

Settlements in Unended Conflicts: The Case of Cyprus

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Abstract

Cyprus is an unended conflict despite many intercommunal negotiations and the best efforts of the international community. The paper begins with a brief overview of the nature of settlements, followed by a synopsis of the recent history of the Cyprus conflict. The brunt of the paper is an analysis of contemporary Cyprus concentrating on the period since the Annan Plan, ending with the current intercommunal negotiations. The emphasis is on the difficulties in arriving at a settlement which help to explain why this protracted conflict remains neither settled nor resolved.

Keywords: Protracted conflict, conflict settlement, Cyprus conflict, United Nations, European Union

Introduction

Since the Turkish military intervention of 1974 there have been numerous international diplomatic initiatives aimed at restoring the unity of Cyprus. All have failed. The most recent was the Annan Plan, which was accepted by the Turkish Cypriots but rejected, by a large majority, by the Greek Cypriots. A new effort began on 3 September 2008 and is still in progress. The original premise of this paper was that settlement was progressively more unlikely because, with increasing interaction between individuals, enterprises and institutions in the two communities across the Green Line and abroad, the need for a settlement had declined and with it the imperative for a formal agreement. There is not a hurting stalemate sufficient to induce the parties to take a risk which may explain why there is no movement towards a settlement when, to an outside observer, there appears no insuperable impediment to one. The paper begins with a short discussion of the nature of settlements, followed by a brief synopsis of the recent history of Cyprus. The brunt of the paper is a discussion of a situation in which life is relatively comfortable for both communities but there still hangs over them unfinished business of a potentially catastrophic nature while at the same time the barriers do not seem to be inherently insurmountable.

1 Keith Webb made a substantial contribution to this paper despite being seriously ill. He died on 14 March 2008. He will be remembered as a true scholar and gentleman. For this reason not all the references are complete or in place for which understanding is requested in the circumstances.

The Nature of Settlements

What do we mean by a 'settlement' in violent conflict? In common parlance, it is an agreement which in some way is accepted by two or more parties. Once a settlement is achieved, the dispute between the parties is considered to be at an end. In reality, of course, there are often issues that remain but these are not considered germane or reason for the continuance of violent conflict. A degree of acceptance is given by both or all parties. Here we identify four modes of settlement, which are not, however, necessarily mutually exclusive, in the sense that there can be overlap. The typology is, therefore, an heuristic device rather than a strict classification.

The first type of settlement to which we draw attention is what we term a 'unilateral *Diktat*'. In these cases settlement and the end of violent conflict is imposed by the stronger party, usually as the result of an outright victory. In short, the victor determines the nature of the settlement and imposes it on the loser. It is rare, however, that the loser has no power whatsoever since victors usually need some local cooperation in order to govern and in so doing have to confer power on indigenous bodies. Examples of this are the settlements initially imposed on Germany and Japan in the occupation following the Second World War. A variant of this is the total destruction of the enemy. Fortunately, even with such a genocidal intention and behaviour, it is rarely possible wholly to destroy the enemy although the Romans had a good try in their victory over Carthage.

The second type of settlement is what can be termed a 'negotiated settlement'. This is a far more common form, and will usually involve compromise. Examples would include the Northern Ireland settlement or the constitutional trifurcation that characterises the settlement between the Walloons and the Flemish in Belgium. This kind of settlement is often marked by two features. First, external parties are frequently involved. These may be either first-track or second-track actors, or often, some combination of the two. In the Northern Irish case external first-track actors included the British government, the Irish government, and the United States while there were numerous second-track interventions ranging from fact-finding missions to actual attempts to facilitate or mediate. Secondly, negotiated settlements will often take many years to achieve and may be accompanied, in a bicomunal context, by considerable violence. This mode of settlement is that which has been adopted by the international community in the case of Cyprus.

The third type of 'settlement' is what we term a 'stasis' settlement. In this case the actual physical violent conflict has ended, and in the case of Cyprus it seems unlikely to be resumed, but no actual agreement has occurred. Instead, there is an implicit acceptance of the situation in spite of the rhetoric and smoke. There are agreements and acceptances by the parties on small issues, there is a conversation between the parties, but the major issues remain unresolved. It is this kind of 'unended settlement' that we identify as pertinent to Cyprus.

Finally, there is the possibility of a 'full resolution' of the conflict. In such a situation all the parties to the dispute have taken a full part in the peace process and consider, on a basis of full knowledge and without any manifest or structural coercion, that their interests have been met and their values fulfilled. The parties to the dispute are those who hold a veto power. If they are not

satisfied, then they will have to be coerced or they will wreck the agreement thus obviating a resolution. If, however, they give their accord then a new set of relationships develops between the parties, which may be close or distant, which is self-sustaining without coercion. The long process of Franco-German conflict resolution from Churchill's Zurich speech in 1946 to the Charter of Paris and the reunification of Germany at the beginning of the 1990s demonstrates that resolution is possible even in conflicts that last for decades.

