

A BRITISH VIEW OF THE ANNAN PLAN

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Abstract

Britain was actively engaged in a team with the UN Secretariat and the US in the production of the Annan Plan. British officials were present at Buergenstock, where the final version, 'Annan 5', was worked out, and they distributed to each side concise summaries of the advantages each would draw. To make the proposition more attractive the British were willing to give up nearly half of the acreage of the Sovereign Bases.

The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has not hesitated to express his disappointment with the result of the Greek Cypriot referendum. The immediate reaction of the British press was hostile and dismissive. Some British politicians with close knowledge of Cyprus, such as Andrew Dismore (Labour), who initiated a parliamentary debate on the subject, were much more understanding, stressing particularly security anxieties based on experience.

The truth of the matter was that the peacemakers had been fixated for so long on the obstructive methods of Mr. Denktash, so long as he was backed by Turkey and were so relieved when at last the opportunity arose of out-manoeuvring him that they took their eyes off the Greek Cypriot ball. Too much reliance was placed on the leaders of DISY and AKEL being willing and able to deliver a referendum majority. Greek Cypriots also have red lines and it was a serious mistake to give the impression that voters were being bounced into endorsing a document that was being drafted up till the last minute. But the fact must be faced that, although President Papadopoulos has said that other plans can replace the one that has been rejected, the UN has said that, "There is no Plan B."

In 1974 the island of Cyprus was brutally torn apart by the Turkish soldiery, in ultimate response to an idiotic and viciously misconceived Greek military coup. On 24 April 2004, by an overwhelming majority the Greek Cypriot South voted to reject a United Nations plan, several times refined, designed to restore unity, though in a new form. Thus while for Europe 1 May 2004 marked the figurative conclusion of the Second World War, East being joined to West, it failed to mark a comparable end to the division of Cyprus.

Britain, anxious to see a harmonious postcolonial resolution of the island's ethnic problems, deplored the events both of 1974 and of 2004. Hope of bringing an end to thirty years of what had come habitually to be termed 'the Cyprus Problem' had been high, thanks to the massive changes that had taken place in the European context. On 16 April 2003 beneath the Acropolis in Athens there had taken place what diplomats call a 'champagne and ink' ceremony, at which a still forcibly divided Republic of Cyprus, along with nine other applicants, was formally accepted into the European Union, subject to later ratification. This in turn was to be completed by the following May Day, and, because Cyprus was divided, it was clearly understood that with the help of the UN no effort would be spared to remove that scar in the interim.

Britain's role in these proceedings, characterised in the Foreign Office as "prominent but not too prominent", was more conspicuous than would have been hoped more than forty years before when it had reckoned to be quit of Cyprus politics. Both in 1963/1964 and in 1974 the main thrust of British diplomacy was to try to head off Greeks and Greek Cypriots from acts that would provoke Turkey to intervene.¹ In the first case this succeeded, in the second it did not. In both cases Britain alone would not have been prepared to use force against Turkey and could count on no support from the United States. At the end of December 1963 Duncan Sandys, the Colonial and Commonwealth Secretary, wanted British naval vessels in the Mediterranean to steam eastwards to "make [the Turks] hesitate to embark upon a military venture." But this was vetoed by the British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home "because we have no intention of using our force even if the Turks should invade and I do not think that bluff will help us in this situation."²

Although President Lyndon Johnson did succeed by the free use of the rough side of his tongue in stalling a Turkish intention to invade in 1968 the United States would at no stage have permitted a Chapter VII resolution (authorising force) of the UN Security Council directed against Turkey. During the 1974 crisis the British Foreign Secretary James Callaghan, who was severely provoked by the Turkish attitude at the two conferences at Geneva, was unable to get his American counterpart Dr Kissinger to contemplate any joint military precautions. Indeed the latter told Callaghan that he would "react very strongly against any further announcement of British military activities."³ The British therefore could do little to deter the Turks though they were able to block their further advance at the boundaries of the British sovereign base at Dhekelia and at the Nicosia airport. The strategic realities thus have throughout imposed limits on possibilities of settlement that may be thought to override strict concepts of fairness and justice. This was candidly recognised by Archbishop Makarios when in 1977 he accepted the formula of a bizonal, bicomunal federation which has provided the basis of all subsequent attempts under the auspices of successive Secretaries-General of the UN to resolve the Cyprus problem.

