

## Cyprus: The Paradox of Granting Tolerance and Impunity to Türkiye

Anastasios Myrodis Tamis

### 1.0 Introduction

Since 1974, Türkiye, illegally and in violation to all United Nation resolutions and determinations, occupies thirty-seven per cent of the land of a European sovereign nation, the Republic of Cyprus. During the last fifty years, Türkiye has harked back to the challenges and the questioning of the sovereign rights of at least two neighbour states, the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Cyprus. In an abusive manner, which betrays the real intentions of its government to create outbreaks of tension throughout the region, Türkiye recurrently announces plans for drilling surveys in an area that does not belong to its Internationally Recognised Economic Zone (AOZ). The recurrent announcements of investigations on the Eastern Mediterranean seabed was not an isolated Turkish aggressive initiative. These were the latest episodes of a tactic of repeated aggression that each time was used to become a little more belligerent. The NAVTEX announcements and - above all - the exodus of the Turkish civilian fleet in order to further militarize the crisis with Greece and Cyprus had been a tactical, conscious move to darken the atmosphere further, especially at a time when emotions are already running high due to the conversion of Greek Orthodox Cristian monuments, including Agia Sophia and the Monastery of Chora (Kariye Müzesi), both World Cultural Heritage Museums, into mosques.

Türkiye's aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean is not a new phenomenon, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to contain. The international conjuncture, a completely distorted perception of the power relations in the region, are leading Türkiye to trespass one border after another. From Libya to Syria, and from Iraq to Armenia and Azerbaijan, Türkiye is a constant source of instability and aggression. Its alleged stabilizing role is a

cover, which hides the real aims of Türkiye, the projection, that is, of this peculiar *Neo-Confessional Ottomanism*, which is nothing more than a nationalist daze non-related to reality with eventual cataclysmic repercussions. This expansionism constitutes a violation of international law and a desecration of the sovereign rights of the other countries in the region. Türkiye violates the territorial and sea rights of the Republic of Cyprus, threatens Greece, destabilizes Libya, invades Iraq, but also Syria, and lately wants to play a “strategically regional” role in the Caucasus. Türkiye appeared uninvited in all these areas. No one has asked for its intervention in Syria or Libya, and certainly, no one feels safe when the Turkish fleet wants to control the Eastern Mediterranean as if it were a Turkish lake.

The Eastern Mediterranean is not and will never be a Turkish lake, simply because many countries have equal rights over it, and it is the mother of civilisation, culture and friendship. There is only one-way to share in the Eastern Mediterranean that of *bona fide* cooperation, dialogue and world recognised principles. Moreover, there is not a single multilateral association or organization that welcomes the unrest that the Turkish stance in the Eastern Mediterranean has created in recent years. Unfortunately, the rhetorical condemnation of Turkish provocations by the EU, or countries such as Germany or the US, is not perceived by Türkiye, as it should be, but as a sign of tolerance, encouragement, or even worse, weakness. Greece and Cyprus as full members of the EU comprise critical factors of stability in the region, bridges between the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and Europe and have nothing to fear from demonstrations of power and intimidation that are neither in line with the spirit of the times nor with the real balances. Anyone trying to turn the region into a field of war rivalries and imbalances is doomed to fail miserably.

## 2.0 Misgivings by Others

The course and evolution of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus, the permanent occupation of its territories, the unilateral insistence on its partition, the insinuated annexation, and the assertion of its leadership to “Blue Homeland-Mavi Vatan”,<sup>1</sup> an apparent revisionist geopolitical illusion, perpetrating the resynthesis of the disintegrated former Ottoman Empire (1918-1920), is a political paradox that international institutions are called upon to tolerate for fifty plus years without impunity. Türkiye’s campaign to

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<sup>1</sup> The *Blue Homeland*, known as *Mavi Vatan* is a revisionist and irredentist doctrine of Turkish geopolitics according to which Türkiye disputes the sovereignty of the Greek Aegean islands as well as the Greek and Cypriot EEZ. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is considered to be the area of sea within which a State has the right to explore for or otherwise exploit marine resources.

legitimize the military invasion as a "*intervention for peace*" to "*redeem the irridentist Turkish Cypriots, establishing permanent peace on the island*", following the imposed coup d'état against President Makarios by the junta of Athens and the invocations of the "Pro-Unionist with Greece" Greek Cypriots, has been refuted by the Turkish Cypriots, who, after the landing of thousands of Anatolian Turks as colonists, escaped in self-exile *en mass* in greater numbers than the Greek Cypriot refugees. The delirium about "*intervening for peace*" cannot be justified either by the large number of Turkish Cypriots who continue to hold passports of the Republic of Cyprus, or by the persistence of the catholic world community not to recognize the *de facto* occupation and partition imposed by an agitating member of NATO. The revisionist claim by Türkiye of promoting two different states instead of two federated communities of one State, has historically been opposed even by the majority of the Turkish Cypriots, who by a ratio of sixty-five percent voted in favour of the *Annan Plan* in April 2004, favouring the political reunification of the island.

Moreover, the historical, cultural and demographic characteristics of Cyprus remained unchanged for tens of centuries, attesting, overwhelmingly, the ethnic character of its inhabitants as members of the Greek homophyly. Alteration of national character through "*military interventions for peace*" or by governmental decrees has not been achieved in the history of any nation, without a forced and enforced exchange of populations, with all that this implies. The forced persecution and expulsion of Greek populations from northern Cyprus and their replacement with Anatolian colonists verify that both the July and August 1974 invasions by Türkiye were clearly acts of expansionism. The ethnic cleansing that ensued in occupied Cyprus was primarily indicative of the profound intention of the invaders, namely, the long-term partition, defiance to resolutions issued by international institutions, and eventual predatory annexation of the occupied territories to the aspirated "Blue Homeland". The responsibility for this paradoxical *status quo* lies, primarily with the international bodies that tolerate the provocative antinomy committed against the territorial sovereignty of a European country and a member of the European Union without impunity.

The expression of neo-Ottoman expansionism in Cyprus completed half a century, showing Türkiye's imbecility in the implementation of the UN resolutions. Turkish defiance and refusal to accept the resolutions of international organizations was encouraged both by the lax and tolerant attitude of the world community, which, contrary to practices of punitive restrictions in the form of punitive wars, sanctions and embargos, which they had ranged on other invader countries (Kuwait, Russia and others) in the case of Türkiye generously offered their lavishing forbearance. However, the lack of a uniform, systematic, and practical strategy on the part of *Hellas* (Greece and Cyprus) also, led the Cyprus' crisis nationally to discoordination and improvisation, projecting ideologies and emotions that essentially turned national cohesion away from the essence of the problem,