In our initial thoughts the third kind of settlement was apposite with respect to Cyprus and we felt that there would not be a fully fledged settlement – by which we mean a re-unification of the island under an agreed constitution within the common state, probably accompanied by demilitarization – since the constant small accommodations removed the irritants which would have led to negotiations and a full settlement. While there has been some accommodation – such as the opening of crossings between north and south – these are not of a sufficient order to move the situation. Only in the last few months have the 'technical committees' proposed by the UN got off the ground and the high level talks, following the Greek Cypriot elections, have given signs of more than a ritual round of negotiations. Nevertheless, the resounding rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots suggests that the going is not likely to be easy.

A Brief Background to the Cyprus Conflict

Cyprus has been invaded and conquered many times. At no time prior to 1960 had it ever been truly autonomous. While always culturally a Hellenistic island, there have always been other cultural incursions of which the most obvious one is Ottoman. At present some 18% of the island's population is culturally Turkish and Muslim, while the vast numerical majority is culturally Greek and Orthodox. In the past the two communities lived together, but largely separately. Even in mixed villages there were separate cafés, a church and a mosque, two languages neither of which was *lingua franca* for the other community (English was for the elites) and there was virtually no intermarriage. Only to a limited degree were they Cypriots since their prime sense of identity was derived from their respective 'motherlands' – Greece and Turkey – although recent surveys suggest that this has changed significantly in the Greek Cypriot community.²

However, rather than go back into the depths of time, let the story begin in 1878 when Britain leased Cyprus from the declining Ottoman Empire. This effectively gave Britain naval control of the whole Mediterranean and protected the recently acquired Suez Canal. It also gave Britain a *place d'armes* from which to support the Ottomans against Russian incursions. Britain continued to administer Cyprus until it was annexed in the First World War and in 1925 became a British Crown Colony, which was recognised in the Treaty of Lausanne. It retained this status until 1960 when Cyprus achieved independence.

2 See Hubert Faustmann (2008) 'Aspects of Political Culture in Cyprus' in James Ker-Lindsay and Hubert Faustmann (eds.), *The Government and Politics of Cyprus*. London: Peter Lang, p. 21.

The Turkish Cypriots were always less keen on an end to British colonial rule than were the Greek Cypriots. First, they feared being dominated by the numerical Greek majority, and secondly, for some Greek Cypriot activists, the British departure was linked to *enosis* or union with Greece. In this case, rather than being a minority on a small island, the Turkish Cypriots would be an even smaller minority within a much larger country. The radical demand for *enosis* emerged effectively in 1931 and was a constant if not always dominant theme up to 1960. The cultural relationship between Greece and Cyprus was always an asymmetrical one. While Greek Cypriots looked to Greece and particularly Athens as the centre of Greek culture, the Greeks viewed Cypriots very much as country cousins. The Turkish Cypriots, a smaller and poorer community, did not at that time demonstrate such strong ties towards the Kemalist state.

During the Second World War, Greek Cypriots supported the British, especially after Greece was invaded and occupied while Turkey, on the other hand, was neutral. The British retention of the island after the Second World War led to the formation of EOKA, a militant and violent guerrilla organisation fighting for *enosis*. This led, in its turn, to the formation of the TMT, a Turkish Cypriot military group organised to combat EOKA. One consequence of this was a vastly increased British military involvement in Cyprus, with mounting levels of violence. Two factors enhanced the EOKA campaign. First, decolonisation, particularly of the British and French empires was gathering pace, encouraged by the UN and the US. Secondly, the mountainous terrain of Cyprus made it, for a while, effective guerrilla country, but by 1956 the British had it under control and the violence moved to the towns. In spite of the small population of Cyprus – or more specifically the Greek Cypriots – it was a colonial war that could not be won politically even if it could be controlled militarily at some cost. After long negotiations in Zurich and London, independence was granted in 1960. However, it was a form of independence that neither Greek nor Turkish Cypriots wanted. It was imposed upon them by Greece, Turkey and Britain.³

While, because of their numerical majority, the Greek Cypriots had the predominant role, safeguards were built into the constitution for the protection of the Turkish Cypriots. The Vice-President was a Turkish Cypriot, and there were certain embedded Turkish Cypriot vetoes. There were three guarantor Powers – Greece, Turkey and Britain. The British kept two Sovereign Base Areas for British military use, one outside Larnaca and the other outside Limassol. The new President was the towering figure of Archbishop Makarios, who in 1963 instigated thirteen amendments to the constitution which led to immediate communal violence due to their rejection by the Turkish Cypriots. In effect the proposed amendments would have nullified the Turkish Cypriot safeguards. British forces came out of their bases and maintained a relative peace until a United Nations force arrived and took over.⁴ But communal violence continued and a substantial

3 For an analysis of the period until independence in 1960, see John Reddaway (1987) *Burdened with Cyprus: The British Connection*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Nancy Crawshaw (1978) *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece*. London: Allen and Unwin.

