The Cyprus debacle: what the future holds

Meltem Müftüler-Bac[*]

Bilkent University, Department of Political Science, Ankara 06533, Turkey

Abstract

This paper analyzes the Cyprus conflict from a realist perspective based on the assumption that it has implications for regional and global security. At the end of the millennium, the UN negotiations for Cyprus have been resumed, the USA has become more actively involved and the European Union has decided to open accession negotiations with Greek Cypriots. The paper proposes first that the futures of Cyprus are going to be determined by the strategic interests of the actors involved and, second, that unification of the island is becoming a more distant possibility. © 1999 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Divided since 1974, Cyprus stands out as one intransigent conflict that has implications for regional and global security. The Cyprus conflict occupies a central place in the multidimensional strategic and regional balances of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Southern Europe. It ranks high on the foreign policy agenda of the governments of Turkey, Greece, the USA and Russia, while it presents itself as a test case for the United Nations' effectiveness in dealing with such intransigent conflicts. In addition, it has implications for stability in NATO and policy-making in the European Union.

This paper deals with the underlying obstacles to a settlement in Cyprus, the present dilemmas that policy-makers face in resolving the crisis and the futures of

* Tel.: + 90-312-266-4137; fax: + 90-312-266-4948; e-mail: meltem@bilkent.edu.tr

this conflict. A major proposition is that even though the Cyprus problem is treated as arising from intraethnic conflict between the two communities of the island, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, in fact it is the end result of the interplay of various players' strategic formulations and concerns. Therefore, its resolution lies not in a reconciliation of interests of the Greek and Turkish Cypriotic communities—although this of course is a necessary but not a sufficient condition—but it lies in a strategic reformulation of the foreign policy objectives and priorities of the actors involved.

At the end of the millennium, the Cyprus problem has become even more complex because of its increased strategic importance in the post-Cold War era, an impending European Union membership and the Greek Cypriotic military build-up. First, the end of the Cold War put Cyprus in the eye of the storm because of its geo-strategic position as the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East. Second, the Cyprus impasse acquired a new direction with the European Union's decision to start accession negotiations with Cyprus for EU membership. It seems that the European Union hopes that membership may be the long-awaited catalyst for resolution of the conflict. Third, the Greek Cypriots started a military build-up with the acquisition of heavy tanks, followed by the purchase of S-300 missiles from Russia in 1997. This military build-up, which followed the 1993 Greek–Greek Cypriot Joint Defense Doctrine, made the present impasse no longer sustainable, with serious implications threatening the stability in the Eastern Mediterranean; for example, US President Clinton claims that the purchase of S-300 missiles constitutes a serious obstacle to a settlement [1].

The Cyprus problem can be classified as a political conflict where there is an enduring tension between two ethnic communities that want to protect their own collective identities and communal interests. An important aspect of the conflict is that it is intransigent; the parties involved in the conflict are refusing to come to an agreement or a settlement on the issue. The parties are locked into their respective positions and are not bending. Thus, the Cyprus problem is a 'protracted social conflict' which is characterized by long-standing, seemingly insoluble tensions that fluctuate in intensity over extended periods of time and in which competition over resources and competing interests are intense [2]. In a protracted social conflict, prior to any bargaining, a mutual recognition of each other as the legitimate representative of a common interest is essential. In an intransigent conflict where the parties resort to demonstrations of force or increase their capabilities to bring a settlement of the conflict, military build-up escalates tension and decreases the probability of a peaceful resolution. It is for this reason that the Greek Cypriotic military build-up is detrimental to peace in the Mediterranean and stability in the region.

This paper proposes that the futures of Cyprus will be determined by the following factors: (1) Turkish concerns and motivations over its security and protection of the Turkish Cypriotic community, (2) Greek concerns over the perceived Turkish threat to their own security and their commitment to a united Cyprus, (3) American commitment to stability and security in NATO's southeastern flank, (4) Russia's attempts for an increased role in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and (5) domestic politics in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. On top of these factors, the EU has emerged

as a player that hopes to gain its first foreign policy success by solving the Cyprus problem through the promise and reward of EU membership.

Prior to the analysis of the futures of the conflict, one should look at the historical developments that led to the de facto division of the island in 1974 and the strategic interests of the principal players of the conflict.

2. History: an obstacle to settlement

The Ottoman Empire conquered Cyprus in 1571 from the Venetians and ruled it until 1878 when the Porte gave the island over to the United Kingdom for administration, but on paper the Ottoman Empire retained sovereignty over the island. During World War I, Britain announced its annexation of the island. With the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, Turkey and Greece agreed that Cyprus belonged to the United Kingdom.

In the post-World War II period, the Greeks began to demand the transfer of Cyprus to Greece based on the argument that historically the island is Greek since the majority of the people are Greek even though the Greeks have not ruled the island since the 11th century. This argument constitutes the basis of the Greek perceptions that "the Greek Cypriotic people are entitled to self-determination and the right to statehood and that the Turkish Cypriots are just a subject community" [3]. After 1950, the Greek Cypriots organized under EOKA—The National Organization for Cypriot Fighters—and declared armed struggle against British rule.