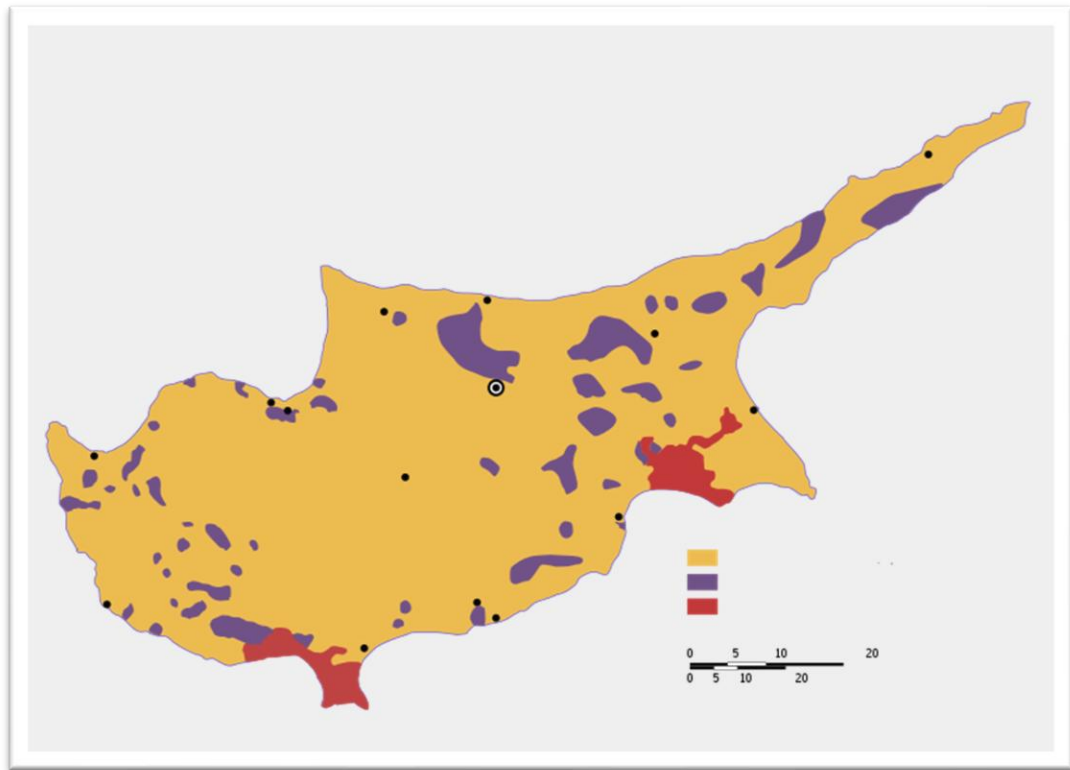
which was a constantly building realistic political compromising solution, away from passions and maximalist objectives.

Until recently, the Republic of Cyprus and the EU made continuous efforts, inviting the reluctant, and "overseen" Turkish-Cypriot leadership under Ersin Tatar to partake to the negotiating table, even though the latter strongly opposes the federal reunification of Cyprus, insisting, like Türkiye, on a two-state solution (*partition*) on the divided island. At the same time, Türkiye continues its aggressive policy against Cyprus, impudently criticizing even the US for daring to sign a defence agreement with the Republic of Cyprus, having first made the landmark decision (September 2022), lifting the decades old arms embargo against Nicosia. More recently, in a letter to Secretary General António Guterres (September 13, 2024), the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the UN, Maria Michael, recorded Türkiye's violations of airspace, territorial waters and international aviation regulations,<sup>2</sup> the ongoing militarization of the occupied areas and the buffer zone, actions which, in the language of diplomacy, "*aim to create new faits accomplis*". In the language of pragmatism, however, these actions underpin the maximalist intentions of Türkiye, contrary to international law, disregarding the territorial integrity of the island, the imposition of a permanent occupation with "*the existence of two separate and independent states*" (*partition*) and an eventual fusion of the occupied territories under the sovereignty of Türkiye (*annexation*).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the international tolerance and impunity towards the *contrajuris* occupation of Cypriot territories, in reality, constitutes a repudiation of the Greek historical, demographic and ethnological composition of the Cypriot population, since, both during the period of Ottoman rule and since the beginning of the British occupation (1878), no study has ever detected a Turkish presence in Cyprus, beyond one fifth of the total population (*see Map One below*).

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Cypriot Ambassadorial letter to Secretary General António Guterres a total of 2,120 aviation and 137 maritime rule violations were recorded (March 2023-June 2024).

<sup>3</sup> This is also evident in the case of Famagusta, where Türkiye systematically ignores and violates the current *Status Quo*, as well as the calls (S/PRST/2021/13) and UN Resolutions (550/1984) for the return of the city to its legal inhabitants.



*Map One.* Ethnic map of Cyprus in 1973, denoting in gold Greek Cypriot, in purple Turkish Cypriot enclaves and in red the British bases.

(Source: *Issues of the Middle East*, CIA publication, at the Perry Castaneda collection)

The paradoxical and heretical thing about the occupation of Cypriot territories by a NATO member-state, undoubtedly, remains Türkiye's continued unthinkable impunity – especially when accompanied by her resounding refusal to accept a solution to the Cyprus Question in a manner consistent with International Law and European Law – urged by the International Community and the European Union. For five decades, the international collective bodies tolerated the consequences and *faits accomplis* of the Turkish invasion, occupation, partition and hunted annexation of territories of the Republic of Cyprus, even though this constitutes a resounding provocation and violation of international law.

This attitude of tolerance and impunity could easily be interpreted as weakness, a dullness in the face of the powerful, rather than as hypocritical preferential treatment on the part of international organizations, at least with reference to the Western World, especially when punitive acts against other invaders preceded with determination and fire. The perception of impunity also reaffirms that international law is only recognizable or desirable by the stronger in a conflict. Thucydides (V, 89), in the speech to the 'mighty'

Athenians for the 'weak' Melians, concluded: *"Justice, in the words of men, is decided when both sides are in the same need, but what can be done is done by the strongest, and the weak admits by retreating."* The same is said by Thrasymachus in Plato's *Politeia-Republic*. *"Righteousness is nothing else but the interest of stronger..."* or *"The interest of the established authority is just."* (A, 338C & 339A). This is especially true in the case of Kuwait (2.8.1990) and more recently Ukraine, when international *fora* launched an exterminating war against the invaders, who like Türkiye, used lax and/or misleading pretexts to justify their aggression. It is also worrying to note, that although successive Governments of Greece and Cyprus responded with increasing haste and passion towards the failing of EU to activate any form of sanctions against Türkiye for invading and occupying a full Member State of the European Union, they flaccidly pursued the EU to enforce the Principle of Solidarity (Article 42.7) of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) against a beleaguered Türkiye. This conscious collective deviation from the content of CFSP, that is, the absence of sanctions against manifested violations of the European law by Türkiye, is borne by EU members in a most accommodating manner, especially when the invader applies to become a member of the EU. Selective application of CFSP articles, i.e., application with divergences and footnotes, quite simply means nullifying the article itself and, of course, violating international law. The most tragic thing of all remains that the international community treats the victim and the perpetrator equally, employing an incomprehensible rationalism, with generalities and "pretentiousness" expediences. This unfair treatment generates deceived and beguiled conceptions on a divided Cyprus which are being taught as genuine and unassuming part of their local history to almost three generations of Turkish-Cypriot student clientele, a situation that will need thorough and chronic epistemology to rehabilitate.

### 3.0 Historical Misgivings

Naturally, the historical and political responsibilities of Hellenism towards the above must be assessed as both severe and consequential. Over time, there have been several proposals for a solution to the Cyprus Problem, submitted by the British, the Americans, the UN and Europeans. These proposals were all based on the elementary principle of political science, which, ultimately, is based on reciprocal compromise, that is, the harmonization between the maximalist and the minimalist, as a political process in a given claim, without this meaning that the stronger of the two parties could be more or less wronged. At the outset of this narrative, it should be clarified that political culture is the common path in which men and societies live, think, and act, not passively, but dynamically and creatively. Political culture also includes such all-significant matters as ethnology, history, philosophy, psychology and public relations, as well as mental and

moral activities which, more than the products of a material nature, determine the course of a political outcome. The roots of political culture, being the product of man's creative activity, lie deep in the ages gone by.