On most, but not on quite all, occasions before 2004 the responsibility for the failure of these attempts, which involved unending drafting and redrafting of proposals, could plausibly be put at the door of the Turkish Cypriots, their leader Rauf Denktash, and their backer Turkey. No state except Turkey has ever recognised the so-called 'Turkish Republic of North Cyprus' which was proclaimed in December 1983. Britain took the lead in ensuring that the UN Security Council formally pronounced this proclamation as legally invalid. The Turkish Cypriot institutions further alienated the international community in 1998 by withdrawing support for a federation and calling for negotiations between two sovereign states for a confederation.

Cyprus through its Greek Cypriot Government applied for EU membership in 1990, hoping that this would bring additional pressure on Turkey to help resolve the internal problem. Although Britain was initially doubtful about the wisdom of adding new complications to an already complex issue, it was taking a more positive line by the time in 1995 it appointed Sir David (now Lord) Hannay as Britain's special representative. Hannay had very appropriate experience, having been the top British diplomat both to the EU in Brussels and to the UN in New York. The critical vote by the EU confirming an earlier ruling that negotiations should go forward despite the continued division of the island was taken during Britain's EU presidency. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, made strenuous efforts to secure Turkish Cypriot association with the negotiations without prejudice to contentious issues of status. But Rauf Denktash stuck to his mantra that the application ought not to proceed because it had originated in a proposal by a Government consisting only of Greek Cypriots, which, according to his definition of all that had happened since December 1963, made it illegitimate.

While references in the Cypriot press to Hannay as 'the architect' of the Annan Plan must be held to be inexact, in the light of the general opinion, emphatically shared by British diplomats, of the high quality of the work of Alvaro de Soto, the Peruvian diplomat who represented the Secretary-General over Cyprus, and his team there can be no doubt that the British input was considerable, positive and sustained over a long period. Because of their long association with the island the British were often able to supply the other parties with background papers and specialist advisers, when required, on particular aspects.

To judge from the occasional interview given by Hannay, it might be deduced that the thrust of the British approach had been one of seeking new formulas to accommodate genuine Turkish Cypriot concerns, particularly in respect of nomenclature, wherever this would still be compatible with the basic principle of a United Cyprus Republic. The notion of 'two constituent states' enjoying responsibility for everything not explicitly given to the centre was first referred to

publicly by Hannay in a CNN interview in June 2002. This gave rise to criticism of the British envoy in the Greek Cypriot press which should perhaps have been taken as a warning signal of the scale of the disaster that was eventually to overtake the elaborate UN endeavour in April 2004. At the time it was matched by sharp criticism from Denktash's organs in the North. Indeed Hannay was to say publicly on 22 September 2003, six months after he had retired from his Cyprus functions, "What I am quite sure of is that, so long as the present leadership in the north of Cyprus is in place, there will not be a settlement."⁴ The personality of Rauf Denktash had, with good reason, come to be regarded as the single greatest obstacle to an agreement. But it must be said that the architects of the Annan Plan were so busy focussing on outmanoeuvring that obstacle that they took their eyes off the task of keeping the Greek Cypriots on side. Greek Cypriots also turned out to have red lines, which they were unwilling to cross.

The original Annan Plan – in the event there were five versions – was published on 11 November 2002, with only a very short time for the parties to respond before the next session of the European Council fixed for 12-13 December at Copenhagen. The Council was already bound by the December 1999 Helsinki decision, brokered by the British, that whereas an internal settlement before accession was highly desirable, its achievement would not be determining. It had always been an assumption that the Turkish Cypriots would not come on board without Turkey's wanting them to but it was a matter of principle that Turkey, an outside power, should not be allowed to have a veto over EU membership. On the other hand EU states, each of whom would have to approve a new member, did not exactly relish having 37,000 or more outside troops remaining in occupation of a part of EU soil over which the EU's writ would not run.

Kofi Annan had become so fed up with the ritualistic non-performance of bargaining between the two parties that he needed considerable persuading before he was willing to revisit what he has characterised as the "Rubik's cube" of Cyprus. It was true that in a change of mood Denktash at the end of 2001 had abandoned his objection to talking directly to his Greek Cypriot opposite number Glafkos Clerides on the island itself. But after a further year the Secretary-General could only speak of the two men's "entirely different approaches" to negotiations. Denktash wanted to discuss principles and "visions" of a new Cyprus with two sovereign states living alongside each other. Clerides, while insisting on a United Cyprus Republic possessing a common sovereignty, was yet ready, as his counterpart was not, to get down to horse-trading within the main issues (territorial boundaries, security, institutions, property and freedoms) that needed to be settled. Since the latter concept fell within the parameters of UN resolutions and the former did not, it was no surprise to read in the Annan report that, "In the case of the failure of this latest effort, I believe that Mr Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, bears prime responsibility."