The civil war of the 1950s ended with the 1959–1960 London–Zurich accords signed by Britain, Greece and Turkey. The Accords reached a compromise for the Cyprus problem which rested on a basis of bi-national independence and political equality and administrative partnership of the two communities [4]. Three Treaties were signed: the Treaty of Establishment which established a quasi-federal Republic of Cyprus, the Treaty of Guarantee which made Turkey, Britain and Greece the guarantors of the Republic and the Constitution, and the Treaty of Alliance which provided for stationing of troops by Greece and Turkey. In addition, the 1960 agreements had recognized the right of military intervention by the guarantors should the status of Cyprus be threatened [5]. The Accords were signed on the understanding that "any excuse of self-determination should be effected in such a manner that the Turkish Cypriotic community no less than the Greek Cypriotic community shall in the special circumstances of Cyprus, be given freedom to decide for themselves their future status" [6].

According to the Greek side, the Accords were signed as a result of international pressures and granted the Turkish Cypriots numerous constitutional privileges. "The Greek Cypriots have often since claimed that the treaties were colonial in nature, and constituted an unfair settlement. They were unfair because they allowed the Turkish Cypriotic minority to deny the Hellenistic ideal of union with Greece" [7]. In the interim period of 1960–1963, almost none of the provisions provided by the Constitution were enacted by the Greek Cypriots, basically because the Greek Cypriots found the constitutional rights granted to the Turkish Cypriots unacceptable [8].

Troubles restarted in 1963 when the Greek Cypriots decided to amend the Constitution by blocking out the Turkish Cypriots' participation in all levels. When intercommunal war broke out between the communities in 1963, 1964 and 1967, Turkey tried to protect the Turkish Cypriots on the island, but it refrained from using its right of intervention granted by the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee.

In 1974, the Greek junta regime claimed the annexation of the island to Greece in violation of the London–Zurich Accords. In view of the threat faced by the Turkish community, the Turkish government tried, with Britain's cooperation, to find a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the violation of Cyprus' sovereignty [9]. When these efforts failed and the United Nations and Britain gave no sign of taking action, the Turkish government under Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit invoked its right as guarantor and intervened unilaterally. As a result of this intervention, the junta left Cyprus and, in the face of failure, the junta in Greece was also ousted. In January 1977, Makarios and Denktash—the respective leaders of the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots—agreed on a set of principles to guide the negotiations, namely the 1977 High Level Agreement with the ultimate aim of an independent, non-aligned, bicommunal Federal Republic in Cyprus. To this end, a 10-point procedural agreement—the 1979 High Level Agreement—was signed by Denktash and Kyprianou, the Greek Cypriot leader following Makarios' death in 1977. However, after 1979, the talks between the two communities came to a complete standstill until 1985.

In 1983, in the face of no political will from the Greek Cypriots for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, the Turkish Cypriots declared their independence. "On November 15, 1983, the Turkish Cypriots declared independence and took the name of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In the declaration, the Turkish Cypriots stated that their final aim was to achieve partnership with the Greek Cypriots within a federal framework" [10]. This declaration resulted from the Turkish Cypriots' perception that the Greek Cypriots would not share power with them.

Between 1985 and 1994, talks between the communities proceeded with some interruptions and no substantive results. Endless negotiations over a possible federation in the 1980s and their subsequent failure opened the way to 'intercommunal talks' between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities in 1988 which aimed to open a forum where the two communities would get to know each other and establish common interests. The intercommunal talks were halted in March 1990 with the Greek Cypriotic announcement that they did not accept the principle of equality between the two communities [11].

History provides an obstacle to political settlement in Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots feel they have been cheated out of their natural right to Cyprus because the 1960 Constitution gave the two peoples the same rights and was based on the notion that sovereignty emanates equally from both parties. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots are angry at the international community which did not react to their plight from 1963 to 1974 and are sceptical towards any settlement that would put them once again at the mercy of the Greek Cypriots. Thus, history and the collective memory of the Cypriotic people act as a natural barrier to a political settlement in Cyprus. This is why the Cyprus problem is classified as a protracted social conflict.

To understand the unfolding of events in Cyprus since 1960 would enable one to understand why mediation efforts by the UN have failed so far.

3. The role of the United Nations

On the Cyprus issue, the United Nations has been an active player since 1964 when it sent a Peace-Keeping Force to the island, UNIFCYP, the mandate for which is renewed every six months by the Security Council. The United Nations' position is clear in the Security Council Resolutions—numbers 367 of 1975, 649 of March 1990, 716 of October 1991, 750 of April 1992, 1179 of June 1998—that emphasized the political equality of the two communities and declared that the resolution of the Cyprus problem depended on the establishment of a federal state.

In 1992, through the United Nations' negotiations, a Set of Ideas was put forward by the Security Council as a framework on which negotiations would be based (Resolution 750). In 1994, during the Vienna talks under UN auspices, the Turkish Cypriots accepted the Confidence Building Measures to build trust between the communities; however, on June 8, 1994 the Greek Cypriotic government decided that they would not continue negotiations on Confidence Building Measures, thereby bringing an effective halt to UN mediation.

On July 29, 1995, Mr Denktash issued a 14-point Peace Offensive in which he emphasized their stand on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and on Confidence Building Measures. In the UN-sponsored talks between the communities' leaders, held in Troutbeck, New York in July 1997, a Draft Joint Statement was presented which stressed that sovereignty emanates equally from the two communities; this was unacceptable to the Greek side and talks ended abruptly; a similar result was obtained in the Glion (Switzerland) talks later in 1997. On June 29, 1998, with Resolution 1179, the UN declared that sovereignty in the State of Cyprus should be single; however, again emanating from two communities [12].

