

## THE HEYBELIADA TALKS: SHARING IDEAS FROM AND FOR CYPRUS

Costa Constanti  
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Edited by Mensur Akgün & Sylvia Tiryaki



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# FEW WORDS FROM THE CONVENERS

*By Mensur Akgün & Sylvia Tiryaki*

When we first convened the Heybeliada Talks in July 2008, we did not anticipate the meetings would last for so long. By now, it has been more than five years during which we had had fourteen rounds and several side meetings.

We believe that the Heybeliada Talks have served well its purpose and contributed to the reconciliation process between the two communities on the island and recently between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus.

As recollected by Chrysostomos Pericleous in his contribution to this publication, “Prime Minister Erdoğan created a historic opening [. . .] when, speaking to Greek Cypriot journalists in Istanbul he proposed the direct participation of Turkey, Greece and the EU in the Cyprus peace negotiations”.

This “historic opening”, that Pericleous calls “a genuine policy shift in Turkey’s Cyprus policy”, happened at our Heybeliada Talks no. 6. Subsequently, President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades “saw in this proposal a unique opportunity [. . .] for enlargement of the peace process”.

The publication you are holding in your hands represents a selection of contributions ranging from personal experiences with the Cyprus problem to the suggestions for the international community, which were discussed during the recent rounds.

The six important contributions will help you to grasp the intricate nature and complexity of the Cyprus problem. As Sami Özuslu has pointed out in his piece, “Without closely focusing on [Cyprus] issue, it is impossible to understand exactly what it is”.

Although, it might be true that the more you read and learn about the Cyprus problem the less sure you feel about your knowledge, with full awareness we take the risk and provide you with yet another publication on this topic.

We wish you happy reading.

# PEACE VIA THE HEART AND NOT THE BARREL OF A GUN

By Costa Constanti

Sometimes, the way to peace is not through long-winded negotiations but through the sharing of experiences, feelings and stories. Empathy, the healer of all wounds and the peacemaker of the soul, can act mightier than the pen that proved it could beat the sword long ago. My father always taught me that the pen was mightier than the sword and pushed me into academic avenues from a young age. But many peacebuilders and peacemakers have not all been academics. Some have been simple charismatic people who have convinced people of the benefits of peace, or have, through the sharing of their emotions, won the enemy over. Less blood is spilt this way. Here I share part of my story. I hope to express my need for peace through my heart's story so far.

I miss the smell of cut grass on a Saturday morning as the Melbourne suburbanites go about their gardening on a warm spring day. This is a smell I am yet to enjoy in Cyprus. Few houses have grass that needs cutting, especially in the cities. I miss driving down the commercial streets in Australia, selecting a Turkish restaurant or Vietnamese soup house to eat with my Italian and Greek friends whilst being dropped off in a taxi driven by a new Indian or Somali migrant. I miss my father's attempts at Chow Mein or his spectacular lamb chop BBQs, or my mother's pasta bake, Sheppard's pie or fried rice with spring rolls. My first 26 years, living in Melbourne, were light years away from the Eastern Mediterranean where I live now, for the last seven years.

Although I have been gone seven years from Australia, and have returned briefly only twice, my heart still sits near the banks of the Yarra River that flows through the city centre, or the edge of the Blue Mountains, or the

*The dream of repatriation was semi-fulfilled when I migrated to Cyprus seven years ago. I say semi-fulfilled as I live in a part of Cyprus, the 'south', which has no relation to my family and my ancestry.*

coastline of the Great Ocean Road or on the balcony of our summer house on the Mornington Peninsula. Yet, my heart also lies elsewhere. It lies in the old Kyrenia fishing port by the Venetian castle; it lies under the gothic arches of Bellapais; it lies beside the church of Ayia Paraskevi in upper Lapithos; it lies in the courtyards of Karmi; it lies in my father's birthplace Yialousa; it lies in the foundation stones of Apostolos Andreas Monastery; it lies in my

mother's teenage bedroom in Trachona; and it lies next to the new mosque in Agios Loucas. But I have never lived there; I only visit from time to time. These ancestral locations are only a false memory. A memory inherited from my parents and my grandparents. Inherited following decades of story telling, nostalgia and reminiscing.

I have never lived in Lapithos, Karmi, Yialousa, Trachona or Ayios Loucas. But my parents and grandparents have. Their memory is embedded in these locations like their DNA is embedded in their cell structure that makes up the very essence of their being. I am born from this. I am Kyrenian. I am Famagustan. I am Nicosian. Our family has been all this for centuries, perhaps thousands of years. I don't know. Will I always be Melbournian? Does 26 years count in human history? Will my children yearn for Melbourne? Will they yearn for the summer seas of the east coast, for the wineries of the south, or an evening of food tasting in the entertainment districts? Will they feel a bond with Australia? I think they will, because I will tell them about where their father grew up. I will tell them about my childhood, where I first rode a bike, my first romance, my favourite restaurant and I will repeat to point of exhaustion the stories of my friends and family who they will have never met. They will know all these experiences and these personalities without setting foot in Australia; and I will understand them.

I never chose to be born in Melbourne. This decision was made for me. In fact, it was somewhat made for my parents also. My father migrated to Australia in the early 1950s, a family of eight children; economic migrants from Yiallousa. My grandmother returned to Cyprus in early 1974, adamant to repatriate and bring the family back home. In 1974, Cyprus was better than when they had left. The economy had grown and the Karpasia Peninsula had potential. Sadly, her dream of repatriation was shattered soon after deciding to announce to the rest of the family to return to her island paradise. She was shipped to Turkey as a female prisoner of war following the hostilities of that dark summer. Upon returning to the island, she spent six months enclaved in her village, still hoping to repatriate the family. It never happened. She was exchanged at the Ledra Palace Hotel gates in the buffer zone in Nicosia and fled back to Australia.

My mother moved 'temporarily' to Melbourne in 1972 for studies. Her oldest aunt received her warmly after migrating there some years earlier. In mid-1974, with plans to return to Cyprus, her dream was cut short. Nicosia airport was closed. The Greek inspired coup had ensured that no return was possible anytime soon. With bated breath she waited for news. Good news never came. Soon the Turkish military had overrun her house in Trachona and her parents' homes in Lapithos and Karmi. There was no home anymore to return to. Melbourne became home overnight, permanently. She had become a refugee without seeing a single act of violence. Some say she is lucky, I say she is unlucky. She never got to say goodbye, even under gunfire. Her family then migrated as refugees to Australia where she had arranged urgent refugee visas for them. They live there till this day.

I was brought up on the memory of a life lost in Cyprus. I was raised on their memories, whilst they tried to adapt to a new reality on the other side of the planet. My heart yearned for Cyprus though. The dream of repatriation was semi-fulfilled when I migrated to Cyprus seven years ago. I say semi-fulfilled as I live in a part of Cyprus, the 'south', which has no relation to my family and my ancestry. Those areas are north of the Green Line that forcefully separates the two halves of the island. Kyrenia district, although only 15 minutes away from my new home, is closer in my heart and in my own personal reality in Melbourne than on the island. It is the people, the stories and the memories that matter in the end. Melbourne is Kyrenia for me. The 'real' Kyrenia today is something else. It is still a beautiful place and the location of all those family stories I have been told. It is without my family though, only their spirit. They are in Melbourne now. Melbourne is their 'New-Kyrenia'.

*Greece, Turkey and Cyprus have so much to gain from a solution to the Cyprus problem and a reunification of the island. Greece can feel safer with her neighbour and Turkey can engage the EU closer and help modernise the country further.*

I never hated Turks. I never hated Greeks. I hated certain governments and military leaderships. I never hated the people, the 99 per cent of humans on this planet. My grandfather worked with Turkish Cypriots and they got along. His village saw unspeakable atrocities against Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriots. He is ashamed of that and I learnt compassion from him. My grandmother told me horror stories about seeing Turkish paratroopers landing around her; of fleeing the house with the clothes they were wearing as the tanks rolled forward. I am saddened at the thought that they lost all their photographs. Memories of at least the physical kind, lost forever. A photo of my grandmother in her wedding dress is all we want. It is lost. A baby photo of my mother would be wonderful. It too is lost. My 14 year old uncle in-law, missing since 1974, is listed amongst thousands missing since the 1960s, both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. Today they find fragments of bone, confirming what we already know: that they are dead.