Moreover, throughout the post-occupation period, although hundreds of Resolutions on Cyprus were expressed, submitted and voted for at the UN, the US Congress and the European Parliament, condemning the Turkish aggression, there was no prior systematic and coordinated cooperation with both the Hellenic Diaspora and the main historical pillar of support for Hellenism, the Philhellenes. It was attested that diachronic *Hellas*, and its heritage legacies were enhanced and preserved as an ideology, a way of life and an inspiration of the humanist ideals by Philhellenes.<sup>4</sup> Politicians, statesmen, intellectuals, philosophers, and men of arts saw in this ideology the fruitful revival, the creative adaptation of classical thought, which as an on-going cultural movement brought about *Philhellenism*. During the more recent and contemporary years, global *Philhellenism* was manifested in manifold vigorous expressions: adoption and practice of Greek way of life and everything that is Hellenic; deep appreciation and enhancement of Greek culture; language and heritage; enhancement of professional scope and practices. In addition, Hellenic conceptions supplanted the ideas of leading politicians and policy makers; sincere understanding and alliance for Greek national grievances, including support for economic crisis-stricken Greece, the Macedonian Issue and attacking Turkish aggression in the Aegean Sea, East Mediterranean and the Cyprus issue.

Equally, the Hellenes of Diaspora never stopped short in expressing their sentiments and appreciation to those global Philhellenic leaders who allied with their national and historical aspirations, pledged their support, and sustained their efforts to maintain their socio-cultural identity. They treated the Diasporic Hellenes as their patrons and mentors. In numerous occasions Greek community leaders and businessmen displayed their gratitude by means of bequests, awards, and other honours that they bestowed upon those whom they assessed as friends of the Hellenes. They hosted impressive events to honour them with a number of awards presented either by the Greek and/or Cypriot governments; they institutionalized specific awards to honour significant personalities and dignitaries from within the mainstream societies including Prime Ministers, Premiers, government ministers, judges and men of letters for their services to Hellenism; they developed forms and events to acknowledge them as Great Philhellenes and friends of the Hellenic civilization. It was through this relationship that certain national issues concerning expatriated Greeks in the host countries received particular government

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<sup>4</sup> Reference is made here to A. M. Tamis (2023), *The Aegis of Hellas: The Continuing Vigour of Philhellenism*, Foundation of Greek Parliament, Athens.



attention and support. Several senior political figures, universally respected for their moral uprightness and their zeal for fairness, allied with the Hellenes as proponents of the Greek national legacies. A large list of able and loyal Hellenists and classical scholars emerged over the years boldly asserting their admiration of Hellenism, past and contemporary. With academic, research and scholarly work they exerted much influence on the broader society, defending Greek national legacies, including Cyprus or Macedonia, and expounding their views to eager listeners.

Several Philhellenes took keen interest in political and national matters concerning the Hellenes (Greeks and Cypriots), especially on the Cyprus issue. Numerous parliamentarians conducted a busy and profitable intercourse with the world Greek communities by way of participation in committees propagating the values of the Greek national issues and constantly supporting, with growing activities, the national issues pertaining the Hellenes. Their parliaments debated, and voted policies, which were adopted by their governments, closely in harmony with the national interests of *Hellas*, whilst they also kept vigilant watch over their relations with the Greeks in their respective countries as well. The effective introduction of certain bills and policies concerning the Hellenes and their national issues in their parliaments was usually made by zealous philhellenic politicians, humanists and liberal minds reproaching organized cruelty in occupied Cyprus.

The lack of the formulation and implementation of a systematic and planned over time national policy on the main issues that concern Greece and Cyprus, the lack of consultation with the organized Hellenic Diaspora and the Philhellenes, but also the catastrophic division regarding ideology and specific policy at a time, have been the causes that led to serious national lapses in the Cyprus problem and outcomes that were later assessed as underbidding the national interests. I will focus in particular on the two most serious Proposals for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The first refers to the colonial era and was proposed by Britain itself in October 1915 to the Royal Government of Greece. The second one applies to the post-invasion period in Cyprus and was formulated by the UN and submitted for consultation and approval by concurrent referendums, at an intercommunal level, in Cyprus in April 2004. Both were rejected by Hellenism: the first by Greek Hellenism and the second by Cypriot Hellenism.

Available evidence<sup>5</sup> attest that until the beginning of the Balkan-Turkish War (1912) and the presence of Eleftherios Venizelos as the architect of the political course of Greece, successive Greek governments omitted or failed to deal systematically with

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<sup>5</sup> Particular reference is being made to the work of Michael Llewellyn-Smith (2021), London, *Venizelos: The Making of a Greek Statesman 1864-1914*, Chapter Eight "Lloyd George, Churchill and Venizelos".



Cyprus.<sup>6</sup> The obvious reason was that the island was already under British jurisdiction, and London was a protector power for Greek interests.<sup>7</sup> At the same time and by contrast, the voluntary offering of sacrifices to the unification movement of Cypriots with Greece<sup>8</sup> had been strong and notable. In 1911-12 the Greek Ambassador in London, Ioannis Gennadius (1844-1932),<sup>9</sup> a prolific writer and speaker, wrote two reports to Prime Minister Venizelos. In the first, he informed him that Britain would use Cyprus as a diplomatic leverage in return for the coming upheavals and therefore Athens would have to draw its national line. With the second, the Greek diplomat called on Venizelos to claim the Union of Cyprus with Greece, in consultation with the British authorities. Just a few weeks after the *Gennadius Reports*, Venizelos included Cyprus in the rest of the national claims and discussed for the first time the possibility of ceding it to Greece.

In July 1912, it was agreed that the British Navy could protect Anglo-French interests in the Eastern and the French Navy in the Western Mediterranean. To achieve this goal, Britain would need an ally in the Eastern Mediterranean, and Winston Churchill, who was First Lord of the Admiralty, chose Greece. In exploratory contacts with the Consul of Greece in London, Ioannis Stavridis, Churchill made it clear that he was interested in the port of Argostoli in Kefalonia, with the right to use the port. In return he ceded Cyprus. On December 16, Venizelos was briefed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George on the British proposal, with which he agreed both on the issue of Argostoli and on the issue of an alliance with Britain and France. On 17 December 1912, Venizelos met with W. Churchill and L. George and agreed to move forward on the issue of Argostoli and Cyprus.<sup>10</sup> However, on 5 January 1913, Churchill revealed to Venizelos that Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and Secretary of State Edward Grey had agreed to postpone the matter until the end of negotiations on the Treaty of London ending the First Balkan War. In

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<sup>6</sup> Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias was the first to include Cyprus, in 1827-1828, within the geographical boundaries claimed by "New Greece".

<sup>7</sup> Besides, other issues were at work that did not allow successive Greek governments to systematically turn their attention to the Cyprus question. This was preceded by, among others, the impact of the humiliating defeat of the Greek army in 1897, the Macedonian Struggle (1898-1908), the question of the Cretan State (1898-1913), the reorganization of the Greek economy and the Greek armed forces imposed by Venizelos (1909-1912), as well as the adoption of a new Constitution and the establishment of the rule of law in Greece.

<sup>8</sup> Over a thousand Cypriot volunteers took part in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, and another 1,800 in the Balkan Wars, culminating in the death, in Bizani (December 1912), of the volunteer Mayor of Limassol, Christodoulos Sozos.

<sup>9</sup> Diplomat and writer Ioannis Gennadius, a most prominent book collector, was best known for the donation of his collection of Greek books and art to the Gennadius National Library in Athens.