The various UN attempts did not bring much progress; one reason for their relative failure is the differences between the parties over conceptions of sovereignty and political equality. A major difficulty in negotiations under UN supervision is the different perceptions of sovereignty. The UN recognizes that sovereignty emanates equally from the Turkish and Greek Cypriotic communities—however, it stresses single sovereignty. "Cyprus settlement is based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty, and international personality and a single citizenship…comprising two politically equal communities in a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation" [13]. The Turkish Cypriots demand the resolution of the conflict through the creation of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation which recognizes their political equality and the Greek Cypriots demand a unitary, sovereign state with indivisibility of territory and single citizenship and recognition of the Turkish Cypriots as a minority.

In the 1990s, the Greek Cypriots consistently rejected UN propositions such as the Set of Ideas and Confidence Building Measures, basically because the UN framework brings the recognition of the Turkish Cypriots' political equality, echoing the 1960 Accords. The UN acknowledges that "Cyprus is the common home of the

Greek Cypriotic community and the Turkish Cypriotic community. Their relationship is not one of majority and minority" [14]. Things have become more complicated at the end of the decade with Greek Cyprus' possible membership in the EU that gave the Greek Cypriots the hope that membership in the European Union would once and for all solve their problems, thus eliminatimg the need for UN intervention. However, when the EU declared the start of membership negotiations with Cyprus in December 1997, Mr Denktash—President of TRNC—and Suleyman Demirel—President of the Turkish Republic—made a joint declaration that "the Turkish Cypriots would sit at the negotiating table with the Greek Cypriots only if their sovereignty and political equality are recognized" [15].

From 1974 to 1998, the Turkish Cypriotic position has not altered, they demanded a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with sovereignty emanating from two communities and a continuation of the Turkish guarantee as granted by the 1960 Accords within the UN framework, the 1992 Set of Ideas and 1994 Confidence Building Measures. However, after the December 1997 Luxembourg summit of the European Council, the Turkish Cypriotic position changed. First they demand their recognition as a state for any progress on talks and, second, they have come up with a new proposal: a confederation.

On August 31, 1998, the Turkish Cypriots suggested a loose confederation, a bi-zonal, bi-communal state composed of two sovereign entities. Previously, confederation as a possible framework for settlement was insinuated by Richard Holbrooke, the Special Envoy of the American Administration for Cyprus [16]. Confederation diverges from the UN position of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation. A number of countries such as France have rejected the confederation alternative based on the argument that it would mean de facto recognition of TRNC and violate UN Resolution 541 of November 1983. On September 4, 1998, UN General Secretary Kofi Annan also declared that confederation is not an option, and that negotiations should proceed in line with Resolution 1179. The US State Department's Statement of September 1, 1998 also echoes a similar argument that the USA continues to support bi-zonal, bi-communal federation as agreed with the 1977 and 1979 High Level Agreements.

Thus, the situation at the end of the millennium is that some progress has been made within the UN auspices, but there is still a long way before a stable settlement is reached. Even if an agreement is reached between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots over definitions of sovereignty and the principle of federation, there are still a number of issues that need to be negotiated separately. These issues are: (1) the 1960 Constitution and the power-sharing between the two communities; (2) territorial divisions; (3) freedom of movement and property; (4) guarantee system and security of the island; (5) economic viability, especially in the North; (6) the issue of the Anatolian settlers in Northern Cyprus; (7) demilitarization of the island; (8) missing persons since 1974.

There are considerable differences between the two sides' demands and their perceptions of the effectiveness of UN intervention, as well as their respective positions on the issues mentioned above. In order to analyze what the future holds for the

resolution of the crisis in Cyprus, we should look at the players involved in this intransigent conflict.

4. Turkey and Greece

The most visible players of the conflict—aside from the Greek and Turkish Cypriots—are Turkey and Greece, which creates the illusion that Cyprus is a crisis between these two countries. For example, in certain quarters there is the belief that the Turkish government blocks an agreement in Cyprus. "Denktash's obduracy is a function of the Turkish government's unwillingness to endorse a meaningful bi-zonal, bi-communal federation solution. In short, the road to reintegration solution of Cyprus necessarily passes through Ankara" [17]. Nothing can be further from the truth, it is the lack of trust between the two communities that effectively blocks a settlement, rather than the essential bad will of Turkey. Cyprus occupies the top place in both Greek and Turkish foreign policy, and it is one of the sources of dispute between Turkey and Greece, but the problem goes beyond that simplistic assertion.

Turkey is involved in Cyprus for two reasons. First, it is committed to the survival and safety of the Turkish Cypriots and, second, Cyprus carries vital importance for Turkey's security. Various Turkish governments declare that Cyprus is a national cause for Turkey. In the 1990s, Turkey's support to the Turkish Cypriots has been emphasized by the constant traffic of high-level state officials and a number of agreements signed between Turkey and TRNC.

The Joint Declaration of December 1995 and the January 20, 1997 Statement of Solidarity between Turkey and TRNC are concrete proofs to the rest of the world that Turkey supports the Turkish Cypriots and the survival of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The 1997 Joint Declaration of Solidarity stresses the rights of Turkish Cypriots and their legal and political equality, reaffirms the system of guarantee of the 1960 Accords, and claims that any attack on Turkish Cypriots will be treated as an attack on Turkey. Thus, one Turkish foreign policy objective is the protection of the Turkish Cypriots and recognition of their rights.

