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Relaciones Greco-Turcas

Greek-Turkish relations: "Yes, we can" ...?
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GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS: "YES, WE CAN" ...?

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You will all doubtless have read that the first democratically elected President of the Maldives announced, on taking office recently, that his primary concern was to use his country's tourism earnings to buy land elsewhere, so that Maldivian citizens could migrate if climate change led to a rise in sea-level that would cover these low-lying islands.

"The Economist (18-11-08) devoted a humorous editorial to his initiative, which is indeed problematic. It was the same "Economist" which many years ago, when ecological concerns first began to emerge, labelled those who most forcibly expressed them, as "econuts". Humour plays many roles in human societies, and one of these, well illustrated by such examples from "The Economist", unquestionably among the most enlightened Western journals of opinion, not least nowadays on environmental issues, is as a defence mechanism against unpleasant realities we are not yet psychologically ready to confront with the seriousness they deserve.

The Maldives are by no means the only island state at risk as a result of climate change. In terms of absolute numbers however far larger populations, indeed billions of our fellow human beings, are already being placed at risk, long before the sea-level begins seriously to rise as a result of the projected melting of the icecap in Greenland and perhaps in parts of the Antarctic, by the gradual retreat of the glaciers in the Himalayas. Almost all the great rivers that water the plains of east, of southeast and of southern Asia rise in or from the Tibetan plateau and the adjoining mountain ranges. As the quantities of water gradually decline and the number of people affected increase, we are being set on a road towards a new species of human security crisis, one quite as serious as any that results from war.

Or is perhaps such a crisis, if in an early and mild form, already upon us? It is not just absolute levels of destitution or relative poverty compared with Southern Europe but in some instances at least unfavourable environmental changes that are driving increasing numbers of citizens of African countries to risk their lives in order to try and reach Spain, Italy or Greece. We all read of the exploitation to which Asian and

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The above is a revised text, taking account of most of the questions and objections raised at the original presentation in Barcelona. The notes include two references to articles that appeared during December and which confirm points made in that presentation.

We urgently need to widen our current definition of what represents a security problem, since new threats to human security may well aggravate already existing conflicts

African migrants are subjected, and the international criticism levelled at the Greek and Turkish authorities in particular for the inhumanity of their treatment. Unorganized migration is arguably an already existing security problem in the Mediterranean, most certainly for the migrants themselves but perceived also as such by the inhabitants of most of their countries of destination.

My first message therefore is that we urgently need to widen our current definition of what represents a security problem, since new threats to human security may well aggravate already existing conflicts, while by contrast, the realization of this probability could lead us to confront and resolve older threats with a sense of urgency that has until now often been lacking. Indeed, those countries which are trapped, or trap themselves, in security or other problems of a traditional nature, are already making a slower response to the newer environmental challenges than others.

Let me give some relevant examples. The United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change¹ figures for developed, mainly European countries, indicate Turkey has had the highest growth of any in greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2006, with an increase of more than 95%, almost double that of the next country, Spain, with 50%. Overall however Turkey still has far lower greenhouse gas emissions per capita than many other countries, while Cyprus and Greece have been judged by outside observers as amongst the very weakest in their current response to the climate change crisis².

The World Wide Fund for Nature Living Planet Report of 2008 suggests that Greece comes second only to the United States (US) worldwide in its footprint of water consumption by person, admittedly however with Italy, Spain, Portugal and Cyprus in fairly close pursuit³. It is clear Turkey and Greece are both dangerously delaying an adequate response to the most critical problems of the future, giving much of their attention instead to traditional security problems, which are allowed to drag on seemingly indefinitely, as with the Aegean, and also of course to continuing patterns of economic growth that were perhaps appropriate in a previous generation but take little account of the need for future growth to be environmentally sustainable.

If we compare Greco-Turkish relations in their narrow sense with the period before the initiatives of the late Ismail Cem and George Papandreou in 1999, we certainly cannot complain. The political atmosphere is friendly rather than hostile, the commercial atmosphere euphoric rather than frosty, cultural doors are open and the attitude of the media, which was largely instrumental in bringing the two countries to the brink of war in 1996, clearly positive, with the most notable improvement in this respect being in Turkey. These are important achievements, even if we should not forget that, particularly at the popular level, mutual suspicions remain. There is however as yet remarkably little political movement on specific disputes, so that the relationship between the two leaderships can be described as politely friendly but not as creatively constructive. Meanwhile future challenges grow more pressing by the year.