4 James Ker-Lindsay (2004) *Britain and the Cyprus Crises, 1963-4*. Mannheim: Bibliopolis.

number of Turkish Cypriots (about half the community) were incarcerated in enclaves covering some 3% of the island's surface in very difficult conditions and unable to exercise any substantial freedom of movement. This induced a real sense of trauma in the Turkish Cypriot community.

Equally traumatic for the Greek Cypriots was the Turkish military intervention in northern Cyprus in 1974. This occurred in response to the military coup against President Makarios led by Nicos Sampson with the backing of the Greek military Junta in Athens. Makarios fled abroad and Turkey intervened in Cyprus in two waves eventually controlling nearly one-third of the island. Sampson, an extremely violent man, was well-known for his hatred of Turks, and was the last person that Turkish Cypriots and Turkey would have wanted to see in power. Turkey, citing its rights under the Treaty of Guarantee, had little alternative but to act. In 1974 and 1975 there was a period of what would later be called ethnic cleansing, finalised by an exchange of populations under the supervision of the UN so that, in essence these were now two separate monoethnic regions. The Green Line became a buffer zone patrolled by the UN peacekeeping force. In addition to some 40,000 Turkish troops in northern Cyprus, a large number of 'settlers' were brought in by Turkey, drawn by the promise of jobs, land, and houses. Much of the land and houses in north Cyprus that went to the Turkish Cypriots from the south and the Turkish incomers, were previously owned by Greek Cypriots, a point that remains contentious between the parties today. However, it is often forgotten that Turkish Cypriots lost land and property in the south. Only recently has the Green Line become porous allowing Greek Cypriots to go to the north and Turkish Cypriots to go to the south. While both communities have taken advantage of this changed situation, they have not done as much as might have been anticipated. However, the presence of some 9,000 Turkish Cypriot workers in the south is not insignificant.

In November 1983 Rauf Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot leader, proclaimed the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'. This entity is recognised only by Turkey. In all other international spheres the Greek Cypriots seized the legal and sovereign entity which is called the Republic of Cyprus. Since 1964, Cyprus has meant the Republic of Cyprus as controlled by the Greek Cypriots, an asset which they have always been assiduous to protect. This has proved to be a major stumbling block in all the negotiations since that time.

Many of the issues that prevent settlement were reinforced or established at this time such as that of the 'refugees'. For Greek Cypriots the term 'refugee' refers to those who were driven out by the Turks and Turkish Cypriots. The term summons up the vision of desperately poor people living under the threat of violence in wretched conditions. But Greek Cypriot refugees are nothing like this. Most have decent jobs, houses and many are still receiving government pensions. Likewise Turkish Cypriot refugees have found their place in the north. Both communities suffered greatly in the process of the exchange of populations which were in some regards the final stage of the Treaty of Lausanne. A further problem is land. The settlers and the Turkish Cypriots appropriated much Greek Cypriot land and Turkish Cypriots lost some of their land too. This is not an insuperable problem since legally acceptable ownership arrangements and various forms of compensation can be built into a settlement. A third issue is the 'missing persons', that is those

Greek and Turkish Cypriots who disappeared during the hostilities of 1974. Recently progress has been made on this issue and a number of them have been identified by their DNA. A fourth issue is security. This is again a declining issue. It is almost inconceivable that Turkey would invade the south, particularly since Cyprus has become a member of the European Union and Turkey is negotiating to join the Union. A symbol of this is perhaps the progressive de-mining of the buffer zone. Indeed, the European Union has just granted a further four million euros to advance the process, which is to be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. But probably the most contentious issue is that of sovereignty and state structure since it raises the issue of whether, on re-unification, the state is to be a unitary state, a federated state or a confederal one. This is about power and power-sharing. To what degree would the Turkish Cypriots have a veto with respect to the numerical majority and what does this mean in terms of effective participation? In 1963 Makarios' thirteen points revision of the constitution of the 1960 treaty sought substantially to attenuate if not eliminate entirely the Turkish Cypriot veto. Both the 1960 constitution and the Annan Plan gave Turkish Cypriots more representation and power than was warranted if their numbers were the only issue. In effect it largely accepted the Turkish Cypriot position that the question was not one of minority rights but a partnership between two (equal) communities.