Second, Cyprus is important to Turkey's security, since it lies only 40 miles off Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The Turkish control over Northern Cyprus enables Turkey to control the passage to its southern coast and to its harbours on the Mediterranean coast. The Turkish perception is that if Greece controls Cyprus, then it would be in a strategic advantage against Turkey with the capacity to threaten Turkey from the south as well as from the Aegean—some Greek islands are within Turkish coastal waters and an arm's length from the Turkish coast. A recent development with capacity to threaten Turkish security via Cyprus is the Greek Cypriotic military buildup, especially the acquisition of S-300 missiles. If the S-300 missiles are deployed in Greek Cyprus, then first, it would affect the Turkish capability to airlift troops to the island and to support them from air. Second, it would grant the Greek Cypriots a capability to hit mainland Turkey in the case of conflict. The 1997 Joint Statement states that: "…the massive buildup of arms and the support given to terrorism in South Cyprus has reached a level which constitutes a threat directed against Turkey"

[18]. Thus, the Turkish government's position on the missiles is that they represent a threat to Turkish security and that their deployment on the island will not be allowed.

The second important actor involved in the Cyprus problem is Greece. The Cyprus problem became an issue of international prestige for Greece which "adopted Enosis as the main plank of her foreign policy in 1954" [19]. Various Greek governments treated the Cyprus problem as an important domestic politics issue, thereby locking themselves into non-concessionary positions. "Just as a concession to Turkey over vital issues in the Aegean conflict would quickly earn a Greek leader the reputation of betraying national interests, so a willingness to compromise over the Cyprus problem would be a political disadvantage for any government in Athens" [20]. One important implication of the Cyprus problem on Greek politics has been the intensification of the perception of the 'Turkish threat'. To deal with this threat, in November 1993, Greece and the Greek Cyprus administration signed a Joint Defence Doctrine which looks forward to joint planning for common defence. In line with this Doctrine, in June 1998, Greek F-16s landed at the Greek Cypriot Paphos Air Base, which was completed in January 1998, for a stopover. Greek Cypriot Defence Minister Yiannakis Omirou declared that the stopover sent "a specific political message; that the Greek–Greek Cypriot common defence doctrine will exist and continue to develop as long as there is Turkish expansionism" [21].

The Greek phobia about the Turkish threat is evident in various Greek government officials' declarations and the perceived Turkish threat is an important source of domestic popularity for Greek politicians—a very interesting example is provided since 1996 by the Greek Foreign Minister Theodaros Pangalos, who capitalizes on disputes with Turkey. The Greek Cypriots' purchase of S-300 missiles falls under the stated aim of 'deterring Turkish aggression'; however, the Greeks were subject to pressures from the USA and the EU to refrain from this purchase and their deployment is, therefore, constantly postponed. "The USA and the EU have been pressing Cyprus to cancel the missiles, arguing that their arrival would have an adverse effect on the UN-sponsored talks for the reunification of the island" [22].

What stands out is that the Cyprus problem constitutes an important issue in domestic politics in both Turkey and Greece in addition to their security interests. The conflict is used by the Turkish and Greek governments as an important ground on which they can demonstrate their resolve and therefore their international credibility with linkages into other problem areas of Turco–Greek relations such as the disputes over the Aegean Sea. Within this power game between Turkey and Greece, the USA acts as a mediator and is directly involved in the Cyprus crisis because of its own security interests.

5. USA and Russia

Cyprus did not occupy a top place in the agenda of the American administration during the Cold War years, especially in the 1960s and the 1970s. When in 1974, the Greek junta staged a coup in Cyprus, no reaction came from the American administration. Similarly, when the Turkish government reacted to the annexation of the

island to Greece following this coup, the USA watched from the sidelines. Its early involvement in 1975 was largely due to the pressure of the Greek lobby to the Congress which adopted an embargo against Turkey for its intervention in 1974.

In the 1980s, the US involvement became more active, due to the increased strategic importance of the island (following the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) and demands coming from Congress for a settlement. The US position, while supporting the UN mandates, acknowledges that Turkish and Greek support is essential for a settlement. For that purpose, in 1985, the US Congress adopted a Peace and Reconstruction Fund for Settlement in Cyprus [23].

In the post-Cold War period, the motives for American involvement in Cyprus are economic and strategic. The Middle East and the Mediterranean have always been a source of global instability and occupied a top position on the American foreign policy agenda due to their economic and strategic importance; but their importance is increasing since the end of the Cold War. Madeleine Albright's statement on June 6, 1997 summarizes the newly gained importance of Cyprus: "Cyprus is a valuable partner in the fight against the new global threats of proliferation, terror, illegal narcotics, and international crime" [24]. In the post-Cold War era, the American motives towards Cyprus rest on three interlocking areas: (1) the containment of the well-armed, aggressive Middle Eastern states, (2) the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East to the West, and (3) stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. Cyprus lies on the oil routes with a capacity to impact the flow of oil to the West. Second, NATO's southern flank would be threatened and weakened by any crisis in Cyprus which would inevitably draw Turkey and Greece into a hot conflict. Third, stability in the Mediterranean is essential for regional stability in Southeast Europe and the Middle East. Fourth, a potential role that Russia would play in Cyprus has to be avoided at all costs.

For these reasons, since the end of the Cold War, the US administration is active in the Cyprus conflict and the promotion of a just, lasting and viable settlement in Cyprus is an aim of US foreign policy. In 1991, then President Bush suggested quadripartite talks between Turkey, Greece, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In June 1997, the Clinton administration appointed the architect of the Dayton agreement for the Bosnian crisis, Richard Holbrooke, as the Special Envoy to Cyprus. Holbrooke came up with a plan for the conflict— which rested on a mutual recognition of sovereignty by both sides and the formation of a bi-zonal federation. In May 1998, Holbrooke came up with three proposals for a solution to the Cyprus impasse; one of his proposals was a Dayton-style quadripartite conference. However, Holbrooke's attempts failed; one reason for their failure was the Turkish Cypriotic demand for recognition as a pre-condition for any talks which was rejected by the Greek Cypriots. On the other hand, Holbrooke's statement that "It is a fact that President Clerides/Greek Cypriotic administration does not represent or have control over the Turkish Cypriotic people" [25] was historic in its acknowledgement of two different peoples and administrations.

