Heading Towards the Defining Moment in Cyprus

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* An extreme draft. Feedback welcomed.

Introduction

Since the landing of the UN peace keeping force – UNFICYP (UN Force in Cyprus) – in Cyprus in 1964 the Cyprus issue continues to be unresolved. Many scholars as well as journalists have already been fed up with talking about the Cyprus problem. It has become a real nuisance for many diplomats and a good number of politicians. Yet, it continues to occupy the busy agenda of the international community. It is a known fact that there has been almost no violence between the two communities of the island - the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots – since 1974, when the "Colonels' junta" in Greece organized a coup which attempted to unite the island with Greece was prevented by a Turkish military operation. Since then the two communities have been living separately in their respective zones – i.e., state territory – separated by the 180 km long UN buffer zone from east to the west of the island, also known as the Green Line. The Greek Cypriots have been living in the southern part of the island under the internationally recognized state – the Republic of Cyprus, while the Turkish Cypriots in the northern part of the island under the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus since 1983 which is recognized by Turkey only.

Since 23 April 2003, several check-points were established through which the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots have been able to cross to the other side by showing their ID cards or passports. In addition, since 1 May 2004, the EU citizens have been free to cross without restraint from one side to the other side of the island by just showing their passports. Since the opening of the checkpoints between the two sides, fortunately there has been no significant inter-communal incident. This shows that, despite the political conflict, there is a level of civility between the two communities. If there is no violence or bloodshed between the two sides in Cyprus since 1974, then why do we need to "solve" the Cyprus problem, let alone talk about it? In other words, why does the Cyprus issue keep on appearing on the world agenda?

The issue appears on the international agenda mainly whenever it is seen as an obstacle to a bigger international issue such as when Turkey was at critical juncture with the EU regarding the start of the accession negotiations during the first half decade of 2000s. Today, Cyprus issue is also in the international agenda simply because it has been blocking or impeding bigger issues beyond Cyprus, such as Turkey's EU accession and a meaningful institutional cooperation between the EU and NATO.

It is precisely these external factors combined with the mood in the current peace negotiations which suggest that the Cyprus problem is nearing an end game or at least a departure from a federation – known as an established UN parameter for a solution - towards alternative solution models.

In this paper, I attempt to compare the *common state* and the *common future* – at least on paper – that the two leaders have been trying to create in the peace negotiations with what the public opinion on both sides view as acceptable and tolerable. Based on the analyses of the problems or rather gaps - both on the leaders level negotiations and the gap between the public opinion of the two sides, I identify the main obstacles in front of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus conflict. Finally, based on the overall analysis I speculate on future scenarios and propose recommendations that can help bring the conflict to a comprehensive settlement.

Negotiations on the Leaders' Level or Never-ending Negotiations

The inter-communal negotiations which started in the 1960s, adopted "federation" as the future solution parameter in the second half of 1970s. Since then, the two sides have been negotiating – on and off – in order

to establish – at least on paper - a federation that will be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects, bi-communal with regard to the constitutional aspects and one that will be based on the political equality of the two communities. Several on and off inter-communal negotiations and the proximity talks conducted under the auspices of the UN during the 1980s led to the UN Secretary General's famous Set of Ideas (1992) – an overall framework agreement. However, the agreement was not adopted by either Turkish Cypriot or Greek Cypriot side.

Towards the mid-1990s, the Greek Cypriot application to the EU for full membership began to draw support from the EU member states, due mainly to the successful policies and maneuvers of the Greek governments in the EU. In spite of strong Turkish and Turkish Cypriot opposition, the EU in 1995 turned a deaf ear to the Turkish Cypriot arguments and decided to open accession negotiations with the Greek Cypriot government – on behalf of the whole island. After that there was practically no peace negotiation until the 1999 EU Helsinki Summit where Turkey was announced a candidate country that changed the dynamics in the Cyprus equation. Here the idea was to solve the Cyprus problem before Cyprus joins the EU so that Turkey's own EU vocation could proceed without Cyprus being a stumbling block before it.   Hence, the two sides in Cyprus were motivated to start the inter-communal talks in 2000 which culminated into the UN Comprehensive Settlement for Cyprus - known also as the "Annan Plan" in 2004.

The Annan Plan was put to simultaneous separate referenda on both sides of the island on 24 April 2004. Though the plan was accepted by 65% of the Turkish Cypriots in the North, it was voted down by 76% - a huge majority – of the Greek Cypriots in the South.   Here, the Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos who advocated the NO vote for the plan believed that the (Greek Cypriot) Republic of Cyprus which become a member of the EU without the Turkish Cypriot "partner" would be in better position to use the EU leverage and get a much better solution for the Greek Cypriots than what the Annan Plan offered. However, that was not the case since the Turkish side refused to budge the pressures, as well as because the EU has been reluctant to play a decisive role in the Cyprus conflict.

During his tenure Papadopoulos was not interested to negotiate while his counterpart, the Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat was eager to engage in negotiations aiming for a comprehensive solution. The presidential election in the Greek Cypriot community in 2008 became a battleground between the Papadopoulos' NO camp and those who threaten that if negotiations are not pursued the island would be permanently divided. It was Demetris Christofias, the leader of the communist AKEL, who was elected. He placed his campaign on the premise that Cyprus is at the brink of a permanent division and that he was the leader to negotiate the reunification of the island with his counterpart Mehmet Ali Talat – who comes from a (once) socialist party.

