

Kenan Atakol, Ph.D.
Former Member of Parliament &
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs &
Defence
Turkish Republic of
Northern Cyprus

25, Neset İkiz Sokak,
Karaoglanoglu, Girne.
Mersin 10, Turkey
Tel: 90 (392) 822 3311
Fax: 90 (392) 822 3200
e-mail : atakol@analiz.net

TURKEY & THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The Cyprus Question from the point of view of a Turkish Cypriot

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a Turkish Cypriot who lived during the British Colonial period, served as a civil servant during the 1960-1963 partnership Republic years, experienced the 1963-1974 period which the Turkish Cypriots went through the darkest days of their history, witnessed the 1974 Turkish Peace operation and actively have taken part in the political life of Turkish Cyprus since 1974. As you can see, I am old enough to have had the chance to live, socialize and work with the Greek Cypriots. During my childhood and early youth, I took part in their cultural activities and learned their language. Unfortunately, my relations with them, as was for all the Turkish Cypriots, took a different turn after the beginning of their open struggle for *enosis*, that is union of Cyprus with Greece that began in mid 1950's. After the physical separation of the two peoples in 1963, the few contacts I did have with them after nearly forty years of separation proved to be disappointing. The long separation did not seem to have made any change to their dream of Cyprus as a Hellenic Island. The failure of the International Community to see this did not help and is not helping in the resolution of the Cyprus issue.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I just lived another disappointment. After listening to Mr. Demetriades's presentation, I have to answer his accusations, before I continue my presentation. The record has to be put right.

Turkish Army is not an occupying force in Cyprus. Turkish Army is in Cyprus under the Treaty of Guarantee of the 1959-1960 agreements. Turkish Army came to protect the Turkish Cypriots from genocide. Turkey waited eleven years before intervening. The intervention came as the Greek Cypriots were going to declare enosis. Samson, who was installed as the Greek Cypriot President after the July 15, 1974 coup, later publicly declared that, "I was about to declare enosis, but unfortunately Turkey came". Turkish Army is our savior and has been the protector of peace in Cyprus. Since the intervention of the Turkish Army in 1974, with the exception of a few skirmishes at the borders, Cyprus has never enjoyed such a peace for a long time.

The Greek Cypriots were not fighting the British for independence but for enosis. Therefore the Turkish Cypriots resisted to the Greek Cypriots' enosis campaign and with the 1959-1960 agreements the partnership Republic, that is the Republic of Cyprus was established. We are not a minority as Mr. Demetriades is trying to portray us. We have never been a minority in Cyprus. The minorities in Cyprus are defined as the Latins, Maronites and the Armenians in the 1960 agreements and the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus.

Turkey has rights accorded to her with the 1960 agreements. With these agreements a balance was established between Turkey and Greece. Attempts are being made to change this balance. What General Hilmi Özkök is saying is that, Turkey will never allow this balance to be changed.

Regarding Loizidou's case: The decision of the court is a political one. For a property that is worth less than one hundred thousand euros, Turkey is compelled to pay over one million euros. Nobody considered the fact that a population agreement was reached between the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot side under the auspices of the UN Secretary General in Vienna on August 2, 1975. According to this agreement, the Turkish Cypriots who were living in South Cyprus could move to the North on their own free will under the protection of the UN and the Greek Cypriots living in the North could move to the South on their own free will. It was under this agreement that all the Turkish Cypriots moved to the North and the Greek Cypriots to the South. Thousand of Turkish Cypriots who took refuge at the British Bases were flown first to Turkey and then back to the North. In this way the population exchange was completed. The Turkish Cypriots did not come to the North to attend a wedding or an entertainment and after thirty years to tell them, 'the wedding or the entertainment is over, now you have to go back'. They will not go back. Even if they want to go back, they cannot, because most of their houses that they left are destroyed, demolished, their plantations all ruined and their land confiscated to build roads and other constructions for so called 'public interest'.

Regarding the statement that the Turkish Cypriot side wants two separate States: What is wrong of wanting two separate States. A lot of countries were divided in the last decade. They were divided for the sake of 'peace'.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Now, I will continue my presentation from where I left.

