

# Cyprus Ironies - An American View

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Cypriots and their friends abroad generally see two major problems facing the island in the near future - entry into the European Union and Reunification.

After some 25 years of studying the island's foreign policy I believe the first will be solved soon but the second will not. That is, I believe the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) will be admitted to the European Union as a full member with the next group of candidates from the so-called "Countries of Central & Eastern Europe" or CCEE. But I doubt very much if the RoC will be admitted into the EU with the Occupied North despite the valiant efforts of the UN, the UK, the US and the RoC negotiators. After 25 years I simply doubt that Ankara will permit the North to accept the very fair and sensible UN formula: a bizonal, bicommunal federation.

This means that the Republic of Cyprus will take her rightful place as a European country albeit a small democratic state in the next enlargement group and thus pursue her destiny as part of the largest aggregation of economic and financial power in the world.

But the Republic will do so without her Turkish Cypriot brothers who - tragically - are apparently condemned to a gradually decreasing standard of living and continued domination by what is at best a "guided democracy". We suggest that Ankara's politics is largely controlled by a National Security Council in which the dominant voice is that of the military, even though a slight majority of its members are civilians. Because the civilians often differ, whereas the military members do not, it is the latter which dominate Turkish policy toward Cyprus. Thus many of Turkey's most courageous voices, including the head of the Turkish Human Rights Association, find themselves in prison for "actions" which neither Cyprus nor any EU country regard as crimes. In fact, Akim Birdal is now in prison for demanding those human rights which Turkey promised to carry out to meet minimal EU standards as laid down in the Copenhagen standards and the overall entry document, the *acquis communautaire*.

Thus it is only one of the Cyprus ironies that it is the Turks who have perhaps suffered most under Ankara's brilliantly executed and consistent assimilationist policy of the last 25 years - this despite the 200,000 Greek Cypriots forced from their homes and compelled to begin a new life as refugees in their own country. Indeed perhaps 50 thousand Turkish Cypriots fled the North and are now living in the dias-

para including some of Denktash's own people who have retired to London. Many of these Turkish refugees from the North have been replaced by Anatolians illegally brought over from the mainland to work the orchards, operate the hotels, and live in the homes many of which were built and operated by Greeks who were never compensated for their lost properties.

And yet via a second irony of Cyprus - its "economic miracle" - most of the Greek refugees have been successfully integrated into the South. These refugees and their compatriots have created an amazingly vibrant economy through hard work and a good bit of luck. On the disaster of the "July Days" of 1974, the South recreated a booming tourist industry largely from scratch since many of the top recreational locations such as Famagusta, Morphou, and especially Kyrenia are controlled by the Turkish authorities. And those Greek Cypriots who were the descendants of generations of Greek-Cypriot families are rightfully embittered at being unable even to visit their home towns and villages.

In addition to the economically elastic tourist industry which fortunately operated in high gear, the South created new "recession-proof" industries such as communications, insurance, software and computers. Cypriot banks replaced those in war-torn Beirut for the Middle East, and a former President of Cyprus developed computer codes for the Arab world. Money from the former Soviet Union flowed into Cyprus banks and three Russian newspapers are printed in Cyprus for guests from that area. The skyline of Nicosia is crowded with construction cranes and new residential and office buildings going up, while "Fedex" minivans whiz around town delivering documents just as in vibrant European or American cities. Finally, the RoC enjoys a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$12,000 per person - higher than any of its fellow candidates for EU membership and significantly higher than that of the two poorest EU members, Portugal and Greece, and almost double that of Estonia, Hungary, and Poland.

Clearly the good news is that Cyprus will move from its ancient position as an object of policy, a plaything of more powerful neighbours, to a participant of policy within the EU. Outside the EU, Cyprus is a small consumer of security organised by stronger neighbours - Greece, the UK, Turkey, and the US. Cyprus is currently *system-ineffectual*, a "flea" in President Lyndon Johnson's perhaps apocryphal, but certainly brutally realistic description.

But inside the EU, Cyprus and its "big brother" - Greece - could cooperate to push for a truly effective EU-Mediterranean policy subsumed under the nascent EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Cyprus and Greece together could even hope to help shape the budding European Security and Defence Initiative (ESDI) now under the dynamic leadership of the quondam NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana.

The irony here of course is that EU membership will certainly exacerbate the economic pressures on certain weak sectors of the Cypriot economy, for EU accession requires coordination of the entire Cyprus economy. Thus "chapters" on taxes require coordination between domestic and off-shore companies with the former increasing and the latter decreasing. EU accession requires a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which has proved a sticky wicket even for powerful members such as France and the UK.

A second irony incident to Cyprus' EU accession is that her fellow candidates are all Central or Eastern Europe (CCEE) countries. Indeed, they border on former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. One even surrounds the Russian oblast of Kaliningrad, fortress city of the Prussian kings known as Koenigsberg and headquarters of the Teutonic Knights! Consequently, Cyprus may well find itself swept up into an EU enlargement process a major thrust of which is EU-Russian relations. This EU "Orang nach Osten" ("Push to the East") may come at the expense of the rather flaccid EU-Mediterranean Partnership, for both the EU and America seem far more interested in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia than in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

A final irony of Cyprus' EU accession has to do with the island's relations with "Big Brother" Greece. It is often forgotten that Greece is both a Balkan and a Mediterranean power - indeed the only Balkan state which is a member of both the EU and NATO.

Yet twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Greece has refused an offer of Cyprus accession to the Hellenic motherland owing to Athens' interest elsewhere. In 1915 King Constantine rejected an offer from the British to cede Cyprus as *quid pro quo* for Greece's entry into the Allied side in World War I. The offer lapsed and Greece joined the Allies sans Cyprus! After the "Great War" Eleutherios Venizelos refused an offer of Cyprus since he wished to acquire Thrace and part of Western Turkey.