Talat and Christofias agreed in March 2008 that a number of working groups[1] would be established on the substantive issues of the Cyprus conflict and prepare the ground for full fledged negotiations that would be conducted by the two leaders. While the working groups were preparing the ground the two leaders came together and issued two joint declarations on 23 May and 1 July 2008.

According to the 23 May 2008 joint statement, the two leaders

> reaffirmed their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined by relevant Security Council resolutions. This partnership will have a Federal Government with a single international personality, as well as a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State, which will be of equal status.

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[1] Six working groups were established: (1) Governance and Power Sharing, (2) Property, (3) Territory, (4) Economic Affairs, (5) European Union Affairs and (6) Security and Guarantees.

The two leaders made another joint statement on 1 July 2008 where they agreed in principle that the common state would have single sovereignty and single citizenship which is in line with the previous body of UN work. Since 2008, the two leaders have been negotiating on six dossiers – issues originally taken up by the six working groups. On 1 February 2010 when the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited the island he read a joint statement on behalf of the two leaders:

> It is our *common conviction* that the Cyprus problem has remained unresolved for too long. We are also aware that time is not on the side of settlement. There is an important opportunity now to find a solution to the Cyprus problem which would take into full consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. We are aware that such a settlement is in the interest of all and that it will finally bring peace, stability and prosperity to our *common home* Cyprus.(emphases in italics are authors')[2]

According to the joint declaration dated 1 February 2010, the two leaders are – at least on paper – stating that they were determined to solve the Cyprus problem which in their *common conviction* had lasted too long. While pointing out the need to find a mutually acceptable solution that would take into consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of the two communities, the leaders are already referring to a *common future* for the two communities in their *common home* Cyprus.

From the above analysis, it is clear that there is a desire to create a *common state* and, hence, a *common future* for the Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus at least on the level of the international community – symbolized by the UN who has been hosting the inter-communal negotiations under its mission of good offices since 1968 – as well as, at least on paper, on the level of the two leaderships in Cyprus.[3] The *common state* is described as a federal state that would be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects and bi-zonal with regard to the constitutional aspects. The *common future* that is attached to the *common state* can be roughly described as a future relationship between the two communities where they will be politically equal – that is, one community would not be able to dominate the other or take the other one as a hostage. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots would respect the distinct language, identity and culture of each other in their *common future* that would be in stability, peace, and harmony. If this is the agreed upon *common state* and the *common future* on the political leadership level, then are the two communities ready for this? Here I examine the Cyprus 2015's (2010) survey[4] results in order to understand if the common state and the common future endorsed by the two Cypriot leaderships – at least on paper – coincided with the ones that the two communities have.

Public Opinion Poll Results

According to the Cyprus 2015 poll, large majorities (68% GC, 65% TC) desire that the current negotiations will lead to a comprehensive settlement (Graph 1). However, equally large majorities do not believe the negotiations will lead to results (65% GC, 69% TC). The continuation of the inter-communal negotiations since 1968 – on and off – without a comprehensive solution inevitably led the two sides to lose hope for a solution.

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[2] SG/SM/12732 (http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sgsm12732.doc.htm).

[3] In April 2010, the Turkish Cypriots who were disappointed with the pace and the fate of the peace negotiations elected the hardliner Derviş Eroğlu as their President replacing Mehmet Ali Talat whose flexibility on the negotiations failed to move Christofias to the necessary compromise. Eroğlu, however, continued the negotiations from where Talat left. Since 2008 the leaders of the two sides have met for negotiations more than 100 times, yet without a breakthrough. Hence, today both Christofias and Eroğlu are questioned whether they truly endorse the established UN parameters for a federal solution to the Cyprus problem based on power-sharing between the two communities.
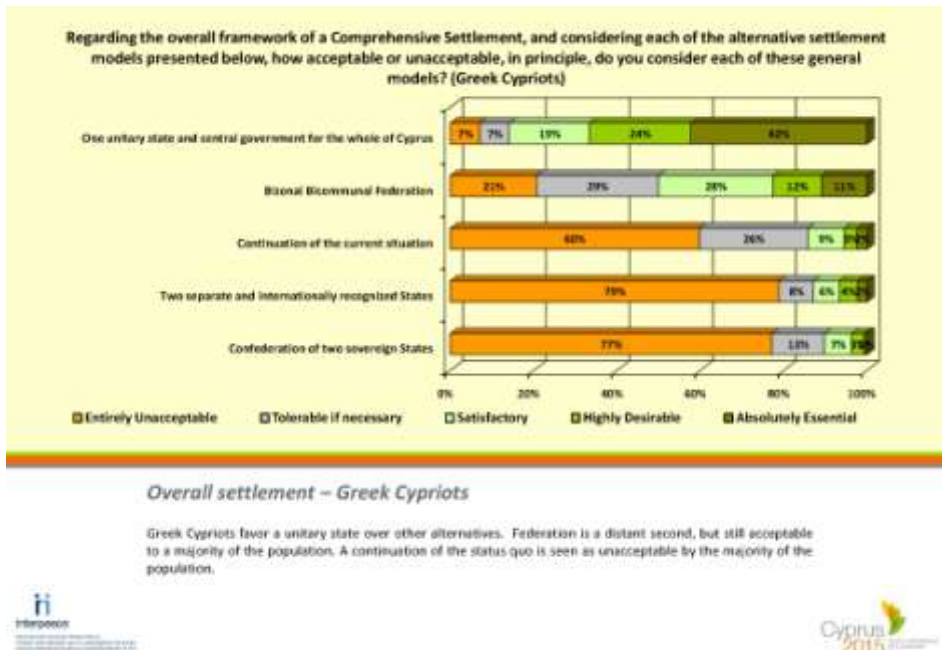
[4] Ahmet Sözen, Alexandros Lordos, Erol Kaymak and Spyros Christou, Next Steps in the Peace Talks: An island-wide study of public opinion in Cyprus, 2010 (www.cyprus2015.org).