In this brief outline four other issues ought to be raised beginning with the unprecedented economic growth of the island since 1974. While it is probably going a little too far to describe Cyprus as a peasant society between the two world wars – major industries were agriculture, fishing and mining – it could not be described as a developed society. But after 1974 both communities made tremendous economic progress, though significantly more so in the south than the north. The north was subsidised by Turkey, largely because it was cut off from direct links with the outside world, in effect by measures taken by the Greek Cypriot government of the Republic of Cyprus. The south displayed great entrepreneurship to become a prosperous society. In all the main cities (Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos) the major shops of the West can be found and there are some flourishing industries, especially offshore banking among other financial services. Tourism is perhaps the major industry, accounting for some 20% of GDP and is a constant theme in the local press. Agriculture, which has great symbolic importance in Cyprus, now accounts for only about 4% of GNP. In the recent enlargement of the European Union, Cyprus ranked second in terms of GDP of the ten new members and it has an enviably low rate of unemployment.⁵

The second major recent development was the accession to the EU. This was seen by the Cyprus Government as important in a number of ways. First, there was a security perception. While it is almost inconceivable that Turkey would invade the south, membership of the EU was seen as an extra layer of security. It also gave Cyprus the right of veto over Turkey's accession talks, though the threat of a veto is probably more important than the veto itself. The second factor was the economic aspect. Entry into the EU was expected to enlarge access to markets. The third aspect

5 It is too early to assess the effects of the economic and financial crisis in Cyprus.

was that membership gave Cyprus a seat at the top table in Europe and thus more influence than it had previously enjoyed. In other ways, of course, the conditions of the *acquis communautaire* reined in some of the proclivities of Cyprus. The integration of Cyprus with Europe has been further deepened now that Cyprus has joined the Eurozone.

The third major recent development was the Annan Plan and its rejection by the Greek Cypriots.⁶ The Annan Plan was only the last of many UN attempts to broker a settlement between the two parties. Many other external actors have made attempts to heal the breach, such as the United States, Britain, the EU, and numerous other state and non-state actors. All have failed and stasis remains. The problem is that the longer stasis prevails, the more institutionalised the division becomes thereby making a settlement more difficult and less likely.

A fourth, but to date largely unregarded element in recent Cypriot developments, is the increasing cosmopolitanism of the society. Put another way, the dilution of Cypriot identity is underway. With the ultimate rejection of *enosis* following the failed 1974 coup, there emerged among Greek Cypriots an emphasis on 'Cypriotness' which was different from 'Greekness'. The first source, and perhaps the less important, is the impact of the 'Charlies', that is those Cypriots who have worked abroad, sometimes for many years, in Britain, the United States, South Africa or Australia, who return with broader perspectives and usually more money than the indigenous population. While they retain their traditional family ties there is, nonetheless, a certain tension. In the north the same tensions exist, but to a lesser degree. There a major strain persists between the indigenous Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish immigrants and army. The second source of change concerns immigration. There are various estimates of how many non-indigenous people are working in Cyprus, largely because there are a lot of illegal and seasonal workers. Leaving aside the tourists and holiday makers, some estimates are as high as one-third of the population for Greek Cyprus and rather less for north Cyprus. Without them the economy would be in dire straits. In the major towns the cafés, hotels, restaurants, car washes and the like are almost all entirely dependent on imported labour. One of the driving forces of the Cypriot economy, more so in the south than the north, but this is changing, is the building industry. Everywhere, but particularly in the coastal areas, there are buildings going up. Added to this, are the 'retirees'. These are mostly British (some 10,000) but other nationalities as well, drawn by the climate and the cheaper cost of living. Hence there are British, Bangladeshis, Russians, Sri Lankans, Philipinos, Moldovans, Serbs, Lebanese and a host of other nationalities. The common language is English, as it is among many Cypriots returning from working abroad. This would not be as true in the small villages, but much of commerce and trade is conducted in English. Most of these incomers are apolitical and have no vote, except in local and European elections for EU nationals, and have little interest in Greek or Turkish Cypriot politics, and hence have no interest in whether there is a

6 See A.J.R. Groom (2007) 'No End in Sight in Cyprus', *The International History Review*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4.

settlement except, perhaps, the owners of 'dodgy' property in the north. While there may be no direct relationship on the settlement issue, the sheer numbers are steadily changing the nature of Cypriot society. Under EU legislation, after a number of years of residence these immigrants have the same rights as the indigenous population and could in the future become an important political as well as economic and cultural force.

PROBLEMS IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT TO THE CYPRUS CONFLICT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE⁷

The Egocentricity of Local Power

Cyprus is a small island which in the past has been in a strategic location. The British retain control over the two military Sovereign Base Areas which can be used in emergencies, such as the Lebanese crises, but in the main they are listening and monitoring bases. The importance of Cyprus has shrunk both strategically and as an object of interest to external actors, with the exception of Turkey. Yet the divided nature of the society dominates political discourse on the island among the political elite and the media. To take one day as an example (9 August 2007) in the Greek Cypriot press – *Alithia*: "The Turks Prefer Tassos"; *Machi*: "Turkish Cypriots making Threats over Oil Reserves"; *Politis*: "41 tanks for National Guard"; *Simerini*: "Turkish Threats Heighten over Petrol". The communal divide dominates all other issues, but no progress is made to resolve it.

