
Pride and Prejudice: The Failure of UN Peace Brokering Efforts in Cyprus

Olga CAMPBELL-THOMSON*

Abstract

During the five decades of its involvement in the infamous 'Cyprus problem', the United Nations (UN) has undertaken several large-scale attempts to lead the process of conflict resolution, however, the UN's mediation has failed to produce a settlement on the island. The issue at the heart of the conflict, political inequality, remains the major stumbling block. This block is firmly and consistently embedded in the UN's successive resolutions on Cyprus which continue to sustain the status of inequality and thus, perpetuate the problem. By drawing attention to the roots of the current conflict in Cyprus, and to the UN's positioning in the conflict, this article challenges the UN's myopic policy towards Cyprus. It is argued that the UN's partiality protracts the conflict, and that attempts to reach a workable solution are deemed improbable as long as the UN's stance on Cyprus remains uncontested.

Key Words

Cyprus conflict, UN mediation, UN policy towards Cyprus, peace-keeping, peace-making.

*Now, which of them was most to blame
'Tis not for me to say;
But this I know: the load is there
Unto this very day
(Ivan Krylov "The Swan, the Pike and the Crab")*

Introduction

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continues to be one of the UN's longest-running peace-keeping missions. The UNFICYP was dispatched to the island in March 1964 when armed confrontation between the communities of Cyprus threatened to pull Turkey and Greece—two NATO allies - into the conflict. The UN Security Council resolution 186 (1964), adopted on March 4, noted that the situation in Cyprus was likely to threaten international peace and security, and recommended the creation of the UNFICYP with the mandate "to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of the conflict and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions." "A return to normal conditions", referred to in the UN Resolution 186 (1964)¹, implied the return to the constitutional arrangements of 1960, which laid out provisions for the functioning of the Republic of Cyprus as a bi-communal state with equitable representation of

* Dr. Olga Campbell-Thomson is a Lecturer at the University of Glasgow, UK.

the two prominent communities- Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot- in all governing structures.

Apart from the deployment of peace-keeping troops on the island, the UN has engaged in multi-level initiatives ranging from the issuance of resolutions to drafting several comprehensive settlement plans. All these attempts have failed to reach any workable solution despite negotiations on the settlement in Cyprus continuing almost uninterrupted for fifty years. The result being that the Turkish Cypriot community has been effectively reduced to one of non-existence, a pariah state, with UN policies fomenting the process.

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The UN’s positioning in, and subsequent effects on, the ‘Cyprus problem’ can only be appreciated with an understanding of the origins of the current conflict, namely the Constitutional Crisis of 1963, and the resulting political disparity. Historical

developments, which followed the Constitutional Crisis, did not reduce, but rather exacerbated the significance of the ‘inequality’ issue at the very heart of the conflict. The UN’s early involvement in the conflict, and its partiality, are intertwined with the conflict itself. Thus, it is inevitable that a study of the origins and progression of the conflict includes a record of UN initiatives and reactions.

Foundation of the Republic of Cyprus

Cyprus, the former British Colony, was granted independence in 1960. The foundations of the new state were established by the Zürich and London Agreements of 1959, which were embodied in several treaties: The Treaty of Establishment,² the Treaty of Guarantee,³ and the Treaty of Alliance.⁴

The British negotiated to retain the two sovereign military bases of Akrotiri and Dhekelia (99 square miles) in accordance with the Treaty of Establishment. Turkey and Greece secured the right to station troops on the island under the Treaty of Alliance (an army contingent of 950 officers and men from Greece and 650 from Turkey).⁵ The Treaty of Guarantee provided a safeguard for the observance of the Constitution and political mechanisms. The Treaty also prohibited any activity to promote union with any other state, or partition

of the island. These special provisions were necessitated by a history of almost a century-long campaign of agitation for *enosis* (union with Greece), and a later emergence of the *taksim* (partition of the island) movement.

The idea of *enosis* was imported to Cyprus from Greece in the 19th century, as part of the irredentist movement, or the claiming of Greek speaking lands in the name of Greece. The struggle for *enosis* in Cyprus escalated into a five-year-long armed campaign against the British in 1955-1959 and was waged by the guerrilla organization EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston*/ National Organization of Cypriot Fighters). Towards the end of the 1950s, the Greek Cypriot *enosis* movement was confronted by calls for *taksim* emanating from the Turkish Cypriot camp, but the goal of *taksim* was not unification of the entire island with the Republic of Turkey. Fearing the prospect of becoming a minority in a state dominated by the *enosis* ideology and the intensifying Greek Cypriot violence, *taksim* proponents asked for the division of the island into Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sections where Turkish Cypriots could have self-rule.

The agreements which shaped the structure of the newly established Republic of Cyprus represented, therefore, a compromise; they also acknowledged the possible threats to the normal functioning of the state, and

overtly forbade propagation of either *enosis* or *taksim*.

The Constitution of the Republic, signed in Nicosia on 16 August 1960, laid out the foundations of a bi-communal state with a presidential regime, where the two prominent communities- Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot- were to be recognized as partners. The economic, social and political rights were clearly outlined in the Constitution within the frame of this partnership approach.