In Cyprus at a recent meeting of the Greek Turkish Forum, a non-governmental body on which Volkan Vural is one of our Turkish colleagues and where I act as Greek Coordinator, we listened to a hopeful pres-

entation on behalf of the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO)⁴, aimed at persuading Greek and Turkish Cypriots that it was in their economic interest to reach an early agreement. Most of the arguments employed are valid, making an impressive case for a settlement on economic grounds, even taking into account that the Republic of Cyprus' economy is already one of the better managed in the eurozone. One however, namely that it would encourage further real estate development, making possible a further expansion of the sale of second homes, was entirely invalid: it took account neither of the already existing drought conditions in Cyprus, which have since then further deteriorated, nor of the 2007 European Commission Green Paper on "Adapting to Climate Change in Europe – options for EU action"⁵. This predicted that European Union (EU) Mediterranean member states should be anticipating, over the next half century, average temperature increases of between 2 and 4 degrees, and, far more serious, average reductions in existing rainfall levels of between 20% and 40%. Predictions are rarely fulfilled: indeed, quite apart from the uncertainty innate in climate predictions of themselves, their usefulness lies partly in the opportunity they give us to act in such a manner as to disprove them. This however is only possible if they feature high enough on our agenda to lead us to take avoiding action, in this instance by husbanding water resources, altering building regulations and encouraging new, environmentally sustainable, technologies.

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In fact, one of the critical advantages to Greek and Turkish Cypriots from a just settlement of the Cyprus problem will be the opportunity to face Cyprus' forthcoming environmental challenges together. This is indeed a common interest so immediate and insistent as to demand an early settlement in itself. How far is agricultural production to be reduced to conserve precious water? Is the construction of second homes to be completely ended or at a minimum severely discouraged? What further measures of water saving and cross-island coordination need to be adopted? Is it realistic to hope that water transfers from Anatolia or the Ionian coast of Greece, both currently water surplus areas, but Anatolia far more conveniently close to Cyprus, will materially reduce the problem in the long term, when these areas themselves are likely to be subjected to the same probable decrease in rainfall precipitation as the rest of the Mediterranean countries? What proportion of the problem can be met by desalination plants of current technology, given the associated increase in energy consumption and potential damage to the marine environment? What improvements in desalination technology might avoid such dilemmas?

The nexus of environmental problems we are considering however has another extremely important regional and world actor, namely the European Union. The European Union is of primary importance for three reasons. First, because, independently of the original ideology that lay behind the Treaty of Rome, contrary even to what some states and interest groups in Europe anticipated and desired as recently as the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2000, the environment has become a central point both of the EU's internal concerns and of its external mission. In the dark years of the Bush Presidency it has been the EU that has kept the issue of climate change politically alive, and even if the US were to vault into the lead under the Obama Administration, nothing will be able to detract from this historic contribution the EU has already made to the safeguarding of humankind against the greatest security challenge of the future.

Turkish military occupation of a large part of Cyprus since 1974 is the other critical factor favouring the continuation of conflict in the region

Second, because the EU's environmental rules form part of a large body of law regulating the internal market while protecting fundamental liberties and rights for citizens of EU member states. This has over time created a radically new form of society within a wider Europe. It may be understandable that some outsiders might wish to damage this slowly evolving but incrementally impressive achievement of the last fifty years. It is tragically destructive that any citizen of an EU member state should wish to do so, for this is one of the most impressive and hopeful creations of collective statesmanship Europe has seen for centuries

Third, membership of the European Union, precisely because of what the Union has over the years come to represent, is less an issue of interest, and far, far less an issue of strategy in the traditional sense, than an issue of identity. To enjoy the benefits of the type of society that has to a considerable degree already been created and that continues to be created in the EU, one must positively desire to adopt and share that identity.

That is why it is only natural some European countries should not wish to join the EU. Others, having joined, are yet in a constant identity crisis about it: the British are the most notable but not the only example of the latter stance. There is, in short, an evident distinction between being a European country, which Britain certainly is, and sharing an EU identity, which for many British people remains as yet, in my experience, very problematic.

A more extreme instance of such an identity problem in relation to the European Union of course, concerns Turkey, now a candidate country, and a critical aspect of it relates to the Turkish attitude to Cyprus, in particular the Turkish military occupation of a large part of that country since 1974. This is the other critical factor favouring the continuation of conflict in the region, and unlike the diminished official awareness of the significance of the environmental challenge, which applies to all the parties involved, it concerns Ankara alone. Greece is no longer in relation to Cyprus the same nationalist country as in the period before 1974. This is not because there is no nationalism in Greece: that there is, even if defensive rather than aggressive, is clearly demonstrated by the shrill and counterproductive attitudes taken on the issue of the name of Greece's northern neighbour in the early 1990s, with the attempt to deprive it of any form of use of the word "Macedonia". It is also shown in the continuing adherence to a narrow and essentialist Hellenic national history line. Yet, in relation both to Cyprus and indeed to its other neighbours, Greece has clearly set aside territorial aggrandizement as a national aim. Suspicion of Ankara there most certainly is, and such suspicion is hardly surprising when there is still a Turkish occupying army in Cyprus, but this suspicion does not entail any desire that Athens should play a countervailing role. Greeks in their vast majority want Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to find a solution and they want Cyprus to be properly independent. In short, Greece will back any settlement that is mutually agreeable to Cypriots.