Graph 1: Level of Desire and Hope for a Solution

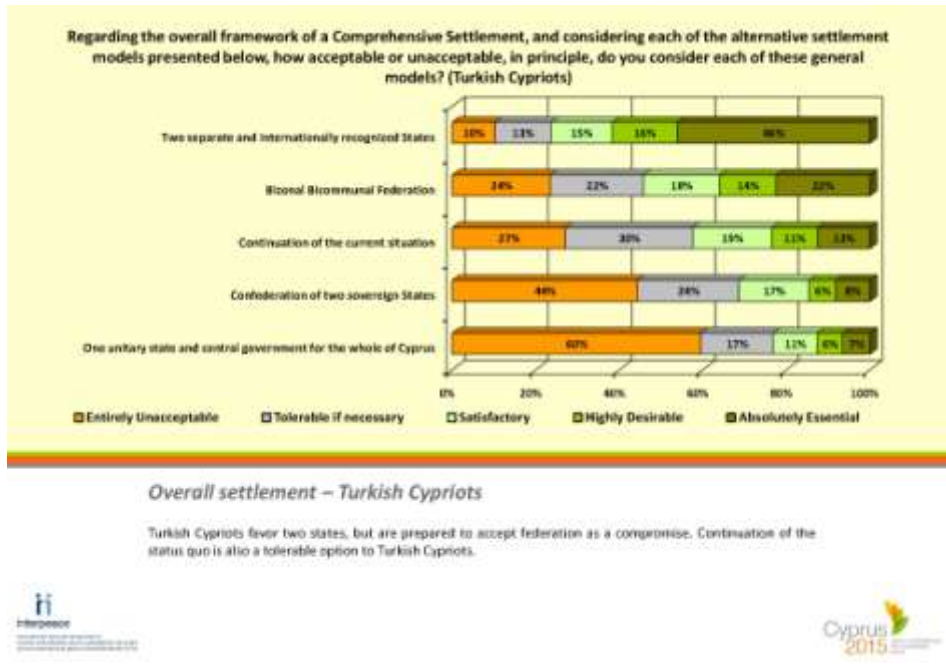Level of desire and hope that the peace process should / will produce results
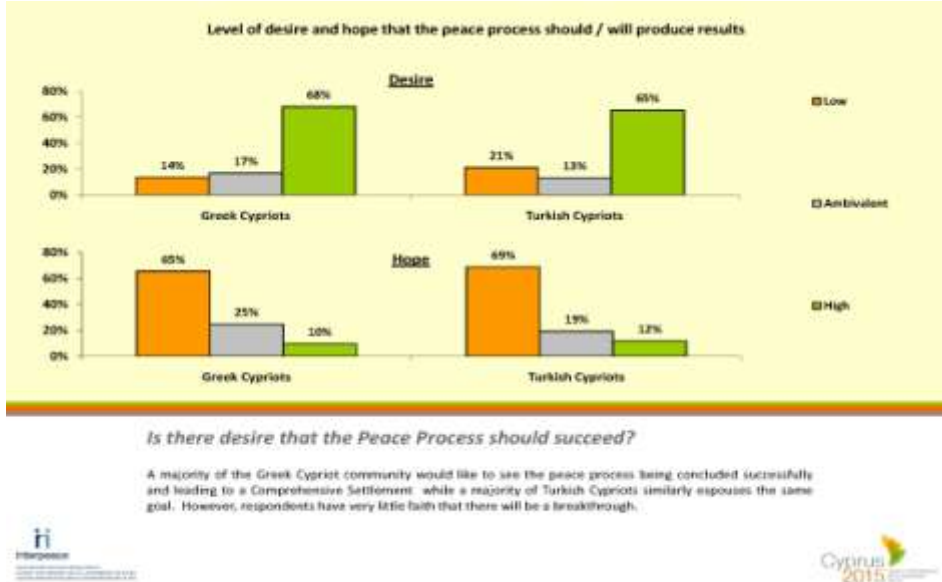
In Graphs 2 and 3, support of the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, respectively, to alternative settlement models are presented. Greek Cypriots favor a unitary state – sort of a Greek Cypriot nation state - over other alternative solution models (93% support). Federation comes as a distant second, but it is still acceptable to a majority of the population (79% support). Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, favor two independent recognized states as a solution (90% support). However, they are prepared to accept federation as a compromise (76% support).