Added to this, the communal divide gives the parochial political elite, with its propensity for populist antics, a status on the world stage that they would not have if the island were united. Cyprus is very small. Nevertheless, barely a day goes by without some foreign dignitary visiting the island – from Poland, Bulgaria, Belgium, the United States – meeting with the President or the Foreign Minister and making anodyne statements to the effect that the international community must help to solve the 'Cyprus Problem'. If it were not for the communal divide, how else could the political elite get taken seriously by some of the top world decision-makers? It may be going too far to say that the political elite *enjoy* the communal divide but they certainly exploit it to enhance their personal status and the importance of the island in world politics. There are benefits to the communal divide. These are enhanced by the use of both communities, and especially the Greek Cypriots, of a clear and valued identity as 'victims'. To be sure they are victims, and often because

7 For an analysis of the various attempts to negotiate a settlement, see Oliver Richmond (1998) *Mediating in Cyprus: The Cypriot Communities and the United Nations*. London: Frank Cass; Joseph S. Joseph (1997) *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics*. Houndmills: Macmillan; Clement Dodd (ed.) (1993), *Cyprus The Political, Social and Economic Development of Northern Cyprus*. Huntingdon: The Eothen Press; John Koumoulides (ed.) (1986) *Cyprus in Transition 1960-1985*. London: Trigraph.

of their own doing, but, given the current state of the conflict, it is a well-worn, almost cosy, rhetoric which is often resorted to as an argument to plead for a special status which others must respect, acknowledge and do something to alleviate. The Greek Cypriots, in particular, have got such moaning to a fine art. This is not to say, however, that Cyprus does not have a special status.

Costas Constantinou has rightly pointed to Cypriot 'states of exception' and comments,

"... that not much is normal with the state of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus (RoC) was intended to function as a state of exception from its very inception; an exception to the principle of self-determination, an exception to the withdrawal of colonial armies, an exception to independence from the 'motherlands' and an exception to the unfettered exercise of sovereignty."

Cyprus is, therefore, far "... from an idealised western norm that was never instituted, a norm promising – yet not delivering – genuine self-governance, sovereign authority and state equality."⁸ Harry Anastasiou shows how this special status has persisted and bedevils the position of Cyprus in the EU since it was

"... the first EU member country that was ethnically divided; that was represented at EU level exclusively by members of one of the rival ethnic communities; that was partially occupied by the military forces of an EU candidate state; that had the institutional means to apply the *acquis communautaire* in one part of its territory but not in another; that had a cease-fire line and a buffer zone manned by UN peacekeepers; and that had one portion of its citizens deprived of the right to their property and residence and another portion of its citizens deprived of the right of access to and participation in the EU economy and EU political institutions. Moreover, Cyprus was the only EU member where its major ethnic communities recognise EU law while simultaneously rejecting each other's law; where its major ethnic communities accept the legitimacy of the EU while rejecting each other's legitimacy within their own shared island."⁹

In addition to this, the 'TRNC' is a pathfinder and a precedent for others whether it be Kosovo, Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

While there can be little contention that, as Cypriots claim, Cyprus is different, there is much contention over why this is so. The Greek Cypriots have what many find an annoying tendency to blame others – anyone but themselves, be it Britain, the 'motherland', the UN, the EU – for their predicament. They are the eternal victims who need to be cherished and succoured because of their exceptional status and victimhood. Moreover, they have a split personality. No one can deny that the economic recovery of the south after the *de facto* partition of 1974-5 was truly remarkable – initiative, flair, imagination, determination, courage, hard work, sacrifice – but these

8 Costas M. Constantinou (2008) 'On the Cypriot States of Exception', *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 145.

9 Harry Anastasiou (2009) 'Cyprus as the EU Anomaly', *Global Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 131.

are precisely the characteristics that are lacking in the Greek Cypriot approach to their political situation aided and abetted, it must be added, by a like obduracy by the Turkish Cypriots on many an occasion – hence the egocentricity of local power.

The Hurting Stalemate

According to both theory and practice, realistic negotiations towards a settlement are more likely to occur where there is a ‘hurting stalemate’. A hurting stalemate is defined as a situation where both sides are suffering, there is little chance of either winning or losing and there is no escape from the problem. If we take the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an example, there is little doubt that the Israelis have the upper hand militarily and economically, but there is little chance of them winning in the long run. What will transpire is a long-term running sore for the Israelis as they attempt to repress Palestinian aspirations. At some time, as the hurting stalemate digs deeper, they will have to negotiate and compromise with those Palestinian parties that hold a veto. Hamas is a current case in point, or elsewhere, the Taliban.

The problem in Cyprus is that there is no hurting stalemate. In spite of all the rhetoric both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are doing rather well, with the Greek Cypriots leading the way but the Turkish Cypriots are developing fast. If the embargo on the *de facto* state is ever lifted so that the Turkish Cypriots have direct and free access to the rest of the world the gap will close even faster. There are pockets of traditional peasantry, but these are lessening with generational change. In the past there was tremendous loyalty to the village, and this still remains with respect to the older generation, but it is not shared by the younger generation – most young Greek Cypriots do not share their village culture and would not want to exchange it for their lives in the big towns where there is opportunity, education and money, compared with the monotony of the rural village. This change is exemplified by the recent coming to power of Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders who are young in comparison with their predecessors.