Following the negative outcome of direct negotiation the UN team under De Soto was driven, *faute de mieux*, to draw up the first Annan Plan, based on drafts and concepts that had been in circulation for years and in some instances for decades. It was hoped that a combination of the near approach of the European Council meeting at Copenhagen and two new developments, one on the Turkish, the other on the Turkish Cypriot side would offer a real prospect of advance. On the Turkish Cypriot side there was the emergence of a strong popular movement in favour of a settlement called, 'This Country Is Ours', led by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), of which, considering the tiny population of about 200,000, there are an astonishing number in the North. This was mainly on account of the economy being in such a bad way, with a standard of living reputed to be four times lower than in the South. At local government elections three of the northern towns had elected opposition party mayors.

On the side of Turkey there took place on 3 November 2002 an election which had the extraordinary effect of totally excluding from Parliament all supporters of parties in the ruling coalition and for once placing a single party – the AKP (the Justice and Development Party) – in power with an absolute majority. The principal leader of that party (though, for legal reasons, not for the first few months the Prime Minister) was Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who declared bluntly that he was "not in favour of following the Cyprus policy that has been followed for thirty or forty years" and who was resolved to press forward speedily with Turkey's aspirations to EU membership. This was most welcome news to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who in the course of 2002 had come to identify himself strongly with the idea, which had long been controversial within the EU, of full Turkish membership. It was well established that for this to be possible a long list of Turkish reforms, some of a constitutional nature, would need to be completed but Turkey's co-operation in solving the Cyprus problem would obviously be helpful.

It was in these circumstances that the original Annan Plan ('Annan 1') was presented to the parties on 11 November 2002, to be negotiated by them until 28 February and then submitted to the two ethnic electorates on 30 March 2003. Provided both peoples agreed, an interim authority for the whole island could be installed just in time for 'champagne and ink' at Athens on 16 April.

Two striking features of Annan's plan in all its five versions were, firstly, how far it went within the Security Council's parameters to meet the Turkish Cypriot case and, secondly, how far the EU was prepared to go to bend the *acquis communautaire* to accommodate the special case of a Cyprus settlement. The combination of proposals – the minimal nature of the list of powers for the central government and the absence of a hierarchy of laws; the designation of the two entities as 'constituent states' (though with an explicit ban on secession); the

relinquishment after the first version of the plan of the notion of Greek Cypriot control of a portion of the Karpas peninsula; the proposal that the Swiss system of a collective head of state with a rotating chairmanship should replace strong presidential government;⁵ the provision that 6,000 troops each from Turkey and Greece should be allowed to remain in the appropriate sectors until 2011, dropping to 3,000 each until 2018; the willingness to accept as citizens up to about 45,000 of the 'settlers' brought to the North from Turkey; and the extremely gradual rate at which Greek Cypriot refugees would be allowed to resume residence in the North⁶—were a shock for many Greek Cypriots.

For Turkish Cypriots disposed to entertain reunion the sorest point would probably have been that the town of Morphou was to find itself under Greek Cypriot administration, albeit with proposals to build a new town close by on the Turkish Cypriot side of the border. It is calculated that, in the case of the final version of the Annan plan ('Annan 5') 47,000 Turkish Cypriots would have to be shifted on account of these changes with another 15-18,000 eventually affected by reinstatement of formerly Greek Cypriot properties, while 86,000 Greek Cypriots (or 54 per cent of those displaced by the trauma of 1974)⁷ would be entitled to return to the 7 per cent of the island which would, by the changes in the border lines, be returned to Greek Cypriot administration. Elaborate provision was offered for handling the transition to these new arrangements.

Aware that some of these features would be difficult for Greek Cypriots to swallow, Britain timed its own contribution for the last minute so as to increase the attractiveness of the package. It was revealed in mid-February that, as part of the general settlement, the size of the Sovereign Base Areas would be reduced by nearly a half. The areas given up would come from both Akrotiri and Dhekelia, the former including what could be very valuable development land adjacent to the suburbs of Limassol, and the latter farmland and coastline. The Greek Cypriots would get 90 per cent and the Turkish Cypriots the remaining 10 per cent.