I hear Turkish spoken in Ledra Street, in Debenhams, in the Mall of Cyprus and at Larnaca airport. I see Turkish Cypriot number plates on cars driving in Troodos and Paphos. It is still surreal for me. Although the previous generations lived somewhat together, the past 4-5 decades of separation ensures that I still don't take for granted the overlapping lives we have started somewhat to live again. The perforation of the Green Line that divides us, the relaxation of restrictions on crossings and the progressive opening of minds across the island is making life more... 'normal'. It means that the two major Cypriot communities can engage, interact, learn from one another, investigate, ask questions, get things off their chest and most importantly, build peace between them. However, it is all going too slow for me. The hardliners and the extremists are still hesitant to change; compromise, tolerance and acceptance are words unfamiliar to them. There are still too many people that fear change. There are still too many who want things to go back to 'how they were', without accepting some new realities.

Both communities demand compromise and acceptance of victimisation. Perhaps both communities should accept the errors of the past and deal with them. The Germans did this following World War Two and look at them now. They are regional hegemony and economic giants. There is no shame accepting your past. You must accept the highs and the lows of your history. Greece, Turkey and Cyprus have so much to gain from a solution to the Cyprus problem and a reunification of the island. Greece can feel safer with her neighbour and Turkey can engage the EU closer and help modernise the country further. The potential for Cyprus post-solution is phenomenal. An island of one million people trading with Turkey, a country of approximately 80 million people is a one-way advantage for Cypriots. The Greek and Turkish spoken on the island allows access to both main markets, and the use of English, Russian and other languages ensures the ability to tap into many regional markets. Greeks and Turks could visit Cyprus to learn each other's language in a holiday-like environment and English can also be taught as the common language. Malta is a centre of English language in Europe. Cyprus could be centre for our region as well for Greek, Turkish and English.

Whether I am in Onasagorou Street in the south, or Dereboyu in the north, I never forget that both areas are a short walk away from each other, but are nearly half a century apart. Psychologically they are thousands of kilometres away, due to barriers and check points, but in reality, they are only mere meters away as the bird flies. I wake in the morning to both the hoca calling his flock to prayer and the bells of the local cathedral ringing. From

my rooftop I can watch the car lights coming and going on the Nicosia to Famagusta road in the north, with the flag of the entity in the north flashing down on me all through the night like a silly Christmas ornament. For me though, there is no Green Line, but a psychological barrier. It is permeable. It is destructible. It can be removed in minutes. It may take a lot longer to rebuild Varosi, the worlds' biggest ghost town on the east coast, guarded by Turkish soldiers and the souls of 50,000 inhabitants who cannot return. However, it can be done, and fast.

When a Turkish national with no Cypriot ancestry joins me south of the Green Line, does this make me a people smuggler? According to (Greek) Cypriot law, they are illegal. So that would make me a people smuggler, in my own land, with my own people. After four decades they feel Cypriot. My friends, these people Greek Cypriot law considers illegal, want peace and reunification. They want what is best for the island as a whole. They have been here for some generations now. They are now Cypriot. They have nowhere else to go. How can we not move forward? Kuwait has an embassy in Iraq and the ex-Yugoslav states have made peace among themselves. Why are we so stubborn?

No one in Istanbul seems to fear the sound of church bells ringing in the Beyoğlu area. In Athens, no hotel shies away from hanging the Turkish flag among others outside their hotels. Cypriots can draw inspiration from this. Greek Cypriots should know that today's Turkey is not the one they feared decades ago. Turkish Cypriots should also know that the Greek Cypriots are not the ones they feared decades ago either. Far from it - things have

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changed. It is time to move forward. Istanbul is a massive modern megalopolis of perhaps 20 million people. In this city alone that's 20 times more than the population of the whole of Cyprus. The island is almost insignificant. Do they know we even exist? I doubt anyone there cares about us anyway. Everyone talks about peace building, building

bridges and knocking down walls. However, we don't have street battles and guerrilla warfare, so why is still no peace agreement to reunify the island? Is the situation on the island too 'ignorantly peaceful' to risk changing? Should we focus purely on 'twiplomacy'? That's the use of social media to solve problems and create opportunities for confidence building measures.

Evrin, Marios, Melis, Popi, Murat, Georgina, Menderes and Anna, all on my summer rooftop, having fun, together. Who is the Cypriot, and who isn't? Does it matter? When they cross the line, do they change? Do I change? I don't know. Perhaps yes. Is it voluntary or forced change? Can I help feel sad when I drive past a humble old pre-1974 home on the Kyrenia bypass among newer modern complexes? Am I wrong to feel sad when looking through windows and doors and seeing photos of a new family on the walls, the shadows of the past residents long gone. Like a flower seeking sunlight in the thick forest I see evidence of a past that seems to have vanished suddenly. How can I overcome that? However, I don't hate. I am happy I am making new memories in Kyrenia now. I am making new friends and new stories. My friends and I are the bearers of reconciliation among ourselves, building a new common future; building peace on our own. We are fed up of waiting for the leaders and the statesmen to do their job.

Going to my grandmother's sister's funeral recently made me think. Here we were burying her just some kilometres from her hometown, yet it seemed so far away. Familiar faces, travelling to the funeral from across the island, had come to pay their respects to a lady they once all lived with in the neighbourhood. Buried 'far' away from home, at least psychologically. The village is there though, you can visit whenever you like now, but it is not the same. I have never lived there, so I don't know the difference between what it was and what it is. What I do know is that we have to accept the change and build on that. It's a reality we have to accept. Izmir is Smyrna. Smyrna is Izmir. Istanbul is Constantinople. Constantinople is Istanbul. Girne is Kyrenia. Kyrenia is Girne. These places are still there. Call them what you like, as you please.

Cyprus is my island. Not part of it. Not south or north, east or west... all of it. The churches, mosques, Hellenic ruins, Lusignan castles, Venetian walls, Ottoman baths and British courthouses are all part of my island home. The religions that dominate, the languages that are spoken and the food we eat, all of it is Cypriot. I am proud to be Hellenic, as proud as some of my friends are to be Turkic, but at the end of the day, I pay my taxes to the Republic of Cyprus, I live on the island of Cyprus and my passport is Cypriot. I am Cypriot. Personal friends who arrived in Cyprus many years before me, from Lithuania, Bangladesh etc. are more Cypriot than me. They are proud of their civic and national identity. However, their ethnicity is sacred and no one wants to take that from them. Same with the Armenian Cypriots, they are ethnically Armenian and proud, but their nationality is Cypriot. Many of them have never even been to Armenia. Who is more Arab, an Arab from Lebanon, or Syria, or Egypt? They are almost all ethnically Arab, but nationality is different. The same is the case with Cyprus. I am no more or less Hellenic than someone in Athens, but they belong to one Republic and I to another. Who would dare tell a Spaniard or a Columbian that one is more Latino than the other based on nationality?

Turkey doesn't recognise the Republic of Cyprus and it in turn doesn't recognised the entity established in the north. Yet we cross the checkpoints using documentation from each other's authorities, as if they are mutually recognised. I think the common person really needs to stand up and demand their leaderships behave the same way

as they do. After all, they are empowered by their vote. I don't believe there is anyone who can accept the current situation, the miserable status quo. I think we would all agree that something better is available for all of us. We have to make it happen, through actions, not just words. Extremist groups need to be approached and a dialogue needs to open with them. They too deserve to see the benefits of a mutual agreement.

A fantastic example of this is the NGO called Cyprus Academic Dialogue. They are heavily active, promoting civil society, peace building activities, reconciliation between the two communities and problem solving the problems of our leaders. From the most difficult chapters of the reunification talks, they have managed among their members to negotiate agreements for almost everything. This even includes the seemingly impossible property chapter in the talks. The respect of both Cypriot communities, as well as the authorities in Turkey and Greece, has been gained and they are showing the Cypriots how easy it in fact can be to live together. Another great example is the Home for Cooperation in the Nicosia buffer zone at Ledra Palace. This NGO houses numerous other NGOs and is the employment site of both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot employees. They work together in peace, forging the way forward for the rest of the island to follow suit soon. The location even has a bicomunal café that sees Cypriots socialising and making friends daily. It all may be very 'happy hippy' as I have heard it being described, but call it whatever you like, it promotes peace, prevents tensions and potential bloodshed.

There are no green lines between us Cypriots. There is no division. 'They' tell you there is. Any division that exists is false and man-made. We simply enforce this division by acknowledging its existence. Do not let it exist and it won't. It is psychologically installed via barrels, barbed wire and walls. Just recently on a trip overseas with a Turkish Cypriot friend, we realised even more how silly the 'concept' of the Green Line is. It is comical. Facebook, email, telephones and the media ensures that the barriers are long gone. We don't even have to meet overseas anymore to be together as friends.

Between us we have solved the Cyprus problem. We don't have barriers and green lines between us. It is time we see the authorities react to this, and cement us in history. There is one future, a peaceful one. It is impossible otherwise.

