

LEGITIMATING DISCOURSE: AN ANALYSIS OF LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES IN U.S. OFFICIAL DISCOURSE ON CYPRUS

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Abstract

This article is about a concrete example on the discursive aspects of political legitimation. It studies the press briefings and press conferences that are delivered by U.S. officials roughly through the second-term period of former U.S. president Bill Clinton. After a theoretical analysis of legitimation, this article aims to examine what a legitimating discourse says and how it says these things. In order to study the legitimation process of U.S. official political discourse on Cyprus, of the vast number of discourse structures and strategies it only concentrates on semantic macrostructures.

1. Introduction

This study defines and discusses legitimation within a discourse analytical framework and examines its discursive aspects in general. In particular it analyses some properties of the discourse of U.S. officials and concentrates on U.S. official political discourse on Cyprus.

Political discourse is one of the most ideological of all discourses. The same "discourse may be uttered by a professor [...] but it becomes a political discourse simply by the fact that it is uttered by a politician speaking and writing in a political context" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 19). Therefore, political discourse can be described as the discourse of politicians. However, this does not mean that an informal conversation of a politician is political discourse; "the discourse must be produced by the speaker in her professional role of a politician and in an institutional setting. This means that discourse is political when it accomplishes a political act in a political institution" (van Dijk, 2001, p. 6). That is, only those discourses of politicians that are produced in institutional settings are considered to be political discourse and thus what makes discourses political are their roles in political situations and their functions in the political process.¹

The official documents that are selected for analysis in this article have been gathered from the homepage of the U.S. embassy in Nicosia, under the title "The Cyprus Issue," the subtitle "U.S. Official Policy" and the heading "Official Statements on Cyprus." In order to limit the text types under analysis in this article only U.S. State Department press briefings and press conferences of U.S. officials are analysed while other documents like the White House monthly reports are not included. The data covers an analysis of ninety press briefings and twenty-two press conferences that are delivered roughly during the second-term period of former U.S. President Bill Clinton, between June 1997 and January 2001.²

In this study, press briefings and press conferences are chosen, because they are direct expressions of political power. They allow speakers to control the agenda, topics and other important aspects of institutional talk, and formulate a good example for legitimating discourse. In addition, since they are political texts, in them ideology and power relations are easy to follow and the discursive reproduction of dominance is more significant. Both press briefings and press conferences are well-prepared, well-thought, persuasive texts that are effective and authoritative. They are precise, heavily monitored, and intended for the record. They are institutional discourses, produced by a person who is authorised to make a declaration. The speakers of these texts are powerful and influential political decision makers, not speaking of themselves alone, but speaking on behalf of their countries. Through their speeches and answers to the questions, the policy of the U.S. at the highest possible level can be witnessed. They enable people everywhere to hear fundamental outlines of U.S. foreign policy from government officials.

Press briefings and press conferences are typical political propaganda, a mediums, since they both have the aim of propagating and justifying a certain type of ideology. The argument in them is simple, clear and repetitive as their sole aim is to make U.S. policy known and legitimated.

The U.S. officials justify their actions on Cyprus as morally and politically defensible and as beneficial for the people living on the island. Throughout their discourse on Cyprus, they try to show that their policies and actions towards Cyprus are legitimate, are executed within the boundaries of moral order and are correct procedures. By focusing on the structures and strategies of legitimation, this article aims to question the legitimation process of U.S. official political discourse on Cyprus and analyses the contribution of semantic macrostructures to the legitimating discourse.

2. Method of Analysis

This part is about the theoretical analysis of the various levels and dimensions of legitimation and legitimation strategies. It examines very briefly what a legitimating discourse says and how it says these things. After introducing what legitimation and delegitimation are and after giving the relationship between legitimation and ideology, characteristics of the discourse of legitimation will be pointed out. In the second part of this section Theo van Leeuwen's (1996) legitimation categories will also be summarised.

2.1 Legitimation

The concept of legitimation has been extensively studied in social and political sciences, in law and in philosophy. Max Weber was among the first great social theorists to stress the importance of legitimacy. In his definitional foundations of the types of social action, he gave particular attention to those forms of action that were guided by a belief in the existence of a legitimate order: a set of "determinable maxims", a model regarded by the actor as "in some way obligatory or exemplary for him" (Weber, 1968, p. 31). In his own works, Weber applied the concept to the legitimation of power structures, both corporate and governmental. His widely rehearsed typology of administrative systems depended on whether the subordinate actor regarded the order as binding because of its traditional nature, the charismatic qualities of its leader, or because it had been legally constituted.

After Weber, Talcott Parsons (1960) broadened the focus of legitimation to include features other than power systems. He claimed that for organisations to have a legitimate claim on scarce resources, the goals they pursue should be harmonious with wider societal values. The focus of the organisation's value system "must be the legitimation of this goal in terms of the functional significance of its attainment for the super ordinate system" (21). Such an approach to legitimacy, emphasising the consistency of organisational goals with societal functions, was later accepted by Pfeffer and colleagues (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) were among the first to call attention to the ways in which organisations seek legitimacy and support by incorporating structures and procedures that match widely accepted cultural models embodying common beliefs and knowledge systems. Later Mark Suchman formulated all of these approaches by defining legitimacy as follows: "Legitimacy is a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions". For Suchman legitimacy is a "generalised perception representing the reactions of the

observers to the organisation as they see it; thus, legitimacy is possessed objectively, yet created subjectively" (1995, p. 574).

As the above-mentioned studies on legitimation suggest, the discursive and communicative characteristics of legitimation are not studied much although legitimation is a communicative act and an ongoing discursive practice. It is amazing that even though legitimation is an important function of discourse and is most of the time exercised by text and talk, it did not receive enough attention from discourse analysts either. Legitimation is related to the speech act of defending oneself, in which speakers explain why they did or did not do something, and why such an action is reasonable and acceptable. For that specific reason, legitimation is accomplished by persuasive or manipulative discourse. However, a persuasive discourse is not enough for legitimation. Certain contextual factors are compulsory for a justificatory discourse to have a legitimating function. Martin Rojo and van Dijk (1997) argue that three conditions are needed to be satisfied, in order to consider a discourse as legitimate: "(i) their sources (speakers, institutions, etc) must be legitimate, (ii) their representation of events must appear to be true and trustworthy, (iii) their linguistic and discursive forms must be socially appropriate, authorised or 'politically correct'" (550).