When asked if Athens would possibly "trade" Cyprus for a deal with Ankara over the Aegean, both Greek and Cypriot officials argue heatedly that public opinion in both countries would preclude such a deal while the regnant "Defence Dogma" would not permit it in any event. Perhaps they are right and relations between the two make impossible the apothegm, "The Past is Prologue".

In sum, then, I am quite optimistic that Cyprus can and will meet all EU criteria for membership. It may be difficult for some sectors of the economy, but Cypriot citizens and top RoC officials alike realise the stakes involved: the continuation of the "Cyprus Economic Miracle". Tourism is highly "elastic" in demand, and a recession in Europe could badly damage Cyprus' economy. Agricultural products will be sub-

jected to tough price competition after entry into the EU. Thus "post-industrial" industries which take advantage of human skills are essential to complement older sectors. These certainly include pharmaceutical production and distribution, computer and software development, and perhaps above all - education. The latter is the key to the development of all "high-tech" industries. I believe that Cyprus can certainly do what Israel did - move from an agricultural to a high tech economy.

One additional irony here is that as the RoC progresses, the Occupied North will slip further behind exacerbating the bitterness felt by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities and some Turkish-Cypriots still in the North. In short, the greater the success of EU integration for the RoC, the less likelihood of a successful integration. Unfortunately, however, nothing I have seen or read since 1974 suggests that Ankara is willing seriously to consider any of the UN-sponsored initiatives to reunify Cyprus. That occupation made possible by an illegal invasion is in clear violation of UN resolutions, international law, and even the clear *desiderata* of Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee. The latter specifies that any unilateral action could only be carried out to restore the *status quo*, i.e., the reestablishment of the authority of the legitimate Government of Cyprus, i.e., the RoC.

Yet a "straight line" of Turkish policy stretches from 1964 and the Galo Plaza Report through the High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 and the lugubrious farce of the "handshake of the century" of 1985 through the Ghali "Set of Ideas" to today's negotiations in Geneva with Denktash's announced precondition of a negotiation between two existing sovereign states, i.e., recognition of the so-called "TRNC" before negotiations begin! The statements of the new President of Turkey, Ahmed Necdet Sezer, simply paraphrase those of the redoubtable Turkish administrator of partition, Rauf Denktash. To paraphrase the late President Kennedy in a different context, the Turkish view has been simple and clear: "what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable." Regrettably, I cannot believe there is any concession short of outright surrender, which would move Ankara to agree to reunification based on the UN criteria: a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

If I am wrong, I shall be delighted as will nearly all Cypriots on both sides of the Green Line. What does Ankara want in my view? It wants the continuation of the last wall in Europe, a continuation and deepening of the *status quo*. I believe it wants a quasi-"statelet" allegedly independent but actually under total Ankara control as Rauf Denktash has candidly admitted. This so-called "state" recognised only by Arikara has led to an "Hispanola" solution in which the Turkish-controlled North is in legal limbo but which is actually controlled by the 40,000 Turkish mainland troops now illegally occupying the area.

### **What is to Be Done? - The "Two-Track Policy"**

The Republic of Cyprus policy should be "steady as she goes" for the ship of state. It should pursue its current policy of continuing the UN-sponsored reunification negotiations while not expecting anything substantive from them. The RoC enjoys a robust democracy, a high standard of living and expectation of continued vibrant economic growth. It also has finally developed a diplomatic corps equal to its Turkish counterparts in skill and sophistication.

Let the UN diplomats, the British and Americans all work together to see if Turkey can be persuaded to agree to the *igniis fatuus*, a bicomunal, bizonal federation embodying the Three Freedoms of the Greek side and adequate protection for the minority Turkish side. Let the US State Department Coordinator for Cyprus Thomas Weston and the US Ambassador Donald K Bandier join with Presidential emissary Alfred Moses. Perhaps the latter can bring us to the Promised Land after 25 years in the desert! Maybe Col. Stephen Norton can develop a "new security architecture" capable of reunifying Cyprus.

Above all we wish the new UN special envoy for Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto well in his upcoming bicomunal Geneva negotiations. But if they are no more productive than the previous 25 years is there another - second track for Cyprus?

Indeed there is. While pursuing the first track of UN-sponsored bicomunal negotiations, the Republic of Cyprus should widen and deepen its efforts to get ready to join the EU. This includes the economic, financial, and even educational and environmental sectors of society. The educational standards of the University of Cyprus need to be brought into line with EU standards of promotion, tenure and hiring. The idea that a private College such as Intercollege cannot obtain a quick response to its international professors' committee requesting it be granted University status is absurd. One thousand pages of application should be enough especially in view of the 25,000 college students now studying in the Occupied North. The technical and academic resources of the RoC need to be expanded immediately so that the RoC can meet EU standards.

Cyprus' entry into the EU will not be a *deus ex machine*, it will not be without pain or difficulty. But accession will be a transforming event, opening up the Cyprus economy to a European and world market. Accession will turn the RoC into a "system-effectual" participant of policy, ending its millennial role as an object "object of policy".

Finally by following a "two-track" policy honestly and fully, the time may come when reunification does come. When Turkey finally makes the massive adjustmen-

ts to its economic, social, financial, and politico-human rights system which alone would permit its serious consideration as a full EU member, then Cyprus may be truly reunified as an island-wide federation.

In the meantime, Cyprus should "make haste slowly" or as the Cypriots say, "perasména, xehasména".