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# A UNITED INDEPENDENT CYPRUS FITS IN THE NEW ERA

By Takis Hadjidemetriou

One substantive weakness of the parties directly involved in the Cyprus conflict, namely Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, has been their failure to internalize the complex developments and to comprehend the state of flux and the new balances that are continuously being reformed and reshaped in the region and the world. This weakness has been a fundamental reason why the Cyprus problem has been stalled for so many years.

The nationalist movement that has pervaded the relationships of the two communities in Cyprus as well as those of Turkey and Greece should have faded away by the 1960s. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Nationalism continued to be the main driving force of political developments causing pain and derailing the history of the region. Huge responsibilities rest with the leaderships; who, instead of containing friction and trying to rationalize political approaches, fed nationalism with patriotic rhetoric, thus leading to disaster.

Although political and economic problems have changed political orientations in Turkey and Greece, political elites are still prone to using nationalist rhetoric in connection with the Cyprus problem with the view to making political profit. Consequently, the Cyprus conflict has, for decades, been the object of local and regional antagonisms along with narrow-minded military calculations at a time when the whirlwind of globalization has been dramatically changing the world. While the 21<sup>st</sup> century ushers in a new era, we still perceive the world in terms of the 20<sup>th</sup>, even the 19<sup>th</sup>, century. A Turkish-Greek confrontation is still being carried on in Cyprus as if the problem will sometime be solved with the complete victory of the one side over the other.

Political predominance was first sought by Greece, and then by Turkey – albeit with no success. During the first phase, the Greek side had the upper hand but failed to impose its conditions. Since 1974, Turkey, despite occupying

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37% of Cyprus and its continued military predominance, has also failed to impose a solution on its own terms. This failure could be explained to some extent by the fact that the great powers, all of which have interests in the region, do not want either Greece or Turkey to have control over Cyprus and, through it, over the Eastern Mediterranean basin. Their interests converge in maintaining an independent Cyprus. The maintenance of an independent Cyprus on the basis of

a sustainable equilibrium between Turkey and Greece seems to be nearer to how the great powers, and even the coastal states of the region, see their interests best served.

The new data that the natural gas perspective brings to focus creates an even closer convergence towards the maintenance of the independence of Cyprus. This convergence covers Turkey's interests as well given that the partition of Cyprus would finally deprive it from sharing the benefits of the natural gas perspective. All actors directly or indirectly involved in the Cyprus problem are now faced with situations that are interconnected with incomparably more complex and multi-layered interests. Old patterns confined to interests and antagonisms in the triangle of Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus are not relevant any more.

In an era of transnational and trans-border management, neither Cyprus nor Turkey can remain stuck to obsessions of an obsolete past. Interconnectedness and interdependence are the motto of the day. Within this framework, we all need stability and security; we all need a sustainable peace in the region, which could only be achieved if both the Cyprus and the Palestinian problems were solved.

From the outset, we have to take into account that unimpeded exploitation of natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean basin presupposes both bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the countries of the region through relevant agreements. This condition necessitated the bilateral agreements that the Republic of Cyprus concluded with Egypt and Israel and a still pending one with Lebanon. In a nutshell, the secure exploitation of natural gas in the region depends heavily on the ability of the countries involved to come to an agreement on mutually beneficial, open and transparent practices. Nationalist rhetoric or, even worse, nationalist obsessions, have no place whatsoever in this case. The precondition of peace and stability can only be met through win-win approaches.

Secondly, the gas reserves are found in international waters far from Cyprus' coasts. This means that exercising our sovereign rights on our EEZ, even after agreements with neighbouring countries, presupposes the capability of safeguarding the drilling installations. This constitutes a key element strengthening the need for international cooperation while weakening the narrow national approach of the issue. Protection of such installations is not safeguarded by patriotic verdicts but through cooperation with all those who have common interests. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that cooperating with third countries means considering their own interests and interdependences as well. Those who undertake a role in safeguarding the security of the gas platforms and of the personnel thereon will, in practical terms, have a role in the management of the gas in the EEZ of Cyprus. As long as drilling was in process in plot 12 of the Cypriot EEZ there was intense presence and activity of American airplanes for 6-12 hours a day. Economic interests of companies and of states connected with them brought to the region more warships than those brought by regional wars. American, French, British, Russian, and German war vessels have made their presence apparent in the region while Israel has been strengthening its naval forces in order to protect its own interests. Let's not speak about Cypriot naval forces. The only thing they can do is to move around the drilling installations and carry out vigil and rescue missions when need arises.

Third, the drilling budgets are of such grand scale that makes it impossible for local resources to undertake any such project. In fact no country of the region is capable of putting in the capital, the scientific and technological expertise needed. Such assets are available only by transnational energy corporations the capabilities of which transcend those of state budgets of quite a lot of countries. The involvement of worldwide esteemed corporations from Korea, Italy, France, and the United States create new parameters that reshape the political and economic future of Cyprus. As economics and security are interconnected, respective states come along with corporations. Not accidentally the Ambassadors of Israel and the USA were present at the signing of the contracts for installing an LNG plant in Cyprus.

Fourth, the drilling and management of natural gas also involves prospective customers who look forward to safeguarding their energy needs. This means that prospective customers, the EU being one of the main ones, will have a say on the management of the gas. The EU, in particular, would not like to find itself in a situation similar to that of the Russian gas pipe interruptions some years ago.

Fifth, the Republic of Cyprus, in order to safeguard its sovereign rights, has put forth the argument that it is acting within the framework of international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and this is acknowledged by companies and states involved. However, the UN and the EU Commission put the additional precondition that all the population of the island should benefit from its natural wealth. The RoC readily accepts this condition but within a solution framework, which is not considered a satisfactory answer to the problem as natural gas will, in the meantime, become a source of tension between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as well as between the RoC and Turkey.

To expect that all corporations and countries involved will definitely take the side of the RoC is not a realistic expectation. Cyprus needs peace and stability to fully exploit its gas resources. However, Turkey as well needs a new model of cooperative relationships with Cyprus in order to benefit from the gas management projects not only in Cyprus but also in the whole region. Here comes the issue of the anomalous situation in Cyprus with Turkey bearing the main responsibility through maintaining an occupation army in the northern part of Cyprus. The protraction of this anomalous situation is considerably damaging the interests of Turkey itself.

Political leaders on all sides have repeatedly stated that the protraction of the Cyprus conflict is damaging their national interests. However, they have not had the courage, or the will, to reach a compromised settlement. As long as the issue remained dormant, its protraction seemed not to pose any threats. However, once wider interests became involved, the Cyprus conflict turned into an explosive issue. The problem that Turkey and Cyprus, in particular, have to address is to take the message on board and rationalize their approach of reality. Otherwise, if they go on insisting on confrontational zero sum practices, the dynamics of the new era will overcome both of them. A stalemate or, even worse, a deterioration of the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean because of the Cyprus problem will have extremely negative consequences not only for Cyprus and Turkey, but for much more powerful actors as well.

Within this framework, what is the role of the people of Cyprus as a whole? It certainly cannot be the most important determinant but, under certain conditions, it might become quite substantive. A unifying common vision is desperately needed, a vision that might lead Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to the new era that has been ushered in. Day after day it is becoming clearer that our interests, our existence itself, depends on our capability of reaching a settlement.

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We, the people of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians and Latins, have to seek our own paths accounting for the great powers' antagonisms, but not becoming part of them. This we can better achieve through a united and coordinated effort. It is high time we dreamed of a common future and common prosperity.

***It is high time we dreamed of a common future and common prosperity. Such a target will not be achieved by its own, nor just through good intentions and wishful thinking. It basically calls for a state and institutional structure of a united Cyprus.***

Such a target will not be achieved by its own, nor just through good intentions and wishful thinking. It basically calls for a state and institutional structure of a united Cyprus that will be capable of addressing the needs and concerns of all citizens and normalize relations both among ourselves and with our EU partners and the rest of the world.

Within such a framework we will be able to fully utilize the capabilities of our people so that all might benefit from our natural wealth. We have to work for a new Cyprus, which will make use of its human capital as a whole and will dynamically enter into the new age of technology thus achieving new capabilities adopted to the needs that the energy management will call for.

Within this new order, apart from Cyprus as a whole, Turkey in particular will benefit as it will be directly involved in the energy resources' transportation and trading. The complex reality and the multiple interests involved create the urgent need for a cooperative approach that will, on the one hand, settle age long conflicts and enmities and, on the other hand, bring peace and prosperity to Cyprus, Turkey and Greece.