Depending on the above-mentioned criterion, one can argue that legitimation is an institutional justification with the aim of justifying the actions of the institution. That is, since, there is a relation between legitimation and institutional power, for legitimation to be actualised, not only must speakers be a member of an institution occupying a special role or position, but also the action should be official. Therefore, to a certain extent legitimation can be considered as the "institutional counterpart of justifications" and as

... a discourse that justifies 'official' action, in terms of the rights and duties, politically socially or legally associated with that role or position. Indeed the act of legitimation entails that an institutional actor believes or claims to respect official norms, and hence to remain within the prevalent moral order (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 256).

Still this does not mean that legitimation is necessary in each institutional context. In the normal course of events, when no challenges to institutional power or authority are anticipated, legitimation is not needed. It becomes "imperative, in moments of crisis when the legitimacy of the state, an institution or an office is at stake" (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 258). For that reason, when officials are accused of breaking the law, or when they expect principled opposition against their decisions, policies or political action, they try to legitimise their deeds and actions. In broad terms, legitimation aims to justify the actions of the institution itself. It presupposes moral or legal grounds for the judgment of official action, such as norms, values or

formal laws.

The process of legitimation is most of the time discursive and involves the usual moves of positive self-representation and negative other representation. Therefore, in legitimation what is said is as important as how an event or an action is said or presented. In legitimating discourse, through the speech event, legitimacy is formed and created within discourse itself. Therefore, a legitimating discourse can be described briefly as "sociopolitical legitimation accomplished by discourse, which contributes to the reproduction of power by monopolising the truth and by monopolising public discourse" (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997, p. 531). This is one of the reasons why discourse of legitimation is usually discursive and often argumentative. It is "related to the speech act of defending oneself, in that one of its appropriateness conditions is often that the speaker is providing good reasons, grounds or acceptable motivations for past or present action that has been or could be criticised by others" (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 255). Besides, legitimating discourses presuppose norms and values, as they implicitly or explicitly state that some course of action, decision, or policy is "just" within the given legal or political system, or more broadly within the prevalent moral order of society (256). Legitimation discourse is "prototypically political" as people who are expected to legitimate themselves are the ones who are "appointed to public office and exercise power because of such office" (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 256).³

2.2 *Legitimation Strategies*

Discourse may itself be (de)legitimated, since it has a very important role in the formulation and expression of ideologies. The discourse of any social group can be controlled, legitimated or delegitimated in certain ways. Each of these ways may be included within the four legitimation categories developed by Theo van Leeuwen (1996), which he calls the 'grammar of legitimation'. They are authorisation, rationalisation, moral evaluation and mythopoesis.

2.2.1 *Authorisation*

Theo van Leeuwen defines authorisation legitimation as legitimation by reference to authority.

[It is] the answer to the implicit or explicit question 'Why is it so?' or 'Why must it be so?' is essentially 'Because I say so', or 'Because so-and-so says so', where the 'I' or the 'so- and-so' is someone in whom institutionalised authority is vested - a parent, a teacher, a doctor, an expert, a famous contemporary French philosopher, etc. The authority may be impersonal, e.g. 'the regulations', 'the law', 'the Bible'. In both cases, the typical form in which this kind of legitimation is expressed involves either a saying verb with the relevant

authority as subject ('The rules stipulate that ...', 'The Bible says that ...') or a circumstance of attribution ('According to Foucault ...', 'As my Grandmother used to say...') (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999, p. 104).

In other words, authorisation may be based on the authority of tradition, custom, law, impersonal or personal authority, or expertise. In addition to that, as stated above in the quotation, authorisation legitimisation is done by either institutionalised authorisation or impersonal authorisation. In political documents, most of the time, impersonal authorisation is used, and to a large extent, they are legal authorisations that quote from certain laws, rules or regulations. Conformity authorisation, which is also another kind of authorisation, 'rests on the principle that something is legitimate when 'everybody does it', or 'everybody does so'.⁴

2.1.1 Rationalisation

The rationalisation legitimisation can be described as "legitimation by reference either to the utility of the social practice or some part of it ('instrumental rationalisation'), or to 'the facts of life' ('theoretical rationalisation')" (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999, p. 105). Very briefly, it means the utility of institutional action and its cognitive validity in accepted knowledge, which may involve a specification of purpose, functions, strategies, effectiveness, scientific arguments, and so on. Instrumental rationalisation appears at first sight as the straightforward and rational justification of practices or parts of practices by reference to the purpose or function they serve, or the needs they fill, or the positive effect they will have. However, these purposes usually turn out to take the form of "moralised activities". On the other hand, theoretical rationalisation legitimations 'embody moral values (and social prejudices), which are detached from the moral logic from which they stem and presented as common-sense fact' (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999, p. 107- 108).

2.1.2 Moral Evaluation

Moral evaluation legitimisation is based on norms and may involve moralisation (by abstraction or comparison), evaluation and naturalisation (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997). It has two forms, namely, moral abstraction and moral evaluation by means of straightforwardly evaluative clauses. Moral abstraction appears to be straightforward description of what is going on rather than an explicitly formulated legitimacy argument, and it is therefore one of the least explicit forms of legitimisation. Very briefly, moral abstraction legitimisation means moral values expressed in abstract references (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999, p. 108).⁵

2.1.3 *Mythopoesis*

Mythopoesis is the fourth major type of legitimation, which is achieved through the telling of stories. It is legitimation conveyed through narrative. In some discourses, the telling of stories is very important. A story or an event is taken as an evidence for a general norm of behaviour. However, most of the time negative stories are being told. In other words, Mythopoesis involves telling stories about what good or bad may happen when one does (not) do what is expected⁶.

