

REVISITING THE CYPRUS QUESTION AND THE WAY FORWARD

This article provides context for the recent round of Cyprus negotiations by giving a historical overview of the Cyprus problem – the political landscape after the Turkish invasion in 1974, EU involvement, the UN initiatives, and the rejection of the Annan Plan. The author argues that the current negotiations are unlikely to lead to a comprehensive agreement in 2017 as there are still some major stumbling blocks. Furthermore, he notes that consociational federal models based on ethnonationalist pillars lead, more often than not, to tensions, frustration, and even conflict. Consequently, the author suggests that an evolutionary approach may create some mutual benefits and also build trust; this will facilitate a comprehensive settlement utilizing an integrationalist federal model which will encourage common objectives. Such an outcome will serve multiple interests.

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Despite years of intercommunal negotiations and repeated efforts by the international community, the Cyprus problem remains unresolved. The overwhelming presence of Turkish troops on the island since 1974 and Ankara's objective to strategically control Cyprus continue to be the most important obstacles for a solution. The accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU in 2004 in conjunction with Turkey's own European ambitions at the time did not, as expected, lead to a breakthrough thus far. Since the April 2004 referendum on the UN Plan – rejected by Greek Cypriots but backed by Turkish Cypriots (and Turkish settlers) – this issue has become more complicated.

The recent new round of negotiations on 9-12 January 2017 in Geneva, which culminated in a conference with the participation of the three guarantor powers – the UK, Greece, and Turkey – once more did not lead to a comprehensive agreement. It will be a surprise if the new round of negotiations that was/is expected to take place in Geneva in March/April 2017 leads to a comprehensive agreement. That is why it is essential to think outside of the box.

Historical Background and Context

The early days of the Republic of Cyprus were marred by intercommunal and intra-communal strife as there were different objectives. Most Greek Cypriots aimed for *enosis* (union with Greece) and most Turkish Cypriots for *taksim* (partition). Furthermore, the level of tolerance, political maturity, and trust was low. The defining period for the Turkish Cypriots was 1963-64 which led to their withdrawal from the government, the creation of enclaves and the subsequent establishment of the “green line” in Nicosia separating the two communities. This was preceded by intercommunal violence and the bombing of parts of Cyprus by Turkey. Greek Cypriots felt that this was part of a broader Turkish plan for the partition of the island. Conversely, most Turkish Cypriots felt there was a security issue.¹ In March 1964, the Security Council of the UN passed Resolution S186 by which the Makarios government was recognized as the sole legitimate authority in the Republic of Cyprus.²

In his March 1965 report, the UN Special Envoy Galo Plaza indicated that there was no rationale for the federalization of Cyprus and/or any form of division, rather, supported further integration and indeed a unitary state. Plaza also proposed that a solution to the Cyprus problem should be consistent with the principles of the UN. The report was rejected by Turkey.

¹ Stanley Kyriakides, *Cyprus: Constitutionalism and Crisis Government* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 157-162.

² United Nations, S/RES/186, *The Cyprus Question*, 1964, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/1964.shtml>

Thereafter, while people argued on ideological lines, Cyprus was undergoing a socioeconomic transformation which created new stakes. This, in conjunction with the military coup in Greece on 21 April 1967, led to a fundamental redefinition of Greek Cypriot aims: President Makarios declared that the objective should be “what is feasible, which does not always coincide with what is desirable.” The new policy objective towards a unitary state was confirmed with his re-election with a clear majority in January 1968. In pursuing a new policy based on a unitary state rather than *enosis*, Cyprus was moving along the lines of pragmatism and towards a promising future.

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On 13 July 1974, Michael Dekleris and Orhan Aldıçasti, two constitutional experts from Greece and Turkey respectively, finalized a draft for a comprehensive settlement based on a unitary state, with elements of local and communal self-administration on issues of low level politics. The draft was to be ratified on 16 July 1974 by the two negotiators, Glafkos Clerides and Rauf Denktash.³ At the time, however, the national and international media were not focusing on the prospect of an imminent solution of the Cyprus problem, but on the brewing clash between President Makarios and the Greek junta.