Constitutional Crisis

The communal partnership and, hence, the Constitutional arrangements at the foundation of the Republic, lasted only three years. The 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus was abrogated in November 1963 by the then President of the Republic, Archbishop Makarios, who tried to create a unitary Greek Cypriot state based on a majority rule, in which Turkish Cypriots would be considered a minority. Thirteen amendments proposed by Makarios on 30 November 1963 undermined the principles of bi-communality and were not accepted by the Turkish Cypriot members of the government.

If there was any room for dialogue between the two parties, armed attacks on Turkish Cypriot civilians in December 1963 by re-armed Greek Cypriot police and irregulars from the banned EOKA

movement, made any constructive initiatives impossible.

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According to the UN Secretary-General's report of 10 September 1964, approximately twenty-five thousand Turkish Cypriots and five hundred Greek Cypriots had become refugees since the outbreak of violence in December 1963. The report stated that "in 109 villages, most of them Turkish Cypriot or mixed villages, 527 houses have been destroyed while 2,000 others have suffered damage or looting".⁶ Those fleeing from their homes sought refuge in the areas already densely populated by Turkish Cypriots. These 'enclaves' would exist up until 1974 and would absorb a considerable portion of the Turkish- Cypriot population.

The return of the Turkish Cypriot deputies to the government of the Republic of Cyprus in 1964 was not a viable option. The President of the Republic, Makarios, who declared the constitution to be "dead and buried,"

announced that he did not recognize the Vice-President and "cut off even telephone contacts with Dr Küçük".⁷ The UN Mediator, Galo Plaza, confirmed in his report to the General-Secretary that "since the outbreak of disorder in December 1963, the Turkish Cypriot Vice-President and the Turkish Cypriot Ministers were barred from their offices and from meetings of the cabinet".⁸

With the gradual restoration of a ceasefire on the island, Turkish Cypriot deputies to the Government of the Republic of Cyprus made an attempt to return to the government as partners in the Republic, under the provisions of the 1960 Constitution. Any possibility of such return was impeded by parliamentary acts which were passed unilaterally by the remaining Greek Cypriot members of the parliament. As reported by Droushiotis, on 20 July 1965, "the Council of Ministers approved a revision of the electoral law, abolishing the Turkish Cypriots' rights separately to elect the Vice-President and the Members of the House of Representatives from their community".⁹ In response to the request by the Turkish Cypriot representatives to attend the session of the House, the then Speaker of the House Glafkos Clerides imposed conditions which were "tantamount to an acceptance of minority status by the Turkish Cypriots".¹⁰ Following the statement of Clerides on 22 July 1965 that the Greek Cypriot community "did

not recognise the relevant provisions of the Constitution”, the Greek Cypriot press announced that Turkish Cypriots “had no right to return to the House of Representatives”.¹¹

The control of the state was effectively left in the hands of the Greek Cypriots. The UN resolutions confirmed recognition of this state of affairs as satisfactory, as they continued referring to the government of Cyprus in its truncated version as the legitimate government of all Cypriots. The acceptance of solely Greek Cypriot representation in the United Nations on behalf of all Cypriots validated the UN’s stance on the established situation in Cyprus.

The Turkish Cypriots maintained that the structure of the republic rested on the existence of two communities as equal partners, and not a majority/minority division. The ‘minority’ issue was not based on a body numbers. The concept of ‘minority’, despite its popular misassociation with a numerical, statistical minority, refers to categories of members of society who hold fewer positions of social power. It was precisely this loss of any political influence that worried the Turkish Cypriot co-partners of the Republic.

The Turkish Cypriot community was mainly concerned with unjust treatment in their own country, and the concerns were well justified. The political inequality of the two

communities did not only manifest at the level of parliamentary structure. The loss of any political influence resulted in a systematic harassment of Turkish Cypriots by a powerful Greek Cypriot majority impacting on many levels of their daily existence.

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During the second half of 1964, the government, led by Makarios, initiated an economic blockade, restricting the movement of food, clothes and other commercial materials between areas controlled by Turkish Cypriots. In view of the fact that many Turkish Cypriots were now refugees, some having to camp in the open, the blockade significantly aggravated the situation. The Greek Cypriot authorities also imposed restrictions on the movement of Turkish Cypriots and obstructed the delivery of the Red- Crescent food supplies and other relief material sent from Turkey.¹² The evidence provided by the Secretary-General in 1964 supported his evaluation

of the situation as amounting to a veritable siege. Reporting on systematic obstructions placed by the “Government” on the movement of UNFICYP escorts to the Red Crescent convoys, and on the desperate situation of the “beleaguered Turkish Cypriots”, the Secretary General warned “of the serious consequences that the Government measures could bring about”.¹³

A report by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operations in Cyprus to the Security Council on 10 September 1964 contained details of “serious misgivings” about the Government of Cyprus. It is worth noting that throughout the report, references are made to the “Government” and to the “Turkish Cypriot leadership”, thus cementing the erroneous official position taken earlier by the UN, treating the Greek Cypriot faction as the sole and legal government, and accepting the ousting of the Turkish Cypriot community from the Republic’s government as a *fait accompli*.¹⁴