In order to contribute to the four legitimation categories of van Leeuwen, Luisa Martin Rojo and Teun A. van Dijk (1997) introduced semantic legitimation strategies that belong to the four categories mentioned above:

Authorisation: (Legality, Legal Procedures, Authorisation, Normality, Standing Procedures, Positive Self-Representation)

Rationalisation: (Special circumstances, Necessity, Threat, Comparisons)

Moral Evaluation: (Consensus, Carefulness, Democracy)

Mythopoesis

The two scholars argue that the pragmatic and persuasive functions of justification can be successful only when they are based on a defensible semantics of representation. For that reason, they give a lot of importance to semantic legitimation strategies. In order to make it easier for readers to follow, these semantic legitimation strategies will be explained in the analysis section with direct quotation from the data.

Analysis

The aim of this analysis section is to examine the process of discursive legitimation. More specifically, it is to show how through the speech event, the U.S. officials create and enforce both authority and legitimacy within their official statements on Cyprus issue. The following analysis is done to evaluate the detailed properties of the legitimating discursive act, and focuses on semantic macrostructures since they are one of the most important discourse structures that should be included in a study of political discourse genres.

Discourses are not only locally coherent, but also have global coherence that may be defined in terms of themes or topics. In other words, the meaning of discourse is not limited to the meaning of its words and sentences, but also has

more global meanings, such as topics or themes. Topics regulate the overall coherence of discourse and are semantic macro-propositions derived from propositions expressed in the text, through a process of information reduction (van Dijk, 1980; 1995; 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 2000a). Semantic macrostructures, global meanings, topics or themes all refer to the same thing. They express the upshot, gist or what is found to be the most 'important' information of a discourse and they tell us what a discourse is about (van Dijk, 1980; 1999). They consist of the information most readers will remember out of a discourse. This makes the assignment of topics by speakers or recipients not only more or less subjective, but also liable to ideological control. In other words, defining the situation is related not only with the knowledge of the world, but also on more general attitudes and ideologies. Therefore, discourse topics are very important in the 'formation and accessibility of preferred ideological models, and thus, indirectly in the formation or confirmation of ideologies' (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 266).

Topics or themes are mostly intentional and consciously controlled by the speaker. For this reason, they influence other structures of discourse. For instance, when a story is globally defined as an example of a specific concept, such as racist or terrorist, other discourse structures (e.g. local meanings) are supposed to contribute to it or exemplify it (van Dijk, 1995). Furthermore, because of the fact that topics are under the control of speakers, they also have 'effects on the recipients and hence on the process of reproduction that underlies social power and dominance' (van Dijk, 2000a, p. 7). Hence, 'there are probably no structures of text and talk, which have a more prominent effect on the construction and further processing of models than semantic macrostructures or topics' (van Dijk, 1998d, p. 266). In simple terms, "macro-structure" is an underlying thematic and propositional framework that enables the text to hang together (van Dijk, 1980).

Topics or macrostructures are derived from a text by inference, that is, through a process of information reduction. Some mapping rules called macro-rules are needed to obtain macrostructures from texts and they both organise and reduce the information in texts by linking them to one macro-proposition (van Dijk, 1980; van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983).⁷

Topical analysis of discourse is crucial for establishing what dominant groups think, speak or write about. It represents what language users find most important and it regulates coherence. It signals the most important information of underlying models and expresses indirectly ideological group representations about Us and Them. Thus, it gains more importance in political discourse, where speakers want to portray themselves as good and the others as bad. Therefore, while doing topical analysis, both in the press conferences and the press briefings about Cyprus, the first question one should be able to answer is: What exactly are the U.S. officials talking about when they talk about the Cyprus issue?

In a critical study, identifying topics is the first task of a semantic analysis, since they point out how speakers are defining a situation and how they construct the events. For that specific reason, in the present article, as a first step, the global structures of the data, that is the semantic macrostructures and their schematic superstructures (based on van Dijk, 1980) are analysed. After giving a line number to each of the texts in the data, topics or macrostructures are derived from each text by inference, through a process of information reduction. In order to reduce the given information and obtain macrostructures from texts, macro-rules (explained in note 7) are applied. Thus, the following topics or macro-propositions are found.

Topics of Press Conferences:

- (T1) We [Americans] benefit from the U.N. led talks.
- (T2) The Cyprus problem is a difficult problem.
- (T3) The issues between Greece and Turkey are of great importance to the United States and among the many issues between them, Cyprus is the most important one.
- (T4) The United States is engaged, because Cyprus is the core issue.
- (T5) For a solution, creativity and flexibility of both sides are required.
- (T6) Both Greece and Turkey play significant roles in the equation.
- (T7) The United States supports a bizonal bicomunal federation.
- (T8) We recognise the Republic of Cyprus and we recognise Glafcos Clerides as its president.
- (T9) Cyprus cannot move forward without Turkey's support.
- (T10) The United States is not going to spend the rest of the century wandering around, trying to create a settlement between sides if the parties do not want a settlement.
- (T11) People-to-people contacts are good and should not be destroyed.
- (T12) Our [U.S.] interest in Cyprus is not recent.
- (T13) The United States cannot recognise the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'.
- (T14) The U.S. is engaged, because both sides want it.
- (T15) The Turkish side has preconditions that make the settlement difficult.
- (T16) Turkey is aware of the importance we attach to the Cyprus issue.
- (T17) The United States will remain engaged and available to help the parties.
- (T18) We would like to see a united Cyprus enter the E.U., not a divided one.
- (T19) We cannot impose a solution.
- (T20) It is the right time to move toward a comprehensive settlement and to resolve the Cyprus problem.
- (T21) The U.S. government is in favour of demilitarisation.
- (T22) We are working with the Government of Cyprus to find a solution.
- (T23) Our objective is, has been and will be a solution to the Cyprus problem, and

if we cannot solve it, to help reduce tensions.

(T24) The Turkish side has not accepted the proposals that we discussed.