# CHARALAMBOUS, DENIAL, AND “LOUD SILENCES”

By Mete Hatay

On Sunday 22 December 2013 a very interesting article appeared in the Cyprus Mail (Sunday Mail), published in south Cyprus. This article by Loucas Charalambous was shared on social media hundreds of times only a short while after it hit the internet. In this article, calling on his own memories of the period, Charalambous claims that the primary responsibility for the events of December 1963, which Turkish Cypriots remember as ‘Bloody Christmas,’ lies with Archbishop Makarios, then president of the Republic of Cyprus.

As far as I can tell, on social media this article was welcomed by many Turkish Cypriots from both left and right who saw it as an unprecedented admission of ‘truth.’ The interesting thing, however, is that despite receiving the ire of certain Greek Cypriot nationalists on social media, other Greek Cypriots appear to have ignored it. In other words, apart from a handful of Greek Cypriot academics and peace activists who actively support Charalambous, the Greek Cypriot community has chosen to remain silent. Moreover, as far as I can see, the suggestion of even some of those whom I would like to believe are well-intentioned that these sorts of subjects should be examined reciprocally, in other words that both communities should accept their own responsibilities at the same time, seems to signal an approval with reservations. But just as I wasn’t surprised by the Turkish nationalists who took advantage of this admission, or by the Greek nationalists who attacked Charalambous, so I wasn’t surprised by the silence amongst the vast majority of the Greek Cypriot community.

Is remaining silent the sign of a timid politics of silence?

Coming to terms with the truth, something seen as an absolute must for reconciliation and peace-building, unfortunately has never become part of public discourse in the island and, apart from the efforts of a few researchers, academics and artists, has gotten stuck in official narratives. The official politics of memory that have insisted on remembering and reminding us of our own suffering have also ignored the suffering of the other. Silence regarding the suffering of the ‘Other,’ and simply not talking about the subject, has become a part of the way that we behave as a community.

In a 2010 article, the anthropologist Rebecca Bryant divides Cypriot ‘silences’ into two main categories. At the same time, the author interestingly observes that after the opening of the checkpoints the institutionalized politics of silence did not change despite the opportunity to interact with and come to terms with the other side. Rather, these silences continued and became ‘loud silences,’ in other words silences that hid things everyone knew but chose to ignore.

If we take a look around us, we can see that despite the increased interactions between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, they still avoid coming to terms with the past. Indeed, in an environment in which it is possible to establish new friendships across the divide, we can also see that in the name of preserving those friendships, many people prefer to avoid talking about the past. And I’ve observed many instances in which one side tries to relay its victimization to the other and receives a shy, polite silence in reply. No doubt this is often done in the name of not disturbing newly won friendships. I know many people who keep their thoughts and feelings about the past to themselves and choose to postpone facing the past. At the same time, I’ve witnessed numerous instances in which this sort of friendship has been destroyed by a sudden argument about the Cyprus problem.

*Coming to terms with the truth, something seen as an absolute must for reconciliation and peace-building, unfortunately has never become part of public discourse in the island and, apart from the efforts of a few researchers, academics and artists, has gotten stuck in official narratives.*

Building on Stanley Cohen’s (2001) examination of politics of denial, Bryant argues that the two communities have two different forms of denial and two different ‘politics of silence.’ For instance, we can say that the tendency in the Greek Cypriot community to see the period before 1974 as blissful, a period when ‘we lived in peace together,’ resembles what Cohen calls ‘the denial of injury.’ This politics of silence largely denies the 1963-68 period, which majority of Turkish Cypriots remember as a traumatic period. According to Cohen (2001), this politics of silence often

emerges even as events are unfolding. He claims that a majority community, or a community in power, may not even see the violence or quotidian threats and humiliations inflicted on the other community, and so may not be able to understand the lasting trauma left by their actions years later.

On the other hand, when we look at Turkish Cypriots' politics of denial, we see that it more closely fits what Cohen calls the 'denial of the victim.' The political scientist Mahmood Mandani (2001) observes that it is possible for victims to become killers, indeed for them to turn their real or perceived victimization into a rage that can support a politics of violence that can even lead to ethnic cleansing. A community that is trapped in its own victimization, or in the egoism born of a belief in one's victimization, can justify the displacement and destruction of thousands of people by pointing to its own previous victimization. In certain circumstances, with such a politics of denial, with such an attitude of 'they deserved it,' it's possible to remain on onlooker to the tragedy of those persons one believes to be responsible for one's own victimhood.

I believe this resembles the politics of denial of a large portion of the Turkish Cypriot community. We know quite well that we look at the victimhood of 160,000 Greek Cypriot from the perspective of our own victimization. Moreover, in this sort of politics of denial one doesn't have to deny the facts. In other words, in those communities that employ a 'denial of the victim,' they tend to know the other side's victimhood quite well but take on an attitude of 'they deserved it,' thereby trivializing their victimhood and suffering and justifying what was done to them.

This politics, internalized by the community, denies what Greek Cypriots suffered in 1974 with phrases that we hear so often, such as 'the priest [Makarios] should have behaved himself' ('Papaz yerinde dursaydı') or 'they should have known better' ('akillarıyla otursalardı'), thereby trying to avoid any kind of moral accounting. A few brave

*The official politics of memory that have insisted on remembering and reminding us of our own suffering have also ignored the suffering of the other.*

academics, artists and journalists, such as Lucas Charalambous, Sevgül Uludağ, Panicos Christanthou, Niyazi Kızılyürek, Tony Angastiniotis, and Derviş Zaim, have occasionally attempted to tear down this formulaic and desensitized politics of denial with their works. Perhaps they have not achieved the success we expected and hoped for, but it is also the case that, as Bryant notes, the opening of the checkpoints created a 'loud silence' that has by now become deafening. It seems to me

that new efforts and actions resembling those of the ones I mention above will increase the volume, but I believe that in the end the unbearable loudness of these silences will be broken by new voices such as Charalambous's coming from both sides.

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# IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: DOES THE CRISIS WORK AS A CATALYST OR AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION?

*By Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou*

If the rationale in approaching the solution of the Cyprus problem was based on straightforward economic analysis, the problem would have long been solved.

For studies have shown that all Cypriots, as well as Turkey and Greece, stand to gain tremendously in terms of economic growth, income and jobs once Cyprus is peacefully reunited and relations between a federal Cyprus, Turkey and Greece normalize, so as to become relations of peaceful and productive cooperation. And I will explain briefly in a while how these tremendous economic benefits can be obtained.

Unfortunately nationalism and vested interests nourishing such nationalism – and this refers to all involved parties – have so far either prevented the layman from acknowledging the obvious benefits of a solution, or have twisted economic facts to turn them from economic arguments in favour of a solution into economic counterarguments. This negative approach is unfortunately nurtured and sustained by the majority of the Mass Media.

Nationalism, pride and arrogance lead to narrow mindedness and annulment of critical thinking and blind people to the benefits that substantial change may bring.

In 2004, Greek Cypriots were led to believe that reunification would eat down fast economic growth and their high standard of living. Furthermore, arguments against a solution included the threat that the economy would

***For history gives opportunities once or twice.  
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overheat as a result of the additional economic activity it would create. On the other hand, the estimated amounts of necessary investment to reconstruct the economy and the country after reunification were presented to people as an unbearable cost rather than as an investment that would create additional growth.

That neither division nor high growth rates were sustainable remained a well-kept secret and whoever tried to explain it was marginalized as a dissenting voice of treason and heresy. One also wonders about contradictory approaches to decision making: if a referendum had to be held in 2004 to ask for people's approval to spend about 10 billion pounds on the reunification of the Cyprus, why was a referendum not held more recently when €45 billion of investments were made by Cypriot banks in Greece and brought calamity to Cyprus ("Fitch Cuts Cyprus Rating", 2011)?

On the other hand Turkish Cypriots were aware in 2004 that reunification would allow them to participate in economic growth and the enjoyment of more rights and opportunities that membership of the European Union entails. Since then, however, there has been disenchantment; and given the understanding that the Turkish Cypriot Community cannot survive financially on its own, dependence on Turkey – both financial and political – has grown.

But all this is history, which has not led to positive developments. What is now new is the emergence of Cyprus and of the area of the eastern Mediterranean as a new source of hydrocarbons. This development obliges all countries in the area to awaken out of the past and into a new future, to think outside their narrow national borders and problems and consider how this new variable in the equation of the area – energy – can be jointly addressed in a way that it will yield growth and prosperity for all, including our European Union partners.

It is a time of joint responsibility towards both the people of the Eastern Mediterranean as well as towards the people of Europe. This is the time for Turkey, Cyprus and Greece to resolve their problems of the past, as is also the time for Israel and the Arab countries to do the same.