On 15 July 1974, the Greek junta overthrew Makarios and reversed an important historical path. The putschist regime in Nicosia announced “that the change was an internal affair of the Greeks of Cyprus only,” and that the intercommunal negotiations would be continued in order to find a solution on the agreed basis. Likewise, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash initially stated that what had happened was “an internal affair of the Greek Cypriots.” For Ankara, though, it was a golden opportunity as both the Greek junta and the putschist regime in Nicosia were internationally isolated.

On 20 July 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus. Ankara stated that “its intervention was intended to reestablish the constitutional order and to protect the Turkish Cypriot community.” On 23 July 1974, the Greek junta collapsed and Greek politician Constantinos Karamanlis returned from Paris to Athens to reestablish democracy

³ Michalis Dekleris, *The Cyprus Question 1972-1974: The Last Opportunity*, (Athens: Estia, 1981), pp. 266-273; Miltiades Christodoulou, *The Course of an Era: Greece, the Cypriot Leadership and the Cyprus Problem*, (Athens: Ioannis Floros, 1987), p. 623.

and to lead the country to a new era.⁴ The putschist regime in Nicosia collapsed as well and Glafkos Clerides – President of the House of Representatives – assumed the duties of Acting President in accordance with the constitution (and Doctrine of Necessity following 1963-64, validated by Security Council Resolution S186 in March 1964). He immediately suggested a return to the 1960 constitution to Rauf Denktash; both Denktash and Ankara declined.⁵

With the reestablishment of democracy in Greece and the constitutional order in Cyprus, international public opinion changed. Nevertheless, Turkey continued its military operations, despite the cease-fire and negotiations (involving Greece, Turkey, Britain, the two communities, and the UN) for a peaceful resolution. On 14 August, Turkey launched a second massive attack against Cyprus after the rejection of its ultimatum to the Republic of Cyprus to surrender about 34 percent of its territory. Greek Cypriot civilians were expected to evacuate this territory and allow the Turkish army to deploy accordingly. By 16 August 1974, Turkey had occupied 37 percent of the land of the Republic of Cyprus, having committed atrocities and violations of human rights.⁶

Had Turkey stopped its military operations on 23 July 1974 and contributed to the reestablishment of the constitutional order based on the 1960 agreements, few would have questioned its stated reasons for “intervening.” Instead, Turkey occupied 37 percent of the land of this island-state, did not reestablish the constitutional order in Cyprus, committed ethnic cleansing, set up a puppet regime, and pursued an ambitious policy of colonization. Furthermore, there has been systematic destruction of the cultural heritage and massive exploitation and usurpation of Greek Cypriot properties.⁷

Despite the initial outcry and resolutions by the UN and other international institutions, virtually no action has been taken against Turkey. In November 1974, the UN General Assembly passed a unanimous resolution (3212) for the respect of the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of the Republic of Cyprus and for the withdrawal of all foreign troops. Ironically, Turkey voted in favor of this resolution. Subsequently, the UN urged bi-communal negotiations to address the problem, despite the fact that the issue is multidimensional and that the bi-communal aspect

⁴ Brendan O’Malley and Ian Craig, *The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion* (London/ New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 87-119.

⁵ Glafkos Clerides, *My Deposition*, Vol. 4, (Nicosia: Alitheia Publishing, 1991), pp. 38-39.

⁶ Christopher Hitchens, *Hostage to History: Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger* (New York: Verso, 1997); Brendan O’Malley and Ian Craig (1999); Van Coufoudakis, *International Aggression and Violations of Human Rights – The Case of Cyprus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

⁷ Christos Ioannides, *In Turkey’s Image: The Transformation of Occupied Cyprus into a Turkish Province* (New York: Caratzas, 1991); Van Coufoudakis (2008).

is not the most important one. Not surprisingly, successive years of bi-communal negotiations did not lead to any results.⁸

The Political Landscape after 1974, UN Initiatives, the EU, and the Rejection of the Annan Plan