Cyprus is a beautiful island where, we, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, have been living for nearly four and a half centuries. During this period, we experienced cohabitation under different rules. We lived under the Ottoman Empire and then under British rule. We gained independence and tried a partnership Republic that failed after three years. We lived in peace and we lived in war. We once lived mixed and now we are separate.

- The reason for the separation of the two peoples is 'the *enosis* obsession', that started in the early nineteenth century and is still continuing under different pretenses. In 1878, the year that the Ottoman Empire turned over the administration of Cyprus to Britain, there were 234 mixed villages in Cyprus. In 1974, just before the Turkish Intervention, there were only 48 mixed villages left. In other words, in less than one hundred years, 186 mixed villages disappeared as mixed villages from the map of Cyprus. With the end of the Turkish intervention the number of mixed villages went down to one. Therefore, it is a fact that the separation of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots started more than one hundred and twenty five years ago. It was always the Turkish Cypriots who were living the mixed villages for safer areas or immigrating to Turkey. The real separation, of course, came in December 1963 when the Turkish Cypriots were thrown out of the Government and forced to live in enclaves and ghettos on three percent of the land for eleven years. The whole world, except for Turkey, seemed indifferent to the plight of the Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots who found themselves Stateless in one night and were terrorized by their State that was supposed to protect them, had to form their own administrations and govern themselves. This is a chronology of the Turkish Cypriot Administrations:

- Dec. 1963: General Committee
- Dec. 1967: The Provisional Cyprus Turkish Administration
- Dec. 1971: The Cyprus Turkish Administration
- Oct. 1974: The Autonomous Cyprus Turkish Administration
- Feb. 1975: The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus
- Nov. 1983: The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

These Administrative changes were necessitated due to the policies of the Greek Cypriots and of the International Community.

Mr. Chairman:

The 'Cyprus Problem' which started on December 21, 1963, could have been resolved in no time provided; (1) the United Nations Security Council adopted resolutions based on the rule of law and (2) Britain, the former colonial power with two military bases on Cyprus and one of the Guarantor Powers of the Republic of Cyprus, lived up to her obligations and protected the Turkish Cypriots from aggression and restored constitutional order after the 1963 attacks. Nothing positive, of course, could be expected from the other guarantor power Greece, since she was the mastermind of the *enosis* campaign and along with the Greek Cypriots was belittling Turkey's determination to keep Cyprus from becoming part of Greece. Turkey, also a guarantor power, made the Cyprus issue a matter of national honor both because of her concern for the security and well being of the Turkish Cypriots and because of Cyprus' proximity to Turkey.

The Turkish and Greek Cypriots have been negotiating on and off since 1968 to resolve the so-called 'Cyprus Problem' without any success. The main reason is due to the recognition accorded to the illegitimate, unconstitutional Greek Cypriot regime as the representative of the whole of Cyprus and the intervening of third parties in support of the Greek Cypriot side. The EU and other third parties are trying to force the Turkish side into a superficial agreement that fails to address the underlying interests and needs of the Turkish Cypriot people. This definitely means trouble for the future. A policy of formulating any kind of agreement will not be serving the interests of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, also the EU and the International Community for that matter. Therefore, not any kind of agreement but the quality of the agreement is important. Short-term expediency should not be sacrificed for long-term stability.

The International Community and specifically the European Union and the UN should stop their biases against the Turkish Cypriots. There must be symmetry if we expect to have fair and successful negotiations. In situations of power asymmetry, the stronger side will exploit the weaknesses of the other side and negotiate on a take it or leave it basis. This is what is happening with the Cyprus negotiations. The EU publicly declares that 'whether or not there is a solution in Cyprus, the Greek Part of

Cyprus is going to join the EU'. This is coercion aimed only at the Turkish side. It is not a win-win situation.

The EU has been grooming the Greek Cypriot side for membership since 1972. The EU signed a customs union agreement and four financial protocols with the Greek Cypriots and were all implemented during the past thirty years in total disregard of the Turkish Cypriots complaints and warnings that the EU was cementing the division of the Island. The Turkish Cypriots view this policy as a one-sided pro Greek policy, and therefore, EU is not considered an honest broker in the Cyprus issue.