As pointed out in a recent article co-authored by Sir Graham Watson MEP and myself, "The discovery of natural gas in Cyprus could serve to bring home the possibility of a win-win outcome. However, it will require wise political management on the part of all parties involved" (Watson & Antoniadou, 2012). The resolution of the Cyprus problem

in a way that will reunify the island will allow all the Cypriots to participate in the economic development and to share the benefits that the exploitation of the island's natural wealth will bring.

At the same time, it will allow the normalization of relations with Turkey, so that Cyprus and Turkey can become partners in peace to the benefit of all the Cypriots, Turkey, Greece and of the whole area of the Eastern Mediterranean. Such a development will also benefit the European Union in its entirety, since the Union is currently looking for new sources of natural gas as a bridging solution until the fuller inclusion of renewables in the energy balance can be accomplished. The Southern conveyor corridor envisaged by the regulation on Trans-European Energy Infrastructures is but a case in point.

There is a leadership challenge also for Turkey:

Turkey has a real opportunity to become a true leader and peacemaker in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean. The government of Prime Minister Erdoğan can prove that it is transforming Turkey into a country with a true European outlook. Internally it can prove that it is governing on the basis of European values, primarily of freedom, democracy and respect of human rights, while in its external policies it can prove that respect can be gained not only on the basis of military strength but also on the basis of peaceful cooperation creating mutual benefit, in areas that address the future of the area, rather than to persevere on anachronistic problems of the past. For history gives opportunities once or twice. And if the Greek Cypriots missed the chance in 2004, Turkey must not lose the chance of today while still looking backwards to 2004.

In their 'The Day After' trilogy the three ladies explained how the reunification of Cyprus would yield huge economic benefits to all the Cypriots as well as to Greece and Turkey. In quantifying the benefits of reunification, they found that Cypriots will benefit from a peace dividend of €12,000 per year per family, as a result of a three percentage increase in GDP growth per year – over a five year period – which would also give rise to the creation of 33,000 new jobs (Mullen, 2008; Antoniadou, 2009; Çilsal, 2010).

They based their findings on the opportunities for trade in goods and services between Cyprus and Turkey that would be unblocked once an agreed solution is found that would be reunifying the island and the relations between the whole of Cyprus and Turkey would normalize. Exports of goods to Cyprus from Turkey and exports of services from Cyprus to the vast neighboring Turkish market would start flowing in significant and increasing numbers, given the complementary strengths of each economy in the respective areas. Furthermore, the removal of political uncertainty would lead to increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment not only to Cyprus but also to Turkey and Greece. A significant boost to economic growth will also be given by the reconstruction effort, in the sense that new infrastructure and housing will be required, especially with reference to the re-building of the ghost city of Varosha, as well as in association to any resettlement that a solution may involve.

Not to mention the huge savings on military expenditure that will be made by all three countries once the Cyprus problem is solved: savings on military expenditures made by Turkey in maintaining troops in Cyprus; savings by both Turkey and Greece through a reduction of the need of armaments lined against each other at the borders between them and in the Aegean; and savings on military expenditures made by the Republic of Cyprus to defend the demarcation line dividing Cyprus.

Demilitarization will relieve the public finances of Cyprus from an unsustainable burden and will contribute to the efforts to save whatever is left of the Cypriot economy. Reduction on armaments will also be conducive to the efforts to revive the Greek economy.

Unfortunately, currently the Cypriots now bear the real economic burden of financial and economic collapse, which follows years of arrogance, speculation, mismanagement and above all narrow mindedness.

In these times of unprecedented economic hardship, if political leaderships across the board does not decide to move in a positive, constructive and forward looking manner, nationalism will grow even more and will bring total disaster.

What Cyprus and the other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean currently need are genuine and inspired leaders who have the necessary political will to tell the truth and move their countries forward. In order for the crisis to work as a catalyst towards the reunification of Cyprus, we need inspired, able and willing political leadership simultaneously in all countries and parts of the equation; in this sense, the discovery of natural gas in Cyprus is an opportunity to make or brake. In the hands of responsible leaders – across the board – it can be a vehicle to peace making; if instead it is used as an instrument of power building and warmongering then it will only lead to destruction for all.

In order to break the stalemate and create dynamic movement towards the attainment of a solution, Sir Graham Watson, the leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party and myself, placed forward last year

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the following proposal: that both the port of Famagusta and the airport of Ercan be opened in exchange for the return of the ghost city of Famagusta to its original owners. At the same time, for Turkey to open one major airport and major port to Cypriot vessels and a number of chapters be opened for negotiation in the framework of Turkey's EU accession process.

Such a combined move will provide financial and political benefits and incentives to both communities in Cyprus as well as to Turkey. It will drive the Turkish Cypriots out of economic isolation while at the same time returning real assets to the Greek Cypriots for reconstruction and development. It will also be a first step towards the normalization of relations between Cyprus and Turkey and a step for smoothing relations between Turkey and the EU.

This is the time for liberal, visionary, courageous and able leaders – across the countries of the area and across Europe – to lead, support and encourage the area of the Eastern Mediterranean towards peace, cooperation, growth, prosperity and democracy, so as to build on the opportunity rather than risk it going astray and so as to ensure that Europe's neighborhood will indeed become and remain stable.

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# CYPRUS: THE WORLD'S FUNNIEST PROBLEM

By Sami Özuslu

There is a saying in Turkish: “Voice of the drum is nicer when it is away.”

Its meaning is as follows: Without closely focusing on an issue, it is impossible to understand exactly what it is. Voice of the drum may sound good when it is far away, but when it comes close it can be a disaster for your ears.

The Cyprus dispute of ours is a bit similar to the ‘sound of the drum’.

When you read about it in books, reports or you hear it from afar, you can perceive it differently. However when you come to the island, take a walk, talk to people and observe things, you can have very different considerations and emotions. So much so that even the situation has its own joke:

If you stay in Cyprus for one week, you can write a book about Cyprus.

If you stay for one month, you can write an article.

If you stay more than one year, you will get mixed up and you probably won't even be able to write a single paragraph.

## Oh, Cold War, Where Have You Been?

The Cold War conditions during which the world was divided into two poles as the ‘West’ and the ‘East’, are the main reason for the Cyprus dispute becoming what it is. After the Second World War, ‘independence winds’ affected Cyprus, as well. Cyprus was a colony of the British Empire and a change in its status became part of the agenda. Yet, the real owners of the island never fought for independence, nor were they united for this goal. On the contrary, illegal organizations, which were formed to fight for independence became part of the ‘internal conflicts’ and the ‘divide and rule’ concept of the British Rule gave its results. As a result, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, who expected to be the ‘lord’, but chose to be the ‘root’ of the island, never accepted and sustained the Republic of Cyprus formed by Turkey, Greece and the UK in 1960.

Cyprus, named as ‘buoyant war ship’, was very much necessary during the Cold War period. The UK needed to keep the energy resources and trade in the Middle East under control. The closest partner of the UK was the USA and the umbrella organization of the alliance was NATO. The people of Cyprus and the ‘mainlands’ Turkey and Greece who had close relations with the island’s communities must have been kept away from danger of communism and USSR effectiveness which was leading the Warsaw Treaty.

*As the Cold War was finishing in Europe, all conflicts typical for the era became history one by one. Despite these developments, mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, which came to the island in 1963, has been renewed for 50 years.*

Military coups against left wings were performed in both countries, and some other measures like ‘green belt’ were taken against the ‘Russian colonialism’. Scenarios written in ‘big centers’ channeling the world were determining the ‘Cold War’ conditions at the local scale,

as well. Leftists in both communities in Cyprus were being marginalized and socialists were on the target. The main target of the illegal organizations, which were formed for the so-called ‘independence’, were the leftists who were called ‘internal enemies’. The dark pages of Cyprus history are full of leftists murdered by their own ‘organizations’ and as can be imagined, the number of persons who know these realities are very small in the world. In other words: Voice of the drum is not even heard at times.

## ‘Coup’, ‘Occupation’, ‘Invasion’

In July 1974, developments which would define the fate of the island for decades took place. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots entered into a war as a consequence of an ‘imported’ intervention. In fact those who fought were the ‘pro-coup’ Greeks and the Turkish army, which intervened with the aim of saving the peoples of the island and restoring the order. Certainly, local armed forces too were part of the war, but in reality it was a Turk-Greek war.

The Cold War condition led to a physical division of the island. Even into three. Greece would be a ‘sovereign’ on one side of Cyprus and Turkey on the other. The ‘everlasting’ partner was the UK. Nobody could touch the Akrotiri and Dhekelia bases of the UK taken during the end of colonization period in 1960, thus the sovereign position of London in the Mediterranean was sustained and even stronger than before.