All these societal changes suggest that there is no hurting stalemate. Things are getting better as far as security and the economy are concerned, and there is a relaxation and perhaps a *de facto* acceptance of the situation. This would not be admitted publicly, but there is no imperative to compromise and settle. Indeed, Greek Cypriots have been heard to say that a settlement would just cost them too much financially. Whether this is true or not (and it probably is given the realities of turning promises of aid into money spent), it is the perception that is important.

Entrapment

In a 1971 UNITAR paper Frank Edmead introduced the idea of ‘entrapment’ into the conflict analysis literature.¹⁰ ‘Entrapment’ basically means that individuals, usually leaders, put themselves

10 Frank Edmead (1971) *Analysis and Prediction in International Mediation*. New York: UNITAR.

into a position from which it is difficult for them to move even though there are good reasons that they should do so. A common line of argument is that “we have lost so many lives that to compromise now will mean all those lives have been wasted. For the sake of the dead we must continue”. In Cyprus the entrapment situation takes an additional form. For decades the political elite in both the ‘TRNC’, under the leadership of Rauf Denktaş, and the Republic of Cyprus, under a variety of leaderships, have been putting out messages of ‘no compromise’. Only when Denktaş left office were the Turkish Cypriots more flexible, as in the referendum on the Annan Plan. But in the Republic the leadership was in a situation where it could not go back without repudiation of all it had been saying for decades even if, which is doubtful, it had wanted to under President Papadopoulos. In such a situation a new action policy is blocked by declaratory policy. Moreover, there is a temptation not only to look at the public declaratory policy of the adversary, rather than its possible action policy, but to see one’s own policy not in terms of the public rhetoric but the more hidden ‘real’ action policy of what is thinkable, but unsaid. Like is not being compared with like. Entrapment is when there is no easy escape from declaratory policy which tends to nip any nascent change of action policy in the bud.

Two before One?

There have been many analyses as to why the overwhelming majority of the Greek Cypriot people, led by their President, rejected the Annan Plan. To the rest of the world they turned down the best that the international community could offer. After all, the Greek Cypriots would receive substantial territory, almost all the Turkish Army would eventually leave Cyprus, a host of thorny issues would be resolved regarding property and the like, the international community, and especially the EU, would support and protect the agreement and their security, financial aid was promised and they would seize the moral high ground. On the other hand, they would lose a grievance and their status and identity as victims. They would be obliged to share *their* island, as they see it, with Turks on a partnership basis so that Cyprus would not be Hellenic in a pure sense. This partnership would be with people with whom they did not share or want to share an identity. There had never been a shared governance except fitfully from 1960-1963. There was a lack of shared socio-cultural and economic ties. Moreover, they had to make their major concessions immediately on signing the Annan Accord whereas some of the changes dearest to them would only come years later and depend upon others fulfilling, to the letter and in the spirit, the clauses of the Agreement.

The debate was essentially between those who would rather preserve a national conception of Hellenism and those who, while not denying Hellenistic values, saw them in a cosmopolitan European light. If an Hellenic island was not possible in a partnership state then perhaps an Hellenic Republic in the south was preferable to a partnership state. Half a loaf is better than none. Greek Cypriots were and remain torn between a cosmopolitan economic and social system and a nationalistic political system, and the latter won. They remain caught between a modern national

state and a cosmopolitan post-modern European entity. The past defeated the future upon which they have embarked so enthusiastically in many ways in non-political spheres.

Here We Go Again?

It was always on the cards that following the Greek Cypriot elections for President on 24 February 2008 that there would be an attempt once again to bring the leaders of the two communities together to see if the new political situation gave enough leeway to enable negotiations to start once again. In fact, with the victory of Demetris Christofias, there are more than ritual grounds for hope that some progress at least might be made. Mr Christofias received 53.36% of the votes as against 46.64% which went to his Conservative opponent Ioannis Kasoulides. The former President Tassos Papadopoulos had already been eliminated in the first round. In the second round Tassos Papadopoulos gave his support to Demetris Christofias and this raises an interesting political conundrum.

Mr Papadopoulos had owed his victory, in the previous presidential election, in part to the support that he received from AKEL, Mr Christofias' party, which is, of course, a communist party. Likewise it was the last minute switch of AKEL which helped President Papadopoulos to swing the Greek Cypriot electorate to vote against the Annan Plan. This was therefore an unusual alliance of a nationalistic Conservative with a Communist. To make matters more complex, the Greek Cypriot Communist party, AKEL, had always maintained reasonable working relations with Turkish Cypriot trade unions. So why did AKEL change its mind in 2004 at the last minute and join President Papadopoulos in rejecting the Annan Plan thus sealing its fate? This is one of the issues which the Greek Cypriot rumour-mongering industry is so good at exploiting. No-one really seems to know. And what is more, despite their differences over the Cyprus problem in the first round of the presidential election, why should Papadopoulos turn round and then support the AKEL candidate and not the conservative former foreign minister Mr Kasoulides? The question therefore remains whether or not Greek Cypriots want an Hellenic state in the Republic of Cyprus as it presently exists or whether they are still looking for a process of reunification for both parts of the island. The political stalemate after the Greek Cypriot rejection remained throughout the period in office of President Papadopoulos but two issue areas provided an element of movement – the opening of the partition between the north and south and the interaction between Cyprus and the EU.