Holbrooke's plan that rested on mutual recognition of the parties' sovereignty was doomed to fail because it would mean recognition of the TRNC, which Greek Cypri-

ots try to avoid at all costs. Thus, US mediation hit the same wall as UN mediation does; conceptions of sovereignty.

The 1990s brought another player into the Cyprus impasse whose active involvement further complicates the already complex problem: Russia. In April 1997, Russia proposed a plan for the Resolution, 'Basic Principles for a Cyprus Settlement' supporting Greek Cypriotic arguments. Since 1996, Russia has been involved in the Cyprus problem through its role in the Greek Cypriotic military build-up. In addition to the heavy tanks it provided to the Greek Cypriots, Russia sold S-300 air-to-air missiles to Greek Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots' motivations for the purchase of S-300 missiles are pretty clear. They are using military build-up as a deterrence against Turkey which has superior air power over Greece and Greek Cyprus. The Russian motivations, however, are more varied. It seems that through its new ties in the Middle Eastern region—through Greek Cypriots—Russia is trying to carve a new role for itself in the post-Cold War era. To do so, it is using its military technology and arms trade as an effective tool.

Russian motives for its involvement in Cyprus are strategic. For example, "Pridhodko, the Kremlin aide, stated that Russia's military–technical cooperation with Cyprus was an integral part of Russia's foreign policy" [26]. One Russian motive is to acquire a bargaining chip against NATO's eastern enlargement—NATO signed accession treaties with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in July 1997—and to counterbalance Turkey's influence in the Caucasus era. Cyprus lies on the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East in a position to affect NATO's presence in the Mediterranean and oil routes to the West. Through its military presence in Greek Cyprus, Russia would gain access to all the information regarding NATO movements in the Mediterranean. The US administration has warned that if S-300 missiles are deployed, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East would fall under Russian control and Russia would threaten NATO with its radar system that it would bring to the island [27]. On the other hand, Russia is making belligerent remarks towards Turkey if Turkey intervenes in the deployment of the missiles. Aleksey Alfadox—from the Committee of Duma—stated that if Turkey intervenes in the deployment of the missiles, then Russia will regard this as a cause of war and retaliate accordingly [28].

It seems that Russia has economic and security interests in getting involved in the Cyprus problem; it will acquire a new influence in regional and global politics and gain a bargaining chip against the USA, NATO and Turkey. The future prospects point out that the US–Russian competition over influence in Cyprus is going to be a determining element in the resolution of the conflict. A final player involved in Cyprus is the European Union.

6. The European Union

In the nineties, the European Union has emerged as another player directly involved in the Cyprus debacle. Interestingly, the EU seems to be the only international organization with the capacity—through a stick/carrot policy—to impact a

political settlement in Cyprus. Since 1981, Greece has been a member of the EC/EU and used the EU as an additional international platform to which the Cyprus problem should be carried. The European Union plays two roles in the Cyprus issue: one concerns Turkish prospects for membership and the other concerns Cyprus' prospects for membership. The first aspect of the EU's role in the Cyprus debacle is the linkage it created between Turkish membership in the EU and the resolution of the Cyprus problem. Turkey has had an Association Agreement with the EC/EU since 1963, it applied for full membership in April 1987 and signed a Customs Union Agreement in March 1995. The 1989 Commission Opinion on Turkish application for EC membership stated the Cyprus problem as one of the obstacles for Turkey's closer integration to the EU. In 1997, in the Luxembourg summit of the European Council, the EU did not include Turkey among the applicant countries, and based this decision partly on concerns about Turkey's troops on Cyprus and its tense relations with Greece. In 1997, the Commission suggested that the Cyprus problem should be resolved prior to any negotiations between Turkey and the EU.

As far as Turkey's standing vis-à-vis the European Union is concerned, it was widely recognized that Greece and Cyprus constituted the main obstacles to Turkish membership of the EU. The Mitsotakis government, for example, sought to help the Greek Cypriot administration by trying to bring the Cyprus problem back onto the international agenda and by trying to introduce the issue into Turkish–EC relations [29]. Greece has made it clear that it expects a favorable settlement over Cyprus before it will endorse Turkey's bid for full membership of the European Union. In the meantime, Greek leaders have used the institutions of the Community to berate and isolate Turkey [30]. This perspective has in turn made Cyprus one of the key issues blocking Turkey's membership of the EU.

The second role of the EU on the Cyprus impasse is the Greek Cypriot negotiations for EU membership. In 1972, the Republic of Cyprus signed an Association Agreement with the EC and in 1990, the Greek Cypriotic administration applied for full membership in the EU; however, the Turkish side objected to this application on the grounds that the Greek Cypriotic administration cannot apply on behalf of all of Cyprus and that this was against the 1960 Treaties of Establishment. The 1960 Accords forbid Cyprus' participation in whole or in part, in any political or economic union with any state whatsoever. The 1960 Constitution on which the Greek Cypriots are basing their legitimacy prohibits such an application. Furthermore, any international agreement requires the assent of the two communities through a referendum. Thus, the Greek Cypriotic claim that they are following the 1960 Constitution is void: the message they give with the EU application is just the opposite, that the Greek Cypriots are the sole owners of the island.