UK's stance as regards its bases in Cyprus remained the same after 30 years and also at the time of the 'referenda for settlement'. Any change in the status of the bases would not even be brought to the negotiating table. While what had happened in 1974 was defined as 'coup', 'occupation', and 'invasion', the issue of 'bases' would never be spoken of.

### **'The Cold War is Over, Why Isn't the Fight?'**

The end of the 'Cold War' was announced in 1989 after what had happened in Eastern Europe led by Gorbachev. This was interpreted to be good by some, yet bad by others. Former socialist countries turned their faces to capitalism one by one. It was also announced that the armament competition was over. It was declared that the world has switched to a 'single polar' world instead of being 'bi-polar' and that only one 'super power' remained.

Looking back today, some progress has taken place in the world since 1989, divisions left their position to integration and hostilities have converted into cooperation. The EU umbrella has been expanded, and significant steps forward have been taken for integration in Europe. Except for a few, most Eastern European countries, even some which used to be part of the USSR, joined the EU. Today there is no 'border' between countries, which were ready to attack each other 30 years ago.

As the Cold War was finishing in Europe, all conflicts typical for the era became history one by one. Despite these developments, mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Forces, which came to the island in 1963, has been renewed for 50 years.

### **The Funniest Movie Prize**

The Republic of Cyprus has become a member of the EU in 2004. Yet, only in half. It neither includes the North, nor all the population living on the island. This is an absurd, strange, and funny situation, which can be interpreted as the 'full membership of a half-island'.

The chance lost through the referenda constitutes the most unfortunate era of the island's history. What happened on the 24th of April 2004, is the result of the 'partitionary culture' created by the status quo and populist behaviour of the Greek Cypriot leftists who followed that culture, as well.

Crossings between the North and South opened about ten years ago and Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots found the possibility of keeping in touch after 30 years. Looking at the past in 2013, the importance of the missed chance is clearer today because of the 'new situation' that has been unfolding. This is because Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have overcome many 'emotional walls' since that day.

And that is why chauvinist textbooks and stories on Cyprus told from afar are away from the realities too and they simply seem to be samples of 'black humour'. A Greek Cypriot history-teacher can eat seafood and drink Turkish style raki at a restaurant in Kyrenia, where Turkish Cypriots live, and then try his luck in a casino belonging to Turks in the same day's evening after giving a lecture to Greek Cypriot students in the morning on "how Turks had killed Greeks".

Similarly, a Turkish Cypriot columnist who writes that "We can not be friends with Greek Cypriots" in his newspaper can go and apply for the 'Republic of Cyprus passport' next day and then travel with it.

If we wrote these as a screenplay and then filmed it, it might perfectly receive 'the funniest movie' prize.

### **An Outdated Problem**

The divided small island in the Eastern Mediterranean being characterized by a 'problem', does not comply with the conditions of today's world and of Europe especially.

It is not clear what kind of strategic importance Cyprus has in 2013 in terms of the balance formed in the region between Turks and Greeks. Nowadays, the name of Cyprus is linked with NATO again, due to the hydrocarbon sources, which have recently entered the agenda. NATO's role in the 'security umbrella' to be implemented while the gas is carried to Europe, is currently an issue being discussed. In other words, the North Atlantic Pact, which was the biggest enemy of the Warsaw Treaty during the Cold War, can try to bring sustainability to the Eastern Mediterranean during the post-Cold War era. The problem is that Cyprus still stands outside NATO.

The Republic of Cyprus, which became a member of the 'Non-Aligned Movement' just after the establishment of the Republic in 1960, left the movement after joining the EU.

As the Warsaw Treaty fell apart and NATO expands towards the East, the place to resolve the Cyprus problem might be NATO, of which all guarantor countries are members. Greek Cypriots often face problems with NATO

because of Turkey. Ankara keeps stumbling over full membership negotiations with the EU due to Cyprus' veto. Given today's conditions, the island of Cyprus is deployed with excessive military forces.

That said, a formula can be found to guarantee both the transfer of gas from the Mediterranean to Europe and the security of the island. Shortly, even though it does not sound good from the left point of view, it seems like NATO could play a role in the settlement process in Cyprus. After all, the Cyprus problem has become quite 'absurd' and a settlement involving NATO would not contradict this image. It would only make it even more absurd.

# CYPRUS: REAPING TIME

By Chrysostomos Pericleous

## Introduction

All ancient, medieval, and even modern empires, that have aspired to control the East Mediterranean basin (Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Post-Alexander Greek dominions, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, British) were led, one way or another, to capture and control Cyprus. Coming to our post-modern world of globalized interdependence, territorial empire building is no longer an aspiration as it is not a possibility. However, despite the shift towards “soft” power in pursuance of political interest, “hard” power politics seems to be still on the agenda of certain states.

## Turkey: Back to “Hard” Power?

This thought has been tormenting my mind recently in relation to Turkey’s policy towards the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and makes me wonder sometimes whether the brilliant “no problems with neighbours” doctrine of Davutoğlu, a turning point in Turkey’s shift towards “soft power” diplomacy, relates to all neighbours except for Cyprus. Apart from a pile of statements and acts which constitute real threats against the RoC’s effort to exploit the natural gas reserves in its EEZ, the maps resulting from Turkey’s delimitation agreement with the TRNC and the claims by Turkey itself on the western EEZ of the RoC so flagrantly violate international laws and norms of the sea that only an obsolete “might is right” perception of politics could justify them. Commenting on these maps, in an article in *Insight Turkey*, Michael Emerson (2013) says characteristically that, “it is as if Northern Cyprus were allocating to itself the continental shelf of almost the entire island of Cyprus, except for its western offshore zone, which Turkey claims as part of its own continental shelf.” Yet, the final message that Emerson conveys, and is what I intend to focus on, is that the natural gas issue should be seen as a catalyst to an agreed solution of the Cyprus conflict, thus making it possible for Cyprus as a whole, and Turkey as well, to benefit from its exploitation and trading. President Gül, addressing the International Forum on Energy organized by Sabancı University on May 11 2013, conveyed exactly the same message when pointing out the need for cooperation between Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Cyprus as a whole, and Turkey on the natural gas issue, and suggesting that such cooperation would help solve the political problems in the area as well.

So, this is the challenge Turkey and Cyprus as a whole are faced with. Reach an agreed settlement of the Cyprus conflict and open the way to unimpeded exploitation of natural gas and possibly oil in a secure and stable political environment. On the part of the RoC it has been made abundantly clear that, even if a solution is not achieved by the time natural gas pours into Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot community will have an equitable share in the benefits. As the gas project will take a long time to be materialized, any efforts in this direction do not in any way impede a solution. Rather they bring it nearer by strengthening solution incentives in all parties that have to benefit. Turkish threats in words and acts, though they cannot question the lawful right of Cyprus to proceed with the exploitation of the natural resources in its EEZ, might create such tension that would discourage foreign companies from investing in the drilling projects. If intimidation succeeds, it will most probably damage the prospects of Cyprus as a whole. But Turkey will be a loser too as continued confrontational relations between Turkey and the RoC makes any plans for gas pipes from the East Mediterranean basin to Turkey – and through Turkey to Europe – highly unfeasible.

## Turkey a Major Actor

Why then do the parties directly involved fail to come together at the negotiating table and find a negotiated settlement of the protracted conflict in a win-win approach? Speaking here of “the parties directly involved”, in concrete political terms, we mean the Greek Cypriot community, the Turkish Cypriot community, and Turkey. With regard to Turkey, not so much with respect to its guarantor status of the 1960 constitutional order of the RoC but mainly with respect to its military control of northern Cyprus since 1974, a situation that makes Turkey factually involved in Cyprus.

Erdoğan: Prime Minister Erdoğan created a historic opening in February 2010, when, speaking to Greek Cypriot journalists in Istanbul he proposed the direct participation of Turkey, Greece, and the EU in the Cyprus peace negotiations. The follow up of that proposal and particularly the fact that, a few days later, the EU, presided over

by Spain at the time, tried to pass this through, albeit unsuccessfully, owing to a Greek Cypriot rejection, bears convincing evidence that Erdoğan's proposal was not a tactical move. Far from it, it constituted a genuine policy shift in Turkey's Cyprus policy, which the then President of the RoC Demetris Christofias failed to grasp.