UN-led Cyprus Talks 1965-1974

As the inter-communal relations came to a standstill, and the economic and political gap between the two communities widened, the UN began brokering negotiations with the aim of resolving the conflict. UN Mediator Galo

Plaza held a number of consultations with each party throughout 1964-1965 only to conclude that it was not appropriate at that stage “to set forth precise recommendations”.¹⁵ His suggestion was that the two communities of Cyprus should meet together and that the search for a solution “must go on, with patience, tolerance and good faith.”¹⁶

The two communities carried on their negotiations until 1967, when the Greek Cypriot assaults on Turkish Cypriot villages brought all talks to a halt. In November 1967, the Greek Cypriot National Guard, led by the Greek General Grivas, launched an attack on the two Turkish Cypriot villages of Boğaziçi and Geçitkale. On 15 November of the same year, armed troops attacked the Turkish Cypriot quarter of Ayios Theodoros and Kophinou. The UN Secretary-General’s report of 8 December 1967 stated that the incidents of 15-16 November at Ayios Theodorou and Kophinou “were the gravest since the disturbances of 1963-1964, and the situation in Cyprus has undergone a serious deterioration in consequence”.¹⁷

Turkey’s threat to take military action, following the attacks, prompted international concern. The UN Secretary General sent three appeals to the President of Cyprus, and to the governments of Greece and Turkey, urging them to avoid further outbreaks of hostilities.¹⁸ An agreement between the involved parties was reached on 30 November

1967, in which the Greek government agreed to withdraw the nearly 12,000 Greek military personnel who had been clandestinely smuggled into Cyprus, and to recall General Grivas to Greece. In return, Turkey disbanded its forces in south Turkey that were preparing for a landing in Cyprus. As part of his promise to extend normalization measures on the island, President Makarios lifted most of the restrictions on the Turkish Cypriot enclaves and allowed freedom of movement for the Turkish Cypriots throughout the island.

Resuming in 1968, inter-communal talks under UN auspices took place intermittently until 1974 between Rauf Denktaş and Glafkos Clerides, who represented the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities respectively. During the first round of the talks in 1968-1971, the Turkish Cypriot side agreed to considerable concessions, yet firmly resented any possibility of downgrading their partnership status to that of a minority.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Glafkos Clerides insisted that the Turkish Cypriots were given representation in government disproportionate to the number of their population and, hence, declared that it was impossible to return to the Zürich-London Agreements.²⁰ Denktaş's position on the matter was as follows:

In the modern concept of democratic rule the primary business of political democracy is to defend the rights of all. Where the will of the minority is not

given expression within these rights, 'mob rule' replaces 'democratic rule.' The concept of the partnership status in Cyprus was evolved in order to establish a modern system of democracy with sufficient safeguards to prevent its ultimate emergence as tyranny or mob rule.²¹

The military assaults on Turkish Cypriots in 1967 were all too vivid illustrations of what mob rule could bring about in the absence of political parity or of any possibility of the Turkish Cypriot side to participate in the management of the state. If the insistence of the Greek Cypriot administration on its control over the entire Cypriot population went against Turkish Cypriot desire of equal political representation in the Republic of Cyprus, overt claims to pursue the policy of *enosis* were met with resolute indignation by the Turkish Cypriot leadership. The UN Secretary-General, reporting on the impasse in the inter-communal talks in 1971, noted that the public statement made by Archbishop Makarios earlier in 1971 that "he would never sign an agreement that barred the way to *enosis* made the issue a fundamental one for the Turkish Cypriot side, which would accept no agreement unless it closed the door to *enosis*".²²

The talks that had broken down in 1971 were reactivated by the UN Secretary-General and his Special Representative, and the second round of the inter-communal talks (1972-1974) commenced the following

summer. This round of talks was undermined by the intensification of *enosis*-inspired activity in Cyprus, which was now vigorously backed up by the fascist military junta of Greece. In September 1971, General Grivas returned to Cyprus and set up the new terrorist organization EOKA-B. The Cypriot National Guard and EOKA-B aimed their violence primarily against Greek Cypriot supporters of Makarios. Even though Makarios never renounced the idea of *enosis*, he retracted from actively promoting it after the military junta seized power in Greece in 1967. Makarios himself was now seen as a major obstacle to *enosis* by the extreme nationalists in Cyprus and in Greece, and, whatever progress was achieved during the second round of talks between the two Cyprus communities (1972-1974), was negated by the Greek-staged *coup d'état* in Cyprus on 15 July 1974.

By preventing *enosis*, Turkey had preserved the island's independence. As noted by Loizos, Turkey's intervention stopped the miniature civil war between the Greeks in Cyprus, and so it is impossible to say how long it would have gone on, and how many lives would have been lost in it.