In addition to human tragedy, there was severe socio-economic disruption, as well as a new *de facto* political state of affairs following the Turkish invasion of 1974. This included the expulsion of thousands of Greek Cypriots and the gradual transfer of all Turkish Cypriots to the occupied part of Cyprus. In February 1975, the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash unilaterally declared the occupied northern part as the “Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus.”⁹

New ideas arose on how to proceed with a solution to the Cyprus problem. While Greek Cypriots discussed the prospect of a “multi-canton federation,” the Turkish Cypriots revealed their preference for “a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation.” The high-level agreements of 1977 and 1979 entailed a very different approach than what was discussed before the summer of 1974.¹⁰ For the Turkish

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Cypriot side, these agreements nearly met their maximalist positions, while for the Greek Cypriots they were considered to be a painful concession. Furthermore, the mainstream interpretation of what was actually agreed upon in the high-level agreements was diametrically different in each community.

Different interpretations did not only revolve around the size of the area that should be under Turkish Cypriot administration. For Makarios and the Greek Cypriots, the rights of property, the return of refugees to their homes, and the settlement of all Cypriots throughout the island were (and remain) inalienable. It seemed logical to the Greek Cypriots to demand their properties back; the Turkish Cypriots’ demand to live in an

⁸ Michalis S. Michael, *Resolving the Cyprus Conflict: Negotiating History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2009); Andreas Theophanous, *Governance and the Political Economy of a Federal Cyprus* (in Greek), (I. Sideris Press: Athens, 2016).

⁹ Clement H. Dodd, *The Political, Social and Economic Development of Northern Cyprus* (Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Tozun Bahcheli, “Searching for a Cyprus Settlement: Considering Options for Creating a Federation, a Confederation, or Two Independent States,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Vol. 30, No. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 2000), pp. 203-16; Andreas Theophanous, “Prospects for Solving the Cyprus Problem and the Role of the European Union,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Vol. 30, No. 1-2 (2000), pp. 217-241; Andreas Theophanous, *The Cyprus Question: The Challenge and the Promise* (Nicosia: Intercollege Press, 2004).

area under their own administration could be satisfied without violating the rights of Greek Cypriots. The Republic of Cyprus could construct on state land new homes for Turkish Cypriots living on Greek Cypriot property. Furthermore, arrangements could be made so that even if all Greek Cypriots returned under Turkish Cypriot administration, there would still be a Turkish Cypriot majority in the northern part of Cyprus.

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The Turkish Cypriot positions were diametrically opposite. Denktash, who in 1983 declared unilaterally the northern part of the island as the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (“TRNC”) – recognized only by Turkey – was clear: there would be a “global” exchange of properties and compensations, and the region administered by each community would preferably be ethnically homogeneous. The Turkish

Cypriot interpretation of the new state structure had multidimensional implications: the central government would be weak and the source of power would be the two ethnically homogeneous entities. These were later to be described as “constituent states” in the 2004 Annan Plan.

There were different perspectives on the decision-making processes too. The Turkish Cypriots’ demands stressed the concept of political equality in all aspects; this meant that no decision could be taken without Turkish Cypriot consent. The idea of a rotating presidency was also put on the table by the Turkish Cypriot side. For the Greek Cypriots, this was excessive. It was one thing for Turkish Cypriots to have autonomy in the region under their administration as well as effective participation in the decision-making process, and another to demand a 50-50 share in the central government. Greek Cypriots agreed that there could be effective Turkish Cypriot participation in government, but this did not translate arithmetically to participation on a 50-50 basis. Greek Cypriots stressed the supremacy of the central government – in contrast to the Turkish Cypriot position that most power should emanate from the two zones, which were regarded as political entities of equal, almost sovereign status.

On 4 July 1990, the Republic of Cyprus submitted its application for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC). It was generally believed that this move would facilitate the solution of the Cyprus problem.¹¹ The intercommunal ne-

¹¹ Andreas Theophanous, *European Cyprus: Constitutional Structure Economy and Society. Accession and Solution Scenaria* (in Greek), (Athens: I. Sideris, 2002).

gotiations under UN auspices continued. In the summer of 1992, the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, encouraged by the US and the UK, submitted a Set of Ideas for the solution of the Cyprus question. These ideas became the major focus of the 1993 presidential elections in Cyprus.