<sup>10</sup> Llewellyn, 2021:353-356

January 1914, Venizelos visited London again. In his contacts with the British Government, he raised the issue of Argostoli and Cyprus, but it was pointed out to him that the political crisis that had arisen over Ireland was not conducive to final decisions. E. Grey did not want to proceed with the case of Argostoli and Cyprus, because he was afraid of Italy's reaction. All this led to a retreat by the British Government on the Cyprus issue. Meanwhile, on 5 November 1914 Britain, France and Russia declared war on the Ottomans and Britain annexed Cyprus, an act which was later recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

In February 1915, Venizelos resigned as Prime Minister, unable to withstand pressure from the pro-German King Constantine. The British, with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Rober Cecil, meanwhile, formulated a plan according to which, if Greece became an ally of *Entente* against the *Central Powers*,<sup>11</sup> it would be granted Southern Thrace, Smyrna and Cyprus, before the end of the war. Although Edward Grey initially disagreed about Cyprus, he quickly changed his mind. On 16 October 1915 the British government notified the British Ambassador in Athens, Francis Elliot, in which he stated that Britain was ready to cede Cyprus to Greece, providing that the latter will support Serbia militarily in her attack and sided with the *Entente*. The telegram made it clear that Greece had to support Serbia immediately and with full mobilization of its military forces. On 20 October 1915, the Royal Government of Alexandros Zaimis rejected the only official British offer to unite Cyprus with Greece. In particular, Prime Minister Alexandros Zaimis refused to accept the annexation of Cyprus to Greece, arguing to the British Ambassador, Francis Elliot, that in the view of the military it would be disastrous to help Serbia and that it was decided not to act, but for Greece to maintain its benevolent neutrality towards the *Entente*. It was also made clear that no offer would change Greece's stance, which was over imposed by the pro-German Court. It is worth noting that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Dmitryevich Sazonov considered that the offer of the Allies to Greece was exaggerated, and that this proposal was diminishing the prestige of the *Entente*, which gave the impression that it was conceding everything to achieve Greek cooperation. The French and Italians had no problem with the concession of Cyprus, while the objections of the Russians had more to do with Greece dominating the Eastern Mediterranean. The official negative Greek response to the British offer for Cyprus was given by Ambassador John Gennadius on 22 October 1915 in London. Three days later (25 October 1915), the British Foreign Office announced to the Zaimis Royal Government that the allied offer for Cyprus had ceased.

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<sup>11</sup> The *Entente* or the *Triple Entente* was an international military [coalition](#) of countries led by [France](#), the [United Kingdom](#), [Russia](#), the [United States](#), [Italy](#), and [Japan](#) against the [Central Powers](#) of [Germany](#), [Austria-Hungary](#), the [Ottoman Empire](#), and [Bulgaria](#).

#### 4.0 The Greek Cypriot Last Supper

Greek nationalism was expressed in Cyprus with various faces and experienced various phases in its evolutionary course. Given the historic and demographic presence of Greek identity in Cyprus and the patriotism of the Greek Cypriots, nationalism was initially expressed as an anti-colonial struggle against the British colonists (1931), which was later evolved progressively as an ideology with the main goal of emancipating, uniting and integrating Cyprus with Greece. The typology of nationalism and irredentism in Cyprus was interpreted on the basis of the ideological approach of its citizens, sometimes as an intended ideal, historically and ethnically documented with Hellenism, and sometimes as a result of pressures exerted by colonialists and Western interests in Cyprus, in order to maintain their sovereign rights on the island. There were various proposals for resolving the Cypriot tragedy with different tensions and sizes of claims, with different protagonists swinging a pendulum between maximalist interests in terms of acquisition, but minimalist in terms of offer. In negotiation theories of high political importance, you project a forum for dialogue and consultation, which can act as a mechanism for decompressing tensions, so that they do not produce greater crises, and we have a better understanding of the positions of the other side. In this respect, Hellenism was not arguably successful in identifying the right balance that could lead to a compromise solution to the intercommunal problem, giving to Türkiye the opportunity for the second time, after 1974, to transfer a purely *inter-communal problem* of a single and, at most, federated Cyprus, to a problem *of inter-state partition*, in pursuit of an envisaged annexation.

Let us now turn our focus on the *Kofi Annan's Plan*. Beginning from the 1950s, Cypriots, were divided into two obediences - those Greece-centred, proclaiming *Enosis* with Greece, and refuting as illegitimate and unpatriotic, any other solution for the island Republic. And those who believed in an independent Republic, where the two ethnic communities could determine their destiny without the military presence of a third power. During the numerous international rounds of negotiations, discussions, and deliberations, under the authority of the U.N., leading to the 2004 referendums, regarding the *Kofi Annan's Plan*, and the explosion of Turkish Neo-Ottoman nationalism that prevailed during the years, following the discovery of the natural resources in Cyprus's AOZ, the resentment among the Greek and Turkish Cypriots with reference to the status and destiny of Cyprus continued to play a primary role in their relations.

The crisis confronting the post-invasion Republic of Cyprus reached its newest height when the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (1938-2018), braced by much of the international community, proposed the most concerted and detailed Plan to reach a

federal solution to the Cyprus problem.<sup>12</sup> There was a strong backing from the E.U. because Cyprus, represented internationally by the Greek Cypriots, was set to join the bloc in 2004. The E.U. was keen to see the island re-united first. There was also a strong backing by the US Government and its President, George Bush.<sup>13</sup> However, in twin referendums on 24 April 2004, Greek Cypriots, led by President Tassos Papadopoulos (1934-2008), overwhelmingly rejected the *Annan Plan*, with 75.8% voting against, while Turkish Cypriots, contrary to the will of their leader, militant nationalist Raouf Denktash, accepted it, with 64.9% in favour; hence the Plan was officially declared null and void.

Annan presented a first version of his plan in November 2002 and a fifth and final version in March 2004. He had wanted the final text to emerge from negotiations between the two sides but, amid continuing deadlock, finalised the text himself.<sup>14</sup> As was expected, the vast majority of Turkish Cypriots were enthusiastic, hoping that a settlement would enable them to end their isolation by entering the E.U. alongside the Greek Cypriots in a reunited Cyprus. Greece, broadly speaking, also supported the *Annan Plan*, as did Türkiye where the *Justice and Development Party [AKP]*, won a landslide victory in November 2002 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. At that time and prior to his elevation in the presidency, which seriously aggravated his nationalistic ambitions, he had made Türkiye's membership of the E.U. a priority and knew accession was impossible while Türkiye occupied northern Cyprus.

There was less incentive for the Greek Cypriots who, in April 2003, had already been guaranteed E.U. membership. President Tassos Papadopoulos was stridently opposed to the *Annan Plan* and in an emotional televised speech urged Greek Cypriots to reject it.<sup>15</sup> He argued that it was tailored to suit Turkish interests at the expense of Greek Cypriot rights and would legalise the island's *de facto* partition instead of reuniting it. Papadopoulos also invalidly calculated that Greek Cypriots could secure a more favourable Cyprus settlement once they were in the E.U. His speech prompted the communist party, AKEL, a coalition partner in the Papadopoulos administration, to

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<sup>12</sup> Kofi Atta Annan was a Ghanaian diplomat who served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1997 to December 2006. Annan and the UN were the co-recipients of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

<sup>13</sup> US President George Bush wrote to the Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis on December 26, urging him to push for a Cyprus settlement, asserting: "*We now have a window of opportunity to reach a settlement so that a united Cyprus joins the European Union. We must not let that window close.*"

<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the 2015-16 drive for a settlement is wholly "Cypriot-owned", with the U.N. acting solely as a facilitator.