Graph 2: Alternative Settlement Models for Greek Cypriots

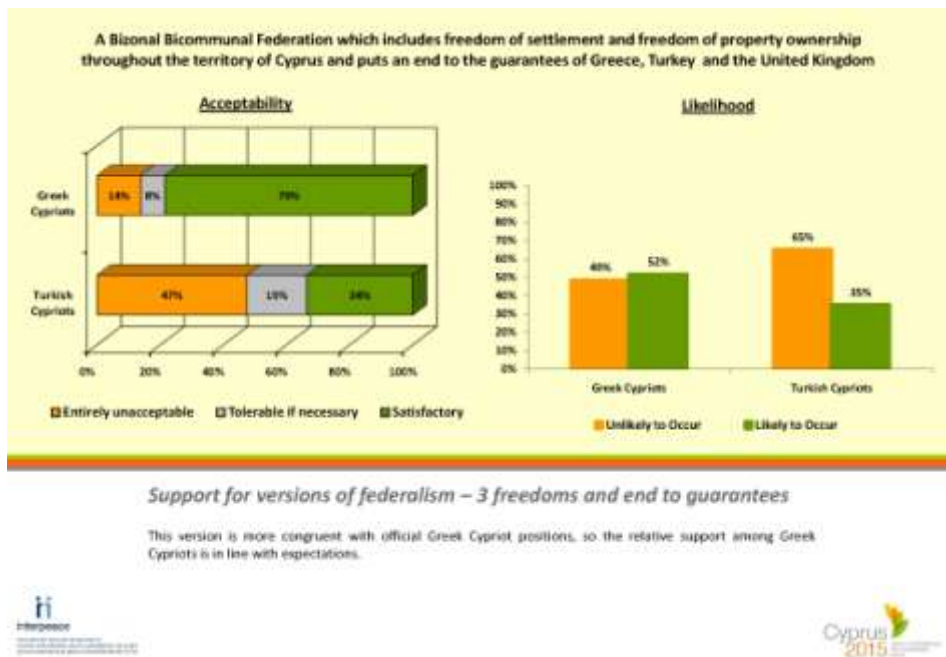
Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these general models? (Greek Cypriots)

Graph 3: Alternative Settlement Models for Turkish Cypriots

Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these general models? (Turkish Cypriots)

Overall settlement – Turkish Cypriots

Turkish Cypriots favor two states, but are prepared to accept federation as a compromise. Continuation of the status quo is also a tolerable option to Turkish Cypriots.
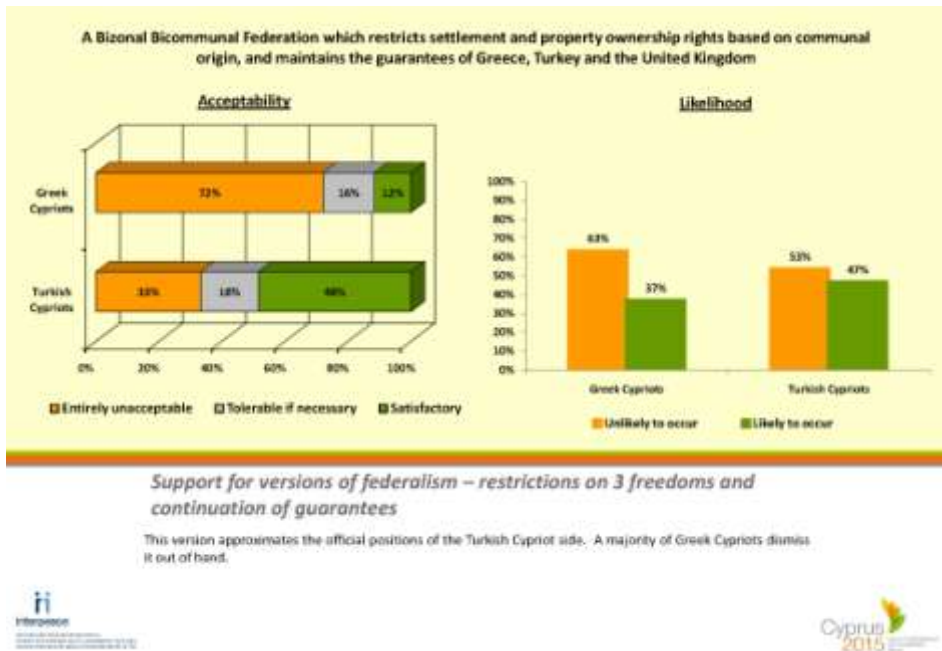
Greek Cypriots strongly support their own preferred model of federation (Graph 4) – that is, a federation without restrictions on settlement and property ownership throughout the whole island and without the 1960 Guarantees by Turkey, Greece and the UK – (87% support). The Greek Cypriots, however, consider the Turkish Cypriot preferred model of federation (Graph 5) – that is, a federation with restrictions on settlement and property ownership, as well as the continuation of the 1960 Guarantee system (28% support) to be even worse than the status quo (37% support). In contrast, Turkish Cypriots strongly support their preferred model of federation (66% support), while consider the Greek Cypriot preferred model of federation (53% support) to be worse than the status quo (64% support).