This was the first time that the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation model took substance. The debates were bitter and often personal. Veteran politician Glafkos Clerides defeated President George Vassiliou by a narrow margin in the 1993 presidential elections, challenging the Ghali Set of Ideas and calling for “a European solution.”

The then-President Glafkos Clerides, in cooperation with Athens, paid greater attention to the European prospects of Cyprus than his predecessors. The steps taken were gradual but steady. One and a half years after the beginning of Cyprus’ accession negotiations with the EU (March 1998), the then-

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UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, encouraged by the US and the UK, began a new process in the fall of 1999 for a solution to the Cyprus problem. This time, the stakes were higher. In Washington, the dominant strategic thinking was that the EU could offer incentives for addressing several issues simultaneously. The three major objectives were:

- (a) solution of the Cyprus problem and accession to the EU of a unified island in 2004;
- (b) candidate status for Turkey and subsequently accession negotiations with the EU with the objective of full membership; and
- (c) resolution of all Greco-Turkish disputes by 2004 and the advancement of peace, security, and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

President Clerides and Costas Simitis, who was Greek Prime Minister at the time, understood the US’ strategic aims and shared the view that Cyprus’ objectives could be satisfied as well. At the Helsinki EU Council in December 1999, the EU encouraged a solution to the Cyprus problem prior to accession, but it did not make the solution a requirement for accession. At the same time, Turkey was given candidate status, and was expected to both contribute to the resolution of the Cyprus question and resolve its differences with Greece by December 2004.¹²

¹² “Presidency Conclusions,” *Helsinki European Council*, 10 and 11 December 1999, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm

“A multi-regional or even a bi-regional functional federation based on an integrationalist approach may indeed lead to a unified state with viability and sustainability.”

Despite difficulties, the UN process continued. After 10 years in power, Clerides lost the presidential elections in February 2003 to Tassos Papadopoulos, who had campaigned on the premise that he could secure major changes to the Annan Plan. The final version, known as Annan V, was to be voted on by the two communities in simultaneous referenda on 24 April 2004. However, as reflected by the outcome of the referenda, the plan was imbalanced. 76 percent of Greek Cypriots voted “no” and 65.9 percent of Turkish Cypriots (together with Turkish settlers) voted “yes,” even though it was the Greek Cypriot side which sought reunification all along, while the Turkish Cypriot side opted for a more separatist approach.

The overwhelming rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots stemmed from a fundamental disagreement with its philosophy. Kofi Annan’s plan did not call for an integrated society and economy but instead, embedded division. Furthermore, the strict “bi-zonality” inherent in the plan essentially legitimized the ethnic cleansing carried out by Turkey and the usurpation of Greek Cypriot properties. The plan also provided that Turkey would continue to have a strategic presence on the island; this was considered to be detrimental by the Greek Cypriots. From the perspective of the US, the UK, and Turkey, the major issue at stake was Ankara’s European ambitions, as a solution to the Cyprus problem would have facilitated Turkey’s accession process. However, without a solution, it would have seemed more “convenient” should the Greek Cypriots have rejected it and not the Turkish Cypriots.¹³

With the failure of Annan V, President Papadopoulos lost a historic opportunity to clearly redefine the Greek Cypriot position in the aftermath of the referendum and with the accession of Cyprus to the EU on 1 May 2004.¹⁴ The moral high ground of the Republic of Cyprus was shaken in the aftermath of the referendum. There were several factors which contributed to this outcome:

- (a) an effective Turkish narrative i.e. “Greek Cypriots do not want to share wealth, benefits of the EU, and power;”
- (b) the lack of a narrative and a comprehensive day-after strategy on the part of the Republic of Cyprus, i.e. “the plan was rejected because it was putting

¹³ Claire Palley, *An International Relations Debacle: The UN Secretary-General’s Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus 1999-2004* (Oxford and Portland OR: Hart Publishing, 2005).