<sup>15</sup> Because President Papadopoulos rejected the Plan see "*The Case Against the Annan Plan*", Koufoudakis and Kyriakides and the *Letter by the President of the Republic, Mr Tassos Papadopoulos, to the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan dated 7 June 2004.*

withdraw its earlier support for the U.N. proposals. Conservative Democratic Rally Party [DI.SY], then led by Nicos Anastasiades, backed the *Annan Plan*, which was also supported by two former presidents, George Vassiliou and Glafkos Clerides. Annan expressed dismay at the Greek Cypriot 'no' vote, as did Washington, London, and Brussels. Cyprus entered the E.U. a week later (1 May 2004), with only the Greek Cypriots enjoying the benefits of membership. The *acquis communautaire*, or body of E.U. law, was suspended in northern Cyprus pending the island's reunification.<sup>16</sup>

The *Annan Plan* proposed the establishment of the *United Cyprus Republic*, "an independent state in the form of an indissoluble partnership, with a federal government and two equal constituent states, the Greek Cypriot State and the Turkish Cypriot State".<sup>17</sup>The structure of this bizonal, bicomunal federal republic entity would be based on the Swiss model. The state would have a single international legal personality and single sovereignty. People would hold two citizenships: that of the common state and of the component state in which they lived. The latter would complement, not replace, Cypriot citizenship. Acquiring Cypriot citizenship would be covered by federal law, meaning that the federation controls immigration. Any unilateral change to the state of affairs established by the agreement would be prohibited, in particular union of Cyprus in whole or in part with any other country or any form of partition or secession. The federal government would be responsible for foreign policy and international relations, ensuring that Cyprus "can speak and act with one voice internationally and in the European Union". It would also be responsible for Cypriot citizenship and issuing passports, immigration, antiquities, and some other matters. The powers of the constituent states would consist of anything not governed by the common state, that is, each would have a large degree of autonomy. They would cooperate through agreements and constitutional laws that would ensure they did not infringe on each other's powers and functions.

The new state of Cyprus would be governed by a federal parliament made up of two houses. A Senate (upper house) would have forty-eight members with an equal number from each of the two communities while a Chamber of Deputies (lower house) was to have forty-eight members, no fewer of twelve of them Turkish Cypriots. Decisions

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<sup>16</sup> Following the membership, Cyprus being a divided country, the entire island is EU territory. Turkish Cypriots are eligible for EU citizenship, however EU law is suspended in certain areas for them.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account on the content and the outcome of the referendums see *Ewen MacAskill; Helena Smith (5.3.2004). "New date to be set after blunder over Cyprus referendum" in The Guardian. Retrieved 2 February 2021*; also: Chadjipadelis, T. & Andreadis, I. (2007), *Analysis of the Cyprus Referendum on the Annan Plan*, 57<sup>th</sup> Political Studies Association Annual Conference; from "Letter by the President of the Republic, Mr Tassos Papadopoulos, to the UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, dated 7 June, which circulated as an official document of the U.N. Security Council". *Cyprus PIO. Retrieved 3.2.2021*; also "Cyprus", *Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. Retrieved 3.2.2021*.

by parliament would require a simple majority vote of both houses to pass. There would also be separate legislatures in the two component states. Executive power would be vested in a presidential council with six voting members. Parliament could also choose to add some non-voting members. No less than one third of the voting and non-voting members would come from each constituent state. No less than a third of members from each category would be Turkish Cypriots.

The presidential council would be elected on a single list by special majority in the Senate and approved by majority in the Chamber of Deputies for a five-year term. The presidential council would try to reach decisions by consensus. If this was not possible, then decisions would be taken by simple majority of members, provided this comprised at least one member from each constituent state. The council would elect a member from each constituent state to rotate every twenty months in office as its president and vice president.

The member hailing from the more populous constituent state would be the first president in each term. The foreign affairs minister and European affairs minister would not come from the same state. A supreme court would have an equal number of judges from each constituent state and three non-Cypriot judges that would not be Greek, Turkish or British. The court would resolve disputes between states or between the federal government and the states.

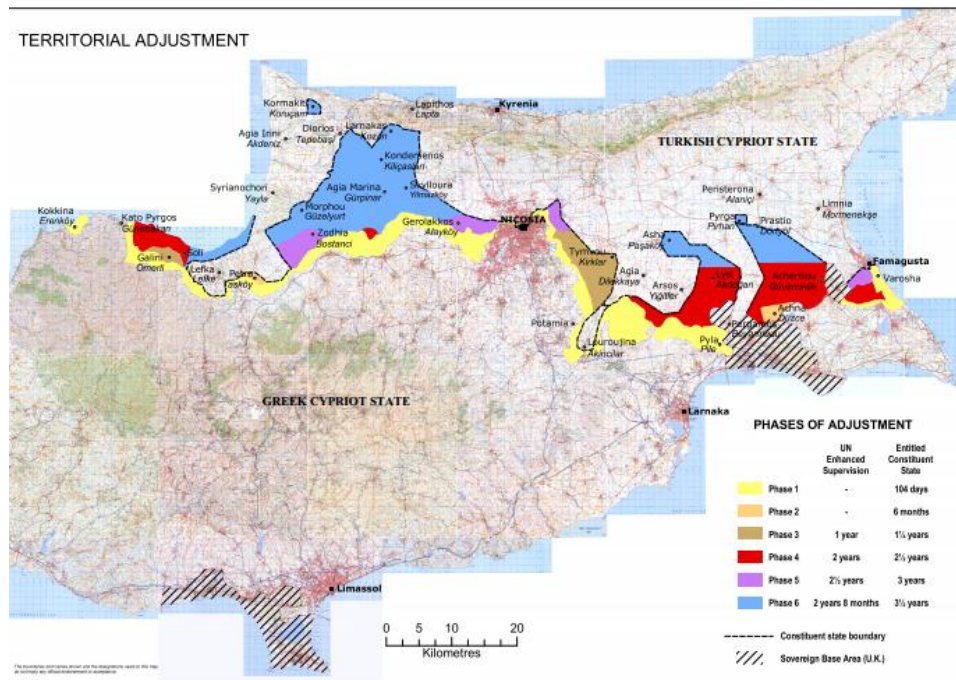
The *Plan* proposed significant territorial adjustments in favour of the Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots made up 18% of the population at the time of the 1974 invasion but were left in control of 36.2% of the island's territory. Their territorial share would be reduced to 28.5%, arguable in harmony with the augmented demographical surcharge, resulting from the tens of thousands of Anatolian Turks colonizing the occupying lands. This would take place in six phases over a 42-month period, starting 104 days after the agreement came into force [*See Map 2, below*]. During the more than fifty years that followed the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus, successive governments of Türkiye, planned and implemented a long-standing demographic policy. Without expressed party or ideological divisions and attending a permanent strategy of harmonizing the occupying territories in proportion to the population, implemented a full colonization and socio-economic program, resulting, in 2024, from the total of 1,189,000 Cypriots, the number of inhabitants of free Cyprus amounts to 889,000, and of the occupied zone is estimated at almost 295,000, i.e. 26% of the total number of Cypriots.<sup>18</sup> The realization of this strategy

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<sup>18</sup> The population density is 39 people per square kilometre in the free territories, but 93 people per square kilometre in the occupied areas, with the transplantation and colonization of Turks from Eastern Turkey. The total area of the Cypriot territory amounts to 9,251 sq.km., of which 5,896 square kilometres correspond to the free Cyprus and 3,355 to the occupied one.



is widely owned to Türkiye’s charismatic communicator and populist leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his monocratic regime in power. His long, stable and rigid political tenure (1994-2024), initially as Mayor of Istanbul and later (2002) as Prime Minister and President, contributed significantly to implementing this goal. Since coming to power, Erdoğan has overseen a radical transformation of Türkiye. Once a pillar of the Western alliance, the country has embarked on a militaristic foreign policy, intervening ambitiously in regional flashpoints from Nagorno-Karabakh to Libya. Press freedoms were reduced, through coverage restrictions, the arrest of journalists and the AKP forming close links to media outlets. And its democracy, sustained by the aspiration to join the European Union, has given way to one-man rule.



Map Two: The Annan Plan proposed significant territorial adjustments in favour of the Greek Cypriots, reducing the Turkish-Cypriot territorial control from 36.2% to 28.5%.