Events of Summer 1974

On 15 July 1974, the Cypriot National Guard and Greek officers led an armoured attack on the presidential palace in Nicosia. Makarios was hastily proclaimed dead and the presidency was assumed by Nikos Sampson, who had distinguished himself as a convicted murderer of British civilians and police in the 1950s, and was later nicknamed 'the butcher of Omorphita' for his ruthless assaults on the Turkish Cypriots in 1963-1964, specifically for his leadership of the attacks on the mixed suburb of Omorphita. Although he announced that the ensued fighting on the island was an internal Greek Cypriot affair, Sampson's presidency became an imminent threat to any possibility of peace for either the Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot population.

The elaborate plan codenamed *Iphestos 1974* [volcano], which was captured with other documents of the Greek Cypriot National Guard in the weeks following the *coup*, contained the specifics of the annihilation of the Turkish Cypriots, up to the exact location as to where to bury their corpses.²³ The raging attacks on Turkish Cypriots in summer 1974 were all the necessary proof of the vulnerability of the Turkish Cypriot population in the face of extremists' control over the island.

The Greek Cypriots themselves were not spared during the days following

the *coup*; clashes ensued among different factions in the Greek Cypriot society including Makarios supporters, communists, EOKA-B militants and their sympathisers, and plain civilians. Describing the events which followed the coup, Loizos remarked that “the game was now a deadly one, and its name was civil war.”²⁴ As reported by Borowiec, an estimated 2,000 Makarios supporters were killed by Greek officers and EOKA-B militants in the four days following the coup.²⁵

The ceasefire line (buffer zone) established in August 1974 and the following exchanges of population were necessary measures for the maintenance of peace on the island, and for the first time in ten years, the Turkish Cypriot population was able to live in safety.

Makarios managed to escape from the island with the assistance of the British forces. On 19 July 1974, he addressed the UN Security Council and asked the Council members “to do their utmost to put an end to this anomalous situation which was created by the coup of Athens”.²⁶

No denunciation of the Greek-led *coup* or of the assaults on the civilian population in Cyprus was made by the UN Security Council.

A round of consultations between Turkey and Britain (the two guarantor powers), as well as bi-lateral and multi-lateral diplomatic exchanges between Turkey, U.S., Greece, and Britain, went on for several days following the *coup d'état* in Cyprus, with no reasonable resolution on how to halt the bloodshed in Cyprus. On 19 July, the National Security Council of Turkey made a decision to intervene under the auspices of the Treaty of Guarantee. Six thousand Turkish troops landed in the northern port of Kyrenia on 20 July, and by the evening of 22 July, Turkey accepted a ceasefire from the Greek-led militia.

The outcome of this operation (First Peace Operation in Cyprus) was the restoration of a democratically elected government in Cyprus with Makarios as President. By preventing *enosis*, Turkey had preserved the island's independence. As noted by Loizos, Turkey's intervention stopped the miniature civil war between the Greeks in Cyprus, and so it is impossible to say how long it would have gone on, and how many lives would have been lost in it.²⁷ The intervention had aided the overthrow of the brutal dictatorship in Greece; the junta regime was toppled the day following the landing of the Turkish troops in Cyprus, and civilian democratic rule in Greece was restored.

In order to protect the Turkish Cypriot community, the Turkish forces carved out a piece of land- seven percent- which

would become a safety island under protection of the Turkish troops until other proper guarantees to the Cypriot population were installed.

The proclamation of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus in 1975 was an inevitability, and reflected the reality of the two separate political and territorial entities on the island.

A round of talks between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus in Geneva on 25-30 July 1974 (First Geneva Conference) resulted in a Declaration, signed on 30 July, which stipulated the establishment of a security zone, immediate evacuation of all Turkish Cypriot enclaves occupied by Greek and Greek Cypriot forces, and the release of detained military personnel and civilians.²⁸ The provisions of the First Geneva Conference were immediately violated by Greek and Greek Cypriot forces, who continued to attack and put under siege Turkish Cypriots residing outside the protective umbrella of the Turkish armed forces. According to Türkmen, the Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Aloa, Sandallaris, Maratha, Tochni, Zigi and Mari were “almost entirely wiped out.”²⁹ UNFICYP admitted that its resources did not “permit complete surveillance over all the areas concerned”,³⁰ but regular reports

of the Secretary-General in July-August 1974 registered instances of looting, and harassment of civilian population, as well as instances of the National Guard taking prisoners and undertaking military action against Turkish Cypriot enclaves throughout the island.³¹

The Second Geneva Conference, with the participation of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, took place on 9-13 August 1974. As the talks were going on, the occupation and siege of Turkish enclaves in the Greek sector of the island continued; the situation in the regions of Serdarlı and Nicosia were particularly disturbing. On 14 August, talks broke down and Turkey undertook a second intervention. The operation was concluded on 16 August 1974 and resulted in demarcation of the territory (approximately one third of the island) in the north of Cyprus, where Turkish Cypriots could live under the protection of Turkish forces.

