizonal lines but simply want to throw the blame on Ankara. Undoubtedly, this may be the case for some diehard nationalists and rejectionists in Cyprus and Greece, but it only tells part of the story.

In light of the Republic of Cyprus's accession to the EU and the key role Greece played in bringing this about, the most tangible benefit Athens has gotten from the events of the last decade is that it has at least partly absolved itself of the blame for bringing about the catastrophe that befell the Greek Cypriots in 1974, its overthrow of Makarios that led to the Turkish intervention. Moreover, since 2004, Greece has tried to decouple Greek-Turkish relations from the Cyprus quagmire, though this effort has met with limited success.

Additional Points

The amount of sway Greece held over the Greek Cypriots is negligible. By comparison, there is little doubt that Turkey calls the shot with regards to its *yavru vatan* (literally, "young land") to a much greater extent than does Greece, which has limited influence on its own far more independent *yavru vatan* (actually, no such expression exists in Greek; Greek Cypriots are commonly referred to as "brother Cypriots"). After all, the TRNC is a secessionist entity that is not a recognized state like the Republic of Cyprus, and it relies entirely on Ankara for economic, political, diplomatic and other types of support. But, in order for Ankara to convince the Turkish Cypriots under their leadership to cooperate, the following three things are needed: (1) wide public support on the part of the Turkish Cypriots for reunification and a settlement, as was the case in 2002-04; (2) a moderate non-rejectionist leader at the helm in Nicosia; and (3) when the leader is a hard-liner, as presently with Eroğlu, considerable public support by the majority of Turkish Cypriots for reunification.

Regarding the most important factor—support for a solution—it is an open question today as to where the Turkish Cypriot public currently stands. There is probably an even

split between rejectionists and moderates. Additionally, however, a new dynamic unfolded in the first months of 2011: animus between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, due to blunt statements made by Erdoğan. Ironically, this emerging resentment may actually have a positive impact on reunification as far as the Turkish Cypriots are concerned. At the end of the day, what could bring the two communities in Cyprus together may be not be their hidden or repressed attraction for each other (if such a feeling exists), but their hearty dislike and distrust of their respective motherlands. Now, let me turn to the talks that began in 2008 and continue until today.

Settlement Talks Since 2000

When Dimitris Christofias unexpectedly beat the intransigent incumbent Papadopoulos in the February 2008 presidential elections, a unique opportunity for a settlement again presented itself, much as one had been between 1999 and early 2004. For the first and only time in the history of Cyprus since 1960, both sides were headed by leaders who were willing to compromise. The viability and duration of this new window of opportunity, however, depended on the two leaders remaining in power and being able to sway their respective publics, irrespective of the internal political costs.

Christofias and Talat agreed to initiate substantive negotiations, committing themselves to establishing a bizonal, bicommunal federation based on political equality between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot constituencies. These were known as the Christofias-Talat agreements of 23 May and 1 July 2008. The two leaders felt that a negotiated settlement must be reached "now or never" (International Crisis Group 2008).

These talks were "Cyprus-owned" and "Cyprus-led," as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly put it (UN Secretary-General 2009: 5). The Secretary-General appointed former Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer as his special advisor with a mandate to "facilitate" the talks, but not to mediate them. Clearly, lessons had been drawn from the spectacular failure of Annan's involvement, which was much more intrusive and

had amounted to full-fledged mediation or "arbitration," according to rejectionist Tassos Papadopoulos.

The two leaders set up six working groups: (1) sovereignty, governance and power-sharing (executive, legislature, federal competences, external relations); (2) EU matters (*acquis*, derogations, and others); (3) security and guarantees; (4) return of territory; (5) property; and (6) economic matters.

After four months of preparations by the working groups, negotiations at the leadership level were initiated in September 2008. Up to mid-2011, more than 100 meetings between the leaders of the two communities, and many more between their chief negotiators, Giorgos Iacovou and Kudret Özersay, have taken place.