The Commission's Opinion on the Cypriot application was presented in June 30, 1993 where it was stated that "the Community considers Cyprus as eligible for membership and that as soon as the prospect of a settlement is surer, the Community is ready to start the process with Cyprus that should eventually lead to its accession" [31]. In the case of no political settlement, the Commission decided to reassess the situation in 1995. To do so, the Council of Ministers appointed a European Observer to re-evaluate the situation in Cyprus. The Corfu summit of the European Council

in 1994 revealed the EU position that Cyprus' EU membership is not linked to the resolution of the conflict. In its report on enlargement, the Agenda 2000 of July 1997, the Commission stressed that Cyprus would not encounter any problems in adopting the acquis communautaire. The Commission's position is that "the Union is determined to play a positive role in bringing about a just, and lasting settlement in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. The status quo which is at odds with international law threatens the stability of the island, the region and has implication for European security".

There are, however, serious question marks surrounding the EU's objectivity with regard to Cyprus. For example, when the Commission Opinion was being prepared for Cyprus' membership, only information obtained from the Greek Cypriots was used for the analysis of the situation. Thus, the 1993 Opinion had a series of grave mistakes about the Turkish Cypriots. For example, 'Mr Denktash holds a large majority in Parliament owing to the Turkish settler vote'. Apart from the fact that the President has no place in the Assembly, research has shown that Turkish immigrants do not for the most part vote for either for the government or for the President in the elections [32].

Similar to the Commission's Opinion, the EU Observer's Report on the accession of Cyprus to the EU presented in February 1995 had used only information granted by the Greek Cypriots and their account of the events. The EU Observer's Report had similar grave mistakes with regard to the situation in the Northern part of the island and unfolding of the UN negotiations. Such statements from the Report illustrate the clear bias by various organs of the EU towards the situation: "the Cypriot National Guard is arming itself more heavily in response to the rising number of Turkish forces" (The European Observer's Report on Cyprus, January 23, 1995, Paragraph 1 of Part II) where there was actually no rising number of Turkish forces; or "so far Mr Denktash has either turned down these suggestions (made by President Clerides) or not responded" (The European Observer's Report on Cyprus, January 23, 1995, Paragraph 11 of Part III) whereas Mr Denktash sent the acceptance letter for the Confidence Building Measures to the UN Secretary General on 21 November 1994—two months before the report was written [33].

The European Union's conduct both in the Commission Opinion of 1993 and EU Observer's Report of 1995 demonstrates a lack of understanding of the situation and ready acceptance of the Greek Cypriotic arguments and assertions about the Turkish Cypriots without consulting the Turkish Cypriotic government and without checking the accuracy of the information granted by the Greek Cypriots. Thus, it is not surprising to find the Turkish Cypriots highly critical of the EU's objectivity and therefore its legitimacy. In response to Turkish concerns, the EU has set up a Delegation in Nicosia which contacts the authorities both in the North and in the South and explains possible advantages of EU membership. In addition, the EU asked the Turkish Cypriots to participate in the negotiating team of Cyprus.

The situation is complicated further by the Greek Cypriotic assumption that membership in the EU will end up unifying the island, thereby eroding the need for UN negotiations. On the other hand, the Greek Cypriotic hope is that EU membership would pacify Turkey which would not want to antagonize the EU members. President

Clerides' statement to Alithia newspaper on September 30, 1992 summarizes the Greek Cypriotic position; that "Admitting Cyprus into the EU will abrogate the Turkish right stemming from the Treaty of Guarantee to unilaterally intervene". The EU is therefore faced with the unenviable task of negotiating with the Greek Cypriots, finding a way to integrate the Turkish Cypriots into the negotiations, while simultaneously dealing with any complications that may arise between Greece and Turkey. The EU's conduct as a neutral arbiter of interests might have been a catalyst towards a settlement; however, its conduct up to now has been just the contrary. There is another side of the story: if the EU were to decide against Cyprus membership, then it would be confronted with the Greek veto against the EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europeans. The Greek Foreign Minister declared in November 1996 that "If Cyprus is not admitted, then there will be no enlargement of the Community" [34]. In September 1998, France, Italy and Spain gave a message to the EU term President Austria, that "If a solution in Cyprus is not reached within one year time, they will veto the Greek Cypriotic application", and if they do so, Greece will veto the entry of the five other candidates for EU membership [35].

Mr Denktash responded to the European Council decision in its Luxembourg summit to open negotiations with Cyprus by suspending intercommunal talks between the two communities and by declaring the Turkish Cypriotic position that progress from then on could only be made on the basis of two equal states. In addition, the then Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz stated that "the EU decision had undermined the possibility of a settlement in Cyprus and that nobody should expect any improvements unless the EU recognizes the existence of two separate, distinct entities on Cyprus" [36].

Within the TRNC, there are different voices than that of President Denktash's with regard to the suspension of intercommunal talks and EU negotiations. The opposition parties, for example, "maintain that Turkish Cypriots should join EU accession talks with a method that would reflect their political equality" [37], but the position held by the government is that recognition of TRNC is a must before any talks can be resumed in any framework. In response to Greek Cypriotic accession to the EU, the Turkish Cypriots claim they will have economic integration with Turkey so as to cope with increased economic alienation that South's membership might bring. To this end, on July 20, 1997, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and President Denktash signed a nine-point bilateral accord on integration which looks toward "gradual economic and financial integration and partial integration on security, defence, and foreign policy matters" [38]. The Turkish government also declared that in all international meetings concerning Cyprus, the Turkish delegation will include representatives of the Turkish Cypriots, and that any attack on Turkish Cypriots will be considered as an attack on Turkey [39]. In addition, in March 1998, Turkey and TRNC signed an agreement on comprehensive economic and trade cooperation to ease the negative impacts of economic embargoes on TRNC. For the gradual integration between Turkey and TRNC, an Association Council—an effective mechanism of economic decision and foreign policy making based on a principle of 'special partnership'—has been created. In addition, in Summer 1998, Turkey

began to transport water to TRNC with balloons and has suggested that it may sell water to the Greek Cypriots—who are in dire need of water as well.