The situation in Cyprus is not ripe for a win-win resolution. So far the International Community and particularly the EU has been imposing conditions only on Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side. The recent EU Commission report on the enlargement process is a striking example of the one sided conditionality, i.e., imposing conditions only on Turkey and Turkish Cypriots:

1. The report states that the EU's strong preference is a United Cyprus joining the EU. However, the EU by accepting only the Greek Cypriot side as the only legitimate authority is damaging the equal legitimacy of the two sides and is preventing any meaningful discussion and reconciliation.
2. The EU is calling all the parties involved in the Cyprus issue to start negotiations. However, the EU is pointing its finger to Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side as the two parties preventing the resumption of the negotiations.
3. In the report, under "Cyprus" there are no preconditions for membership or any element that will encourage the solution. This policy of the EU totally ignores the fact that it was the Greek Cypriots who started the problem, violated the international agreements and it was Turkey that came to Cyprus and prevented a total genocide of the Turkish Cypriots. In spite of this, the EU chose to punish Turkey by bringing a precondition that, "the absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey's EU

aspirations". The solution of the Cyprus problem became a precondition for Turkey's aspirations of joining the EU as though it is only up to Turkey to solve the problem and as though the Greek Cypriot side, Greece and EU have no responsibility whatsoever. The solution of the Cyprus problem is not amongst the Copenhagen criteria and in this context it does not constitute an obligation for Turkey. On the other hand, the solution of the Cyprus problem is not envisaged as a precondition for the Greek Cypriot side. Are we to understand that the EU looks at Cyprus as a Greek Republic?

The EU, under pressure from Greece and Greek Cypriot side, is prejudiced and is continuously changing positions against Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side. The EU is telling Turkey that, 'if the Cyprus problem is not solved, forget EU membership; you might not even get a date to start negotiations'. When it comes to the Greek Cypriot side, the EU is saying to the Greeks, 'do not worry, whether there is a solution or not, your membership is definite'. This is a double standard and is making reconciliation difficult. The EU should re-evaluate the effect of her actions and policies on Turkey and Turkish Cypriots. The EU and the International Community can only help if they adopt a policy of conditionality on both parties. An agreement made under pressure will not be sustainable.

Another issue that is troubling us is that, countries that do not recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are interfering in the elections of this Country. In this way, they are trying to change the free will of the people, create artificial problems amongst the Turkish Cypriots, so that they can impose their own solutions. We had been having democratic and free elections in our country since 1976, electing our President, the Members of Parliament, the Mayors and the all the way down to the village headmen. No body cared much about our elections until this year's December 14 elections. We find the interference into our elections very disturbing indeed. It is unbecoming for the western world to try to change the course of the elections of a small peace loving democratic country

How can we hold meaningful negotiations? Meaningful negotiations can only be held:

1. By establishing equity in the negotiating process between the parties. In this way no party will have the opportunity to have a monopoly or a preponderance of legitimacy or authority.
2. By stopping to blame constantly one person, that is, Denktaş, for the failure of negotiations. It is not fair, because it is not right. This kind of policy makes the Greek side more and more intransigent.
3. By promoting confidence between the parties. The Turkish Cypriot side has already taken important steps in this direction. The Greek Cypriot side is persistently refusing to take any positive steps that will promote confidence building between the two sides.
4. By not trying to force the Annan Plan as a pre-condition to negotiations. The Annan Plan contains sharp disagreement articles. Bi-zonality, bi-communality, political equality and Turkey's Guarantee are too far away from satisfying the Turkish Cypriots needs. The Turkish and Greek Cypriots should be allowed to put together their own plan without interference from third parties.

It is a grave mistake to assume that the Cyprus question will be resolved if Turkey puts pressure on Turkish Cypriots. No one can overlook or ignore the root causes of the Cyprus question. The cardinal fact is that a new partnership that encompasses bi-zonality, that is the two peoples living side-by-side, political equality, equal sovereignty, Turkey's guarantee, protecting the balance that was established in 1960 between Turkey and Greece, are essential elements for the solution of the problem and are not negotiable. The existing process does not give much hope and confidence to Turkish Cypriots for a balanced and win-win outcome.

It is time that the EU and the International Community properly diagnose the half a century old 'Cyprus Problem', if a sustainable solution is genuinely desired.