There has been progress and convergence on governance and power-sharing, EU matters, and the economy, but very little on property, territory, and security. Apart from the sheer complexity of these three issues, there is, as times goes by, an increasing amount of domestic criticism from both communities that is "directed at the leaders and the process," making the way ahead "politically difficult for both leaders" (UN Secretary-General 2009: 4; 2010: 1). Alarmingly, according to public opinion polls, some 90 percent of the Greek Cypriots did not trust that Talat was sincere in his call for a federal solution. The end result was that Talat and Christofias, who lacked the necessary political capital, were hesitant and unable to clinch a deal before the TRNC April 2010 presidential elections. Talat would lose to Eroğlu, a nationalist and long-time supporter of TRNC independence.

Eroğlu is undoubtedly a hardliner and nationalist (Dodd 2009: 11) but he is under strong pressure from Ankara, and Erdoğan himself, to be constructive in the talks.[v] If Eroğlu were to try to derail the talks as Denktaş successfully did in the early 1990s by foiling Ozal's conciliatory attempts, he would not be able to achieve this aim, owing to the fact that he does not possess the level of prestige and influence in Turkey that Denktaş once

did. Thus, the talks have continued between Christofias and Eroğlu. Fortunately, the latter seems at times somewhat detached, leaving the initiative to the more constructive Özersay.

On the property question, the Greek Cypriots insist that they should be able to choose between exchange, compensation, and reinstatement. This is unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriots, for, if all opt for the latter, this would mean that most of the land would be transferred to the Greek Cypriots, since 70-80 percent of the property is owned by Greek Cypriots, thereby precluding the Turkish Cypriots from securing bizonality. According to the Greek Cypriots, the property question should be evaluated on the basis of the amount of territory that would be returned. They have also proposed a census under UN auspices. The Turkish Cypriots retort that they can discuss the territory issue only in a wider conference that includes the three guarantor powers (Turkey, Greece, and the United Kingdom). As for the guarantor powers' regime, which dates back to the 1959 London Agreement, the Greek Cypriots would like to see it terminated, while the Turkish Cypriots favor its retention.

In a report issued to the United Nations Security Council in November 2010, the Secretary-General expressed apprehension towards the progress of the talks. He pointed out that there was "a worrying lack of progress," notably on the property question, and concluded that, "a critical window of opportunity is rapidly closing" (UN Secretary General 2010: 6). In a March 2011 report to the Security Council, however, Ban Ki-moon was somewhat more optimistic. Following meetings with the two leaders on 18 November 2010 and 26 January 2011, he declared that "there has been some progress," and that "the pace of the talks has quickened." In fact, there has been progress on governance and power-sharing, the economy (namely, on how to deal with the North's economic troubles), and the derogations from the EU *acquis*. On these three issues, the remaining divergences do not appear to be insurmountable. However, according to Ban Ki-moon, there is a "growing public skepticism that a settlement would be reached." Most of the members of the two communities are predicting failure. Thus, according to the Secretary General, the two

leaders should do their utmost to stem this negative rhetoric and not cast any further doubt onto the process with "public statements [that] demonize or ascribe ulterior motives to the other side" (UN Secretary-General 2011).

Currently, the prospects for a settlement remain, at best, unclear. Christofias has stated recently, on more than one occasion, that progress has been minimal to non-existent since Eroğlu took power. Georgios Iocovou, the Cypriot Minister of Presidency, doubts Turkey's sincere interest in a settlement. Özersay has said that "everyone wants peace, but not everyone is prepared for the necessary mutual compromises." If there is no progress on a settlement, he has hinted that he may resign. Downer has made a telling remark: that the real question is not whether a deal is possible—it is—but whether or not the two sides truly want a deal.[vi]

At the moment, the biggest fear of the Greek Cypriots is that the TRNC will upgrade its status to something similar to Taiwan's. On account of this fear, the Republic of Cyprus has threatened to block the opening of six more chapters in Turkey's accession, in addition to the eight that it has already blocked (Dodd 2009: 11). Given this frame of mind, the Republic of Cyprus is not prepared to allow international flights to fly to northern Cyprus or to lift the continuing embargo in other ways. Greek Cypriots are of the view that by initiating direct trade with the north, they would be eliminating the Turkish-Cypriots' primary incentive to come to an agreement.[vii] Moreover, the Greek Cypriots are convinced that not only Eroğlu but Erdoğan and the Turkish military deep down are not supportive of reunification or a federal solution, but would prefer a Taiwan-style formula that would lead to eventual partition (that is, the *Taksim* idea, or "division").