Anastasiades: However, opposition leader Anastasiades saw in this proposal a unique opportunity to make the peace process more meaningful and more effective. Having perceived the limits of the "Cypriot owned-Cypriot led negotiations" doctrine, he supported, what he referred to as, the "enlargement of the peace process" one of the corner stones of his procedural approach to the problem. Along with his expressed awareness that a "decentralized federation" was a better option compared to a "strong" federal government in that it would minimize friction,

*Coming to our post-modern world of globalized interdependence, territorial empire building is no longer an aspiration as it is not a possibility.*

he was prepared for an effective result oriented "enlarged" negotiation process. Even during the run up to the presidential elections, he stood firm on these key positions.<sup>1</sup> And once he was elected President of the RoC, press reports showed him, in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis, responding positively to the eventuality of having, through delegates, some kind of discrete contact with Turkey with the Americans acting as brokers in an effort to reach common ground on basic

parameters of the problem on which Turkey has a major say. The dying out of those press reports is an indication that there has been no response on the part of Turkey so far. After decades of unsuccessful inter-communal negotiations, it is high time we shift to an Oslo type of direct contacts with all the major actors if we genuinely want a settlement.

Waiting for a spark of hope: Initially the disquieting events on the Syrian border and then the Gezi Park events (last May and June respectively) diverted the attention of the Turkish government from the Cyprus problem. But this should not kill the opportunity. Being a major regional player with an extremely efficient diplomacy, Turkey has the ability to deal simultaneously with multiple problems. After all, achieving a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus conflict is not a marginal issue. It is directly linked with vast economic interests related to natural gas pipe diplomacy. And Prime Minister Erdoğan, the man who has tripled Turkey's GNP in a decade, cannot afford to be indifferent to this perspective. Moreover, despite the acrimonious statements made occasionally by both Erdoğan and EU Accession Minister Bağış against EU criticisms on shortcomings, they cannot afford to be indifferent to the vast economic interests involved in Turkey's EU accession, the road to which passes through Cyprus and keeps waiting for a spark of hope.

## The Cypriots

On the other hand, the Cypriots themselves have to rethink their future within the framework of a united federal Cyprus and the vast benefits therein. As far as the Greek Cypriots are concerned, they, first, have to move beyond the conventional notions of majoritarian democracy and adopt European values of consociational democracy and see how these values relate to federal state structures. Thus, seeing the federation not as a "painful concession" (a stance attached to past experience) but as an asset (a future oriented stance), they will more readily accept the basic tenets of federalism at the heart of which is "political equality" of the constituent parts. Secondly, they have to realize how complex and fluid the realities around them are, they have to see the state of flux and the unstable nature of the status quo itself, and find ways to rationally navigate their roadmap towards a peaceful and prosperous future. As for the Turkish Cypriots who either have retracted to or still believe in a two state solution, that is, the partition of Cyprus, they have to consider the risk of losing the gas benefit bearing in mind that there can be no lawful means whereby a separate state in Northern Cyprus can have a share in the natural resources of the EEZ of another state in southern Cyprus. The vast majority of the Turkish Cypriots also have to consider the danger of completely losing their distinct historical and cultural identity. In a nutshell, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots have to liberate themselves from the cheap nationalist rhetoric that diverts from a rational approach of reality, and see clearly where their real chances of survival are. In this respect, without abandoning their historical and cultural heritage and identity, they have to move towards the higher sphere of civic loyalties where citizenship and statehood give a broader meaning to patriotism engulfing – without contradicting – ethnic, cultural, and religious identities.

Unification a common vision: Within this broader vision of reality, the distance between "us" and the "others" shrinks, thus enabling us to share an inclusive interconnecting and interlinking world. Happily enough, the writer is not alone, not even a pioneer, in putting forth the above norms. Since the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, lots of NGOs, mostly inter-communal but intra-communal as well, have been systematically promoting these ideas and gradually influencing wider social strata in their respective communities. In light of such developments and drawing

<sup>1</sup> During a meeting we had with him and the Cyprus Academic Dialogue, he was adamant both in this regard and, in general, in his determination to work towards a solution.

on personal experience from the work of the Cyprus Academic Dialogue, I dare say that society at large, in both communities, is in a better position today to comprehend the need for a federal unification solution. It remains for the policy makers both in Cyprus and in Turkey to take initiatives and move in this direction.

## Basic Parameters of Solution

As for the basic parameters of a unifying federal solution, a realistic approach might briefly sketch them as follows:

- **Security:** The “double minority concerns” of the two communities should be addressed, that is, the Turkish Cypriot community should feel secure vis-à-vis the much larger Greek Cypriot community while, at the same time, the Greek Cypriot community should feel secure vis-à-vis the much larger and incomparably more powerful nearby Turkey. In this regard, the complete demilitarization of Cyprus could be the ideal solution, though minor divergences might be discussed.
- **Guarantees:** Turkey should show readiness to reconsider the 1960 guarantees, in the light of the European framework and of Greek Cypriot concerns at the possibility of unilateral intervention. During a conference that the Cyprus Academic Dialogue held on 26-28 April 2013 entitled *Cyprus Peace Process: Alternative Approaches*, renown experts on security issues suggested that “the most reliable guarantees of a united federal Cyprus might, under certain prerequisites, be safeguarded within NATO provided that a mutually agreed settlement of the Cyprus conflict will terminate the confrontational relations of Cyprus with Turkey.”<sup>2</sup>
- **Territory:** As for the territory to be administered by each community,<sup>3</sup> adjustments should be made that would allow a substantial number of Greek Cypriot displaced persons to return to their homes and lands. The map of the Annan Plan of 2004, which Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots had accepted at the time, offers a balanced readjustment that should not be lost.
- **Property:** The Turkish Cypriots should be entitled to a majority of the population and land ownership in the constituent state to be administered by their community. Within this framework, a certain number of Greek Cypriot refugees who might opt to return to their lands should be given the right to do so. As property is closely interconnected with the territorial issue, a balancing rule might be agreed whereby the more the land to be returned to Greek Cypriots within the territorial readjustment the higher the percentage of Turkish Cypriot land ownership in the Turkish Cypriot constituent state. The Cyprus Academic Dialogue, in an effort to help achieve a breakthrough on the property issue, prepared a document in which it suggested that a humanitarian criteria be given priority with regard to both lawful owners and users. It also suggested, instead of level “ceilings” per village or town, specific “Unrestricted Relocation Areas” where Greek Cypriot returnees would be capable of forming organized communities, without creating any serious burden on the socio-economic stability of the Turkish Cypriot community. Moreover, in order to further encourage citizen interaction and cooperation, in the economic as well as social fields, the CAD property document exempted from any restrictions on land ownership all bi-communal economic enterprises, cooperative foundations, or civil society organizations.
- **Settlers/immigrants:** Turkish citizens who, under varying circumstances since 1974, established themselves in northern Cyprus are estimated by Turkish Cypriot press reports to amount to more than 200,000. This dramatically upsets pre-1960 demographic structures while it constitutes a burden on the social norms and the distinct cultural identity of the Turkish Cypriots. A substantial number of these people, particularly those who have come during the last years, should return to their country under agreed upon arrangements and incentives.
- **Power sharing:** Regardless of the process leading to the establishment of the United Federal Republic of Cyprus, in which the Annan Plan gave a masterful way out, the political equality of the constituent parts should be taken for granted. As the term has been wildly misinterpreted or misunderstood by Greek Cypriot politicians who have not yet reconciled themselves with the basic tenets of federalism, the term is used here in the meaning given to it by the UNSG in his report to the UNSC dated 8 March 1990, which was endorsed by UNSC Resolution 716 of 11 October 1991.<sup>4</sup>

*Achieving a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus conflict is not a marginal issue. It is directly linked with vast economic interests related to natural gas pipe diplomacy. And Prime Minister Erdoğan, the man who has tripled Turkey’s GNP in a decade, cannot afford to be indifferent to this perspective.*

2 From the report issued by Cyprus Academic Dialogue in which it was clarified that “as far as CAD is concerned, we see the NATO connection just as one possible option within the framework of a collective security system. What we are after is a security system that will address the needs and concerns of both communities as well as of the people of Cyprus as whole”.

3 UNSG’s Report S/23780 of 3 April 1992, endorsed by the UNSC (Resolution 750), para 20, expressly states that “The bi-zonality of the federation is reflected in the fact that each federated state would be administered by one community which would be guaranteed a clear majority of the population and of land ownership in its area.”