Topics of Press Briefings:

- (T1) Turkey ought not to threaten Cyprus.
- (T2) Turkey is a friend of the United States, as is Greece, as is Cyprus.
- (T3) We strongly support the U.N.
- (T4) Greece and Turkey must work together peacefully to resolve problems.
- (T5) The U.N. led talks are useful.
- (T6) The U.S. recognises the government in Nicosia as the legitimate government of Cyprus.
- (T7) The United States Government is working hard and closely with Greece Turkey and both communities on Cyprus to promote a negotiating process.
- (T8) The United States cannot impose a solution on Cyprus.
- (T9) The U.S. cannot recognise the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'. The U.N. cannot recognise them. The E.U. cannot recognise them.
- (T10) We work with Turkey, a close ally and friend, on a wide range of important issues and believe that it is in Turkey's national interests to support a Cyprus settlement.
- (T11) The primary responsibility lies on the Turkish side.
- (T12) We want to help Greece and Turkey resolve their problems peacefully.
- (T13) We continue to urge the Turkish Government to resolve this issue through diplomatic means.
- (T14) The missile deal complicates our effort to find a solution to the Cyprus dispute.
- (T15) We continue to urge the Government of Cyprus to cancel the missile deal.
- (T16) We strongly support the E.U.'s decision to start accession talks with Cyprus
- (T17) The U.N. is in favour of U.S. engagement.

In a further reduction, the below topics are summarised as follows:

- (T1) Cyprus is important for the United States.
- (T2) The U.S. government is doing whatever it can to solve the problem.
- (T3) The U.S. cannot impose a solution on Cyprus: the structure and terms of a settlement are matters for the Cypriots to decide.
- (T4) The U.S. government works in cooperation with the U.N. and supports its efforts.
- (T5) The U.S. engagement is supported by the U.N. and requested by both sides.
- (T6) Solution of the problem requires support of Greece and Turkey.
- (T7) The only government we [Americans] recognise is the government in the south and we are not going to recognise the so-called 'TRNC' in the north.

The implied consequence of these topics is that promotion of a Cyprus settlement is a core issue for the U.S. The U.S. government is doing its best to find a solution to the issue and will continue to support the U.N.'s efforts. However the success of all of these efforts requires the positive support of Greece and Turkey and the terms of settlement are for the Cypriots to decide. We see that these various topics indeed represent very high-level principles. These propositions are direct expressions of some tenets of U.S. official policy towards Cyprus. In other words, the macro-propositions express the general ideological principles of the priority of U.S. interests and then apply these to the special case of Cyprus. In fact, their main aim is the reassertion of American leadership and security. The U.S. government has anxieties about the future of NATO and before expanding eastward, it wants to settle possible problematic issues. In that part of the world, there is uneasiness between the two NATO allies, Turkey and Greece over a problem on Cyprus. The U.S. views the Cyprus problem as the cause of the friction between Turkey and Greece and treats the island as a problematic area that could weaken the southern flank of NATO. Therefore, the U.S. wants a peaceful settlement in that area. Their efforts on Cyprus reflect their awareness that tensions over Cyprus threaten the stability of a strategically important region and are an obstacle to the kind of cooperative relations they would like to see between Turkey and Greece. They interpret their efforts on Cyprus as a reflection of American values, notably the belief that people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds can work together to ensure peace, stability, and a better future. For the U.S. officials the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable, and the period's U.S. administration is committed to fostering a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. Their immediate goal is to move to comprehensive negotiations under U.N. auspices without preconditions. As they put it, the people of the region, Turks, Greeks, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots alike, desire peace, prosperity, and security for themselves and for their neighbours, regardless of religious differences.

After this brief synopsis of what the Americans say in their discourse about Cyprus, one can summarise these macro-propositions with the overall macro-proposition (topic): "the settlement of Cyprus issue is a constant of U.S. foreign policy".

The main concern of U.S. officials, here, is to legitimate their actions and to delegitimize the actions of the others. Throughout their discourse on Cyprus, U.S. diplomats endeavour to show that their policies and actions towards Cyprus are not only legal but are also executed within the boundaries of moral order. As the given Table overleaf makes it explicit U.S. diplomats try to legitimise three points both in Press Briefings and Press Conferences. Firstly, they try to legitimise U.S. official policy on Cyprus by showing that the U.S. practices on the island are morally and

politically defensible. Secondly, they try to legitimise the reason of their engagement in the Cyprus issue. Finally, they attempt to legitimise their preference for not recognising the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)'.

Table: Macro-propositions & Semantic Legitimation Strategies

<i>Macro-propositions</i>	<i>Semantic Legitimation Strategies</i>
Cyprus is important for the United States	Special Circumstance Seriousness
The U.S. government is doing whatever it can	Positive Self-Representation Normality and Standing Procedures
The U.S. cannot impose a solution, it's for the Cypriots to decide	Carefulness Positive Self-Representation
The U.S. works with the U.N. and supports its efforts	Authorisation Comparison
U.S. engagement is supported and needed	Positive Self-Representation Authorisation
Solution of the problem requires support of Greece and Turkey	Consensus Carefulness
We recognise the Republic of Cyprus and cannot recognise the 'TRNC'	Consensus Normality and Standing Procedures

Each of the above given macro-propositions, in fact, serve as a semantic legitimation strategy used by the U.S. officials. In this part of the analysis, therefore the emphasis will be on the legitimation strategies adopted by the U.S. officials.

The first strategy the U.S. officials use is *Special Circumstance*. Highlighting the special case of the accomplished action is a legitimation strategy used very often. It is especially necessary, when the speaker needs to legitimate his/her specific decision for his/her action. Cyprus issue is special for the U.S. government because, as stated above, this part of the world is important for United States' national security.

This area of the world, by which I mean all of south-eastern Europe, is *critical to stability for the United States' national security* and for the Europeans. Two of our great allies,

NATO nations , are in this part of the world ... we believe that *stability in the area is an essential goal* in the post-Cold War period (Holbrooke, 11 November 1997) .