¹⁴ Andreas Theophanous (2004).

- aside the Republic of Cyprus and replacing it with a new state entity, was worsening the status quo, and essentially was legitimizing the outcome of the 1974 Turkish invasion. Furthermore, there was no suggestion for an alternative to what was rejected...”; and
- (c) the stance of the strategic allies of Turkey, which essentially wanted Ankara to be absolved of its responsibilities over Cyprus so as to open the way for EU accession negotiations.

Despite its continued occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and the perpetuation of its problems with Greece, on 17 December 2004, Turkey was granted a date by the EU – 3 October 2005 – to commence EU accession negotiations. Ankara was expected to sign and implement the Customs Union Protocol (entitled the Ankara Protocol) with the 10 new member countries, including the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey, however, never met this obligation.

In December 2006, the EU reached a decision in relation to Turkey’s accession process. Eight major negotiating chapters were frozen, while the completion of each of the remaining chapters would have to be confirmed by all member states. The message was clear: Turkey would have to honor its obligations it had undertaken toward the EU, including the Republic of Cyprus.

The Negotiations Framework: Context, Substance, and Procedure

Although President Papadopoulos continued to negotiate with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat on the basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation after the rejection of the Annan Plan, and despite their 8 July 2006 agreement under the auspices of the Secretary General of the UN, not much progress was made. This was hardly a surprise given the different perspectives of the two sides.

The victory of Demetris Christofias (Secretary General of the leftist party Progressive Party of Working People [AKEL]) in the presidential elections of February 2008 raised expectations about the prospect of rapid developments. The implicit assumption was that the major obstacle for a breakthrough had been President Papadopoulos. This proved to be simplistic and misleading. Despite some progress made in the negotiations based on the 23 May 2008 Christofias-Talat Agreement, the stalemate persisted (under Christofias’ leadership).

Five years later, a new president was elected. Nicos Anastasiades became President of the Republic of Cyprus in February 2013, replacing Christofias. President Anastasiades had promised to address the economic crisis and also to work for

a solution to the Cyprus problem – with a better plan than Annan V. The Joint Statement by President Anastasiades and the then-Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu on 11 February 2014, marked the resumption of the negotiations. It revolved around a philosophy that included elements of both a loose federation and a confederation, with sovereignty emanating separately from the two communities and not from the Cypriot people as a whole. The Joint Statement represented an additional shift of the Greek Cypriot position towards that of the Turkish Cypriots. Upon the election of Mustafa Akıncı as the new Turkish Cypriot leader in April 2015, expectations were once again very high.

Although the negotiations have been taking place between the two major ethnic communities, the Cyprus question also has other dimensions which are, in fact, more important. Firstly and above all, Greek Cypriots consider the conflict to be an issue of invasion and occupation of a small country by a strong neighbor. Furthermore, Turkey does not recognize the right of the Republic of Cyprus to exist.

Secondly, it has also a European dimension. Cyprus is a member state of the EU, as are Greece and, until recently, the UK – two of the three guarantor powers. The third guarantor power, Turkey, is a candidate for membership and as previously mentioned, commenced EU accession negotiations in 2005. Therefore, it is paradoxical that Turkey, which aspires to join the EU, occupies a substantial part of the territory of an EU member whose international legitimacy and sovereignty it does not recognize.

We cannot also ignore the Greco-Turkish dimension of the problem. When the Republic of Cyprus was created in 1960, the Greek Cypriots comprised about 80 percent of the population, Turkish Cypriots comprised 18 percent, and Armenians, Maronites, and Latinos made up the remaining two percent. Greek Cypriots do not understand how Ankara's current demand for the four fundamental freedoms for Turkish citizens can facilitate the solution of the Cyprus problem. Instead, they see it as a demographic time bomb. Aside from demographics, there are also strategic issues in this equation. Greek Cypriots do not wish to become a minority in their own country as this will have serious political and strategic implications.