In the longer run, for the first aspect of the EU's role in Cyprus with regards to Turkey, it seems likely that as long as disputes with Greece and the Cyprus problem remain unsolved, Turkey has a very low chance for membership in the EU. In addition, if Cyprus becomes an EU member, then Turkey will face a double veto on all its negotiations with the EU: the Greek and Cypriotic veto. For the second aspect of the EU's role in Cyprus with regards to a settlement in the island, the EU policy seems to have antagonized the Turkish Cypriots, divided the EU members, prepared the conditions for a lasting partition of the island rather than its unification. On the other hand, the EU hopes that accession negotiations would act as a carrot for the Turkish Cypriots tempting them to reintegrate with the Greek Cypriots. The EU misses the point that Turkish Cypriots are concerned not only with economic gain but have very valid security considerations.

7. Prospects

At the end of the millennium, it seems things are even more complicated in Cyprus than they ever were. In addition to all the complications associated with protracted social conflicts, i.e., the parties are not bending from their respective positions and do not recognize each other as legitimate arbiters of a common interest, too many actors are involved with their own national interests in mind.

Today, one can identify couple of scenarios for the Cyprus problem. The first scenario is a hot war between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus; the trigger for which can be provided by the deployment of S-300 missiles. The 1993 Joint Defence Doctrine between Greece and Greek Cypriots and the 1997 Declaration of Solidarity between Turkey and Turkish Cypriots increase the probability of escalation of a crisis in Cyprus to a Turco–Greek war. The Summer 1996 border incidents along the Green Line in Cyprus and the January 1996 Turco–Greek crisis over the Aegean islets Kardak/Imia indicate that the current situation can easily escalate into a military confrontation. Since Russia has become a party in the conflict with its sale of these missiles, Russia may step in this war as a supporter of Greek Cyprus. Any Russian involvement would bring NATO—or at least the Americans—in. This worst-case scenario would destabilize regional, European and global security. In the light of such a possibility, the USA and the EU as neutral arbiters of interests and as pacifiers would best promote stability and curtail risks. As for Turkey and Greece, they would minimize risk of military confrontation if they keep open as many channels of communications as possible and follow a strategy of issue-by-issue negotiations with respect to their conflicting interests.

A second scenario is that Greek Cyprus becomes a member of the EU and the Turkish Cypriots would integrate economically with Turkey, as the process of this integration has already begun in Summer 1997. This scenario would be detrimental to Turkish interests vis-à-vis the European Union because more than 60% of Turkey's external trade is with the EU and it has a customs union with the EU. Integration

with the TRNC may be found not to be compatible with the international obligations Turkey has acquired with its Customs Union Agreement with the EU, leading to an increased international isolation for Turkey and TRNC. In the case of the European Union, the EU is in a very delicate position; if it accepts Cyprus as a member, then it will incorporate an unstable, unpredictable political and security problem of the Eastern Mediterranean into the European ranks. For example, French President Chirac stated that "If Cyprus has a vocation to join the EU, the Union does not have a vocation to take in a piece of Cyprus and integrate conflicts that are not its own" [40]. On the other hand, if its membership carrot succeeds in bringing the parties together, it will gain its first foreign policy success. Since the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is isolated economically, save Turkey, there may be some incentive among the Turkish Cypriots to participate in EU talks. However, if reintegration with Cyprus through the EU will put them in a minority position, that would be unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriots. It seems that the EU made a major policy mistake in 1997 by excluding Turkey from the list of countries with whom accession negotiations would begin. By doing so, the EU angered the Turks and deprived itself of a powerful incentive it can use to generate Turkey's support to persuade the Turkish Cypriots to participate in the EU negotiations.

If the EU specifies a timetable for Turkey's accession as a full member, then it would have an additional policy tool with which it can pressure Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots towards a political settlement. The present policy of the EU— negotiating accession with Greek Cyprus but excluding the Turkish Cypriots as well as Turkey—seems to be the worst policy for the EU's future interests in Cyprus.

A third scenario is that a Confederation as suggested by Mr Denktash is created with two politically equal, sovereign states in Cyprus which delegate certain powers to the federal state. A fourth scenario is unification within a federal framework with sovereignty emanating equally from both communities. Of the last two scenarios, a basic requirement is a reconciliation of Turkish and Greek Cypriotic interests, and here US, United Nations and European mediation can be most helpful. In almost all possible scenarios and mediation efforts, what is needed is to break the enduring impasse between the two parties and bring a mutual recognition of the sides as legitimate arbiters of common interest. For example, in October 1998, Mr Denktash proposed a Non-Aggression Pact to the Greek Cypriots and a meeting between the two interior ministers to outline measures for easier passage of tourists to cross the border between the sides [41]. This kind of cooperation may be useful in bringing the parties together. The more common interests are created between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, the more probable a settlement would be. Thus, any policy towards solving the Cyprus problem should involve this mutual recognition without which progress would not be possible.