Turks by contrast are in a dilemma. The evidence continues to indicate that a majority of Turkish people continue to desire a European vocation, EU accession and an EU type of society but both the continuing influence of the military and the rediscovery of its majority Sunni Muslim

identity have been making it very difficult to take those decisions in relation to Cyprus and Greco-Turkish relations that would help make that vocation a reality. All too many Turks, even some committed pro-Europeans and far more amongst the uncommitted, speak in private of the difficulty and sometimes even the impossibility of "giving up Cyprus". It has indeed proven impossible thus far even to keep a specific commitment made to the EU by October 2005 to permit Cyprus flag vessels to call at Turkish ports, though this would no more imply recognition of the Republic of Cyprus than it did when Cyprus-flag vessels called at Turkish ports in the years between July 1974 and April 1987. The attempt to bargain a firm commitment already undertaken against a demand for further EU measures to counteract the alleged "isolation" of Turkish Cypriots is not calculated to increase an appreciation of Ankara's political reliability among other member states.

In this situation the EU is, I believe, called on to shed that tired cynicism which forms the least desirable part of the European tradition and to adopt the more hopeful and energetic approach we have, most of us, been moved to hear recently from across the Atlantic. We Europeans also need to be able to come both to say and to mean: "Yes, we can!" Nowhere is this more true than in relation to the long stagnant nexus of conflict represented by Ankara, Athens and Nicosia. We should not, in face of the immensity of the environmental and other fundamental challenges our world is confronting, be willing to accept "power politics as usual". Power politics as played from time immemorial until the breakup of the Soviet Union can today be likened only to the classic example of reordering chairs on the deck of the Titanic while the band plays ... and the ship goes down. And in this instance we are all of us on the same ship: there are no "outside observers".

An energetic approach on the part of the EU might easily however lead in a mistaken direction if it involves betraying what is most precious about it, namely that identity which the EU has so slowly and painfully, but creatively, built up over the last five decades and which is needed more than ever both internally and in relation to Europe's neighbours. There is an old saying "Where there is no vision, the people perish". Such a lack of vision on the part of the EU's leadership would be displayed if its leaders were to surrender the universality of its organizing principles within the EU – as for instance, by accepting permanent derogations to its *acquis* – or, more specifically, to betray the ideological primacy of its simultaneous commitment to the principles of a free market, a clean environment and human rights. It is the combination of these three that have afforded the EU not just a formal but a substantive role in world development, a role connected not with the security issues of times past but with the emergent security challenges of the future.

You may respond that it is hard for the EU to achieve a great deal when those immediately involved are not setting an example. This is certainly true of important governmental actors, as I have already pointed out. By contrast civil society in the region, and also specifically in Cyprus, has in fact set several examples. For reasons of space I shall mention but two, neither of which concern the environment. This is not because there are no Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot environmentalists who collaborate. There certainly are such and they have indeed made joint protests to the EU in relation to development in the Karpas. It is not easy for environ-

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mentalists to go beyond joint protests however when the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot authorities have more frequently been engaged in a competition as to who can do the greater environmental damage to that part of their common home they currently administer.

Not that we should speak of an absolute equivalence. Where cultural conservation, in particular of monuments, is concerned the Greek Cypriot community as a whole has aspired with some success to meet the highest European standards, and Turkish Cypriot professionals in the field hold the same aspirations so that when they can work together, as in the Old Town of Nicosia under the aegis of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the results are most impressive⁶. By contrast, the wanton neglect and sometimes destruction in the area occupied by the Turkish army since 1974 has been one of the most notorious cultural crimes in Europe over the last 35 years, one further example of what I have just suggested – that official Ankara has a considerable distance yet to travel in order to adopt those EU attitudes and practices, in this instance respect for all forms of the cultural heritage, which represent one of the most valuable expressions of modern European identity⁷.

In two other fields however Cypriots have been setting an example. It is Cypriot social scientists, and not the UN or foreign powers, who have taken the initiative in elucidating the attitudes of ordinary Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots through systematic and in depth polling. This process, which began after the 2004 Referendums, represents an essential precondition to meaningful negotiations for a settlement. It has already produced some revealing and unexpected results. In the most recent survey large majorities alike of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots agreed, first, that Greece, Turkey and a unified Cyprus should become strategic partners after a settlement; and, second, that Cyprus will need to maintain a moderately-sized professional security force, bicomunal in composition, which would be responsible for defending the island from any internal or external threats and aiding in the response to any potential natural disaster⁸.

In history teaching Cypriots, and more particularly Turkish Cypriots but with an already evident response from the Greek Cypriot leadership, are setting an example not just to themselves but to Europe as a whole. How has this come about? Already during the brief period – 1994 to 1996 – when the Turkish Cypriot left, then under the leadership of the late Ozker Ozgur, shared in the administration of the Turkish Cypriot community, with Mehmet Ali Talat then holding the education portfolio, Turkish nationalist history books were replaced, only to return promptly after their departure from office. For the fact is that political change in the Turkish Cypriot community has, over the years, proven far harder to achieve than among the Greek Cypriots.