4 In his report to the UNSC (S/21183, Annex 1), the UNSG defined political equality as follows: “While political equality does not mean equal numerical participation in all federal government branches and administration, it should be reflected inter alia in various ways: in the requirement that the federal constitution of the state of Cyprus be adapted or amended with the concurrence of both communities; in the effective participation of both communities in all organs and decisions of the federal

In view of the strong criticism that the Christofias-Talat convergences on governance received by both Greek and Turkish Cypriot political forces and some real problems therein, the model proposed by Dr. Neophytos Loizides is a real challenge that breaks new ground in this field. Drawing on Northern Ireland's power sharing experience, he suggests a system in which all major political actors automatically have a share in the federal executive according to their electoral strength. This model creates positive incentives to all major political forces in both communities to endorse a unification solution, as they will all have a role in it. Thus it defuses opposition and pre-empts the undermining of the solution by those forces, which, in a majoritarian model, would be excluded from power.<sup>5</sup> The consociational principle of inclusivity underlying this model promotes responsible cooperative behaviours, which will be badly needed during the first steps of the new federal Republic.

- **Deadlock resolving mechanisms:** An additional novelty in Loizides's proposal is the down to the ground deadlock resolving mechanism that he suggests. As deadlock resolving attains greater importance in a bi-cameral federation, as is the case for Cyprus, he suggests two rotating co-presidents (acting as president and vice president) who will be elected through cross weighted voting and whose main role, apart from the ceremonial ones, will be to deal with deadlocks as an intermediary between government organs and the constitutional court. This provision will help ease tensions, as the co-presidents will find their loyalties transcending narrow communal confines and become based, instead, on their broader electoral constituencies thus engulfing Cyprus as a whole.

### Confidence Building Measures

The convergence of interests that the natural gas perspective creates calls for an overall settlement. Solution time is ripe more than ever. It is reaping time in the fullest sense of the word. It only needs political decisions on the part of policy makers among all directly involved parties. And we might kill the momentum if we leave the main target aside and started talking about CBMs. However, if all actors are determined to reach a deal, while moving towards it nothing prevents them from agreeing on immediate measures to ease tension, set aside confrontational rhetoric, and prepare the people both to accept the agreed upon solution and to make it work. Such CBMs, which should be reciprocal in order to serve their purpose, might be:

- a) The return of the fenced city of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants under UN administration;
- b) The opening of the Famagusta Port and the Ercan (Tymbou) Airport under EU authority with the effective participation of the Turkish Cypriot community;
- c) The return of all religious sites – or at least Apostolos Andreas and Hala Sultan – to the respective religious institutions, that is, the Church and Evkaf;
- d) The opening by Turkey of its ports and airspace to ships and airplanes of the RoC and simultaneously the withdrawal by the RoC of its veto on Turkey's EU accession negotiation chapters;
- e) Finally, if the directly involved parties are genuinely interested in reaching a settlement, they have to set aside provocative confrontationist language, which promotes alienation and hatred towards the "other". What we need is forgiveness and empathy, which should pervade both our political and educational vocabulary.

### Closing Remarks

An independent federal republic of a reunified Cyprus could not be a threat to any neighbouring state. At the same time, as long as Cyprus remains independent no single state in the region can take control of the Eastern Mediterranean basin. It is this awareness by the big powers interested in stability in the region, such as the US, the EU, and Russia, that makes them converge in supporting the maintenance of a united and independent Cyprus. Turkey's long-term policy throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to prevent a union of Cyprus with Greece could be justified in terms of geopolitical power antagonistic considerations of that period in the region as well as genuine security concerns. Nowadays, there is no reason whatsoever that might justify Turkey's maintenance of an army of occupation in Cyprus. Turkish diplomats know better than anyone else the problems the country has been facing in its international relations. The Greek Cypriots have learned their lesson, the hard way, one might say. One reason they rejected the UN peace plan in 2004 is that they were led to fear and distrust Turkey's intentions. It is up to the Turkish government to address such concerns and establish friendships and cooperation. It can only gain.

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government; in safeguards to ensure that the federal government will not be empowered to adopt any measures against the interests of one community; and in the equality and identical powers and functions of the two federated states."

- 5 These ideas were presented by Neophytos Loizides during the 26-28 April Conference of Cyprus Academic Dialogue. They are elaborated in detail in his upcoming book *Designing Peace Processes: Institutional Innovations in Cyprus and Divided Societies*.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Costa Constanti** was born in Melbourne, Australia, and moved to Cyprus as an adult in 2006. In Australia he studied psychology, psycho-neurosciences and humanities (politics, history, languages) at a bachelor level, followed by a masters in international relations, with a top score at his university for international law. Today he works as an adviser and researcher in the fields of international relations, conflicts, politics, international economy and public diplomacy. He has recently focused on non-state actors in conflict resolution and diplomacy. As an active member of the peace building community in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean he has been on the board of directors for the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research at the Home for Cooperation in Nicosia's UN Buffer Zone and is now on the steering committee of the bicomunal Cyprus Academic Dialogue NGO that is working on the reunification and negotiations for peace in Cyprus. Costa also runs a small not-for-profit consultancy that deals with European issues including cross-cultural tolerance, adult education, integration of immigrants, women's and minority group rights among other topics.

**Takis Hadjidemetriou** was born in Nicosia in 1934. He is married and has two children. He studied dentistry at the University of Athens. In the sixties, while playing a leading role in several youth organizations and student movements, he was also member of the editorial group of the literary magazine "Kypriaka Chronika" (Cyprus Chronicles). He then served as secretary of the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Greece. He was among the founding members of the EDEK Socialist Party and served it both as Vice President and member of the parliament for 22 years. He was chairman of the Council of Europe's Cultural Heritage Subcommittee and in 2003 he was appointed as Coordinator for the harmonization of Cyprus with the European Union. Takis Hadjidemetriou is author of several books, among which is "The 24 April 2004 Referendum and the Solution of the Cyprus Problem". Since 2008 he has been leading the Greek Cypriot Group in the Technical Committee for Cultural Heritage, a bicomunal Committee working in the frame of the Intercommunal talks.

**Mete Hatay** is Senior Research Consultant at the PRIO Cyprus Centre. Hatay has been a political analyst and freelance writer since 1985, primarily researching and writing on the Cyprus conflict, Cypriot cultural history, immigration, Islam, and ethnic and religious minorities in Cyprus. Before joining the PRIO Cyprus Centre, he worked as co-director of a consultancy firm that provided media monitoring, social and commercial research, and public relations and communication strategy services for international organisations, including the EC Representation in Cyprus. He has taught at Near East University and Cyprus International University and served as a board member of the Turkish Cypriot Education Foundation. He is currently serving as a board member of the Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Foundation and a member of the editorial board of The Cyprus Review. Apart from popular and academic writing, Hatay is also a composer who has produced two albums, as well as music for numerous documentary films.

**Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou** is the leader of United Democrats, the Liberal Democrat party of Cyprus. She is a graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science and carries with her 24 years of experience as an economist and manager at the Central Bank. In her former capacity as Minister of Energy, she was responsible for the successful conduct of the first exploratory drilling for natural gas offshore Cyprus, which she declares can serve as an instrument for attaining lasting peace and cooperation between all countries in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean and lasting prosperity for all the people of the area.

**Sami Özuslu** was born in Cyprus in 1968. He is married and has one daughter. After completing his studies in the communication field at the Ege University, he started working as a journalist. He is now the Director and the Chief Editor of Kanal SIM TV and Radio SIM as well as a daily columnist at the Yenidüzen newspaper. Sami Özuslu is a board member at the Turkish Cypriot Journalist Union and a member of the International Federation of Journalists. He is author of two books, i.e. "Persona Non Grata [Ankara'ya Kafa Tutan Adam: Ahmet Mithat Berberoğlu]" (2011) and "6 Biers Came by Plane [Uçakla Gelen 6 Tabut]" (2013).

**Chrysostomos Pericleous** was born in Cyprus in 1940. He has published two books on the Cyprus problem, the last one being "The Cyprus Referendum" of 2004 (I.B. Tauris, 2009), which was also published in Turkish as "Tarihsel Süreçten Kıbrıs Referandumuna" (Galeri Kültür Yayınları, 2011). Chrysostomos Pericleous has also published lots of articles in newspapers and journals in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey on political developments particularly in relation to the Cyprus problem.

Since July 2008, Global Political Trends Center (GPoT Center) has been bringing together opinion leaders from both sides of Cyprus, as well as from Greece and Turkey, under the banner of the “Heybeliada Talks” to discuss issues pertaining to the solution of the Cyprus problem. The meetings, conducted under Chatham House rule, have provided the participants with a trusting environment to frankly debate contested issues, usually in parallel with the official negotiations. Originally started on the island of Heybeliada in the Sea of Marmara, the meetings were later relocated to Nicosia’s Buffer Zone. This publication was prepared with the aim to share ideas about the future of Cyprus developed by those who have attended the Heybeliada Talks over years, and make them accessible to public and policy makers. The contributions were collected between June 2013 and January 2014.



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