Slengesol reports that an American envoy, Hartman, who was sent to Cyprus “on a fact finding mission” in the interim period between the two Geneva Conferences in summer 1974, concluded that “there were ‘genuine reasons’ for the Turkish Cypriots to feel threatened”.³² Hartman’s observation was also that a separation of both communities was necessary and that “two autonomous administrations existed on the island and would continue to exist regardless of constitutional arrangements”.³³

Throughout the summer of 1974, and most of 1975, groups of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike were escorted where possible by the UNFICYP and British Armed forces, to areas of protection. A Population Exchange Agreement was signed on 2 August 1975 in Vienna.³⁴ Most Greek Cypriots moved to the south to live under the governance of a Greek Cypriot administration and most Turkish Cypriots moved to the north to live under the governance of a Turkish Cypriot administration. The ceasefire line (buffer zone) established in August 1974 and the following exchanges of population were necessary measures for the maintenance of peace on the island, and for the first time in ten years, the Turkish Cypriot population was able to live in safety.

On 13 February 1975, the Turkish Cypriot community, which had already been governed by its own autonomous administration for more than ten years, proclaimed the establishment of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus. The proclamation of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus in 1975 was an inevitability, and reflected the reality of the two separate political and territorial entities on the island. The Security Council Resolution 367 (1975) regretted the declaration of a Federated Turkish State, which it saw “*inter alia*, tending to compromise the continuation of negotiations between the representatives of the two communities on an equal footing.”

What exactly the authors of the UN resolutions perceived as “equal footing” remains unclear. There has been no evidence of equal footing in the UN’s dealings with the Cyprus problem since the outbreak of the conflict in 1963. The UN’s regrets of any efforts undertaken by the Turkish Cypriot community to establish some form of political and administrative mechanisms to run the affairs of their community were short of constituting an equal footing approach. The acceptance of a Turkish Cypriot state would establish political parity between the two communities of Cyprus. Yet, an obdurate insistence of the UN resolutions that the Greek Cypriot administration was the legal government of all Cypriots, compromised equal footing and endorsed continuing political and economic disparity between the two communities.

The Status of Inequality Continues and Intensifies

All parties were affected by the Greek-led *coup* and its aftermath. The relocation of thousands of refugees was a painful experience for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots alike. The process of recovery, however, was shaped differently, and the political and economic disparity between the two communities, which was already well pronounced by 1974, reached unprecedented levels in the subsequent years.

The Greek Cypriot section of the island was by now confirmed as the Republic of Cyprus by the UN. By completely erasing the records of Greek Cypriot responsibility for initiating and perpetuating the divide between the two communities of the Republic of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot administration altered the history of the Cyprus conflict into a myth of Turkey's aggression, and consequently drew on the sympathy and benevolence of an ill-informed world community.

Turkish Cypriots therefore had no avenue by which to present their side of the conflict and were kept isolated by an uninterrupted flow of UN resolutions deploring its existence.

According to Borowiec, "in the early 1980s, Cyprus was probably one of the most subsidized countries in the world, to the tune of US\$50 million a year for a population of over half a million", and the total amount of aid for distribution was handed to the Greek Cypriot administration.³⁵

In addition to generous support coming from abroad, the legality of its existence allowed speedy development of industries, trade, and tourism in the Greek Cypriot administered part of the island. The economy of this section of Cyprus, which benefitted from exporting

of manufactured goods and agricultural produce to the Middle East and the European Economic Community, expanded at a 6 percent rate between 1974 and 1978.³⁶ Manufacturing increased at double-digit rates during much of the 1980s, and the per capita gross national product (GNP) was about US\$7,200 or C£3,597 in 1988, compared with C£537.9 in 1973.³⁷

Open access to its ports, combined with the generous tax concessions and the island's geographical position, turned the southern part of the island into a shipping hub, and by 2006, Cyprus ranked among the top ten maritime nations.³⁸

In the UN annual reports on Human Development, starting with 1991, Cyprus (i.e. the Greek Cypriot administered area of Cyprus) appears in the list of High-Income Countries Aggregate, in other words a country with a GNP per capita of US \$6,000 and above. Throughout the years 2000-2012, it maintained its ranking in the top 30, with the GNP per capita growing steadily.³⁹

While the standard of living of the Greek Cypriot community under the name of Cyprus has been meticulously calculated and ranked as 'high' and 'very high', the Turkish Cypriot state is nowhere to be found in the UN Human Development Index. It is not even listed under 'other countries and territories'. It simply does not exist!

Since the Turkish Cypriot side of the island was kept under international political sanctions, it was not allowed to establish diplomatic relations with any other countries, with the exception of Turkey. Turkish Cypriots therefore had no avenue by which to present their side of the conflict and were kept isolated by an uninterrupted flow of UN resolutions deploring its existence. In parallel, the Turkish Cypriot state was not allowed to develop its economy on the same terms as the Greek Cypriot side.

International non-recognition of the Turkish Cypriot state posed challenges unimaginable in any other modern community. The political isolation of the Turkish Cypriot state meant that there were no

direct international telephone lines, no postal addresses, no membership in international legal and institutional resources, and no direct flights to or from the country.