Whether we judge Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader since before 1974, to have enjoyed the genuine support of Turkish Cypriots or to have been regularly reelected partly because of bureaucratic and military pressure on the electorate, it is unquestionable that the three successive electoral victories for the Turkish Cypriot left, between December 2003 and April 2005 represented the first clear change of direction. These were however the direct consequence, first, of the EU

decision taken at Helsinki in December 1999 that the Republic of Cyprus would not be denied accession if consideration of all the relevant factors led the EU to the conclusion the Republic was not responsible for the lack of a settlement prior to signature of an accession agreement, and, second, of the decisive rejection of the second and third versions of the Annan Plan by Rauf Denktash, on both occasions with the full support of Ankara, in December 2002 and March 2003. The Republic of Cyprus thus signed its Treaty of Accession with the EU in April 2003.

It was this development that for the first time enabled the Turkish Cypriot community to reject Mr Denktash's leadership because he had proven unwilling to safeguard what they appreciated as their community's best interests. Thus the above-mentioned EU decision of December 1999 and the signature of the Treaty of Accession, which flowed directly from it, decisions since unjustly maligned by many outside observers, were in fact not just positive but necessary because they led both the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, where Mr Erdogan became Prime Minister just before Mr Denktash's rejection in March 2003 and thereafter played a decisive role in altering that policy, good reason to think about the Cyprus problem again, and in a notably more constructive manner.

This change has not, of course, solved all the many outstanding problems. Where the substance of settlement negotiations are concerned the jury is out: as we all know, after Demetris Christofias became Greek Cypriot leader in the Presidential elections of February 2008, he and Mehmet Ali Talat, the Turkish Cypriot leader, impressively succeeded in launching formal negotiations in September 2008 but have, so far at least, failed to achieve the breakthrough their comradeship in progressive politics had often been envisioned as making likely. Where the symbolism of reconciliation is concerned, the jury is also out. On the one hand we have the hopeful opening of the Ledra Street/Lokmaci crossing in Nicosia in April 2008. On the other hand there is the failure thus far to negotiate other openings despite the evident desire of ordinary Cypriots. There is also a surprising lack of emphasis on Confidence Building Measures that would involve civil society as an active participant in the process of achieving reconciliation. What is most disappointing is that there seems as yet to be little difference between the cult of Ataturk in Turkey and in the Turkish Cypriot Administration. His portrait and the Turkish flag continue to dominate the offices of senior Turkish Cypriot officials, though not fortunately that of the Turkish Cypriot leader, to the point where a visitor obtains the clear impression that the Turkish military, as under Rauf Denktash, are still not permitting the Turkish Cypriot community to act in its own best interests, either in matters of substance or of symbolism. The message given to the visitor is the same as that given to the ordinary Greek Cypriot by the flags on the mountainside: that Turkish nationalism is both triumphalist and triumphant.

In one area, a very important one however, the jury has already given a verdict on the change in Turkish Cypriot leadership, and it is a very favourable one. This, as I have already indicated, concerns history teaching in Turkish Cypriot schools, where the militaristic and stereotyping nationalism of the "old regime" has been replaced by textbooks that are, in the view of those in a position to judge them, notably fresher, more balanced and oriented towards specifically Turkish Cypriot rather than Turkey's and Turkish nationalist concerns.

There is surprising lack of emphasis on Confidence Building Measures that would involve civil society as an active participant in the process of achieving reconciliation

History-teaching is par excellence a security issue. New Turkish Cypriot history books aims to create better long-term conditions for an improvement in relations with the Turkish, the Greek Cypriot and the Greek

The significance of this development has been underestimated by outside commentators. In Southeast Europe, as elsewhere, the national history which provides me with my sense of identity is simultaneously the history which provides you with your sense that, because of the implications of that identity, I am a threat. History-teaching is par excellence therefore a security issue. It is indeed normally a longer-range security issue than those usually discussed but frequently underlies shorter-term issues, poisoning both international relations and interpersonal contacts.

Thus the significance of the new Turkish Cypriot history books in creating better long-term conditions for an improvement in relations is dual. On the one hand, to the extent these changes are maintained and extended, the message given to Greek Cypriots will no longer be that of a proud military people, suspicious of foreigners and resentful of criticism, however balanced, which is the impression Turkish history books, in parallel to a considerable proportion of Turkish diplomatic activity, continue to give those who are in a position to judge them. On the other hand, they increase the pressure on neighbouring school systems, most notably the Turkish, but also the Greek Cypriot and the Greek, to consider what amendments they in turn might consider appropriate⁹.

It should be stressed that this favourable development in Turkish Cypriot history textbooks is not an isolated phenomenon. We have all heard of the groundbreaking work in history education between France and Germany after World War II. The Council of Europe has devoted many conferences to this theme, as has Euroclio, the federation of European history teachers. Within Cyprus there are both cross-communal and intra-communal groups of teachers actively involved in the effort. The wider region of Southeastern Europe has witnessed an ongoing initiative, with which I am personally associated. This has brought together sixty scholars and teachers from Slovenia to Cyprus, in preparing supplementary material for regional history teaching in secondary schools, with four beautifully prepared volumes that are already available in most of the languages of the region and cover "The Ottoman Empire", "Nations and States in Southeastern Europe", "The Balkan Wars" and "World War II"¹⁰.