Graph 4: Greek Cypriot Preferred Bi-zonal, Bi-Communal Federation

A Bizonal Bicommunal Federation which includes freedom of settlement and freedom of property ownership throughout the territory of Cyprus and puts an end to the guarantees of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom

Support for versions of federalism – 3 freedoms and end to guarantees

This version is more congruent with official Greek Cypriot positions, so the relative support among Greek Cypriots is in line with expectations.

Graph 5: Turkish Cypriot Preferred Bi-zonal, Bi-Communal Federation

Support for versions of federalism – restrictions on 3 freedoms and continuation of guarantees

This version approximates the official positions of the Turkish Cypriot side. A majority of Greek Cypriots dismiss it out of hand.
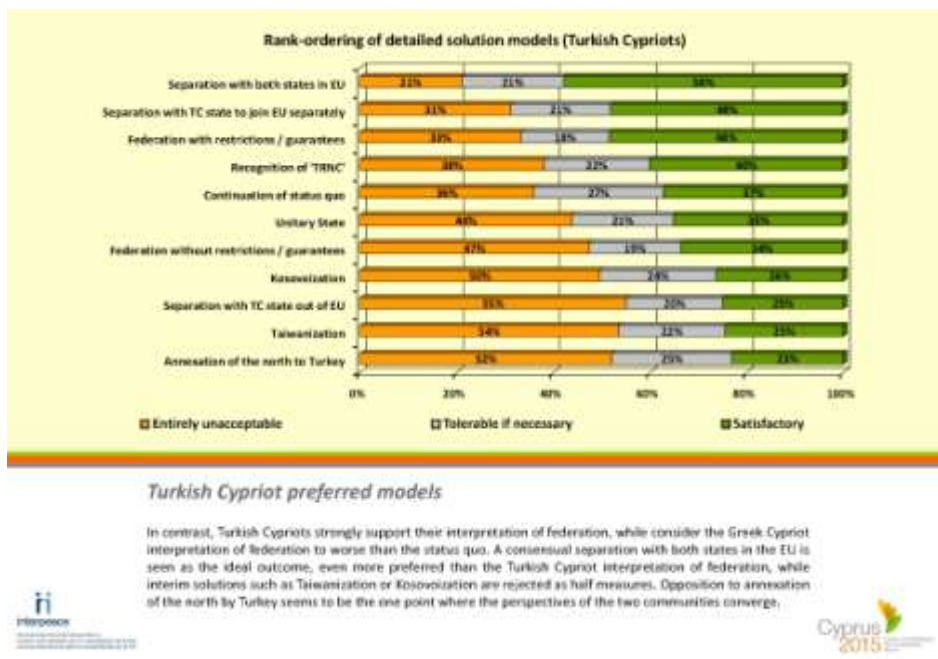
According to the Cyprus 2015 poll, consensual separation scenarios, while unacceptable to a majority of Greek Cypriots, are seen as marginally preferable to the status quo (Graph 6). For Turkish Cypriots, a consensual separation with both states in the EU is seen as the ideal outcome (79% support) as can be seen in Graph 7. Consensual separation for Turkish Cypriots is even more preferred than the Turkish Cypriot preferred model of federation (69% support). However, interim solutions – sort of *half-baked* solutions - such as Taiwanization or Kosovoization are rejected as half measures (Graph 7). Interestingly, opposition to annexation of North Cyprus by Turkey emerges as a converge for both sides in the sense that that option is ranked last in both communities (Graphs 6 and 7).

Graph 6: Rank Ordered Solution Models for Greek Cypriots

Greek Cypriot preferred models

Greek Cypriots strongly support their own interpretation of federation, but consider the Turkish Cypriot interpretation of federation to be even worse than the status quo. A consensual separation, while unacceptable, is seen as marginally preferable to the status quo. The worst possible outcome as perceived by Greek Cypriots, is annexation of the north by Turkey.

Graph 7: Rank Ordered Solution Models for Turkish Cypriots

Rank-ordering of detailed solution models (Turkish Cypriots)

Turkish Cypriot preferred models

In contrast, Turkish Cypriots strongly support their interpretation of federation, while consider the Greek Cypriot interpretation of federation to worse than the status quo. A consensual separation with both states in the EU is seen as the ideal outcome, even more preferred than the Turkish Cypriot interpretation of federation, while interim solutions such as Taiwanization or Kosovoization are rejected as half measures. Opposition to annexation of the north by Turkey seems to be the one point where the perspectives of the two communities converge.