Tourism could not flourish in northern Cyprus, whose ports of entry were declared illegal. Trade could not be properly developed because the community of northern Cyprus was precluded from any international business dealings outside its borders

(except for Turkey). Needless to say, the northern part of Cyprus was less than attractive for investments.

To add to the economic hardships of the Turkish Cypriot community, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in 1994 that member states were disallowed to accept the import of citrus fruit and potatoes from northern Cyprus (ruling 5 July 1994). In 1995, the ECJ expanded its ban to the imports to the European Union of

products originating from the Northern part of Cyprus and, as a consequence of the ECJ decision, around 3,000-4,000 people in Northern Cyprus were laid off.⁴⁰ The ECJ ruling resulted in a considerable decrease of Turkish

Cypriot exports (mainly citrus and dairy products) to the European Union (EU) and forced the Turkish Cypriot state to turn to Turkey for foreign trade as it was the only nation to formally offer recognition. A UK Foreign Affairs Committee Report on Cyprus for 2006-2007 estimated that 80% of goods leaving northern Cyprus did so through Turkey and that this imposed “high costs on Turkish Cypriot businesses, harming their competitiveness”.⁴¹

An aggressive campaign, run by the Greek Cypriot administration to assert that it was the sole rightful government entitled to controlling the entire population and territory of Cyprus, jeopardized any possibility of developing mutual confidence.

UN-led Cyprus Settlement Proposals after 1974

Following the events of 1974, the UN continued its engagement in the negotiation process on the settlement in Cyprus. Invitations were regularly sent to the representatives of Cyprus which, in the UN formulation, included only Greek Cypriots. The UN extended its invitations to Turkish Cypriot representatives under a special provision, so they could participate in talks with ‘representatives of Cyprus’, i.e. the Greek Cypriot party.⁴² Thus framed, the UN-led negotiations continued.

Six rounds of talks, lasting from April 1975 to the middle of 1976, known as the Vienna Talks, were undertaken under UN auspices. However, little was achieved in Vienna.

In May and June 1978, Kyprianou and Denktaş, the representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities respectively, were in New York. Whilst Kyprianou was hosted by the General Assembly and could deliver his version of developments in Cyprus, Denktaş was not allowed to address the Assembly, as he represented a government that was not recognized by the UN. Thus, the Turkish Cypriot party was entirely excluded from the debate. The General Assembly received one side of the story, as has been the standard practice in the UN- Cyprus affair. Dodd

notes that Kyprianou, “fortified by UN resolutions in favour of Greek Cypriot side”, refused to meet with Denktaş in New York, not even socially.⁴³

In Spring 1979, Kyprianou met with Denktaş at the UNFICYP Headquarters in Nicosia in the presence of the Secretary-General. The Ten-Point Agreement reached on 19 May 1979 between Kyprianou and Denktaş stipulated that “there should be respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all citizens of the Republic” (Point 3) and that the parties would “abstain from any action which might jeopardize the outcome of the talks and special importance will be given to initial practical measures by both sides to promote good will, mutual confidence and the return to normal conditions” (Point 6).⁴⁴

Continuing restrictions on movement, and the political and economic blockade of the Turkish Cypriot state, was an outrageous violation of human rights. An aggressive campaign, run by the Greek Cypriot administration to assert that it was the sole rightful government entitled to controlling the entire population and territory of Cyprus, jeopardized any possibility of developing mutual confidence. The UN’s one-sided approach, with a bias in favour of Greek Cypriot side, did not promote mutual confidence either.

The inconsistencies in the UN pledges to run negotiations on an equal

footing, and the reality on the ground, were obvious. Thus, for example, the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1979, once again called for “respect of the human rights of all Cypriots” and “for the urgent resumption in a meaningful, result-oriented and constructive manner of the negotiations ... to be conducted freely on an equal footing”.⁴⁵ The resolution also called “upon all States to support and help the Government of Cyprus to exercise the above-mentioned rights”.⁴⁶ Whilst calling for the respect of the human rights of all Cypriots, the UN was denying rights to Turkish Cypriots, including the right of equal representation, the right for economic development, the right to freedom of movement and freedom of self-determination. Whilst calling for negotiations on an equal footing, the UN Assembly refused to hear the voice of the Turkish Cypriots, and the UN’s references to ‘Cyprus representation’ did not take account of the Turkish Cypriots in such representation. Moreover, the UN affirmed its support to a government that consisted solely of Greek Cypriots, and which had lost both its legitimacy and the moral ground once it violated the Constitutional provisions, imposed an economic blockade, and perpetrated brutal armed assaults on the living community under its alleged legal control. The UN’s call to support the Government of Cyprus to exercise its right to control the entire Cypriot

population became the UN’s consent on long-lasting abuses against the Turkish Cypriot community by the erstwhile Government. This contradicts any UN claims to seek equal footing in the matters of the ‘Cyprus problem.’