This wide-ranging and impressive movement has two objectives, which are in constant but creative tension. On the one side there is a rejection of that negative stereotyping of other countries and peoples which is such a prominent feature of nation-state history teaching in schools – and it was of course nation-states that introduced history teaching into schools in the first place! This is the aspect on which most progressive politicians are currently keenest. Such a constructive aim however is more controversial than it at first sight appears. There has indeed been negative stereotyping on a wide scale and it has indeed distorted young people's attitudes to their neighbours. Not all stereotyping is necessarily without any foundation whatever however, and there have certainly been many ugly events in the history of every country, as in the relations between them. Thus the defenders of traditional nation-state history teaching often criticize the new wave as merely carrying out a post-modern propaganda exercise, obscuring historical truth to white-wash the past, perhaps indeed in the interest of outside powers that desire other countries to lose any pride in their own traditions.

It is for this reason that the four workbooks to which I have referred take a different approach. They do not conceal certain fundamental values held by those who prepared them, such as respect for human life, respect for the truth and increased attention to the lives of ordinary people and the impact political events have on them, but their emphasis is not on achieving reconciliation through changing the substance of what is presented, that is through replacing negative stereotypes by positive, but rather through shifting the angle of vision by approaching historical events with the use of original material derived from a wide variety of sources. A combination of an insistence on historical accuracy in the description of events, including events that display aggression and even ferocity by one or another party, with the critical use of differentiated source material to enable students to understand how the same event can be seen from different points of view, promotes reconciliation on a deeper level, namely that of a common approach to the consideration of contentious issues. This aims at the adoption of that critical but sympathetic standpoint which should inform the attitude of the citizen of any country in the modern world, who will be required to consider various types of political and economic action proposed in response to crises that will affect, to a greater or lesser degree, every member of the human species. Effectively the training required to be an effective citizen in the coming age will necessarily be related to the training required to become a good amateur or professional historian. Thus the work being done in Cyprus and in other parts of Southeastern Europe is blazing a trail for other areas of our planet where historical tensions breed present-day conflicts.

These increasingly important movements in civil society deprive the major international actors of their alibi both for inaction and for their past failure to play a constructively impartial role, which has been quite as common as the obsession of many locals with past injuries.

The challenge facing the international community in relation to the Ankara-Athens-Nicosia nexus is to resolve the current security challenges of a traditional nature, partly through the actual and potential contribution of civil society and partly through the creative reinterpretation or extension of international law, avoiding however the willful overturning or breach of critical elements in it that has become all too fashionable among great powers in recent years. This fashion inevitably creates precedents that tend to lead our world in a tragically mistaken direction, that of a vicious descending spiral towards a Hobbesian state of nature. ("That way madness lies.") Regrettably it is the permanent members of the UN Security Council that have all too often been principals in this disastrous development.

Observance and where necessary creative extension of international law to protect human liberties and rights and the environment in which those liberties and rights must be exercised represents not humankind's best, but our only chance of overcoming the challenges we face.

If this is so it would seem advisable to redirect the whole thrust of traditional discussion on the relationship between Ankara, Athens, Nicosia and Brussels. The discussion as to whether Turkey is a European country needs to be brought to an end in short order. Geographically,

The challenge facing the international community is to resolve the current security challenges through civil society and through the creative reinterpretation or extension of international law

The question should not then be whether Turkey is a European country, but whether it is ready for EU accession because it has not acquired a firm sense of a European Union identity

Europeans since the eighteenth century have accepted their continent's boundary has run along the Urals, the Caspian and the Antitaurus range. Politically, Turkey's predecessor state, the Ottoman Empire, was a part, if in principle a hostile and aggressively expansionary part, of European political life since the fourteenth century and quite capable of concluding European alliances, as for instance with France, as early as the sixteenth. Its economy was always commercially interconnected with that of the rest of Europe. Today Turkey represents one of the most dynamic segments of European economic life and one half of her trade has, for many years now, been specifically with EU member states. If there are some EU citizens who still consider that Muslim peoples cannot be part of Europe they are simply several centuries out of date.

The question should not then be whether Turkey is a European country, which it most certainly is, but whether it is ready for EU accession because it has acquired a firm sense of a European Union identity. Where it is not or has not, and there are clearly several such areas, it is incumbent on us to assist her, something which is nevertheless quite distinct from agreeing with particular positions of any Turkish leadership or even Turkish public opinion as a whole¹¹. In the last resort however it is only in Ankara that the most critical decisions can be taken as to the country's identity. Assistance to the process of Turkish EU accession should thus be given strictly within the frameworks of international law and international collaboration I have outlined.