In what turned out to be a bitterly perceptive passage of the final report in which the Secretary-General described the failure of his efforts, Kofi Annan had occasion to lament that, "Both sides have done little over the years to prepare their respective publics for the compromises that a settlement would involve.....(T)here remains, among Greek Cypriots in particular, a general reluctance to accept that the ultimate choice is not between a compromise along the lines that I put forward and a better one, but between that and no settlement at all."

Given this and the fact that several painful concessions to the Turkish Cypriot side were in fact called for, it should have been no surprise that initial reactions to the Annan plan in the south of the island were mostly unfavourable. "Britain is

tightening the noose around Cyprus through its special envoy, Lord Hannay", reported the Greek Cypriot daily *Simerini*, which went on to say that it was Hannay's task to sell the Annan plan to the Government as Cyprus's last chance, while, under the headline 'Overwhelming Rejection of Annan plan', *Machi* said that public opinion both in Greece and in Cyprus "slammed" the plan as "unjust and dysfunctional."⁸ The English-language *Cyprus Weekly* contributed a long negative analysis headed 'A plan with a big hole in it.' The hole was the undoubted truth that this settlement, as indeed would any two-part federation, carried a real potential for political gridlock. In the last analysis the only remedy prescribed in this case would lie with the three foreign jurists who would serve with equal numbers of Turkish and Greek Cypriot colleagues on the Supreme Court.⁹

There were other worrying aspects, for example those which were brought out in a detailed legal analysis of the plan by a Greek Cypriot lawyer, Achillas Emilianides, within three weeks of its presentation.¹⁰ But it was as true in 2004 as it had been in 1960 that any scheme of ethnic balance, if tested to destruction, will be destroyed, as the British have experienced more than once in Northern Ireland. There is ample evidence that such schemes will only work in conditions of mutual forbearance and informal accommodation.

At the time the politicians, both in Greek Cyprus and in Greece, gave an impression of reacting in a more positive way, with the National Council of party leaders authorising President Clerides to negotiate on the basis of Annan's draft. The initial Greek and Greek Cypriot strategy seemed to be one of swallowing the essence of Annan so that responsibility for any rejection of the plan would be cast entirely on the Turks. The official reaction of the Turkish Cypriots was to denounce the short deadlines proposed and to argue that every facet of the plan should be open to negotiation. This had little appeal to Kofi Annan, for whom decades of negotiation between the two parties had produced no result.

British diplomacy went into overdrive at the turn of the year, with Lord Hannay commuting between the various capitals and regular British missions likewise committed to pressing the various pieces of the jigsaw into place. Unfortunately, everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Denktash was (genuinely) ill and did not attend the Copenhagen European summit on 12 December 2002 at which it was hoped that the signatures of the two leading Cypriot protagonists would be obtained for the plan. The legal complications of Erdogan's position which meant that he did not become Prime Minister of Turkey until March 2003 postponed his ability to prevail over those powerful elements in the Turkish military and the Turkish bureaucracy still supporting Denktash. The tensions created by the American build-up to the war in Iraq distracted attention in Turkey and elsewhere. And on 16 February President Clerides' second term of office ran out. Although he sought a

limited extension in order to complete negotiations the Greek Cypriot voters voted decisively to turn power over to Tassos Papadopoulos, an able lawyer but with a reputation as a hard-liner on negotiations with Turks. This happened just immediately before the new deadline of 28 February that had been set by Kofi Annan for a rendezvous with the two leaders at The Hague. Since Denktash chose this opportunity to challenge at great length the whole philosophy of the plan, Papadopoulos was never called upon at this stage to commit himself to more than an apparent endorsement of its principles.¹¹ The great mistake made by the promoters of the plan including especially the British and Americans lay in assuming that the main task was to win enough votes in the Turkish north, while the major party leaders in the Greek south could be expected to deliver a positive vote on their side of the Green Line.

There was some merit in this assumption. The two strongest parties in the House of Representatives, AKEL (the communist party led by Demetris Christofias) and DISY (the party of Glafcos Clerides, now led by Nicos Anastasiades) together represented the majority of voters. It was supposed that they both would regard the UN plan as an acceptable compromise. The deadline of 16 April, the date set for the admission of new EU members, was reached with no resolution and so a divided Cyprus was unanimously accepted. This, according to Denktash, meant that partition would last until Turkey itself became an EU member. It being Kofi Annan's view that no fresh opportunities for a settlement would occur soon, he closed down Alvaro de Soto's office on the island and Lord Hannay, endorsing Annan's judgment that the blame lay principally with the Turkish Cypriots, relinquished his seven-year assignment.