Lastly, there is also a geopolitical dimension. Historically, Cyprus was controlled by – or was under the influence of – the respective dominant power(s) in the Eastern Mediterranean, which has always been a significant geostrategic region. Currently, there is an upheaval in the broader neighborhood as well as new opportunities following the discovery of huge amounts of hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Inevitably, the essence of the negotiations are influenced by the overwhelming presence of Turkey and the imbalance of power on the island. Thus, the discussion of various chapters of the negotiations – constitutional issues, security, governance, territorial aspect, property issues, settlers, the four fundamental freedoms, and the economy – does not revolve around the primacy of creating common agendas. Instead, the emphasis is placed on ethno-nationalist pillars.

*An Alternative Proposal for the Cyprus Problem*¹⁵

The narrative of recent years was that any solution of the Cyprus problem based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation entails the improvement of the status quo, as well as economic benefits. This position is not substantiated. It is doubtful, if not impossible altogether, for Cyprus to operate in the Eurozone should the current solution framework be implemented. Serious concerns have already been expressed by various circles in Cyprus, as well as in the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In addition, such models, which are based on ethno-nationalist pillars, usually lead to malfunction, frictions, and frustrations.¹⁶ Bosnia, Lebanon and, even, Belgium are indeed indicative examples.¹⁷

It is also important to understand that it is difficult for a solution that would improve the status quo for the Greek Cypriots to take place given the current stance of Turkey, which aims to push aside the Republic of Cyprus and replace it with a new state entity. Furthermore, one of the risks involved in this is the protectorization of Cyprus by Turkey.

The status quo itself poses serious risks. However, because there will most likely be a deterioration of the status quo with a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation solution, we must reassess the situation and focus on policy options which may facilitate the interested parties to overcome the deadlock in a constructive way. It is important to have alternative approaches that rely on an evolutionary process with a specific roadmap.

¹⁵ This specific proposal was finalized recently with the contribution of two Senior Associates of the Center, Soteris Kattos and Constantinos Mavroedis. See Policy Paper (in Greek) by Andreas Theophanous, Soteris Kattos, and Constantinos Mavroedis entitled “Bizonal Bicomunal Federation and the Alternative Proposal,” December 2016. Since then there have been additional efforts to further elaborate this proposition. A summary of this proposition was also electronically published in *Europe’s World* on 5 January 2017. Andreas Theophanous, “Dealing with the Cyprus Problem: An Alternative Proposal,” *Europe’s World*, 5 January 2017, <http://europesworld.org/2017/01/05/dealing-cyprus-problem-alternative-proposal/#.WG367FMrK70>.

¹⁶ Kris Deschouwer, “Federalism, Frustration and Democratic Governance,” *In Depth*, Vol. 12, No. 5 (September, 2015); Jerry Muller, “The Clash of Peoples – US and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (March/April, 2008), pp. 18-35.

¹⁷ Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia from Falling Apart,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 5 (September/October, 2009), pp. 69-83.

The idea for an evolutionary approach is also supported by the fact that, should the currently-discussed proposal for a solution be implemented, it will be extremely difficult – if not impossible – to move from one state of affairs to another in 24 hours. This is because there are separate narratives, experiences, perceptions, value-systems, and different political, economic, and social realities. The main pillars of such an evolutionary approach should/could be the following:

- (i) The occupied areas in the northern part of Cyprus should be turned into an EU Region under Turkish Cypriot administration with the immediate implementation of the *acquis communautaire* through the suspension of Protocol 10.
- (ii) Gradual return of territories under Greek Cypriot administration, gradual implementation of the four basic freedoms for all citizens and gradual implementation of the obligations of the Turkish Cypriot community.
- (iii) Normalization of relations of the Republic of Cyprus with Turkey. Within this framework it will be possible to address effectively energy issues in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond in ways which serve multiple interests.
- (iv) Establishment of a roadmap for the next steps and guidelines for a federal constitution as a result of a synthesis. More specifically, it is essential to amend the 1960 constitution which is based on consociational democracy and introduce elements of an integrationalist federal model as well.
- (v) It is also important for the EU to undertake its responsibilities in the harmonization process of the occupied territories of Cyprus with the *acquis communautaire*. Within this framework, it is also essential to launch a process of internal political, social, and economic convergence.
- (vi) Turkey must also assume its own responsibilities. It should be remembered that when Turkey invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974, it had put forward the position that its objectives were the restoration of the constitutional order of the Republic of Cyprus and the protection of the Turkish Cypriot community. Turkey should work towards this direction. The first steps should be ending the colonization of the island and withdrawing the occupation troops.
- (vii) Any solution should be the outcome of a voluntary agreement between the two sides in Cyprus. Evidently, the evolutionary approach will give the time required for the gradual strengthening of relations between the two communities and the formulation of the concept of an integrationalist, federal, indivisible state. If this is not possible, other ways should be sought to ensure peace and security within the context of Cyprus' EU participation which was ensured upon its accession in 2004, including Protocol 10.