> The Turks and the Turkish Cypriots who support a federal solution fear that if Turkey implements the additional protocol, the sine qua non for opening the chapters that were suspended upon the request of the Republic of Cyprus, and opens Turkish ports to Cypriot ships, this would leave the Greek Cypriots without any incentive to work to resolve the conflict. The fear is that they would simply

pocket the gain and also regard this as a de facto recognition of the Republic of Cyprus and a downgrade of the TRNC.

Needless to say, the May 2011 general elections in the Cyprus Republic and the June 2011 elections in Turkey were far from beneficial to the peace process, and neither produced any signs of moderation. In Turkey's case, one of the main goals of the ruling AKP was to capture votes from the nationalist MHP and drive it out of the Turkish Assembly. Hence, the inflammatory rhetoric on "national issues" (*milli dava*) such as Cyprus saw a marked increase during the election campaigns

It would not be too dramatic or pessimistic to say that, at the moment, the peace talks are hanging by a thread, given the following: (a) Increasing public criticism of the peace process on both sides of the green line; (b) Christrofias's over-cautiousness and fear of domestic political costs; (c) Eroğlu's lack of real commitment for a settlement and reunification of the island; and (d) Fading EU prospects for Turkey, which reduces its incentives to step forward with a generous initiative.

The Final Push Forward: What is Needed?

As the Annan experience demonstrated all too clearly, no amount of external pressure or good will can bring about a solution if the two parties directly involved in the conflict, that is, the two Cypriot communities in their majority and their leadership, are not prepared to arrive at one. However, initiatives that originate from the outside have a chance to break the deadlock. Turkey, in particular, could bring new dynamism to the talks as it did in the second part of 2003 (though this quickly stalled due to Papadopoulos being in control) by taking the following key steps: (a) Implementing the additional protocol which is a sine qua non for opening the chapters suspended upon the request of the Republic of Cyprus. This would mean opening Turkish ports to Cypriot ships, which could be accompanied

by a reservation stating that the opening of the ports does not amount to formal recognition; (b) Allowing for a UN-supervised return by Greek Cypriots to the ghost city of Varosha, an idea that has been up in the air for decades (International Crisis Group 2010); and (c) Withdrawing its troops from Cyprus, hopefully a substantive number and not merely a token force. This can be accomplished at no risk whatsoever, as 15,000-20,000 Turkish troops would more than suffice. In any event, no Greek or Greek Cypriot force would dare to dream of attacking the TRNC.

These gestures could be reciprocated on the part of the Greek-Cypriots, e.g., by allowing charter flights to Ercan airport in the north, or through other measures that ease the embargo on the TRNC. But, if they were not reciprocated, this could paint the Greek Cypriots in a very negative light internationally.

The obvious question is: Why should Turkey take the initiative? Could it benefit from doing so when there are good enough reasons for it not to; after all, its EU prospects are fading and the present AKP government seems to have lost interest in the accession process. Yet, I would argue that it would be in Ankara's interests to take the initiative by carrying out the above-mentioned gestures. So long as Turkey does not make such gestures, it will be eyed with suspicion not only in Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, but also in Europe and at the UN Secretariat. These suspicions include, namely, that: (a) Turkey is not fully committed to a resolution; (b) due to its fading EU prospects, it has little incentive to attempt to lead the way as it did in late 2003 and early 2004; or, even worse, (c) Ankara simply does not care anymore for the EU and Europe. Moreover, if Turkey tries to add new dynamism to the talks by employing such initiatives, it would display a very constructive Turkish attitude, which would be duly appreciated and force its opponents in Greece, Cyprus, and Europe into a corner. At the very least, it would shift the blame to the party or parties responsible for the deadlock for dragging their feet, be it the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots, or both sides.