More specifically in respect of Cyprus, several points seem clear. Substantial progress has been made in establishing the process through which a solution will be achieved since Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots now have the negotiating initiative. This however certainly will not of itself result in a settlement, as is already clear to anyone following the course of negotiations since they began in September. In order to achieve a settlement there are three further desiderata. The first is a clear insistence by the EU on the maintenance of those principles of an open market, human liberty and human rights on which the EU is founded, and Europe as a political and civil society has been consistently built up since the cataclysm of World War II. A Cyprus settlement must be accommodated to European principle and practice, not European principle and practice to the arbitrary demands of some political actors in relation to Cyprus. The second is a sensitive approach by the UN, leaving aside some of the sadly mistaken theories that guided previous efforts, and paying particular attention to what in-depth opinion polling has since then revealed and will continue to reveal over the coming months. The third is the acceptance by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and then by a majority of its full membership, including hopefully Turkey, from 2009 until 2011 a Security Council member, that ongoing Turkish military occupation in Cyprus is contrary both to the interests and to the commitments of the international community as a whole but also to the interests of the individual countries involved, most notably Turkey herself.

In a unanimous and binding UN General Assembly Resolution of 1974¹², voted for alike by Turkey, the US and the UK, consistently Ankara's most vocal and effective supporters, and subsequently confirmed by the Security Council, the UN:

1. Calls upon all states to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Republic of Cyprus and to refrain from all acts and interventions directed against it.
2. Urges the speedy withdrawal of all foreign armed forces and foreign military presence and personnel from the Republic of Cyprus and the cessation of all foreign interference in its affairs.”

There can be only two acceptable responses to the particular problem of traditional security which has existed in Cyprus at least since the Greek junta's coup in 1974 that would be compatible with international law and in consequence with the legitimate Turkish interest of continuing progress towards EU membership. One, by far more preferable, alike for Turkey's EU vocation and for the healthy survival of a Cyprus settlement, would be the immediate replacement of all outside forces now on the territory of the Republic of Cyprus by a domestic force, almost certainly supported, supplemented and organized by the EU and buttressed by a new system of implementation Guarantees combined with a new strategic alliance. If so, such a force should certainly include a Turkish contingent as part of an arrangement by which Ankara would be even more closely associated with EU security structures than she already is.

The other acceptable response, far more difficult to negotiate, would be a staged withdrawal of such forces – overwhelmingly though not solely Turkish – over a short period of time after a settlement, in accordance with a new Security Council Resolution, to be adopted however, this being the crucial point, under the provisions of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This would mean that there would be serious international sanctions, with separate provision for the automatic suspension of Turkey's EU Accession negotiations, if the timetable for a “speedy withdrawal” was not adhered to and international sanctions on the Greek Cypriots if there was an attack on the Turkish Cypriot community.

Cyprus is no longer an ex-colony and the world has changed dramatically since 1960. The issue of guarantees needs to be revisited in the light of the totally new situation that would exist after a settlement, acknowledging the sovereign equality of Cyprus to Greece and Turkey and addressing the need to ensure the successful implementation of the settlement. The absence of any of these elements led to a decisive rejection of the Annan Plan (in its fifth version) by the Greek Cypriots in April 2004, a rejection that for some was emotionally motivated but for many was based on consideration of political ethics and of rational calculation. This was indicated alike by exit polls and by subsequent opinion poll surveys¹³, both of which indicated that three-quarters of Greek Cypriot “no” voters considered security as their most important objection to the Plan's provisions.

Most Western observers of the Cyprus problem believe either that Greek Cypriots were no longer interested in a settlement after the April 2003 Treaty of Accession, or alternatively that other factors played a more important role, whether the emotional appeal of Tassos Papadopoulos for a “no” vote before the Referendum or other issues disputed with the Turkish Cypriots. Such analyses are no less logically and factually inaccurate for their frequent repetition. Were Greek Cypriots negotiating seriously after 1974 and before the Republic of Cyprus applied for EU

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To re-establish the unity of their country, to regain some territory, to repossess their properties: did EU accession provide them with any of these fundamental desiderata?

accession in July 1990? This was the period of the two high-level agreements, signed with Rauf Denktash by Archbishop Makarios in 1977 and by Spyros Kyprianou in 1979 respectively, which no-one disputes were the results of serious negotiation, with the Greek Cypriots then making their major historic concession of a bicomunal bizonal federation. What then were their reasons for negotiating seriously at that stage? To re-establish the unity of their country, to regain some territory, to repossess their properties, to secure the safety of their monuments, to allow those of the 160,000 displaced Greek Cypriots who so wished to return to their homes, to prevent the settlement of Anatolian Turks in Cyprus, and to obtain the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Republic. Did EU accession provide them with any of these fundamental desiderata? The answer is a resounding “no” in all seven instances. So why should they not also be serious in negotiating after the EU Treaty of Accession? They retain every one of their previous reasons for being as serious in intent as they evidently were both in 1977 and 1979.