The history of this area is complicated for the U.S. government. It cannot ignore this part of the world. As the U.S. officials put it, this part of the world has a great significance for the U.S. and peace and stability in the region is their major concern. In addition to that, two of the U.S.'s great allies Turkey and Greece are in this region and they have a very serious unresolved conflict over Cyprus, which for the U.S. officials is the most important problem in the area.

There are many issues between Greece and Turkey, but in my personal view, the *other issues cannot be dealt with unless Cyprus is dealt with centrally*. It is the *core issue* (Holbrooke, 11 November 1997).

To the U.S., Cyprus has a unique kind of situation with a unique set of problems which is why it is special. For over thirty years it has defied the negotiators of the United States, the United Nations and other countries and thus has become a difficult problem. It is "a problem, in which progress is often made in millimetres". In addition to that,

This is the *last place on earth* where people are *divided by a line*. It troubles us [Americans] all... (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

This problem not only has tragic implications for the people of Cyprus, but has had a profoundly negative effect on the whole region (Holbrooke, 1 May 1998).

The Cyprus issue is also special for the speakers, because its settlement is a core foreign policy goal of the Clinton administration. Cyprus is the country with the last divided capital city in Europe and therefore deserves the attention of the U.S. The rhetorical repetition of "unique" in order to emphasise the special circumstances eliminates any blame that the U.S. government might have. In the same way, by saying that the existing problem on the island affects not only the Cypriots, but also the whole region, the U.S. speakers put the responsibility on everyone. In this way, the responsibility of the opposition can be legitimately assessed and this puts a dent in the opposition's argument and credibility.

The emphasis on the special circumstance of Cyprus immediately brings with it the seriousness of the case. *Seriousness* or emergency rhetoric "is a common characteristic of political discourse and most of the time is used in the legitimization of certain measures taken" (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997, p. 538). Cyprus is a very serious issue for the speakers in our texts and needs to be taken care of, because it is related to U.S. national security. For the U.S. officials, the Cyprus

issue is serious, as it can easily bring Turkey and Greece to the edge of war. Besides, military authorities on both sides indulge in the actions of provocation and exacerbate tensions. They expand, upgrade and modernise their armaments.

[The] Cypriot Government decision to acquire S-300 anti-craft missiles from Russia is a *setback for our efforts* to resolve the Cyprus issue peacefully. At the same time, we are firmly opposed to *threats to address the missile question militarily* (Rubin, 19 Sept 1997).

For the U.S. officials both deploying missiles and engaging in hostile threats are mistakes. According to them, their task is growing more difficult and complicated each day, because the tension escalates and the link between the parties become looser. They say "the task is much more complicated when one or the other side is saying, as we often hear, as we often see in the media, go tell them, the other, to do x and I will see how I will react" (Miller, 10 March 1998). In addition, they emphasise that the diplomatic efforts on the island are in such a difficult phase that a solution to the problem necessitates from now on the involvement of all the related countries. The involvement of the leaders of the island is no more sufficient.

The diplomatic situation has been at a *difficult* stage and the solution to it involves not just the leaders on the island but also people outside the island in Brussels, in Athens, in Ankara, and in Bonn, just to name several places. The U.N. and the United States will be heavily involved supporting that effort (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

The seriousness of the situation, results in a final step, in which the other side is represented in a negative way and as a *threat*. Hence, in Cyprus, the U.S. diplomats are exposed to a serious, special issue, which is getting complicated each day and such a situation obliges a heavy U.S. engagement. The U.S. speakers, within the analysed data, legitimise their involvement on the Cyprus issue by saying that they were asked to be engaged. Both the Greek and the Turkish sides have made it clear to the American Cyprus team that they want the United States to continue its efforts in creating a positive climate on the island. Therefore their being on the island is not their idea. It is neither the idea of President Clinton nor that of Secretary of State Albright.

But the degree to which the United States is active, the degree to which Ambassador Miller, as the Special Cyprus Coordinator, and myself as the President's Representative for Cyprus are engaged, the level of our involvement and the level of the involvement of the Secretary of State and of the President and of other senior American officials, is dependent on the degree to which the two parties want us to be involved in the search for a solution[...] If we are going to be engaged, it is going to be because the *parties want us* to be (Holbrooke, 5 April 1998).

I came back here at the *request* of the two sides who, a month ago, both asked me and my team, Ambassador Miller, Miriam Sapiro from the White House, and of course always Ambassador Brill representing the United States here in Cyprus. We came back at their *request* to continue the discussions (Holbrooke, 4 May 1998).

In addition to being requested to come back to the island at the highest possible level, the speakers both in the press briefings and press conferences also stress that they feel obliged to respond positively, whenever they are needed in any part of the world. Obviously, such an affirmation also underlines the helpful and democratic nature of the overall strategy of positive self-representation. In addition to being asked to come, they legitimate their existence on the island, by saying that they have come because the United States government strongly believes that its involvement is crucial in providing help. A settlement will serve everyone's purposes and lead to great economic prosperity for both parts of the divided Cyprus as well as reducing tensions. Thus, each speaker finishes his argument with the statement that, the United States will remain engaged and available to help the parties reach that long-overdue solution, which would benefit everyone.

In response to accusations about the failure of their policies on Cyprus, the U.S. diplomats use a defence mechanism and one of the speakers says the following: "we don't have a horse in the race, so to speak. What we have is a destination, which we hope the two parties will arrive at" (Moses, 10 January 2001). To the allegations, they react by saying that they are not a party to the conflict. However, saying that 'we are the U.S. Cyprus team' and 'we do not have a horse in the race' are two contradictory statements. If there is a Cyprus team of the United States, and if certain U.S. diplomats are portrayed as able team players, this connotes that there are also teams other than the U.S. team. It is apparent that there is a race going on and saying that we do not have a horse in the race (or we are not one of the players) does not reflect the truth. If you are a team, you aim at a destination and work hard with the members of your team to reach it. Since within the team of the United States there are no members of the other involved parties, it is clear that the Cyprus team of the U.S. serves the interests of the Americans. This makes them a participant not a referee. Therefore, saying that we are the destination is a covering up strategy.