Even now, we should seriously utilize fundamental principles from political economy, political science, history, sociology, and the EU's legal framework. We should

also rely on the evolutionary process, as suggested, to advance the alternative proposal. With such an approach, we may have an outcome which satisfies multiple interests and objectives.

Epilogue

Since 1974, Greek Cypriot policy makers have been faced with increasingly maximalist positions from the Turkish side, which has averted any substantive change in the status quo, despite their serious and often painful concessions. Over time, Turkish demands amounted to the legitimization of the status quo post-1974, which marked the strategic control of Cyprus by Turkey and the gradual change of the island's demography through a policy of colonization.

Turkey pursues a policy of double standards, particularly when one compares the way it would like to resolve its own Kurdish question with its demands in relation to the Cyprus problem. Ankara would like to merely "offer more rights" to the 15 million Kurds within the framework of a policy of integration. But in Cyprus, for about 100,000 Turkish Cypriots (and almost 200,000 Anatolian settlers) Ankara wishes to advance a completely different philosophy: a loose federation/confederation based on ethno-communal lines.

When Cyprus applied for EU membership there were high aspirations and expectations. In addition to joining a family of nations with a common value system, it was expected that joining the EU would constructively contribute to the solution of the Cyprus problem. Following accession to the EU on 1 May 2004, on 1 January 2008, Cyprus also joined the Eurozone as part of its conventional obligations. This decision was expected to advance several objectives including a solution of the Cyprus problem within an integrationalist federal framework. Unfortunately, this objective was not realized.

Despite past failures, the Republic of Cyprus' EU membership provides a framework for a breakthrough. In an era of multiple identities, the EU can provide for all Cypriots the context for a common European identity that would make a unified Cyprus work. In addition, respect for a unified Cyprus would be another common bond. Simultaneously, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can also nurture their own ethnic and cultural identities. The EU in this respect may play a significant contextualizing role even though it has not yet reached its full potential in addressing major regional and international problems. For this to happen, the EU must overcome its own weaknesses and address growing Euroscepticism thereafter.

We should also recall that the partial lifting of obstacles to free movement on both sides of the “green line” on 23 April 2003 led to developments which do not confirm Denktash’s hypothesis that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots cannot live together. Furthermore, since then, almost all Turkish Cypriots have acquired the identity card and passport of the Republic of Cyprus.

A multi-regional or even a bi-regional functional federation based on an integrationalist approach may indeed lead to a unified state with viability and sustainability.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it will be difficult to implement this option overnight. Thus, in the absence of a comprehensive settlement which constructively addresses the objectives and the concerns of all interested parties in the next few months, it is important to reassess the importance of an evolutionary process to resolve the Cyprus problem. Within this framework, steps could be taken toward an interim agreement involving the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* in the northern part of Cyprus and the return of Famagusta and the buffer zone under Greek Cypriot administration. Furthermore, the broader energy challenges could also be addressed in ways that would lead to mutual gains. The perceived merits of such a process are economic benefits for both sides and the creation of trust as well as a better climate which eventually will lead to a lasting settlement as well as peace and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

¹⁸ Andreas Theophanous, “The Political Economy of a Cyprus Settlement: The Examination of Four Scenarios,” *PRIO Report* (January 2008), pp. 75-86.