Obstacles in front of a solution: Gap between the public opinion on two sides and the gap between the leaders

According to Cyprus 2015 poll, there are several motivating factors for the two communities to desire a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus conflict. Among these factors, bringing Cyprus forward into a new era of long term sustainable peace (98% GC, 73% TC) and allowing Cyprus to be a normal state fully integrated into the EU without the Cyprus Problem pulling it down (86%, 65%) are important motivating factors for solving the Cyprus problem. Economic factors are important motivating factors for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, such as to create new business and job opportunities (89% GC, 77% TC) and to increase the potential for attracting foreign investment to Cyprus (84% GC, 69% TC). Greek Cypriots are particularly motivated by the prospect of achieving the departure of foreign troops from the island (98%) and achieving the termination of the guarantees and rights of intervention (96%). Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, are not keen to see the departure of foreign troops from the island (31%) and the termination of guarantees and rights of intervention (25%). For Greek Cypriots allowing refugees to return to their homes is essential (99%) and recovering the control of towns and villages lost in 1963 / 1974 (98%) is quite important. For Turkish Cypriots, end to their international isolation (76%) and enjoying the benefits of being EU citizens (74%) are significant factors to want a solution. However, there are very serious obstacles – constraining factors – in front of the solution in Cyprus.

A factor for both communities not wanting to solve the Cyprus problem is the perception that the other side would never accept the actual compromises and concessions that are needed for a fair and workable settlement (84% GC, 70% TC) and the perception that the other side would not honor the agreement and therefore implementation of the settlement would fail (82% GC, 68% TC). A political system based on power-sharing between the two communities is not seen desirable by either side (58% GC, 54% TC). There is a perception that through a settlement the other side might de facto end up controlling all of Cyprus (87% GC, 59% TC). Greek Cypriots fear that a solution might lead to a dysfunctional system of administration (63%). Whether real or imagined, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots express concern that through renewed violence between the two communities might be created after a settlement (69% GC, 56% TC).

Turkish Cypriots believe that too much time has passed with the two communities being apart and it is not possible for the two communities to live mixed again (53%). Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, are concerned that their community might end up carrying the burden of the cost of the solution and subsidize the other community (59%). Meanwhile Turkish Cypriots are more concerned that the cost of solving the property issue in a solution might be too high (52%). A vast majority of Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, would be discouraged in case the solution plan deviates from the implementation of human rights, European principles and European values (95%) or in case the solution plan benefits the interests of Turkey over the interests of Cypriots (96%). Last but not the least, according to the Cyprus 2015 poll, both communities are constrained in supporting a solution in case the solution plan does not create conditions of true political equality between the two communities (71% GC, 71% TC), though what "political equality" means for each side is quite vague.

Although the leaders of the two sides have agreed – at least on paper - on establishing a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, known as the established UN parameters for a solution in Cyprus since late 1970s, this has not yet been possible. A federal solution – sort of a win-win in a *mutual compromise* - has been mostly the second choice for both sides in contrast to their respective *temptation to win unilaterally*.[5] Winning unilaterally for Turkish Cypriots means having their own recognized independent state and solving the Cyprus problem through two recognized states in Cyprus. For Greek Cypriots, winning unilaterally means solving the Cyprus problem by establishing a Greek Cypriot unitary state for the whole island where the Turkish Cypriots will be a minority. It is quite clear that neither the stalemate has hurt both sides to the extent that they decide to give up on their respective maximalist positions – first preference – and endorse their second best option – that is a federal solution, nor the federal solution is seen as providing enough rewards to move away from their temptation to win unilaterally. This is a vicious circle that constantly feeds the gap between the two leaderships as well as the gap between the public opinion of the two sides.

The strategy of the Greek Cypriot leadership in the peace negotiations has been to spread the negotiations in time – by refusing a time-framework or a calendar for the peace negotiations, during which as an EU member state it can use the EU as leverage to put pressure on Turkey – an acceding county for EU membership - for concessions in Cyprus. In other words, the Greek Cypriot side tries to get concessions from Turkey in Cyprus, such as Turkey's opening its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels or giving up territory (e.g., closed area of Varosha) to Greek Cypriots by tying these to Turkey's EU accession criteria. Turkey, on the other hand, does not want to give concessions before a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem or before lifting of the isolations on the Turkish Cypriots on travel, education, commerce, sports and so forth, which the UN and the EU promised in 2004 after the Turkish Cypriots supported the UN peace plan, but failed to deliver. Instead, Turkey faces a very tough accession process – if it could ever be called an accession process when more than a dozen chapters are suspended. This is partly because Turkey refuses to open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels before isolations on Turkish Cypriots are lifted. The other side of the medallion is the fact that countries like France, Austria and Germany who do not want to see Turkey as a member of the EU precisely use Cyprus problem as an excuse to block or at least slow down Turkey's accession process.

Turkish side – that is Turkish Cypriots and Turkey together, on the other hand, cannot afford to say no to a federal solution based on the established UN parameters – even though it is not its first choice. This is clearly observed today with the hardliner Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu continuing the peace negotiations where pro-solution leader Talat left off in 2010 when he lost the presidential election to Eroğlu and negotiating a federal solution on the basis of established UN parameters.

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[5] "Mutual compromise" and "temptation to win (unilaterally)" are game theoretic terminologies. According to Sözen (2010), the Cyprus negotiations can be seen as iterated game theory. For more information about how Cyprus conflict and negotiations are treated in game theoretical framework see: Lumsden (1973), Sözen (1999), Yeşilada and Hewitt (1998) and Yeşiland and Sözen (2002).