Even if such initiatives are implemented, however, the talks might still fail. Thus, let us stand back a bit and contemplate the myriad reasons for the impasse, despite the fact that there are two obvious solutions: either reunification in a loose, bizonal, bicommunal, and consociational federation, or a final "velvet" divorce, that would involve the return of some 7-10 percent of the North's territory back to the south.

Nine Reasons for the Impasse in Settlement Negotiations

I would point to no less than nine reasons for the failure to resolve the Cyprus conflict that must be dealt with in order for there to be a breakthrough in the talks: (1) nationalism and national identity; (2) incompatibility of political aims; (3) social-psychological dimensions; (4) non-acceptance and denial; (5) the negative role of domestic factors; (6) the normative dimension; (7) what constitutes a just solution; (8) the difficulty with federalism; and (9) the fear of change (Heraclides 2011).

Nationalism

The role of virulent nationalism, specifically, the clash between Greek Cypriot nationalism and Turkish Cypriot nationalism, in initiating and sustaining the conflict is more than obvious. In a nutshell, to the extent that Greek Cypriots regard themselves, in their great majority, as *Hellenes* of Cyprus (as regarded by Makarios, Kyprianou, and T. Papadopoulos) and the Turkish Cypriots as Turks (as regarded by Denktaş and Eroğlu), that is as members of a wider nation, an all-embracing Cypriot or pan-Cypriot national identity can make little headway (Loizos 1974; Stavrinides 1976; Kitromilides 1977; Kızılyürek 1999).

The schools of either community instill pupils with love and pride for their respective motherlands, and with animosity towards the other side, the traditional

historical enemy. This has been the case throughout recent years, with the exception of the Talat period, between April 2005-April 2010, when ethnocentric school-books were dropped and sophisticated text-books were written and taught to the Turkish-Cypriot youth. This development, however, was reversed by Eroğlu when he came to power. With such a strong dose of nationalist indoctrination, the two communities view themselves as "Greeks" and "Turks," respectively, and each regards the antagonism as part and parcel of the historical Greek-Turkish conflict, as "a diachronic, invariable, and existential fact" (Anastasiou 2008: 11).

Another angle is also worth examining. In the last phase of the attempts to deal with the famous Eastern Question, Greeks and Turks parted tragically in the years 1919-1924, due mainly to the Greek-Turkish War in Anatolia and the compulsory exchange of populations that followed. According to the national mind-set of both communities, how can the Greeks and Turks of Cyprus be an exception to this rule and live together? Thus, even the heads of the two largest Cypriot-centered leftist parties, AKEL and the Republican Turkish Party, failed to bring about a settlement in the 2008-2010 talks.

Irreconcilable Goals

From 1975 onwards, the predominant view has been that the conflict presents a zero-sum, win-lose situation, and even the possibility of "splitting the difference" is difficult to imagine. Apparently, the current division of the island, however unsavory, especially for the Greek Cypriots, is preferable to any conceivable peaceful, power-sharing settlement. To again quote Ecevit: "No solution is a solution," but neither side, for different reasons, acknowledges this openly. With regard to the Greek Cypriots, its failure to acknowledge this comes mainly from a fear of the domestic and international costs involved. For the Turkish Cypriots, this is due mainly to the fear of being absorbed by a harsh "motherland."

The absence of a mutual "hurting stalemate," to use a concept coined by I. William Zartman, also presents a formidable obstacle to a settlement. As Brian Mandell (1990: 220) has put it:

> The greatest impediment to resolution is the absence of a hurting stalemate. Neither Cypriot community is sufficiently dissatisfied with the *status quo* to make the difficult compromise necessary for resolving the conflict. There is little urgency to reach a settlement as the alternatives to reaching a final solution are not so unattractive as to warrant a genuine desire of settlement.

As a result, "Greek and Turkish Cypriots will always have better reasons for not rocking the boat than for trying to sail it with a mixed crew" (Stearns 1992: 125).