The second observation, namely that other factors apart from security also played a role, is at least logically tenable. Clearly if exit polls and subsequent public opinion polls both indicate that three-quarters of Greek Cypriot “no” voters considered security as the main reason for voting as they did, there was one-quarter that gave other reasons, which is a substantial percentage. It is also likely that some of those who honestly gave security as their main reason had one or another subsidiary reason for the position they took. There is however no prima facie justification to dispute their order of priority and some of those outsiders who do so might wish to consider how they would feel if an equivalent force to the 20-40,000 Turkish troops currently on Cyprus were occupying part of their country. (In such a small country as Cyprus indeed far smaller numbers of troops would be adequate to exercise military control.)

Certainly every body politic contains a spectrum of opinions. It is important therefore to note that in two Presidential elections twenty years apart – in 1988 and 2008 – the Greek Cypriot electorate has not allowed the candidate who had given the impression of being more “difficult” in the negotiations than he might have been, to enter the second and decisive run off. This strongly suggests that just over two-thirds of the Greek Cypriot electorate today, as before the Treaty of Accession, have been consistently serious in their search for a negotiated settlement. By contrast, Rauf Denktash was able, perhaps by questionable means, to maintain a majority among the Turkish Cypriot electorate for decades until it became clear that his opposition to EU Accession could not prevent the Accession of the Republic.

Naturally there are other issues apart from security. For Turkish Cypriots the issue of power-sharing, of a federal state with substantive power-sharing between the two communities, rather than a standard democracy, is essential in view of their experiences, particularly in the period from 1964 to 1967. Those Greek Cypriots who fail to appreciate that their own communal and cultural exclusivity has been a factor in bringing about such a result, that the Turkish Cypriot point on this issue needs, for historical reasons, to be granted and can be granted without decisive damage to a settlement’s viability on the fundamental condition

that cross-voting forms an important element of the constitution after any such settlement, are indeed effectively opposing any federal solution that could realistically be negotiated¹⁴. So far however polls suggest that the proportion of the Greek Cypriot electorate that holds this position is not greater than 35%. It seems there will be similar but hopefully not overwhelming difficulty for an equivalent majority of Turkish Cypriots to accept there can be no permanent derogations from freedoms that form part of the EU acquis or a reversal of the norms set down over the years by the Council of Europe in relation to the violation of human rights. Clearly it is along such lines of mutual concession in different fields that an agreement may be attainable on internal issues.

The issue on which a bargain between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is unattainable is precisely security

The issue on which a bargain between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is unattainable is precisely security. Here Ankara and Athens, but also the international community, form part of the equation. Here too more than anywhere else there is urgent work to be done, distinguishing threats that are realistic from those that serve only as excuses, and elaborating structures that will both prove adequate and be able to command majority approval in both communities.

It is at the international level that currently prospects appear worst. At a popular level, despite the mutual ongoing mistrust, there have appeared some hopeful signs. Ordinary Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike showed a sure touch in responding to the most recent polls, that one necessary element in providing security will be an alliance between Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and another the existence of a small bicomunal military. That there were substantial majorities in both communities for these positions is at first surprising, but we should remember that since April 2003, it has at last become possible for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to cross the Buffer Zone – more accurately perhaps described by Greek Cypriots as “the dead zone” - for the first time since 1974. Not all, particularly among Greek Cypriots, many of them deeply wounded by the treatment afforded to their religious and cultural monuments by the Turkish army, have taken this opportunity or wish to repeat the experience¹⁵. One thing has been clearly proven however: it has gradually become possible for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots not just to meet but also to work together, and to make friendships without police protection or military surveillance – and, what is more important, a good number have done so. The long nightmare of inter-communal strife which began in the 1950s, originally as a consequence of the desire of the then colonial power to maintain imperial domination, is gradually coming to an end.

For these 50 some years of nightmare to be followed by a fair dawn, a massive effort is required of Cypriots, but also an engagement by the international community both to international collaboration and to the maintenance of international law in the pursuit of a resolution of the Cyprus problem. Without adherence to these principles there can be no settlement in the still tense nexus of stagnant conflict that binds Ankara, Athens and Nicosia. Without these there will be far greater risk to Turkey's vocation of EU membership that many Turks certainly and reasonably desire. Without these there will be less progress – at least in this region of the world – in meeting the broader security challenges, the most pressing for humankind, that face us all today.