The Turkish Cypriot community undertook various steps to end its precarious state of non-existence. On 5 August 1981, the Turkish Cypriot side presented a comprehensive proposal in response to the UN Secretary-General’s renewed efforts to bring the two sides together. The discussion of the proposal, which continued until 1983, ended with no solution.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the impossibility of a return to Constitutional arrangements was obvious. The territorial and administrative separation of the two communities became a living fact. A unitary system under Greek Cypriot domination was resolutely rejected by the Turkish Cypriot community. Failure to reach any acceptable agreement with the Greek Cypriot party, and continuing sanctions imposed on the Turkish Cypriots by the UN, left the Turkish Cypriot community in a political limbo.

On 15 November 1983, The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was proclaimed. The UN Security Council resolution 541 (1983) promptly deplored the declaration of the TRNC. The resolution considered the declaration of the Turkish Cypriot

State to be “incompatible with the 1960 Treaty concerning the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus”.⁴⁷ But so was the abrogation of the Constitution in 1963 by Makarios and further unilateral changes to the 1960 Constitutional arrangements by the Greek Cypriot administration. The UN resolution 541 (1983) considered the declaration of the Turkish Cypriot State illegal, but so was the Greek Cypriot administration which ousted Turkish Cypriot partners from the Republic’s government and appropriated the name of the Republic of Cyprus. Neither exists in agreement with the 1960 Treaty concerning the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. So, there is no juridical justification of the UN’s acceptance of one fraction of the Republic of Cyprus as legal and the other as illegal.

With the UN obviously leaning in their favour, and riding on the crest of economic prosperity, the Greek Cypriots had little to lose, regardless of the outcome of any proposed solution. The losing party, as always, were the Turkish Cypriots, and the incessant negotiations did not bring any notable results.

In 1985, the UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, hosted a new round of meetings between Greek and Turkish Cypriot parties in New York. While Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot representative at the talks, was prepared to sign the Secretary-General’s complete proposal, his Greek Cypriot counterpart, Kiprianou, objected to almost every paragraph in the document.⁴⁸

The successor to Perez de Cuellar, Boutros Ghali, who assumed his position as UN Secretary-General in 1991, moved the existing proposals on Cyprus to a new level. The ‘Set of Ideas’ developed under his leadership laid out the ground for UN discussions with the two Cypriot communities. The ‘Set of Ideas’ was

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underpinned by the understanding of the importance of equal standing of the two communities if a solution to the Cyprus problem was to be reached. UN Resolution 744 (1992) reaffirmed that the settlement in Cyprus must be based on a State of Cyprus “comprising two politically equal communities”.⁴⁹ Three rounds of talks took place in phases from June to November 1992. The Turkish Cypriots accepted 91 out of

100 paragraphs of the ‘Set of Ideas’ and the Greek Cypriots “only accepted them subject to the provisions they had listed, which were substantial.”⁵⁰

On 3 July 1990, the Greek Cypriot Administration (again, presenting themselves as the Republic of Cyprus) submitted a unilateral application for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC), without any talks on the matter with the Turkish Cypriot community. In 1993, the European Commission erroneously concluded that the application was made in the name of the whole of Cyprus. In early 1994 Greece assumed presidency of the EU Council and urged EU membership for Cyprus.

The European Council, which met in Corfu in June 1994, welcomed “the significant progress made regarding the application of Cyprus” and asked the Commission “to do their utmost” to bring to a rapid conclusion the efforts of Cyprus towards integration into the European Union.⁵¹ The European Council’s Corfu discussion on the progress of Cyprus was, of course, limited to the Greek Cypriot community. It was amidst this “progress of Cyprus” in the background, that the Turkish Cypriot community suffered the 1994 ECJ ruling imposing the forbidding of member EU states to export goods originating from the Turkish Cypriot state, with the result that economic sanctions imposed on the Turkish Cypriot community

intensified. Following the meeting of the European Council in Corfu in June 1994, the UN reaffirmed its position that “a Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus...comprising two politically equal communities” but once again reiterated its call not to recognize the existence of the state of the Turkish Cypriots.⁵²

Trying to use the possibility of EU accession as a catalyst for settling the Cyprus problem, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for negotiations on 29 June 1999. Numerous discussions and consultations, as well as a continuous process of making concessions by all sides and of amending the text, finally shaped into a comprehensive settlement plan. On 11 November 2002, a plan sponsored by the UN, Kofi Annan’s plan (named after UN General Secretary at the time), was proposed. The two communities had two years (2002-2004) to study the plan and to hold a referendum in April 2004 to voice their support or rejection of the plan of re-unification. The Turkish Cypriots voted YES (64.91%). Greek Cypriots voted NO (75.83%). The Republic of Cyprus was allowed to join the EU on 1 May 2004 as a part of a divided island. The TRNC community was left out and continues its existence as an ostracized community, largely dependent on Turkish aid, since political embargoes and trade restrictions do not allow the TRNC to develop its own

economy to reach the level of modern developed economies.

Convinced in their righteousness by strong UN backing, the Greek Cypriot administration has learnt that it could scorn proposed settlement plans without any loss of the privileges it has been granted by the international community.

Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General of the UN, noted in his report following the referendum of 2004 that the Turkish Cypriots' vote in the referendum had "undone whatever rationale might have existed for pressuring and isolating them".⁵³ Despite the fact that the Turkish Cypriots and their leadership were commended for their willingness to compromise to reach a settlement in Cyprus, and were promised by the UN and the EU bodies that they would lift the economic and political sanctions imposed, the pledges died on the vine and have remained in place to this date.

Present Day

As the negotiation process towards an alternative political arrangement in Cyprus continues, there are, in fact and in substance, two separate states in Cyprus: the TRNC in the north, and

the Greek Cypriot controlled area of the Republic of Cyprus in the south. They function as two states independent from each other, and a stark political and economic disparity exists between the two communities.

Despite the constraints imposed on the TRNC by its precarious existence as an internationally unrecognized political entity, the TRNC has all the characteristics and institutions of a nation-state. But as the UN continues to call to all countries to deplore the existence of the Turkish Cypriot state, a living community of the TRNC carries on its daily subsistence in a state which is customarily referred to as 'quasi state', 'so-called state', 'runaway state', 'the north of the green line', 'the nation-in-waiting' or '*de facto* state.' This list is not comprehensive but it provides an idea of the unusual nature of the Turkish Cypriot state's existence.

At the time of this writing, negotiations on the settlement of the Cyprus problem continue. The most recent (at the time of this writing) UN resolution asks all parties to engage "fully, flexibly and constructively in the negotiations" and makes a note that "the *status quo* is unsustainable".⁵⁴ In point of fact, the *status quo* in Cyprus is sustainable and is being sustained precisely due to the UN resolutions, which do not allow for an equal standing of the two parties in conflict. Convinced in their righteousness by strong UN backing, the

Greek Cypriot administration has learnt that it could scorn proposed settlement plans without any loss of the privileges it has been granted by the international community.

The *status quo* in Cyprus will sustain itself for as long as the United Nations continues to endorse the conditions of inequality between the two parties. The root of the problem was (and is) the issue of inequality. The UN's endorsement of the status of inequality of the two prominent communities in Cyprus has escalated the problem to the point of a deadlock. As the UN continues to send emissaries to the island, it would be timely to review the organization's myopic policies, and to consider focusing on the roots, and not the symptoms, of the conflict.

Afterwards

Glafkos Clerides, a long-term Greek Cypriot negotiator, summed up the Cyprus problem as the following:

Just as the Greek Cypriot preoccupation was that Cyprus should be a Greek Cypriot state, with a protected Turkish Minority, the Turkish preoccupation was to defeat any such effort and to maintain the partnership concept, which in their opinion the Zurich Agreement created between the two communities. The conflict, therefore, was a conflict of principle and for that principle both sides were prepared to go on arguing and even, if need be, to fight, rather than to compromise.⁵⁵

Indeed, the Cypriot conflict has been a matter of principle, or rather, two very different principles. If the Greek Cypriot principle of domination at any cost can be seen as an atavism of a supremacist ideology which has been shamed and banished from the scene of modern human order, the Turkish Cypriot principle of equality is not at odds with any of the principles underpinning the philosophy of the modern Western world.

The UN's wilful imposition of political and economic sanctions on the Turkish Cypriot community, and its partiality in the Cyprus conflict, contradicts the very foundational principles of the organization's existence and operation.

The slogan of modern democracy *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* has been held high in Western society. The UN Charter itself was founded on the principles which adhere to liberty and equality as necessary pre-conditions for a dignified human existence. As it is stated in the Preamble to its Charter, the Organization of the United Nations was established in order "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations

large and small” and “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”.⁵⁶ It was also foreseen that the formation of the organization would be a way “to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”⁵⁷ The purpose of the creation of the UN was to ascertain the existence of an impartial organization which would safeguard basic human rights “in conformity with the principles of justice” and “based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people”.⁵⁸ The UN was not foreseen as a tool of manipulation and certainly not as a tool of arbitrary punishment.

The principles of justice, equality, and the right for the economic and social advancement have no less significance today than they did in 1945, when the UN Charter was adopted. The UN’s wilful imposition of political and economic sanctions on the Turkish Cypriot community, and its partiality in the Cyprus conflict, contradicts the very foundational principles of the organization’s existence and operation.

The UN’s prejudice in the case of Cyprus is of an even greater sorrow, since the core of the Cyprus problem is the issue of inequality, and the UN’s endorsement of inequality exacerbates the problem.

It is argued here that the UN has failed to lead the island towards a workable solution, because it has actively prevented any possibility for the two sides to act as equal partners in the process, and has not created a level playing field. There are no more reasons to grant legality to a separatist Greek Cypriot administration than there are to deplore the proclamation of the Turkish Cypriot state. As stated in numerous UN reports and resolutions, the two sides indeed have to be on equal footing; and to go forward, either both have to be treated as legal political partners or both deplored. It is hardly possible to anticipate any success in the UN’s attempts to fraternize the two communities of Cyprus unless equality is achieved first. Although the UN has advocated for equal footing, its partiality has, in fact, hobbled the process of settlement in Cyprus.

Endnotes

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