Optimists, however, still hoped that the workings of Turkish politics as Erdogan gained more control of the machinery of government, combined with the chronology of Turkey's application for EU membership, would impart a new impulse to a solution. British influence, reflecting Tony Blair's personal backing for Turkish membership, had been in favour of the EU fixing 1 May 2004, the date it was to become a 25-member body, as the date also on which Turkey's readiness to start accession negotiations should be assessed. The French had wanted to put Turkey off until 2007. December 2004 was the agreed compromise.

In the meantime things began to happen in the north of the island. Demonstrations on quite an unprecedented scale in favour of the Annan plan occurred in the Turkish Cypriot area, opposition politicians like Mustafa Akinci and Mehmet Ali Talat openly attacked those elements in society within Turkey who stood in the way of Turkish Cypriots gaining the advantages of EU membership, and some elements in the Turkish press took a similar line. A writer for example in *Radika* wrote of Ankara's traditional policy that it "has meant that Rauf Denktash is

going his own way, trailing Turkey behind him. Where to? To crash into the EU wall."¹²

At this point, to universal surprise, Denktash displayed his remaining ability to seize the initiative. Normally most niggardly in giving permission for Turkish Cypriots to take part in bi-communal events beyond the Green Line, he abruptly announced in April 2003 the opening of the Nicosia crossing-point, so that for the first time in twenty-nine years ordinary Greek and Turkish Cypriots could pay visits to the other side, which they did both ways in large numbers. In particular, Greek Cypriots were able to visit their former homes, being in general most cordially received. This might appear to counter Denktash's contention that Greek and Turks were unable to live peaceably together. The Papadopoulos Government felt it necessary to respond by issuing a number of decrees aimed at making it easier for the two communities to interact.

For the rest of 2003 everything seemed to be waiting on the result of elections that were due in Turkish Cyprus in December. It was evident that the opposition to Denktash was growing in size and in confidence. Increasingly Turkish Cypriots, and even a certain portion of those Turks from Anatolia who had settled in North Cyprus in the course of the Turkish occupation, were looking for a means of escape from their international isolation and seeing it in the Annan Plan. Its many attractive features from the Turkish Cypriot point of view seemed as if they might prove sufficient to weigh against Rauf Denktash's unbending constitutional case for rejection. On the part of his supporters there were some deplorable incidents of harassment and pressure and the eventual result was, on the face of it, a stand-off. Supporters and opponents of Denktash won the same number of seats, with the popular vote slightly in favour of the opposition. But this in fact signalled such a major shift in sentiment that Denktash, who remained 'President' and chief designated negotiator, felt obliged to install the opposition leader Mehmet Ali Talat as 'Prime Minister'. From then on it seemed more likely than not that the Annan Plan would be endorsed in the North if it came to a referendum.

A way had therefore been found at last of bypassing Denktash. Every deadline for the solution of the Cyprus Problem having been missed up till now, the changed circumstances resulted in one last attempt, strongly favoured by Britain and the United States, being mounted before 1 May when ten new members, including Cyprus (united or divided), having completed ratification, were to join the European Union. On 13 February 2004 Tassos Papadopoulos and Rauf Denktash in New York were brought to agree to a series of deadlines by which, first the two parties would seek by direct negotiation to close the remaining gaps in the Annan Plan; then, if there were still gaps unfilled, the two motherlands, Greece and Turkey, would join in; and finally, if there were remaining issues, Kofi Annan was to arbitrate. The

amended plan would be put to the people in the two parts of Cyprus on the same day (24 April). In the event of a favourable result in both, the United Cyprus Republic would, thanks to the remarkable amount of paperwork completed by officials from both sides working with the UN, be just in time to be welcomed into the EU on 1 May. If not the existing Greek-run Republic of Cyprus already possessed the certainty of becoming a EU member.