The Social-Psychological Dimension

With the passage of time, a huge psychological wall has been erected in Cyprus that is nearly as foreboding as the one that separates the Palestinians and the Israelis. At least half of all Cypriots regard their conflict as no less than a struggle between justice and injustice, good and evil, culture and barbarity.

For most Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots are a remnant of the "Turkish yoke," an instrument of Turkey in its "territorial ambitions" towards Cyprus. Most Greek Cypriots claim that the Cyprus question is purely a case of "invasion and occupation." Hence, they tend to regard the Cyprus problem as an inter-communal conflict that began in 1974.

The Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, regard the inter-communal conflict as having commenced in 1956 and intensified in 1963-1967. They consider co-habitation unfeasible and disastrous for them as the weaker party. They are convinced that the Greek Cypriots regard them as a nuisance, the main obstacle to the Hellenization of the entire island—as in the days of Makarios (the experience

with Papadopoulos in 2003-2007 did little to allay this fear). Thus, the Turkish Cypriots' only guarantor against cultural, if not physical, extinction is the protective shield of the Turkish Army stationed on the island.

Historically, the most salient mutual misperceptions that have created an almost paranoiac atmosphere are the views that *enosis* and *taksim* have remained the respective cherished aspirations of either side, though this has hardly been the case for decades.

The ethnic clashes, especially those of 1963-1967 and 1974, and the bitter memories that have been kept alive by every conceivable means (school textbooks, commemorations, obituaries, museums of national struggle in both communities, parades, erecting statues of so-called "hero-martyrs" from the EOKA struggle or of Kemal Ataturk, respectively, and other rituals) have proven until today to be an insurmountable psychological barrier to reconciliation (Papadakis 2005).

Non-Recognition and Denial

I would argue that non-recognition, denial, and rejection of the "Other" are the ultimate obstacles to a Cyprus settlement. The Greek Cypriot denial posture consists of the following beliefs: (1) Cyprus is Greek and has been Greek since time immemorial; (2) The so-called Turkish Cypriots are simply Turks who happen to reside in the island; (3) References to Cypriots, Cyprus, Cypriot rights and so on refers only to the Greek Cypriot side, as if the Turkish Cypriots resided somewhere else or could be wished away; (4) The Turkish Cypriots are politically non-existent; they are simply Ankara's pawns; (5) Northern Cyprus (the secessionist

TRNC) is illegal and non-existent; it is constantly referred to as "The Occupied Territories."

As for the Turkish Cypriots, their denial and rejection of the other side is rooted in the following: (1) The reference to the "Greek Cypriot Administration" and not to the Republic of Cyprus; (2) However understandable it may be, the reference to

the president of the Republic of Cyprus as merely the leader of the Greek Cypriot community and not as the president of an independent, internationally-recognized state; (3) The Greek Cypriots are seen as Greeks and not as true Cypriots; (4) Even more insulting to the Greek Cypriots is that their self-definition is seen as an invention: the "Greeks of Cyprus" are hardly Greeks; they arbitrarily chose to define themselves as *Hellenes*, given their use of the Greek language. As for the Greek Cypriot claim to be descendants of the Ancient Greeks, this is a sheer fabrication used to muster the support of Greece and Europe; (5) The Greek Cypriots are called *Rum*, the connotation being that they were the previous subjects of the Turks.

The end result of this mutual denial leads to a sense of "being victimized through a denial of their identity" (Fisher 1990b, 249). On the Turkish Cypriot side, there is also a cultural *cum* existential fear, and, for the Greek Cypriots, an intense military insecurity in view of the Turkish Army's 40,000-strong presence in Cyprus. Needless to say, only one's own fears are treated as self-evident. The other side's angst is deemed incomprehensible and accordingly brushed aside as far-fetched or sheer propaganda.