The opening of the crossing point is now an established element in the political, economic and social life of the island. While 64% of all Cypriots are positive about the opening, nevertheless, 24.2% are suspicious and 11.8% view it as a negative development. Of the island's population, 20.1% have not crossed the divide and out of that percentage, 54.3% have not done so as a matter of principle. On the other hand, more than half the island's population, in fact 56%, have crossed the divide more than five times. While Turkish Cypriots are more likely to cross than are Greek Cypriots, this is no surprise given the general difficulties for Turkish Cypriots to travel and they are

also able to enjoy the more sophisticated facilities available in the south.¹¹ A study of the economic impact of the opening of the crossing point made in May 2007 was that Greek Cypriots were contributing something like 100 million Cyprus pounds (approximately €171 million) a year to the economy of the north which is equivalent to 15% of its GDP. This input came mainly from spending by Greek Cypriots in the north, wages paid to Turkish Cypriot workers in the south and crossings by tourists from the south.¹² The figures of goods and services traded from the north to the south in 2007 amounted to €705,500.¹³

Behind these figures, however, lies a cat and mouse game. The strategy of President Papadopoulos seemed to be to welcome inter-community trade including that from the north which would then become a transfer to a third country. At the same time the government in the south remained adamantly opposed to any direct trade or communication between the north and third countries. The Turkish Cypriots were thus obliged to go through Turkey or export their products via the south. However, by going through the south they were directly in the EU with no, or little, further restriction – a not inconsiderable advantage. Papadopoulos' strategy appeared therefore to be to inveigle the north into the southern economy – a policy of absorption by stealth and without a political settlement. These considerations induced the Turkish Cypriots to put a brake on inter-communal trade which they saw as a potential trap to obviate a political settlement.

Generally speaking there has not been a flood in either direction across the Green Line once the novelty effect had worn off. Individuals cross the divide if they have a reason to do so but many do not have such a reason once they have satisfied their curiosity. Of all Cypriots, 63.1% are positive about coexistence and 54.1% are positive about forgiveness with the Turkish Cypriots to the fore. The Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, are prominent in the 42.4% of all Cypriots who are willing to endorse the prospect of reconciliation. Nevertheless, 31.1% of the islanders do not feel that this is a likely prospect while 24.5% are more optimistic and consider that such a reconciliation might be possible. On the other hand, some 38.8% of the Cypriots, especially Greek Cypriots, feel that closure has been arrived at in relations in the island whereas 33.8%, especially Turkish Cypriots, feel that the situation is still open, while 27.5% are not sure.¹⁴ What is evident is that 72% of the Greek Cypriots feel safer by being in the EU.¹⁵ All of this tends to suggest that the divide remains in both the psycho-social and practical senses, although its opening has facilitated some alleviation of the economic condition of the Turkish Cypriots.

11 A. Sitas, D. Latif and N. Loizou (2007) *Prospects of Reconciliation, Co-Existence and Forgiveness in Cyprus in the Post-Referendum Period*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre, p. 9.

12 *Cyprus News*, Issue No. 213, May 2007, p. 1.

13 *Cyprus News*, Issue No. 226, June 2008.

14 A. Sitas, D. Latif, N. Loizou, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10, 23.

15 *Cyprus News*, Issue No. 215, July 2007.

There are two major institutional frameworks within which the Cyprus question is being played out – the United Nations and the European Union.¹⁶ Both now have an extended experience of all the vagaries and detail of the Cyprus conflict and it is interesting to note that they have not played to their ostensible strengths. It is the United Nations which is, after all, a state-centric Westphalian organisation that has shown greater flexibility by organising meetings between the two communities. By acting at the community level it has therefore sidestepped the difficult issue of the accepted international asymmetries between the two parties from a legal point of view. On the other hand, the European Union, which is after all a post-modern organisation not so wedded to the Westphalian framework, has displayed more rigidity in its approach to the status of the parties. Perhaps this is because the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot entities both aspire to be modern states which fit less easily into the cosmopolitan multilateralism of the EU. This may therefore be the moment for the EU to begin to behave less in terms of a Westphalian system and more in terms of a cosmopolitanism which will link unity with diversity. It has singularly failed hitherto so to do.