British diplomacy was very active in these final months, working at the interface of the UN, the EU and the United States, in the hope of exploiting the new political complexion in Ankara and in Turkish Nicosia to obtain a result which would be endorsed by the two electorates. Final negotiation, engaging Greece and Turkey, took place at Buergenstock in Switzerland. The British were active in advising Turkey to pare down its remaining requirements to a minimum. The Turks arrived with a shortlist of eleven points, most of which though not all were incorporated by the UN into Annan 5, the final version of the plan.¹³ The number of Greek Cypriots allowed to resume permanent residence in the North for the next eighteen years was somewhat reduced, reflecting the continued nervousness of Turkish Cypriots about being swamped by the more numerous community; the Turkish military presence – if only a token force of 650 men – was to remain even after the prolonged transitional arrangements had expired; and Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots were to be protected from any danger that safeguards promised them in the plan, might be threatened by actions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. As regards the ECHR, the new United Cyprus Republic was to be required to strike out all pending cases against Turkey concerning Greek Cypriot property in the North, an obligation which was particularly to outrage the lawyer in Tassos Papadopoulos, while a specially designed 'Act of Adaptation' was rushed through by the EU to fend off the ECJ. The Greek Cypriots had a few points settled in their favour in last-minute adjustments vastly accelerating the speed of the transition to new institutions and extending the ability of non-permanent residents in the north to make use of second homes there but, in contrast to the other side, the Greek Cypriot leadership gave the impression of not being fully engaged, waiting till the last moment to file a long list of requirements for change, including reopening the territorial issue with respect to the Karpas. The delegation from Greece, without being in any way unhelpful, represented a brand new Government which lacked the missionary zeal in support of a settlement of its predecessors. Supporters of the Annan Plan were disconcerted by the negative reporting back from Buergenstock by most of the Greek Cypriot media.

The British were prompt to circulate to Greek and Turkish Cypriots brief lists of the advantages of the settlement for each, hoping to sell the notion of a win-win situation. It was emphasised to Greek Cypriots, for example, that 80 per cent of the Turkish troops were to leave by the end of 2007, with a further 50 per cent reduction

within the following four years, and that 120,000 Greek Cypriots (a number that includes the computed natural increase since 1974) would be able to return to their former homes under Greek Cypriot administration. On 24 April the referenda were held. The Annan Plan was endorsed among Turkish Cypriots by 64.90 per cent to 35.10 per cent. It was rejected by Greek Cypriots by 75.83 per cent to 24.17 per cent. The youth vote (up to age 34) was the highest for 'Yes' among Turkish Cypriots and it was the highest for 'No' among Greek Cypriots. The latter figure could, in the opinion of many commentators, be attributed to the lack of any personal contact of most members of that age group with Turkish Cypriots combined with the sharply anti-Turkish bias of the educational system.¹⁴ There was undoubtedly considerable intimidation of the plan's supporters on both sides of the line. It was effective principally in the south but that would not have been sufficient to explain the very striking result. On the grounds of not allowing outsiders to interfere Alvaro de Soto and the EU Enlargement Commissioner were not given the chance of defending the scheme on television. Denktash's opposition to any plan for Cyprus unity, blamed by so many including Britain and the UN Security Council for blocking progress, had at last been decisively overcome. But this actual plan had massively failed. All its supporters in Cyprus and abroad asked themselves why.

In the first place, the UN's tactic, which because of EU deadlines and politicians' delays was not entirely its fault, of bouncing the electorate into acceptance after an extremely short campaign turned out to be a serious mistake. Certainly there is a sense in which the international community was entitled to say that Cypriots ought to be familiar with issues they have been debating for nearly thirty years since the High-Level meeting in 1977.

On the other hand realistically the full implications of that formula had not needed until now to be spelled out for the Greek Cypriots because the Turkish Cypriots' blocking tactics spared them the necessity. When confronted with the truth of what the long-established and infinitely repeated formula might actually mean, Greek Cypriots were often bewildered and in many cases shocked. They felt, not wholly unreasonably, that they were being bounced. They were not helped by the emotional and heavily biased fashion in which they were given guidance by their President, Tassos Papadopoulos, who departed from his former approach of accepting the Annan Plan in principle while seeking to improve it in detail to launch a tearful call for its wholesale rejection.