Domestic Factors

Clearly, no lasting settlement can be achieved "without the consent of the large majority of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots." Otherwise, "spoilers" on either side will have a field day (Bahçeli and Rizopoulos 1996/1997: 28). A major problem in

ethnic conflicts is that internal political dynamics favor defiant stances. This results in what can be called domestic entrapment. Governments find themselves unable to adopt the bold and far-reaching decisions necessary to extricate themselves from a costly conflict. Even conciliatory and non-nationalist leaders such as Vassiliou, Clerides, and

more recently, Christofias and Talat, have been powerless to sway their respective majorities. Such is the strength of the reaction against any form of compromise.

At the level of leadership, Denktaş's intransigence is legendary from the 1980s onwards; this was equally the case with Makarios and Kyprianou in the 1980s, and T. Papadopoulos in the 2000s.

The Normative Dimension

In the case of Cyprus, a clash has occurred between two principles of democratic rule: the concept of majority rule (the Westminster system) and the consociational concept, which entails a level of autonomy and effective political participation with regards to sizeable groups (upwards of 10-15 percent of the population). Another normative difference is between the two notions of self-determination. On the one hand, there is the people's right to self-determination, in which a majority makes the political decisions. This view is being advocated by the Greek Cypriots, since they amount to almost 80 percent of the Cypriot population. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot claim since November 1983 has been that it is entitled to unilateral (secessionist) self-determination in view of what it suffered at the hands of the Greek-Cypriots from December 1963 until 1974.

The Parameters of a "Just Solution"

The question of what constitutes a just solution presents yet another minefield. For the Greek-Cypriots, a just solution should include the following: (a) The departure of all the Turkish soldiers; (b) The departure of all the "settlers"; (c) The Greek-

Cypriots regaining their properties and resettling in their original homes; and (d) Power and territory within a federated state being handed to the Turkish Cypriots corresponding to their percentage of the island's total population, which is not much more than 20 percent (Stavrinides 1999: 59-61).

Clearly, in any mutually acceptable settlement, none of the above conditions would be adopted as such. Even the Greek Cypriots realize that these demands are unattainable (Stavrinides 1999: 58). It may very well be that these unachievable goals are put forward, consciously or unconsciously, so as not to allow any reasonable settlement, making "no solution the solution."

The Turkish Cypriots' view of a just solution includes: (a) the retention of part of the Turkish Army as a guarantor against Greek Cypriot nationalists; (b) the departure of only a minority of the immigrants from Anatolia; and (c) a sharing of power and territory based on a consociational framework and political equality between the two communities that would constitute the new Cyprus.

Federalism

The idea of a bizonal and bicommunal federation has been the generally accepted blueprint for a solution since 1977. Yet, it has not managed to capture the hearts and minds of most Greek Cypriots, who have viewed it from 1977 until today with suspicion. It is seen, at best, as a bad solution to reunify the island; but, alas, it is the only one available. The two main reasons for this stance are: (1) the fear that giving the Turkish Cypriots a federated state of their own would pave the way for its partition and union with Turkey; (b) the difficulty of sharing the state of Cyprus, after almost five decades of having monopolized the Cypriot state, and to do so on the basis of equality when the ratio of Greek Cypriots to Turkish Cypriots is 4:1.

Another reason that federalism is unpopular with the Greek Cypriots is that it was a Turkish idea to begin with, one that was officially proposed in August 1974 at the five-party Geneva conference, following the first Turkish military intervention. Hence,

accepting a federal framework is seen as tantamount to accepting the *fait accompli* of the Turkish military intervention of 1974.

Turkish Cypriots who are opposed to reunification and federalism regard the federal solution as a disguised take-over by the Greek Cypriots that will eventually create a unitary Greek-led state. In general, however, the federal blueprint is more popular among Turkish Cypriots who support reunification than among Greek Cypriots, notably among supporters of the Republican Turkish Party and the Communal Liberation Party, which, in the 2000s, was renamed the Peace and Democracy Movement.