(Source: *Issues of the Middle East*, CIA publication, at the Perry Castaneda collection)

The *Annan Plan's* complex property provisions included restitution, compensation, and exchange. Greek Cypriots displaced in 1974, from territory to come under the control of their constituent state would get their properties back. Those not entitled to return to



their homes would be paid compensation in guaranteed bonds based on market values at the time they were lost, adjusted to reflect the appreciation of property values since then. All other dispossessed owners would have the right to reinstatement of one-third of the value and one-third of the area of their total property, and to receive compensation for the remainder. Among other provisions, current users of properties originally owned by displaced Greek and Turkish Cypriots who have made "significant improvements" to a property could apply for its title, provided they paid for the value of the property in its original state. Cypriot citizens required to vacate property to be reinstated would not have to do so until adequate alternative accommodation was made available.

The three 1960 Treaties of Establishment, Guarantee and Alliance would stay in place. Britain, Greece, and Türkiye would remain as guarantor powers. In the event of the *Annan Plan's* acceptance, Britain said it would relinquish almost half of the 98 square miles of territory covered by its two sovereign military bases under the Treaty of Establishment.<sup>19</sup> There would be a phased demilitarisation of Cyprus. All Cypriot security forces would be disbanded while Greece and Türkiye would each be allowed to keep up to 6,000 troops in Cyprus until 2011. That would be reduced to 3,000 each by 2018 or earlier if Türkiye joined the EU before that date. After that, numbers would be scaled down to the original 950 Greek and 650 Turkish troops envisaged under the 1960 Treaty of Alliance. This would be reviewed every three years with the aim of an eventual total withdrawal of all Greek and Turkish forces.

The *Annan's Plan* had been the most tangible and most hard-headed proposal ever presented for negotiation and acceptance on the Cyprus issue. Any negation of it by any of the two communities, participating at the April 2004 Referendum, could be repented in the future as ill-judged desertion from the reality or as a patriotic, yet maximalist, dream that was conceived over and beyond its limitation. As was expected, the Cypriot communities around the globe were once again divided over the outcome of the referendum on ideological and place of origin lines. All things conspired to force a fanatical outburst. The fires of dissention burned once again brightly. The more moderate, the sceptical, the non-aligned, soon perished. The doctrine of resistance against the plan gained the most. Maximalists became more prominent and assumed leadership. They voiced their opinions in public places.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Britain has since periodically reiterated its offer, most recently in September 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Fierce dissention erupted in Melbourne and Australia between those who were against the *Plan*, and those who were supporting it, despite its limitations. The rift appeared in the columns of Greek language newspapers by means of essays, in-depth reporting, open letters and seriously divided the broader Hellenic community. In several cases even the intra-family cohesion was disrupted, as siblings took opposing stance, whilst some of those incoming artists, academics, and intellectuals, who had

The difference of opinions was also vivid in Greece, where the political leaders were divided, with the proponents of “Yes” attitude gaining momentum there. Also, many Greek Cypriots felt that the demand that the Cyprus issue be resolved before Cyprus' entry to the EU was so that the reunification would not have to contain elements of European law which were incompatible with certain provisions in the *Annan Plan*.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, as was expected, Türkiye's nationalistic ambitions, under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to augment its territorial aspirations and to colonize the occupied part of northern Cyprus, led its leaders by February 2022, to consider any solution based on a “federated state”, as was designed by the Annan Plan, now as “obsolete and out of discussion”.<sup>22</sup> Instead they were now focusing to “resolve” the Cyprus problem by partition, creating two separate states in the island and hence, legitimizing the revenues from the natural gas explorations on an even basis. Meanwhile, the concomitant of the produced crisis, emerging from the failure of the 2004 Referendum, was felt in Cyprus, Greece and the Hellenic Diaspora with an exchange of vitriolic articles in Greek language newspapers, traded letters with regrettable content, rioting meetings, and noisy assemblies.<sup>23</sup>

Türkiye and the Turkish-community leaders are well-aware that there is no country other than Türkiye who is willing to recognise their 1983's TRNC as an independent sovereign state on an island which, in its entirety, will be accepted as a member of the European Union. They are also conscious that Greek Cypriots have no reason to accept forms or types of a minimalist settlement because they are accepted by the world as the Republic of Cyprus on their own, and as such, they can enjoy the benefits of recognition by themselves. Why should they ever accept anything less than that? Finally, it is also a political and legal fact that individually Turkish-Cypriots have secured

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voted in favour of the *Plan*, were seriously attacked in the media and open letters. For example, in March 2007, businessman and benefactor, Dinos Toumazos condemned actor Kostakis Constantinou, who had performed in Melbourne with his theatrical group, accusing him as a proponent of “yes” for the Plan, exchanging antagonistic and personal views. CCMV *Minutes* File 2005-2009.

<sup>21</sup> President T. Papadopoulos called those in favour of the *Annan Plan* as “nainaikides” (supporters of yes). See K. Constantinou satirical play *Ottour tziar Katse*, CCMV *Minutes* File 2005-2009.

<sup>22</sup> On 2.2.2021, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlout Tsavousoglou during his visit and discussions with the leaders in the occupied region of Cyprus declared that Türkiye and the TRNC [Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus] are now concentrating in a two separate states solution, away from their initial consent to *Annan Plan*.

<sup>23</sup> Reference is made here to numerus letters, articles and appeals recorded in the Greek language media, including SEKA's statement signed by its president C. Procopiou and Secretary Ch. Polendas, *Neos Kosmos*, 15.12.2005, p. 10; also: Dinos Toumazos, *Neos Kosmos*, 22.12.2005, p. 10; CCMV's *Cyprian Archives*.

for themselves passports and IDs from the Republic of Cyprus and that does mean that even if they refuse to recognise the Republic as their state, by world political and legal standards they are still its subjects, with all its consequences. It is also true that many negotiations have been initiated for the solution of the Cyprus issue. Since the peace negotiations started in Beirut in 1968, seven U.N. secretaries-general have been in office, including Guterres. Also, during this period, the leaders changed five times on the Turkish side and seven times on the Greek side, including those who are currently in office. At least six special representatives for Cyprus and Heads of the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus have been appointed by the U.N.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, the U.S. and the U.N. leaders clearly understand that either formal annexation [to Türkiye] or a "legitimate" northern Cyprus is *de facto* Türkiye. Thus, since 2018, Cyprus has begun joint military exercises and training with the U.S., sent its first security attaché to Washington and begun to receive U.S. troops and ships. In December 2021, American Foreign State secretary, said "*cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus is at a historic high*".<sup>25</sup> Moreover, because of the changing political dynamics in the island,<sup>26</sup> the U.N. leadership after the last round of substantive negotiations at the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana in 2017, remained optimistic, claiming that: "*The essence of a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem is practically there. The parties had come close to reaching a strategic understanding on security and guarantees as well as on all other outstanding core elements of a comprehensive settlement*". Yet, a senior diplomat with deep knowledge of the talks said that "*the open issues left over from Crans-Montana ... are trifling*." As perhaps nebulous remains any solution of the Cyprus problem leading to its unification, given the current political and strategic structure and the diplomatic progress made.

From the perspective of the Cypriot Diaspora the consequential grievances of an unlawful invasion and partition of Cyprus by Türkiye and the struggle for a reunification

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<sup>24</sup> In December 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the appointment of Canadian diplomat Colin Stewart as his new special representative for Cyprus and head of the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. Stewart then arrived on the island, succeeding Elizabeth Spehar, the former head of the same mission. Admittedly, Stewart's appointment is an important step toward a solution for the Cyprus issue as it shows the U.N. is invested in solving the problem.

<sup>25</sup> John Psaropoulos' article in *Al Jazeera*, 21.6.21, following weeks after United Nations-led talks in April failed to resuscitate negotiations to reunify Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot "foreign minister" has told *Al Jazeera* that the UN process is dead.