His speech elided two types of argument - detailed criticisms of aspects of the scheme and attacks on its fundamental nature. In regard to the first there had indeed been some weighty critiques by, for example, the prominent businessman Constantinos Lordos who, while praising the political content of the plan, produced a detailed criticism of its economic content, arguing that, "Activating suddenly

property values lying near-fallow over thirty years, will throw the property market into a long disarray and instability with far-reaching consequences to the banking sector, on inflation, on economic growth."¹⁵ Rather better financial provisions, worked out with the help of a British expert, were crafted for the final, last minute version of the plan. Alternative proposals were offered by an academic authority on federal systems, Dr. Andreas Theophanous. But to attack the whole new political system as dysfunctional was surely to challenge the validity of the accepted principle of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. At the federal level this obliges Cyprus for most, though not all, purposes to treat the 18 per cent of the population who are ethnically Turkish as the equivalent of the 80 per cent who are ethnically Greek. This is no doubt an awkward proposition and might be accounted as unfair but political reality has dictated its acceptance for upwards of thirty years.

Particular features of 'Annan 5' which grated included the contrast between the immediate disbandment of the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus and the three and a half years allowed to the Turkish Cypriots to get out of all of the 7 per cent of territory being restored to the Greek Cypriots; the failure to arrange for the UN to take over from Turkey complete control of this process from the start; the retention in perpetuity of 650 Turkish troops on Cypriot soil with the (Greek Cypriot) National Guard totally disbanded and an extended version of the Treaty of Guarantee, bitterly blamed as the excuse for Turkey's unilateral action in 1974, to remain; and the granting of Cyprus citizenship to an increased number of settlers from the Turkish mainland.

The two largest political parties, AKEL and DISY, which were counted on by optimists to deliver a majority for 'Yes' both in their different ways proved weak straws. For all the firm and courageous leadership that both Anastassiades and Clerides, vigorously campaigning at the age of eighty-five, gave DISY they were not followed by a large majority (62 per cent) of their usual supporters. AKEL, which had built up a consistent record of friendship for Turkish Cypriots over the years and had, as a communist party, carried an expectation of disciplined voting, crumbled under the pressure of its membership. A split decision to back 'Yes' in the politburo was reversed in the central committee. The communist leadership was placed in the odd position of having to beg the United States and Britain to save them from voting 'No' by sponsoring a UN Security Council resolution underwriting the plan with additional security guarantees. Realising what was at stake the British laboured hard to produce wording that stood a chance of being carried. But the resolution was vetoed by Russia shortly after a visit to Moscow by Papadopoulos' Foreign Minister. In the end AKEL called for a 'No' vote unless the referendum was postponed for further talks.

The shipwreck of the UN's immense effort was regarded internationally with

dismay. Utterly frustrated, EU Commissioner Verheugen went to the extent of accusing President Papadopoulos of cheating him, his argument being it had been understood that the Greek Cypriots had only been allowed to go ahead with EU membership on the understanding that they would accept a UN-brokered settlement. In Britain the immediate comment was not sympathetic to the Greek Cypriot side which had for long occupied the moral high ground. The ungracious tone of the press comment betrayed a sense of shock. 'The vote against the Kofi Annan plan was a vote to make 1974's Turkish invasion a permanent reality,' said the liberal *Guardian*. It conceded that the Annan plan was not particularly fair to the Greek Cypriots but it was better than nothing. The amount of intimidation displayed during the brief campaign was "the worst possible way to enter Europe and the EU must now be ruining the day it agreed to allow them in." The conservative and Eurosceptic *Daily Telegraph* blamed "the EU's blundering – and arguably illegal – decision to admit Southern Cyprus with or without an agreement", as the result of which, "Greek Cypriots made the entirely rational calculation that they had nothing to lose by voting 'No'." And *The Times* did not spare its language. "An irresponsible leadership in the south," it wrote, "preferred to pander to popular emotion rather than counsel patience. And foolish prattling about the chance to renegotiate the deal, haggling with the UN like used car dealers, blinded the Greeks to the dangers of rejection."¹⁵

The month before the referenda the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw had been asked on Turkish television by the well-known commentator Mehmet Ali Birand what would happen if the Turkish Cypriots said 'Yes' and the Greek Cypriots said 'No'. He replied that "we would need to ensure this positive contribution to resolving a serious conflict...was properly recognised inside the councils of the European Union and in the way in which the European Union dealt with Turkish Cyprus."¹⁷ High indignation was expressed at the time by the Cyprus Government but it was clear that following the referendum the EU would exert itself to end as far as practicable Turkish Cyprus's isolation; the way that Mehmet Ali Talat was addressed by the American Secretary of State as "Mr. Prime Minister" was an indication of a change in international standing. As for Tony Blair he did not conceal his dismay. "I still believe," he told the Commons on 14 July 2004, "that it would have been better if the Kofi Annan plan had proceeded. It was a fair settlement." Some backbench MP's took a different view. In one parliamentary debate a Labour member, Andrew Dismore suggested that the Turkish Government, at the behest of its general staff, had deliberately escalated its demands to a point beyond which the Greek Cypriots could accept.¹⁸