Harry Anastasiou argues cogently that the EU has “... unwittingly entrenched the Cyprus problem”.¹⁷ Since the entry into the EU of the Republic and the rejection of the Annan Plan, the EU has been faced by a Greek Cypriot party that argues from the legal basis of an internationally recognised state which is a full member of the EU. The Republic of Cyprus has played this card à l'outrance. The Turkish Cypriots, however, have insisted that they have the moral high ground since they accepted the Annan Plan and that the question is therefore essentially a political one so that they, too, can enjoy the benefits of membership of the EU which they see as their right. Faced with this dilemma the EU has chosen consistently to play by the legal book. The chickens of accepting Cyprus as a member without a settlement of the problem have come home to roost. President Papadopoulos refused to play the EU game causing the EU Commissioner for Enlargement at the time, Günter Verheugen, to state bluntly, “I have been cheated by the Greek Cypriot government”, a view widely shared in the international community.¹⁸ Since 2004 the Turkish Cypriots have been the victims of this ‘cheating’ on a tacit understanding about resolving the Cyprus problem. Nevertheless it was for the Greek Cypriots to express their views and to reject the imposition of another unwanted settlement on them, as had been done in 1960. In any case an imposition would have been difficult to achieve and counter-productive. It would merely have stoked the fires of Hellenic nationalism.

16 See Thomas Diez (ed.) (2002) *The European Union and Cyprus: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press and James Ker-Lindsay (2005) *EU Accession and United Nations Peacekeeping*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

17 Anastasiou *op. cit.*, p. 134.

18 Quoted by Gerald Butt on *BBC News 24*, 24.iv.04.

Anastasiou makes a telling point when he states that the Republic of Cyprus is an interim institution.¹⁹ Whatever is agreed it will not be the 1960 Constitution and the Republic of Cyprus as it was known then or is known now. Moreover, if there is no settlement and the Republic of Cyprus becomes, in effect, an Hellenic state whose writ does not run in the north of the island, then the international community, and especially those principally concerned, will have to take this into account both politically and legally.

The EU could use its regional policy and committee to accept the two Cypriot communities as the United Nations has done and then to extend this more generally. There are elements of both the *acquis communautaire* and also of the Annan Plan that could be applied to the northern part of Cyprus especially as the whole island is deemed to be a member of the EU. What is now the 'TRNC' could become either a region in a bi-regional state for many purposes or the 'TRNC' could be a European territory, as is Gibraltar, to which some of the *acquis* is applied but which has derogations for other parts. Another idea might be if the EU played the role of the federal authority in Cyprus pending its establishment. This would imply a Europeanisation of the Turkish Cypriot entity which, after all, is the intended future goal when the whole island effectively becomes part of the EU. As the Turkish Cypriot entity becomes more involved in the European Union, it may well be able to then initiate, if necessary unilaterally, some of the provisions of the Annan Plan such as the return of territory to Greek Cypriot administration or a reduction of the Turkish army garrison. A more radical strategy would be to turn the situation on its head by increasing the degree of hurt that is felt by the Greek Cypriots who, after all, are the party that rejected the Annan Plan. However, this may have a nationalist backlash and could easily get out of control.

But the most likely solution remains more of the same. The Greek Cypriots will be content with half a loaf in the form of a national, modern, Westphalian type, Hellenic state and the situation of the Turkish Cypriots will gradually alleviate as the cosmopolitan framework of the EU begins to permeate ever more deeply through the barriers that have kept them separate since 1963 and more especially, since 1974. After all, bloody secession has received a degree of legitimacy in the imposition of the independence of Kosovo which sets a precedent. Turkish Cypriots have clearly demonstrated their wish to be part of a wider European community and it is increasingly difficult to deny them. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have lived together, but separately, for generations and still appear to wish to do so. The European Union is a wider framework within which to facilitate this process.

Following the election of President Christofias in February 2008, meetings with the Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat led to some serious preliminary negotiations under UN auspices. Six working groups were established concerned with governance and power-sharing, EU matters, security and guarantees, territory, property and economic issues. In addition, there were seven technical committees which dealt with crime, commerce, cultural heritage, crisis

19 Anastasiou, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

management, humanitarian issues, health and the environment.²⁰ These progressed sufficiently well for a secure hotline to be set up and for the announcement on July 25, 2008 that the outcome of fully-fledged negotiations, if successful, will be put to separate simultaneous referenda.

What that outcome will be depends on whether the Turkish Cypriots remain committed to the idea of a single Cyprus and whether the Greek Cypriots are willing to embrace it. It is a time for commitment, not bargaining. If there is a commitment, then an agreement will follow. This means that the Turkish Cypriots will have to revisit the Annan Plan and the Greek Cypriots recognise that it cannot be ignored even if much has happened in Cyprus, the EU and beyond in the last four years. Annan turned over all the stones to see what was underneath. There is little need for new knowledge, it is a time for decision or stasis will continue. If stasis it shall be, then there is no war or violence but the situation will remain formally unended and the problem will fade away like the proverbial old soldier as the Republic becomes more Hellenic and the Turkish Cypriots are accommodated whether in Turkey, in the EU framework or on their own. It is, therefore, indeed a time for commitment.

20 *Cyprus News*, Issue No. 223, March 2008