<sup>26</sup> The Turkish lira plummeted throughout 2020 and 2021, reflecting investors' concerns about rising unemployment, slowing growth and political uncertainty, as a rift grew between Türkiye and its Western allies.

resolution had as their ultimate goal to reinforce intra-communal cohesion, averting or alleviating ideological differences. The welfare and notable contribution of Diaspora's Cypriots therefore was not a creation *ex nihilo* but was due to the great zeal of many years of intensive endeavours and sacrifices by the Cypriot migrants. With reference to organized Cypriot Hellenism and its collective bodies in Australia, the struggle for the reunification of the island was launched on two courses of mobilization. The first was the path of constant vigilance, with relentless communication of its leadership with global international forums, so that the leaderships of the latter were persistently pressed for a solution to the problem, decrying Turkish intransigence and guilt for the invasion and occupation. The other sequence sought dialogue and understanding with their Turkish Cypriot compatriots, not only in Australia but also internationally, so that the issue of the reunification of Cyprus would be a common decision of all Cypriots.

For example, Christos Violaris, one of the longest and most consistently serving Cypriot immigrant leaders, addressed numerous letters and reports to British, Australian and world leaders, illustrating in a vivacious and concrete narrative, yet without excessive veneration, his plea for justice for Cyprus.<sup>27</sup> For example, on 28 November 2005, he wrote to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair protesting the "British indifference" in resolving the prolonged Cyprus crisis. In reply, Sean Norsworthy, the attaché of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, reiterated that U.K. maintains and will continue to maintain the "*long-standing policy of non-recognition of the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" raised by the recognised leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community, Mr. Tala'*" and insisted that "*the bizonal, bicomunal federation remains the only realistic foundation on which a comprehensive settlement can be reached*". However, the high-ranking British authority did not stop short in reminding Ch. Violaris that "*it was a matter of deep regret that negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement ended in failure in 2004, with the rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots*".<sup>28</sup>

How to augment the communication and improve the relations with the Turkish Cypriots in Melbourne was also another burning question for Australia's Cypriot leaders and their administration. To this end they collaborated with the President of the Federation of the Cypriot Communities of Australia (FECCA), Panikos Mina and held several meetings with the Turkish Cypriot delegations at the club room premises of the

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<sup>27</sup> Reference is made to Ch. Violaris' letter to British P.M. Tony Blair and Sean Norsworthy response. See also letter of Ch. Violaris to the Australian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, R. J. Hawke, and Bill Hayden respectively and the reply by Senator Susan Ryan, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister, Research File 2, *Cyprian Archives in Melbourne*.

<sup>28</sup> The two communities were asked whether they approved of the fifth revision of the United Nations proposal for reuniting the island, which had been divided since 1974.

Cyprus Community of Melbourne and Victoria (CCMV).<sup>29</sup> Following several meetings involving the Federation of Turkish Cypriots with their counterparts, the Federation of Cyprian Communities of Australia (FECCA), it was agreed to hold their joint Festival on 20 February 2005. It was during the 2000s when the Cypriots (Turkish and Greek) residing in the Diaspora took a keener interest once again on matters referring to their communal re-approachment. In a systematic attempt to re-invent their mutual intercommunal interests in a reunifying Cyprus, they gave appropriate thought and action in building an environment of dialogue. Those involved were all practical men who were required to face the concrete facts of the prevailing situation. They were mostly original minds who found the opportunity to answer questions which demanded solution(s) with increasing insistency. Naturally they were confronted with many problems when they sought to develop a workable and mutually accepted methods of contact. The cultivation of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot relations and the striving for exquisite forms of communications found all manner of expression in political, social, sporting, athletic and intellectual life. The notion of re-approachment of the two Cypriot communities invaded the agendas of their organizations, commencing systematically especially during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In innumerable ways they contributed to the transformation of deeply entrenched ideals and notions of a genuine good will and mutual trust. First, had been the role of the Union Movement, involving progressive, radical, and far-sighting leaders from both Cyprian communities and their counterparts in Australia. In late 2001, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, members of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Australian Trade Union Movement undertook the mission to convene a forum in Victoria to discuss the motifs and the parameters of a possible re-approachment of the two communities. A cluster of determined leaders, including Tümer Mimi, Ali Genc (president, Turkish Cypriot Federation, Victoria), Erdil Nami, Panikos Mina (president, FECCA), Michalis Michael and George Zangalis, entered an agreement to invite from Cyprus Babis Kyritsis, the president of the Cypriot Workers Union (PEO) and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart, Ali Kule in an assembly with delegates from the most dynamic Australian industrial and commercial Unions, including the Ford and General Motors. Kyritsis, Kule, Mina, and Genc after constructive deliberations found a common ground on most significant areas, including one re-unified Cyprus, parity for all and one citizenship. Cypriots Kule and Kyritsis appeared then on Greek and Turkish Cypriot radio programs and voiced their collaboration and accord.

These union movement-based initiatives were augmented during the years that followed with the involvement of university researchers, peace activists, unionists, and

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<sup>29</sup> Several meetings took place between the two communal delegations during the period 2004-2005: including joint meetings of 1.11.2004, also, 10.11.2004, the joint festival on 20.2.2005, in CCMV *Minutes*, 4.11.2004, Items 2. 2-3, p. 1.

intellectuals, encouraging tolerance and transparency. They also included more frequent visits of Greek and Turkish Cypriot unionists to Australia, including those of Kostis Toiranides and Ali Yaman in Melbourne and in Sydney, which left "*flawless impressions to all, even those who were most suspicious*".<sup>30</sup> The role of Australia was also of decisive importance. Although she had been greatly exalted in her role as a peacekeeping Force of the U.N. since 1964, her direct involvement first with Senator Jim Short as her permanent envoy on the Cyprus issue and later, in addition, with Alexander Downer with his U.N. mission, Australia was indiscriminately pushing for a fair solution through its High Commissioners serving in Cyprus. Severity too often characterized their role and Australia's Greek Cypriots were often complaining of the imbalance share of fairness allocated to Turkish grievances in Cyprus. Nevertheless, exchanged correspondence<sup>31</sup> clearly attests that in many cases, Greek Cypriot leaders were compelled to petition and censure the diplomatic credentials or judgments made by both Short and Downer.<sup>32</sup>

The 24 April 2004 rejection by referendum of the U.N. settlement plan by the Greek Cypriots had adversely affected the international institutions and agencies, expressing their disappointment.<sup>33</sup> Three days after the referendums, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer issued an urgent Media Release expressing Australia's disappointment and "*Australia's appreciation for the extensive efforts made by the U.N. Secretary-General to find a settlement to the dispute*".<sup>34</sup> However, the diplomatic setback and impasse that followed the rejection of the U.N. Plan by the Greek Cypriot community was partially offset by Cyprus admission to the E.U. and its foreign ministers' consideration to ensure that all Cypriots could benefit from the economic, political and security benefits that E.U. membership provided. The reaction of Türkiye, in anticipation of her plausible membership in E.U., had been rather cautious, attempting to promote a collaborative image and admitting its commitment "*to continue with the comprehensive*

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<sup>30</sup> P. Mina's Annual President of FECCA Report, 7-9 April 2006, pp. 4-5, Wellington, *Cyprian Archives*.

<sup>31</sup> Panikos Mina's Records on Re-approachment, Research File on CCNS, *Cyprian Archives*.

<sup>32</sup> Mina as president of FECCA confessed that "*I am not happy with his [Short] overall role, however, we try not to distant him from our group*". P. Mina's Annual President of FECCA Report, 7-9.4.2006, pp. 4-5, Wellington, Research File on Cyprian Community of Northern Suburbs of Melbourne (CCNS), *Cyprian Archives*.