Greece and President Papadopoulos have both indicated their confidence that the question of the unity of the island will once more be visited. On the other hand, "There is no Plan B" was the word of the UN spokesman as he closed down for the

second time the UN offices in Cyprus. While the UN would certainly be extremely shy of reinvesting the huge amounts of attention and effort that went into the failed attempt it might be possible to revisit the question of extra security guarantees for the Greek Cypriots. Now that Cyprus is a EU member, that organisation might help produce an economic plan that could assuage genuine Greek Cypriot fears of an experience like that of West Germany's in merging with the East. Greece and Turkey, the two 'motherlands', have promised not to allow Cyprus to stand in the way of their recent policies of friendship. And it seems vital that those Turkish Cypriots who had been euphoric about their own regime change should not become utterly deflated by a sense that their Greek compatriots just do not want them. Finally the two sides in Cyprus could still surprise everyone by coming up with their own settlement without large-scale outside help. The British, who greatly love the island, will, despite everything, wish it and its peoples well.

Notes

1. An exception for 1963 should be noted in the case of the British High Commissioner who apparently on his own initiative assisted Archbishop Makarios in the drafting of the constitutional proposals that sparked off the crisis of December. Keith Kyle, 'The British and Cyprus in 1963' in *Friends of Cyprus Report No.37*, Spring 1994, pp. 10-12.

2. PRO FO 371/168983 Sandys (Nicosia) to Home *et al.*; Home to Sandys, 20 December 1963.

3. James Callaghan, *Time and Chance*. Collins, p. 352.

4. Lord Hannay of Chiswick, *Cyprus: Missed Opportunities and the Way Ahead*. Twenty-seventh Thomas Corbishley Lecture, Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust, p. 8.

5. The Swiss model was explicitly cited in certain passages of the Secretary-General's text but Annan was careful to point out that he did not intend it to be applied to his Cyprus solution as a whole, "Cyprus requires a solution that is *sui generis*." Some Belgian analogies were also called in aid. UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus*, S/2003/398, p. 17, note 5.

6. S/2003/398 para. 99. There was to be a moratorium (with a few exceptions) on resumed residence by refugees for six years; a limit of 7 per cent in any one village for a further seven to eleven years; 14 per cent for twelve to fifteen years; and 21 per cent (reduced in 'Annan 5' to 18 per cent) after the fifteenth year. Annan stipulated that, "The power to impose restrictions would have been specifically authorised by the European Union in the protocol of the Treaty of Accession." The restrictions were to be removed when Turkey would have become a member of the EU or in the nineteenth year, whichever would have occurred first.

7. This number could increase to as many as 120,000 if all offspring born to refugees concerned since 1974 be included.

8. *Simerini*, 'British noose around Cyprus's neck,' 23 November 2002. *Machi*,

'Overwhelming rejection of Annan plan,' 23 November 2002.

9. *The Cyprus Weekly*, 'A plan with a big hole in it,' 23 November 2002. S/2003/398, p. 20, para. 93, and p. 30 para. 138.
 10. *The Cyprus Weekly*, 'Legal analysis uncovers absurdities of UN plan,' 4 December 2002.
 11. *Kibris*, March 2003, p. 2.
 12. Erdel Guven in *Radikal*, 7 March 2003.
 13. 'The Final Points Conveyed to Mr. de Soto by Ambassador Ziyal on 28 March 2004.'
 14. See Lord Hannay's Corbishley Memorial Lecture (*op.cit.*) in which he refers to "the atavistically crude way in which the press characterise any move towards settlement and in which each side teaches the other in their educational systems."
 15. Constantinos Lordos, 'Economic Aspects of the Annan Plan and the Plan's Property Proposals.' Discussion Paper for the Tesev International Workshop in Istanbul, 26 January 2004.
 16. 'Island of lost dreams,' *Guardian*; 'Cyprus stays divided,' *Daily Telegraph*; 'The Cost of saying "No".' All 26 April 2004.
 17. UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Transcript of Foreign Secretary's interview with Mehmet Ali Birand, Istanbul, 3 March 2004.'
- UK House of Commons, Westminster Hall debate, 6 July 2004.