At this stage however we should rather give priority to a good faith attempt at reaching an overall settlement

Let us first suppose for a moment that, for whatever reason, a settlement within 2009 proves unattainable. If so what are the likely consequences? Doubtless, increased pressure, particularly by Ankara, for formal partition. This is unlikely to be acceptable to the international community however, partly because Kosovo has, despite initial statements, already turned out to be an unfortunate precedent, partly because the anti-partitionist Security Council 1983 Resolution concerning Cyprus retains the support of all the Security Council permanent members and partly because although the inter-communal elements of the Cyprus problem are very important, the precedent of partition through an outside military intervention, occupation and imposed demographic change is too dangerous for the international community to accept. Doubtless also Ankara's position in relation to the EU, in a year when the development of its candidacy falls to be considered, will be endangered. In such an eventuality there would be a need to find a "second best". This might well involve the joint use of Varosha by its Greek Cypriot inhabitants and Turkish Cypriots before a settlement, under the control of the UN and EU, as agreed between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders in 1979 and subsequently confirmed in a Security Council Resolution. All parties, including Britain, would have to make concessions in order to achieve a result under which the port in Famagusta and a new airport in the British Sovereign Base Area under UN/EU control would be available to members of both communities; thus assisting all parties but above all keeping open the prospects of a settlement by putting the two communities on a path to convergence. Turkish Cypriots would gain in access to the outside world, Greek Cypriots by the rebuilding of Varosha, Turkey through an improvement of its relationship with the EU.

At this stage however we should rather give priority to a good faith attempt at reaching an overall settlement. Though the signs coming from Ankara are as yet by no means favourable, with considerable speculation that the AKP (Turkish Justice and Development Party) government has, in order to avoid a formal condemnation by the Constitutional Court in the summer of 2008, made a deal under which the military retains veto power over certain issues, including a Cyprus settlement, there can be little doubt that it will become increasingly embarrassing for Ankara not to respond. Seemingly abrupt, but in reality carefully prepared, alterations in Ankara's strategy have been repeated features of the development of the Cyprus problem, with particularly dramatic examples in November 2001, in April 2003 when there was partial lifting of barriers to communication on the island, and, above all, in January 2004. Let us therefore be quietly confident that with a collective, extended and determined act of international will, a just resolution of these stagnant conflicts, for which many people are already working, can indeed be achieved, hopefully indeed within 2009, so as to free all the parties involved for other challenges ahead.

NOTES

1. See: UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (www.unfccc.int)
2. See the "Climate Change Performance Index, 2009" by German Watch and Climate Action Network Europe, Brussels. I should note that most such comparative tables depend to a large extent on the dates chosen to measure trends and often on subjective judgements as to policy.
3. See: WWF International (http://assets.panda.org/living_planet_report_2008)
4. See: "The Day After: Commercial opportunities following a solution to the Cyprus problem" by Fiona Mullen, Ozlem Oguz, Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriakou (PRIO, Paper 1, 2008)
5. See: Adapting to Climate Change in Europe – options for EU action SEC 2007/849
6. See now the European Cultural Heritage Review 2008, issued by Europa Nostra, based in The Hague, under the general title "Heritage, Mirror of Intercultural Europe", in particular the article by Costa Carras "Cultural Heritage and Reconciliation in Cyprus". Website: www.europanostra.org
7. See "The Destruction of a Cultural Heritage and the Kanakaria Mosaics", speech by the late Constantine Leventis (then Cyprus' Ambassador to UNESCO) in the British House of Commons on 8 March 1993 in Issue 38 of the Friends of Cyprus Report.
8. See: "Building Confidence in Peace: Public Opinion and the Cyprus Peace Process" (Erol Kaymak, Alexandros Lordos and Nathalie Tocci), Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels 2008. Also available on line at www.ceps.eu.
Other inter-communal surveys, including the first ever Public Opinion Poll that the UN conducted in Cyprus, in spring 2007, can be downloaded from www.cypruspolls.org. Summaries of these polls have also been published in Issues 48, 49 and 50 of the "Friends of Cyprus" Report, www.friendsofcyprus.org.uk.
9. See "Clio in the Balkans: the Politics of History Education", Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, Thessaloniki, 2002.
10. The four history workbooks to which I refer are the responsibility of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (www.cdsee.org). The general editor of the series is Professor Christina Koulouri, while particular volumes have been edited also by Halil Berkay, Bogdan Murgescu, Mirela-Luminita Murgescu, Valery Kolev, Kresimir Erdelja. The translation into Greek was funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Turkish translation by the UNDP, both in relation to Cyprus.
The organization that brings together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot history teachers is the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.
11. See now International Crisis Group Report: "Turkey and Europe: The Decisive Year Ahead". Istanbul/Brussels 15/12/2008. Website: www.crisisgroup.org
12. UN General Assembly Resolution 3212 (XXIX)/1974, UN Security Council Resolution 365/1974
13. See Exit Poll conducted by Athens MEGA TV, under the supervision of psephologist Ilias Nikolakopoulos, as also "Can the Cyprus Problem be Solved?" and "Rational Agent or Unthinking Follower? A survey based profile analysis of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot referendum voters", both by Alexandros Lordos, available online at www.cypruspolls.org.
14. See "A Guide to Cross-Voting" in Issue 38 of the Friends of Cyprus Report, and the Friends of Cyprus' submission on Governance and Power Sharing to the existing Working Group, summer 2008, Issue 51 of the Friends of Cyprus Report.
15. See: "The UN in Cyprus: An Inter-communal Survey of Public Opinion" by Alexandros Lordos and Erol Kaymak, available online at www.unficyp.org or www.cypruspolls.org