This is *not an American problem*. America is trying to be of help in this problem. This is a problem of the people of the island, some of the parties in the region, and this is not a failure of American diplomacy. I refuse to take the blame on this one. We are trying to be helpful. And I will tell you it's *very hard* sometimes to be helpful in these kinds of circumstances (Miller, 10 December 1998).

Regularly, the U.S. speakers in their discourse make it clear that the U.S. cannot

solve this problem on its own. The U.S. is prepared to invest considerable diplomatic resources and effort to bring about such a settlement. However, the parties too must be committed to making progress. There has not been any success regarding the Cyprus problem, but if there is a failure, the U.S. diplomats refuse to accept it as a U.S. failure. The U.S. officials believe that they can make progress on the problem through direct negotiations. They underline the fact that they cannot impose a solution on Cyprus and make it clear that the American way of solving the problem will not be through demands, pressure or anything else as some of the parties in the conflict threaten to do.

People use words pretty loosely like "demand" and "pressure" and things like these. That is not the world that I live in. That is not the world that I work in (Miller, 10 March 1998).

Thus, the U.S. officials guarantee that the U.S. government is not going to force an agreement down Turkey's or Greece's throat. The U.S. is a friend, who is trying to encourage something and is always ready to help. However, they also highlight the fact that they cannot wait *forever* and "be part of a theatre without a meaning (Holbrooke, 5 April 1998).

The United States is *not going to spend the rest of the century wandering around*, trying to create a settlement between sides if they do not want a settlement. And I repeat: If the two sides don't want an agreement, no one can force them to (Holbrooke, 5 April 1998).

Another semantic legitimization strategy used by U.S. officials is that of *Similarity*. It is a part of Comparison strategy, which claims that legitimate others have also been engaged in similar actions. Such a strategy of comparison can also be used to blame critics for applying double standards and hence accusing them of being unfair (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997). The legitimate other that the U.S. officials give as an example, both in press briefings and press conferences most of the time, is the United Nations. They legitimate their actions by comparative reference to legitimate actors of the United Nations. Throughout the texts, the speakers continuously identify the actions of the U.S. government with that of the United Nations and try to show that they have U.N. support.

We remain committed on the political level to working to a solution in the area *in conjunction with the European Union, the authorities of all the governments in the area, and the United Nations* (Holbrooke and Egelund, 13 December 1998).

The purpose of our discussions was to see whether we could start a process that would lead to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation - a goal to which both sides, the U.N., and the U.S. have been publicly committed (Holbrooke, 4 May 1998).

The U.S. officials do whatever they can to show that they are in close contact with the U.N. officials.

We are *eager to work with the U.N., with the international community*[...]We stay in close contact with *U.N. officials*. I have met the new Chief of Mission of the U.N. Ann Hercus on her way out here. I look forward to seeing her again in my visit as well[...] (Miller, 23 July 1998).

We have been working very closely with the U.N., with Dame Ann Hercus - to try to produce a result that is acceptable to the Government of Cyprus (Miller, 10 December 1998).

Secretary General Kofi Annan is in favour of that [an intense U.S. engagement] (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

Showing Kofi Annan as a person who supports U.S. actions contributes to the legitimization of U.S. efforts on the island. To put it another way, we can say that, by exposing themselves to the others as thinking similar with the United Nations officials, the U.S. diplomats use the move of necessity and legitimise their actions. They use this strategy to support their claim that they have no personal interest in the Cyprus problem, but act as a moderator like the U.N. They represent themselves as the collaborators of U.N. officials. This implies that if something goes wrong the U.N. bears equal responsibility. This strategy is closely linked to another legitimization strategy called *Authorisation* that will be examined later.

Another legitimization strategy the U.S. officials use is that of *Carefulness*. Carefulness strategy is also needed, as seriousness, necessity or the threatening characteristic of the case is not enough to legitimise some of the actions. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise that the accomplished action 'was carried out very carefully, and competently, with due preparation, planning and with consideration to the relevant articles of the law' (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997, p. 539). The Cyprus issue may be a very special serious case for the U.S. diplomats and their involvement in the problem may be mandatory, but this still does not give the U.S. diplomats the opportunity or the luxury to do whatever they want. As stated before in this part, not only the official policy of the United States on Cyprus must be legitimated, but also the way they carry their policies on Cyprus must be morally justifiable. Therefore, the U.S. diplomats are very careful in dealing with the subjects on Cyprus. They are careful in not speaking for the others and are cautious in talking about the stages of the process.

The U.S. is not a member of the E.U. so I will let the E.U. speak for itself (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

I can speak for myself I can speak for Ambassador Holbrooke, Secretary Albright, and my government, but I am not going to start speaking for the leaders of the two communities (Miller, 10 March 1998).

We listen carefully, we analyse carefully and we make suggestions. And we will continue to do so (Holbrooke, 4 May 1998).

If I came out and talked to you about where we are at every stage of the process, I guarantee we could never find that solution (Miller, 10 December 1998).

Interestingly enough, what the carefulness legitimization strategy brings to mind is the idea that the procedures applied on Cyprus are standard steps and are not new. Thus, the officials employ another strategy called *Normality and Standing Procedures*. This strategy is used very often to point out that the accomplished actions are standard procedures that are carried out routinely, whenever they are needed. This strategy is applied in order to highlight that the accomplished deeds are not new or exceptional ones but normal and hence legitimate ones that do not have anything special or new. Applying this strategy, gives the U.S. officials the opportunity to show that not only their actions but also their procedures are quite normal. Thus, one of the standing points of the political legitimization of U.S. government's official practices on Cyprus is that, these practices are usual and ordinary. In order to prove that, everything they do is within the routine procedures they either refer to U.N. Security Council Resolutions or other legal authorities in their speeches.

What we are endeavouring to do is to persuade both sides to enter into negotiations *without preconditions* under U.N. auspices. That is what has [been] called for by the G-8 and U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1250 and 1251. As far as our policy is concerned, we remained committed to a Cyprus solution based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, and that has not changed (Foley, 29 September 1999).