To conclude, the Cyprus impasse still stands as an intransigent conflict where the strategic importance of the island makes a settlement harder. Cyprus is an important listening post, has an important geo-strategic position controlling the trade routes, sea lanes and oil transport routes. It holds the key to stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, Southern Europe and the Middle East, thus a viable political settlement in Cyprus has a capacity to impact regional and global balances. The Turkish Cypriotic

responses to the Greek Cypriots' EU application indicate that the route to unification is becoming more rocky. The Greek Cypriotic hope that EU membership would facilitate the unification of the island is far from materializing, but instead it hardened the Turkish Cypriotic resolve. Thus, a miscalculated foreign policy move by Greece, Greek Cypriots and the EU is effectively sealing the partition of the island. Turkish Cypriotic President Denktash's statement, "If you want Cyprus to be united, two states are ready to unite, if not let Cyprus be divided" [42] summarizes what the future holds for Cyprus.

References

[1] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Turkish Daily News, 3 April 1998.

[2] Rothman J. From confrontation to cooperation. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992:39.

[3] Olgun E. Recognizing two states in Cyprus would facilitate co-existence and stability. Survival 1998;40(3):35.

[4] Ertekun NM. In search of a negotiated Cyprus settlement. Lefkosa (Northern Cyprus): Ulus Press, 1981:7.

[5] Eren N. Turkey, NATO and Europe: a deteriorating relationship? Paris: The Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, 1977:36.

[6] Parliamentary Debate (Hansard). House of Commons Official Report, 19 December 1956:1268. Quoted by Olgun E in Recognizing two states:36.

[7] Dodd CH. The Cyprus imbroglio. Hemingford Grey (UK): Eothen Press, 1998:20.

[8] Coufoudakis V. Domestic politics and the search for a solution of the Cyprus problem. In: Salem N, editor. Cyprus: a regional conflict and its resolution. London: Macmillan, 1992:18.

[9] Muftuler-Bac M. Turkey's relations with a changing Europe. Manchester (UK): Manchester University Press, 1997.

[10] Gurel S. Turkey and Greece: a difficult Aegean relationship. In: Balkir C, Williams A, editors. Turkey and Europe. London: Pinter, 1993:179.

[11] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Yeni Yuzyil, 1 September 1998.

[12] Usakligil E. We want to see the light in Cyprus: interview with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. Turkish Daily Newspaper, Yeni Yuzyil, 14 Sepetember 1998.

[13] Set of Ideas on an Overall Framework Agreement on Cyprus. United Nations, 15 July 1992,

[14] UNSC Doc.S/21183. United Nations, 8 March 1990:2.

[15] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Yeni Yuzyil, 1 September 1998.

[16] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Yeni Yuzyil, 1 September 1998.

[17] Prodromou EH. Reintegrating Cyprus: the need for a new approach. Survival 1998;40(3):13.

[18] Joint Statement by the Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 20 July 1997.

[19] Mayes S. Cyprus and Makarios. London: Putnam, 1960:90.

[20] Kramer H. The Cyprus problem and European security. Survival 1997;39(3):24.

[21] Couturier K. Turks send warplanes to Cyprus: Ankara aims to deter military build-up. Washington Post, 19 June 1998:A33.

[22] Cyprus denies delay of missiles. Associated Press Report, 7 November 1998.

[23] Migdalowitz C. Cyprus status of UN negotiations. CRS issue brief for Congress, 3 December 1996. As quoted by Avci A in: An assessment of US involvement in the Cyprus question. Paper presented at the 2nd International Congress on Cyprus Studies, Cyprus, November 1998.

[24] Madeleine Albright's statement prior to the meeting with the Cyprus Foreign Minister Iaonnis Kasoulides in Washington DC, June 6, 1997. Press Release by the Department of State.

[25] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Turkish Daily News, 5 May 1998.

[26] Khalip A. Missile deal on track, Cypriot says. Washington Post, 14 July 1998:A09.

[27] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Hurriyet, 10 September 1998.
[28] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Cumhuriyet, 25 Spetmeber 1998.
[29] Gurel S. Turkey and Greece: a difficult Aegean relationship. In: Balkir C, Williams A, editors. Turkey and Europe. London: Pinter, 1993:180.
[30] Bahcheli, Greek–Turkish relations. p. 108.
[31] Commission Opinion on the Application by the Republic of Cyprus for Membership, Com(93) 313 Final. Commission of the European Communities, 30 June 1998.
[32] Dodd CH. The Cyprus imbroglio. Hemingford Grey (UK): Eothen Press, 1998:62.
[33] Dodd CH. The Cyprus imbroglio. Hemingford Grey (UK): Eothen Press, 1998:71–2.
[34] Cyprus news, no. 87. London: Cyprus High Commission, November 1996.
[35] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Cumhuriyet, 23 September 1998.
[36] Burham J, Preel Q. Turkey accuses Kohl on EU policy. Financial Times, 6 March 1998.
[37] TRNC stands firm on recognition. Turkish Daily Newspaper, Turkish Daily News, 11 March 1998.
[38] Turkish Daily Newspapers, Yeni Yuzyil, Cumhuriyet, 20–21 July 1997.
[39] The Office of the Prime Ministry, The Directorate on Press and Information, 21 July 1997.
[40] Bremmer C, Binyan M. Turkish dilemma exposes EU rift. The Times, 13 March 1998.
[41] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Milliyet, 22 October 1998.
[42] Turkish Daily Newspaper, Turkish Daily News, 4 May 1998.