Since 2002 election when AKP came to the government, it has been following a new foreign policy orientation where a paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy has been experienced.[6] This new policy vis a vis Cyprus means Turkey's continuous support for a solution in Cyprus based on established UN parameters: i.e., a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on the political equality of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides.

For AKP the moral superiority that Turkey, together with the Turkish Cypriot side gained in the international community by actively supporting the UN comprehensive peace plan in the 2004 referenda is invaluable. This was due to Turkey's moving away from supporting the status quo on Cyprus and instead being the party that actively supports a solution based on the established UN parameters. Here, Erdoğan's policies of 'no solution is not the solution (in Cyprus),' (always) one-step-ahead (of the Greek/Cypriot side),' and 'win-win solution' became the tactical guidelines of Turkey's new Cyprus strategy that nicely and comfortably complemented Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's 'zero-problem-with-neighbors' principle.

However, in solving any conflict it takes – at least - two to tango. In other words, both the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot sides have to have the necessary desire and the motivation to solve the Cyprus problem. Nonetheless, it is clear that Turkish government's immediate tactic as part of its bigger strategy in Cyprus is to push the Greek Cypriot side to a solution based on established UN parameters. If that fails, the AKP government wants to see the Greek Cypriot side being exposed in the international community as the side who walked away from the negotiation table – in which case alternative solution models can be legitimately put on the table.

Future Prospects

Today, the irresolution of the Cyprus conflict causes serious obstacles to Turkey-EU accession negotiations, as well as to a meaningful EU-NATO institutional communication and cooperation. Such external factors, in addition to somewhat weak domestic factors, are increasing the need to resolve the Cyprus conflict. Given the above analysis, what are the future scenarios?

Scenario 1: Though the current peace negotiations have been very slow and they lack enthusiasm as well as a time-table that the Greek Cypriot side staunchly refuses, walking away from the negotiation table is extremely costly. That is why neither the Turkish Cypriot side nor the Greek Cypriot side would want to leave the negotiation table. Hence, there is a possibility that the current peace negotiations might end up with an agreement based on the established UN parameters – that is, a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on the political equality of the two communities. This is what I call "Belgium-*ization*" of Cyprus. Similar to Belgium, the two communities sometimes have problems establishing a common government and so forth, but manage their relations on the common denominators. In such a scenario, either this federation continues to exist a long time – sort of a united Cyprus under the EU umbrella (membership), or after a certain time the two communities might decide that maintaining a common government is too costly and too difficult in which case they might opt out for two states – what I call the Czechoslovakia-*ization* of Cyprus. In this case, the advantage is that the two sides divorce from one another without bloodshed and continue a civilized relationship under the EU umbrella similar to Czech Republic and Slovak Republic.

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6 For a detailed analysis of the paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy under the AKP government, see Ahmet Sözen "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges" in Barry Rubin and Birol Yesilada (eds.) Islamization of Turkey Under the AKP Rule (Routledge 2010).

Scenario 2: In case the Greek Cypriot side leaves the negotiation table and it is certified by the international community, then "federation" cease to be the only solution model championed by the international community (i.e., the UN and influential actors of world politics). In such a scenario, the links between North Cyprus and the rest of the world increases – sort of normalizes – that leads to what I call Taiwan-*ization* and Kosovo-*ization* of North Cyprus. Taiwan-*ization* means, intensification of relations between North Cyprus with many states without formal recognition. Kosovo-*ization*, on the other hand, means the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) will be recognized by a number of states, though just like Kosovo it will not be a member of the UN. This is because, some countries, like Russia as its foreign minister stated clearly "will not recognize the TRNC" in the foreseeable future.

Scenario 3: There is a possibility – though very improbable - that the Turkish side will leave the current peace negotiations. In such a case, the Turkey-EU relations will severely strained and probably come to a freeze. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots continue to be isolated from the rest of the world. Under this - what I call the "dark scenario", where Turkey moves away from the EU, one can expect a real shift in Turkey's axis. In other words, the outcome becomes Middle Eastern-*ization* and Islamist-*ization* of Turkey.

Among the three scenarios, the last one is the least probable one – but still a possibility that needs to be prevented. Because, such a scenario is against the interest of all the involved parties – Turkey, two sides in Cyprus, the EU and the international community at large. A Turkey away from the EU will have less motivation to undertake further reforms in the area of democracy; it will have less motivation to solve the Cyprus problem; and it will fail to become a model of "consensus of civilizations" in the post-September 11 era, as well as a democratic model for the "post-Tunisia" Middle Eastern states which would have been a big loss for the international community at large. Hence, it is the responsibility of the visionary European leaders to stop sending mixed messages to Turkey and work on bringing Turkey closer to the EU by judging Turkey through objective accession criteria, rather than through culturally and religiously biased lenses.