By appealing to U.N. resolutions they try to strengthen the legal basis of the U.S. government's commitment to a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, as Security Council also reaffirms its position that Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus comprised of two politically equal communities in a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation.

We would like to see progress in all aspects of relations between the two countries [Greece and Turkey]. We hope this visit [of Greek Foreign Minister to Turkey] also helps our efforts to jump-start comprehensive Cyprus negotiations *without preconditions* under U.N. auspices, as *called for by Security Council resolutions* and the *statement of the Group of Eight* as well (Rubin, 4 October 1999).

We continue to work hard to get the two sides [Greek and Turkish Cypriots] into negotiations *without precondition* under U.N. auspices, as called for by the *group of AID* and *U.N. Security Council resolutions* (Rubin, 6 October 1999).

In these examples the speakers imply that the U.S. policy on Cyprus to convince both sides to join U.N. led talks without preconditions is normal, because U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1250 and 1251 and the statement of the Group of Eight also call for the same thing. The U.N. Security Council Resolution 1250 calls upon the two leaders to give their full support to a comprehensive negotiation and to commit themselves to certain principles, the first of which is 'no precondition'. Since the U.S. is a member of the U.N. Security Council, the officials think that they have the right to ask the parties to join talks without preconditions and deserve to be appreciated because of their efforts. Such an argument may be defeated by a counter argument, which claims that the above-mentioned resolutions of the U.N. do not give the U.S. government such responsibility or a duty.

In addition the U.S. speakers claim that their official policy on Cyprus is not only within normal and standing procedures, but also beneficial to everyone. They are right in asking the parties to reach an agreement, because the current situation disadvantages not only the people of both communities, but also the security and the prosperity of the entire region. Thus, their job, which is to facilitate the parties in their efforts to arrive at a comprehensive settlement, is normal and moral. Besides, the rules that apply to each negotiation are also applied to the Cyprus issue and nothing out of the ordinary is being done.

The *standard rule* that applies for any serious negotiation applies here and both Rauf Denktash and Glafcos Clerides said very clearly that they would not reveal the content of our discussions either (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

It seems as though the U.S. officials do not introduce anything new or unexpected to the problem. They follow the regular procedures of certain legal authorities and their engagement in the issue produces nothing extraordinary. Thus, they avoid possible critique of the opponents and emphasise that the U.S. actions on the island are normal and hence legitimate. Furthermore, they use this strategy to show that not only the actions are normal, but also the procedures followed by the American Cyprus team are moral and correct.

In addition, while trying to legitimate their policies on Cyprus, on moral grounds, the U.S. officials describe their efforts of finding a solution to the problem in a positive manner. As the given quotations below suggest, the speakers sometimes feel the necessity to show some of the characteristics of the members of the U.S. Cyprus team. They do this on purpose to claim that the procedures followed through

these men cannot be wrong. In one of the speeches, by pointing out that on Cyprus a secret lasts about five seconds, the speaker tries to emphasise that the members of the U.S. team are able, honest, decent and are totally transparent for all to see. They either represent the U.S. president or the U.S. government, thus are authorised to make statements.

Look, what the United States is trying to do in assisting to help solve the Cyprus problem is clear and it's above board and it's *totally transparent for all to see*. The statements that are made by our people are statements that are *authorised statements* (Miller, 23 July 1998).

Let me say that what I discuss with one side I generally discuss with the other side. There are *no secrets*. As you know, on Cyprus a secret lasts about five seconds - maybe. So what I discussed with one side, I discussed essentially with the other side (Moses, 11 March 2000).

In addition to that, the below listed names and their positions within the U.S. government, is given by one of the speakers to show determination of the U.S. to find a just and lasting solution to the problem.

Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs Marc Grossman oversees policy for Cyprus. The post of the special Cyprus coordinator is the top full-time position in the European Bureau, charged with coordinating Cyprus policy. Tom Miller, the former DCI in Athens, has been appointed to this position. Special Presidential Emissary Richard C Holbrooke reports to the President, to the Secretary and to the Assistant Secretary. Within the Bureau, the Office of Southern European Affairs is charged with overall policy implementation for that region. Office Director Steven Mull, Deputy Director Peter Petro and two country officers deal with Cyprus issues (Miller, 10 December 1998).

Referring to the involvement of certain legal authorities while describing the efforts of the U.S. government in finding out a solution to the Cyprus problem is in fact a well known legitimization strategy called *Authorisation*. This strategy is carried out by involving authorities. It goes without saying that the involvement of other authorities with the accomplished deeds gives the speaker lots of advantages. Firstly it protects the speaker against the harsh words of critics. In such a situation, the critics know that while criticising the speaker they would be criticising a large number of people or prestigious agencies. Secondly, it gives the speaker the opportunity to assume and accept his/her responsibility and "thereby both covers for (and hence sanctions and legitimates with his own authority) all possible actions of the various agencies, while at the same time sharing possible blame with them if mistakes had been made" (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997, p. 536). To put the same point in a different way, if the speaker is perceived as legitimate, the others will be

legitimated with him/her. If s/he fails in legitimating his/her actions, then he or she can disassociate or separate himself/herself from the deeds of the other authorities.

Within the discourse of U.S. diplomats, the United Nations and the European Union are the most cited legal authorities.

I have talked to the *White House*, the *State Department* and *Kofi Annan* this afternoon. Secretary General Annan is in London. I briefed him on what was happening since we are operating within the framework of the United Nations effort. He will get in contact with *Mr. Cordovez* and inform him of what we have done. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his support for the efforts and the White House and the State Department are fully up to speed on what we have been doing so far here (Holbrooke, 4 April 1998).

I also want to make clear that *our efforts are under the umbrella of the United Nations*. I talk regularly to *Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General*; I briefed him on our trip before I left. Ambassador Miller and I are in close consultations with his representative *Diego Cordovez* and with Deputy Undersecretary General of the United Nations *Kieron Prendergast* (Holbrooke, 1 May 1998).