Fear of Change

The existing situation is obviously unsatisfactory, but seems preferable to the many uncertainties of a reunited state. The Republic of Cyprus has for decades been a functioning, prosperous, and, by and large, well-governed democratic state, with a GDP per capita among the highest in the EU, and triple that of the TRNC. Why should the Greek Cypriots endanger this state of affairs and well-being by uniting with the much poorer north, from whom they feel culturally different, not least from the influx of Turks from Anatolia? At the end of the day, a Greek Cypriot rump state seems preferable to the necessary compromises, sacrifices, friction, and time-consuming pushing and pulling that comes along with ethnic power-sharing and consociationalism.

As for the Turkish Cypriots, they may have been more forthcoming in the last decade, but they remain fearful that the economically more powerful and politically more experienced, not to mention "devious," Greek Cypriots would most

likely call the shots in a reunited Cyprus. And, the shock from the 2004 Greek Cypriot "No," that is, the unequivocal rejection of and snub in the face of the Turkish Cypriots as future partners, still reverberates.

Concluding Remarks: The Great "Yes" or "No" Moment

The words former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Brian Urquhart uttered more than two decades remain as pertinent as ever: "I know of no problem more frustrating or more bedeviled by mean-spiritedness and lack … of mutual confidence, nor of any problem where all concerned would so obviously gain from a reasonable settlement" (1987: 198). Yet, it seems that the gains to all concerned are not appreciated by many members of the two communities who would prefer separation to reunification. What is to be done?

Needless to say, an imposed settlement is totally out of the question; even if it could be reached, à la Dayton, it would be all but impossible to implement. If the present talks fail, which is more than likely, then the Cyprus problem can only be solved by two variants of partition: a more preferable "velvet divorce" that would entail some territory of the north going to the south; and an "adversarial divorce," a settlement by default, as it were, along the lines famous adage in the case of Cyprus, that "no solution is a solution."

To recall Constantine Cavafy's words from another context: "there comes a time when one must utter the great Yes or No." This time has come. It is now or never for the two ethnic communities in Cyprus.

> Her hükümet sadece uluslararası siyasal ve ekonomik ortamın biçimlediği kaygılara değil, aynı zamanda farklı çatışan çıkarlara sahip ve hükümet üzerinde baskı uygulayabilen çıkar gruplarından oluşan yerel bir ortamın etkilediği kaygılara da sahiptir.[1]

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[1] Ali Çarkoğlu (ed.), *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu'da Bölgesel İşbirliği*, TESEV, İstanbul, 1998, s. vi.

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[1] For mediations and negotiations, see Brian Mandell, "The Cyprus Conflict: Explaining Resistance to Resolution," in *Cyprus: A Regional Conflict and its Resolution*, ed. Norma Salem (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 209-19; Farid Mirbagheri, *Cyprus and International Peacekeeping* (London: Hurst & Co, 1998); Oliver Richmond, *Mediating in Cyprus: The Cypriot Communities and the United Nations* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Michael Stavrou, *Resolving the Cyprus Conflict: Negotiating History* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and James Ker-Lindsay, "A History of Cyprus Peace Proposals," in *Reunifying Cyprus: The Annan Plan and Beyond*, eds. Andrekos Varnava and Hubert Faustmann (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 11-22.

[ii]

[2] I prefer the term "pan-Hellenic" (meaning including all Greeks) and not "pan-Hellenistic," which is used by some Turkish hard-liners, such as the former professor and ambassador, Suat Bilge, who was active in the Aegean talks of the 1970s.

[3] This goes back to the 1959 Zurich and London agreements, when Karamanlis was branded as a traitor to the nation.

[4] See "Northern Cyprus: A Mediterranean quagmire" *The Economist*, 22 April 2010. http://www.economist.com/node/15954444; and "Northern Cyprus's new president: Enter Eroğlu." *The Economist*, 22 April 2010: 15, 26-27. http://www.economist.com/node/15954242.

[5] See "The insoluble Cyprus problem: Sad island story." *The Economist*, 31 May 2011: 28. http://www.economist.com/node/18486379.

[6] See a recent letter by the Deputy high commissioner for Cyprus, *The Economist*, 14 April 2011: 16. http://www.economist.com/node/18557847.