Conclusion and Recommendations for the UN

It is clear that neither the *unitary state* nor the *two state solution* are likely outcomes of a negotiated solution based on the current negotiations. The current negotiations are carried out on the basis of the parameters that the two sides agreed upon, such as 1977-1979 High level Agreements and the Joint Declarations of the Two Leaders dated 23 May and 1 July 2008. According to these agreed upon parameters, the solution of the Cyprus problem will be a *federation* with single sovereignty and citizenship which will be bi-zonal with regard to territorial aspects, bi-communal with regard to constitutional aspects, as well as comprising of two constituent states of equal status - a Greek Cypriot State and a Turkish Cypriot State. This is a likely outcome if the two sides could be kept in the cooperative mode based on tit-for-tat strategy that they have been engaged since 2008 (Sözen 2010).

However, there is always the possibility of one side *defecting* – leaving the negotiating table or saying NO to an agreement in the referenda! Does that mean that the two sides return to the status quo? Then the question is, *is the current status quo sustainable?*

The international community – through many UN Security Council resolutions and reports of the Secretary Generals made it clear that the status quo is not acceptable. However, was not that the case in 2004, too, when the UN Comprehensive Settlement was voted down by the majority of the Greek Cypriots in the referenda? Then, if that's the case, what needs to be done to get the two negotiating sides to end up in the *federation* (Belgium-*ization*) scenario?

According to Sözen (2010) a skilful mediator can induce the players towards cooperation, by means of utilizing binding agreements and/or side payments. The mediator can get the conflicting sides to value the future differently. For example, a skilled mediator can increase the value of the discount factor for an iterated game, so that the conflicting parties are motivated not to quit the negotiation process.   Hence, in case of the Cyprus negotiations, the UN – having the *mission of good offices* – can do several things that can keep the two sides in a cooperating tit-for-tat strategy:

1. High level UN officials should make frequent statements encouraging the two leaders; reminding them of their responsibilities and encouraging them to take bolder actions. Moreover, these statements should make it clear that the international community has very high expectations on the two leaders.

2. There should be a clear understanding that the price of leaving the negotiation table is very high (that is, if punishment for defection is big, then cooperation becomes the choice). The UN should make occasional statements that it has been investing a lot on the Cyprus conflict and that there are other conflict-zones which need UN attention and resources.

3. The UN should find ways of creating and offering large side-payments to the two negotiating sides (the UN can try to change the payoffs of the game, so that through large side payments the payoff structure of the game can be altered so that it is no longer a Prisoner's Dilemma game). For example, a "donors conference" where funds can be raised to be used in helping settle down the property issues in the post-solution Cyprus can be a good incentive for the two sides to make mutual compromises.

4. The UN should commission research to investigate into win-win sets in several sectors in case of the *federation* scenario. Such research results should be disseminated to the general public in a simple and comprehensible mode.

5. The UN should try to induce the two sides to make binding agreements that should pave the way to a comprehensive solution. In other words, the UN should try to keep the two sides committed to the areas of convergence reached so far, so that even in case of defection, they will not start from the start.

6. The UN should remind the two sides that in case the negotiations fail, it will make public the areas of convergence between the two sides as well as the positions of the two sides on the areas of clash based on notes taken so far – so that it would be clear as to which side stepped out of the agreed upon parameters.

7. It should be made clear that rejecting an UN-endorsed comprehensive settlement has a big cost for the side who rejects it. In case a comprehensive settlement emerges to be put to simultaneous, separate referenda – similar to 2004 – then, the UN should remind the two communities that voting no to a plan that was agreed by two leaders will have serious consequences that make the continuation of the status quo impossible.

8. The UN should remind the two sides that the UNFICYP cannot stay indefinitely on the island since there are other conflict-torn regions which are in urgent need of peace-keeping troops. It should be made clear that the failure of the current negotiations would probably lead to the withdrawal of the UNFICYP to be used elsewhere where it is needed more.

9. The UN should set out a realistic time-table for the end of the negotiations. There should be a few months between the end of the negotiations and the future referenda when the leaders go out into the public and campaign for the peace plan. A realistic time for the future referenda is some time

before Cyprus' EU presidency in 2012. Hence, the end of 2011 should be set as the deadline to reach a comprehensive settlement.

10. In conjunction with the plan to end the negotiations at the end of 2011, the UN should upgrade its role in Cyprus – ASAP - from mere "mission of good offices" to a level where it can put bridging proposals on areas where the two sides could not reach convergence.

11. The UN should get the the two sides to engage in give-and-take among all the dossiers of the peace negotiations, except Security and Guarantees – which will be dealt with at the end with the presence of the three Guarantor powers.

12. In conjunction with the plan to end the negotiations at the end of 2011, the UN should secure the approval of both sides that in case there are points of disagreement in a comprehensive solution plan – say a month before the end of the year – the UN will fill in the gaps. In other words, the UN will arbitrate.

13. In any case, the UN – in a parallel path in consultation with the EU Commission, should work on a package deal that will include the following sticking issues:

    i.   Opening of the fenced area of Varosha, starting its rehabilitation under the UN supervision,

    ii.   EU's direct trade for Turkish Cypriots through the port of Famagusta,

    iii.   Starting direct flight for Turkish Cypriots (Ercan could be "Nicosia Airport terminal B for the usage of both communities), and

    iv.   Turkey's opening its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels.

In fact, actualization of such a package – that is accompanied/followed by a symbolic number of troop withdrawal by Turkey - would be a very important key to unlock many seemingly deadlocked issues.

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