The speakers in these examples try to show that, the U.S. efforts for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem are in conjunction with the E.U., with the U.N. and with the authorities of the involved countries. What the speakers claim in these quotations are that the U.S. Government is operating under the U.N. umbrella and working within the framework of the U.N.'s efforts. Firstly, such an utterance implies that the U.S. government's efforts in finding out a solution are supported by the U.N. Secondly, it connotes that the U.S. acts as another branch of the U.N. Saying that the U.S. officials are in close consultation with the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, is a strategy. Informing him about what they [Americans] do, talking and briefing him regularly are nothing but just strategies of sharing the possible victory or blame that may come from the critics. This means that, by including these other participants or authorities, in their discourses, the U.S. officials guard themselves against the criticisms of their opponents, who would not like to criticise a large number of groups or prestigious institutions. That is, criticising U.S. actions would mean accusing at the same time the legal authorities, which are cited as well.

Another legitimization strategy the U.S. officials use is that of *Consensus*. It is a legitimization strategy, which involves and hence shares responsibility with opponents. This consensus strategy "is not merely persuasive, but in fact the core of an attempt to establish attitudinal hegemony" (Martin Rojo and van Dijk, 1997, p. 537). In addition to that, one must not forget that agreeing on the problem immediately brings with it working together in its solution. The U.S. speakers claim that there should be no difference of opinion within the U.S. government when it

comes to solving the problem on Cyprus. The most important point that the U.S diplomats are in consensus with each other is the fact that they cannot recognise the 'TRNC'.

The United States cannot recognise the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'. We've said [it] so many times. The U.N. cannot recognise them. The European Union cannot recognise them (Holbrooke, 1 May 1998).

The U.S. government appears totally in agreement with the U.N. and E.U. on that subject. They continuously repeat that the only government they recognise is the Republic of Cyprus and the recognition of the 'TRNC' is out of the question.

1. Conclusion

In this article, some properties of the discourse of legitimation have been examined and the processes of discursive legitimation have been studied. Topical analysis of U.S. discourse on Cyprus helped us in finding out the most important information of underlying models. The macro-propositions helped us to express the general ideological principles of U.S. priorities and at the end of the analysis, they have been reduced to one overall macro-proposition (topic) which indicates that the settlement of the Cyprus issue is a constant of U.S. foreign policy. From the topical analysis, it has been examined that when U.S. officials talk about Cyprus, they talk about the importance of the area for the U.S. interests.

It is clear from the above analysis that the main concern of U.S. officials in the analysed data is to legitimate their actions. Throughout their discourse on Cyprus, U.S. diplomats endeavour to show that their policies and actions towards Cyprus are executed within the boundaries of moral order. Using each of the macro- propositions, which have resulted from a detailed topical analysis, this study makes it clear that the U.S. diplomats stress three points in their Cyprus discourse. Firstly, they try to legitimise U.S. official policy on Cyprus by showing that the U.S. practices on the island are morally and politically defensible. Secondly, they try to legitimise the reason of their engagement in the Cyprus issue. Finally, they attempt to legitimise why they do not recognise the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)'. These three points make it clear that the target of legitimation in the analysed data covers all the interested parties in the conflict.

It has been found that the U.S. officials' semantic legitimation strategies display three of the four legitimation strategies of van Leeuwen (1996); authorisation, rationalisation and moral evaluation. In other words, many properties of U.S. officials' speeches fit in the categories of legitimation. In the analysed texts, it has been found that through the speech event, both authority and legitimacy are enforced and created within discourse itself.

Notes

1. For more information on political discourse, among the many studies, see, e.g., Atkinson, 1984; Chilton, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1995; Connolly, 1983; Fairclough, 1989, 1995a, 1995b; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Gamson, 1992; Geis, 1987; van Dijk, 1998c; Wilson, 1990; Wodak, 1989.
2. The press briefings and press conferences quoted here are listed in the *Sources* at the end of the article.
3. For earlier studies of the language and discourse of legitimation, see Mueller, 1973; for more details on legitimation see, e.g., Allen and Caillouet, 1994; Habermas, 1993; Tyler, 1990; van Leeuwen, 1995; Yagcioglu and Deger, 2001; and for a detailed description and foundations of the discourse of legitimation see, e.g. Habermas, 1975, 1996.
4. For conformity authorisation, the current tendency of many countries claiming to be fighting "terrorists" can be given as an example. In this way Israel seeks to justify its action against the Palestinians, Russia against the Chechens, Macedonia against the Albanians, etc.
5. For moral evaluation, an example could be the dispute between the U.S. and China on human rights issues. While the U.S. accuses China about its political prisoners, China points at the many homeless people in American cities, a condition that China claims is against human rights.
6. For mythopoesis, the U.S. arguments for a strike on Iraq could be given as an example.
7. The simplest and at the same time the most general macro-rule is that of 'DELETION'. It is the rule of deleting all the irrelevant propositions, that is, the details that do not contribute to the construction of theme or topic. It eliminates full propositions from a given text base. The second macro-rule is a stronger variant of the first macro-rule, which can be called 'STRONG DELETION'. The first rule, which may be called WEAK DELETION, deletes irrelevant detail. This second rule deletes locally relevant detail. The third rule is the 'CONSTRUCTION'. In some cases, this rule may have the appearance of a DELETION rule. However, it reduces the information not by deletion but by introducing new information. That is, in this rule a new proposition must be constructed. The last macro-rule is 'GENERALISATION'. The reductive nature of this macro-rule is characterised by the operation of DELETION, which is an integral component of this rule. Some propositions become directly part of macrostructure without undergoing any operation. This non-application of the macro-rule is taken as the application of a ZERO-RULE. For further information on macro-rules see, e.g., van Dijk, 1977, 1980; Yagcioglu, 1992).

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Richard Holbrooke, Departure Remarks, Larnaca Airport, Nicosia, 05 April 1998.

Richard Holbrooke, Press Conference at Larnaca Airport, 01 May 1998.

Richard Holbrooke, Press Conference on Cyprus, Buffer Zone, 04 May 1998.

Thomas Miller, Remarks to Press on Arrival on Cyprus, 23 July 1998.

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