<sup>33</sup> According to FECCA's records, following the OXI (NO) referendum result of the Greek Cypriots, the American and British government delegations applied a systematic pressure for the adoption of the Annan's Plan in UN Security Council. However, France and Russia voted against, in alignment with the decision of the Greek Cypriots and the motion was defeated. See also P. Mina interview, 22.3.2022, Research File on CCNS.

<sup>34</sup> Media Release titled *Referenda Results in Cyprus*, number Fa57- 27.4.2004, Research File on CCNS.



*reforms to be undertaken to further enhance democracy*".<sup>35</sup> Despite the political numbness that the Referendums had caused in Canberra, FECCA successfully intensified its efforts to convince the Australian J. Howard Government to maintain the post of Australia's Special Envoy, Jim Short, as well as Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the UNFICYP presence in Cyprus. P. Mina in his letters to Australian MOFA, A. Downer (November 22,2004) and Australian Senators (November 18,2004), petitioned in favor of Jim Short "*who is very well informed with the Cyprus issue*" and maintains "*excellent relationships with the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities*".<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, Greek and Turkish Cypriots leaders in Melbourne, the State capital city with the highest concentration of Cypriots, continued their contacts on re-approachment, which were becoming with the time more populous and more widely accepted. The idea of a re-unified Cyprus, remained pronouncedly patriotic amongst them and tended to stir the critical zeal of the old as well as the younger members, including those who had no experience of a united Cyprus. The moral and political support of those who had outlived the difficult period of communal unrest (1962-1964) was also important, as they could exercise profound influence. Erdil Nami, a former policeman in the Republic of Cyprus, in 1964 was arrested and detained by militant Turkish guerrillas in Nicosia for refusing to act "patriotically". He was liberated by the Cypriot forces and was offered protection and safe harbour first in Germany and later in Sydney, Australia. His grandson, Erdil Nami, during the most recent years, was elected as Turkish Cypriot negotiator and president of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce and played a key role in the discussions for re-approachment.

During this period, those committed Turkish Cypriot leaders to re-approachment included Tümer Mimi, his daughter Nitel Mimi, Ali Genc and his brother Kubilay Genc, Aygan Ozkan, Yalcin Adal, Niyazi Okten, Halil Adal, Yuksel Adal, brothers Ismail and Zac Ulusoy, Erdil Nami, whilst several other politicians, including parliamentarian Natali Suleiman and Sam Davet professed an understanding for a united Cyprus, with parity and justice for all. The organized leaders of FECCA and its president P. Mina had found common grounds with those Turkish Cypriot leaders on matters related to peaceful co-existence and collaboration. So, when in early November 2005 was announced by visiting Turkish parliamentarian Egemen Bagis that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was planning an official visit to Australia in December 2005, the members of the re-approachment group acted with caution and mutual respect. Understanding and

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<sup>35</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül's Statement, 24.1.2006, p. 1, Research File on CCNS.

<sup>36</sup> Mina and FECCA's letter to Australian MOFA, A. Downer, 22.11.2004; also: Mina and FECCA's letter to Sen. Christopher Martin Ellison, Minister for Justice, 18.11.2004; also: Reply by Chris Ellison to P. Mina, 30.12.2004; Research File on CCNS.



common sense found their way into their discussions and deliberations. According to Bagis "*part of his [Erdoğan] political agenda is to ask for measures from the Australian Government towards ending the so-called 'isolation of the Turkish Cypriots' including extending an invitation to Turkish Cypriot leader and so-called 'president of the TRNC', Mehmet Ali Talat to visit Australia*".<sup>37</sup> Mina and FECCA in response brought the matter to Australian Prime Minister informing his office that the so-called "*isolation of the Turkish Cypriots*" was nothing but a self-imposed political instrument by Türkiye to promote a separate state entity in the occupied northern part of Cyprus. Nevertheless, Turkish-Cypriot entities residing in the Diaspora, including Australia, continued their re-approachment series for a reunified Cyprus convened the Istanbul Conference 27-29 December 2006. They met at Richmond Hotel in Constantinople "*to start a new dialogue away from the negative atmosphere found in Cyprus and to discuss about the immediate steps that should be taken for the aim of solution*".<sup>38</sup>

The ideological differences between those supporting the *Enosis* and those of an Independent Cyprus maintained their thrust in Australia, but with weakening intensity, after the second decade of the twenty-first century. While Cyprus' reunification had dominated the procedures and assemblies of community leaders, the applied terms and conditions for an accepted solution put forward by the leaders of international institutions, including the U.N. and the E.U., were met with certain dissention. Greek and Cypriot dignitaries and academics mingled and debated with the community leaders. Usually, any proposed plan was ending in a debacle. In several cases, including the *Annan's Plan*, nationalism asserted itself successfully within the Cypriot Greeks because of the political quarrel characterizing the domestic affairs of the Republic. This nationalism was rested upon maximalist aspirations which were also cultivated to a large extend because of Cyprus' inclusion to the E.U. and the hostility of the Turks.

The refusal of the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots to accept the *Annan Plan* in 2004, arguably preserved internationally the universal recognition of its sovereignty of a single Republic of Cyprus in its favour, with its unilateral representation internationally, and its exclusive worldwide recognition as the Republic of Cyprus. It also secured its *status quo*, following more than twenty years as member the European Union, representing exclusively all its nationals, regardless of race or religion, without giving benefits or special treatment to the Turkish Cypriots of the occupied areas. Taking advantage of Ankara's narrow Türkiye-centre policy on the occupied areas, as being a *de*

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<sup>37</sup> P. Pina's FECCA letter to P.M. John Howard, 21.11.2005; also: letter to Kim Beasley, 4.12.2005; Research File on CCNS.

<sup>38</sup> *Istanbul Conference, Peace for a United Cyprus* (26-29.12.2006), Richmond Hotel, Istanbul, Research File on Victoria.

*facto* Türkiye, ideologically and politically, the Republic of Cyprus has achieved the promotion of the reunification of the island as a single, bizonal and federal state structure, in full compliance with the principles of the UN, the European Union and the entire international community. During the post-Annan period, the Cypriots cultivated and strengthened almost exclusively the dialogue with the Turkish Cypriots in Istanbul, London, Nicosia and in host countries receiving Cypriot immigrants, for the reunification of the island. Greek Cypriots have organized and performed jointly with Turkish Cypriots, conferences, musical and athletic competitions that have encouraged or advocated for the reunification of the island. However, despite the fact that for decades there has been no intercommunal violence on the island, at least 30,000 Turkish troops remain in the occupied areas, which raises serious security concerns for both Communities.

Analysing and evaluating the above data, I will conclude that Türkiye will no longer be keen to accept a balanced and compromise solution, which would ensure the equal treatment of Turkish Cypriots and their peaceful and harmonized cohabitation, within a single federal state structure. Perhaps Turkish Prime Minister Mustafa Bülent Ecevit, a scholar, poet and writer, did not seek such a solution when he made the decision to invade Cyprus fifty years ago. I believe that Türkiye's aim has always been to occupy and detach territories of Cyprus for strategic reasons and augmentation of its sovereignty. Reinforcing her objective of annexing these Cypriot territories, ensued the transplantation of thousands of Anatolian settlers, converting them into a province of Türkiye, obviously regardless of whether the Turkish Cypriots who for centuries lived together and experienced the common fate with their Greek Cypriot compatriots, would eventually become victims of an Anatolian colonization, which deprived them of their right to have a homeland of their own. Most of them will transmit with increasing anguish to their descendants, residing in the occupied territories as well as the Diaspora as migrants and refugees, that the invasion of Cyprus by Türkiye eventually enslaved those it was called upon to liberate.

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