

# Towards an Endgame for the Cyprus Issue? Cyprus in the Aftermath of the Helsinki European Council

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## RÉSUMÉ

Chypre est au premier plan de la politique internationale depuis un demi siècle. Bien que le cours des événements n'ait pas été positif dans l'ensemble pour le côté grec, les relations de Chypre avec l'Union européenne ont eu un succès plus considérable. Ces relations ont atteint un nouveau sommet en décembre 1999 à la réunion du Conseil européen d'Helsinki. Cet article analyse la signification potentielle, les problèmes possibles et les récents développements reliés aux décisions d'Helsinki.

Il a été soutenu que pour la première fois depuis 1974, le temps serait du côté grec. On peut attribuer cette situation au fait qu'en n'insistant pas à la solution préalable de son problème politique Helsinki garantit d'une façon l'adhésion éventuelle de Chypre à l'Union européenne.

## ABSTRACT

Cyprus has been on the forefront of international politics for almost half a century. Although overall the course of developments has not been positive for the Greek side, Cyprus' relations with the European Union have been considerably more successful. These relations reached a new plateau at the December 1999 Helsinki meeting of the European Council. This article analyzes the potential significance, possible problems and recent developments linked to the Helsinki decisions.

It is argued that for the first time since 1974, time is on the Greek side. This situation due is to the fact that Helsinki almost guarantees Cyprus' eventual EU membership by not insisting on the prior solution of its political problem.

*The European extension of the Cyprus problem is undoubtedly the most complex and intricate, not least because it supplies the only possible ground for a solution.*

Christopher Hitchens.<sup>1</sup>

## A. Cyprus and the European Union

Cyprus has been on the forefront of international relations for almost half a century, often occupying the attention and efforts of

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some of the world's most powerful states and politicians.<sup>2</sup> Overall, the course of developments has not been positive for the Greek side.<sup>3</sup> Originally pursuing *enosis* (union) with Greece, independence had to be accepted, followed by the occupation of 37% of the island by Turkish forces. One area though, in which Greek actions have been met with considerable success, is that of Cyprus' relations with the European Union. These relations reached a new plateau at the December 1999 Helsinki meeting of the European Council, and this may prove the catalyst for the resolution of the Cyprus Issue. It will be the purpose of this essay to analyze the potential significance, possible problems and recent developments that are linked to the Helsinki decisions.

The official relations between the then European Economic Community (EEC) and Cyprus began in December 1972, with the signing of an Association Agreement. Given the traumatic and momentous events that took place in 1974, its full implementation was considerably delayed. The second stage of the Association Agreement was eventually signed in October 1987, despite the still unresolved political problem of the island.<sup>4</sup> This was correctly viewed by the Cyprus government as a positive development, and in a sense it constituted a precursor of the Helsinki conclusions.

The application for accession was submitted on 4 July 1990, and represented a turning point in the Cyprus Issue. For at least three decades, the Greek side had pursued a strategy that had primarily relied upon the United Nations (UN). The application to join the Community introduced a major new actor, as well as a source of hope for the eventual ending of the island's political problem.

The responses of Turkey and of the self-styled 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' were entirely negative, and have essentially remained unaltered until today.<sup>5</sup> Both emphasized that membership was not possible prior to Turkey's own Community accession and to the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash even went a step further, suggesting that his breakaway republic would be annexed by Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

The election of Glafkos Clerides as President of Cyprus on 14 February 1993 proved a positive development for his country's relations with the EU.<sup>7</sup> Clerides viewed the prospect of Union membership as a potential catalyst: the process of accession would wield pressure on the Turkish side, allow for a partial alternative to the seemingly endless UN-sponsored negotiations, and provide Cyprus with new possibilities, challenges, and guarantees.<sup>8</sup>

However, Clerides soon met with disappointment. On 30 June 1993, the Commission submitted its opinion (*avis*) concerning Cyprus' application for membership.<sup>9</sup> Using diplomatic and careful language, it concluded that:

"The Community considers Cyprus as eligible for membership and that *as soon as the prospect of a settlement is surer*, the Community is ready to start the process with Cyprus that should eventually lead to its accession".<sup>10</sup>

In other words, the Commission offered a 'mixed' recommendation, acknowledging the possibility of accession, but linking such an event to the solution of the island's political situation. In doing so, it made evident the fundamental problem that was to be overcome at Helsinki.

The conclusions of the Council of Ministers of 6 March 1995 revitalized Cyprus' application process, "reaffirm[ing] the suitability of Cyprus for accession to the European Union and confirm[ing] the European Union's will to incorporate Cyprus in the next stage of its enlargement."<sup>11</sup> This major breakthrough followed Greece's decision not to veto the signing of a Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the EU. Thus, a principle that was also applied at Helsinki seems to have been informally established: Greek cooperation and positive contribution on Turkey's relations with the EU was 'rewarded' with progress in the accession process of Cyprus.

## B. The Helsinki Conclusions

The meeting of the European Council took place at Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999, and reached a series of conclusions on various issues.<sup>12</sup> Of particular importance were the decisions that directly affected Greece and Turkey.<sup>13</sup> More specifically, Greece abandoned its long-standing veto, allowing Turkey to become a candidate for membership in the EU. A controversial and risky move, it has the potential of altering the dynamics of Greek-Turkish relations by 'Europeanizing' them. In the words of Greece's Foreign Minister George Papandreou:

"With the Helsinki decision, Turkey enters into a framework of supervision and obligations and will be audited by the European Union. It is the European Union itself that from now on requests meaningful and in-depth progress with Turkey. It is also the European Union that is bound to supervise and audit this course."<sup>14</sup>

As a 'reward' to Greece for agreeing to lift the veto, it was also decided that if the dispute over the Aegean Sea Continental Shelf was not resolved through negotiations by 2004, Turkey would accept arbitration by the International Court of Justice (it is widely believed by Greeks that their country's legal case on this issue is particularly strong).<sup>15</sup>

An ever more significant 'reward' though, concerned Cyprus' relationship with the European Union. Thus, The European Council note[d] with satisfaction the substantive work undertaken and progress which has been achieved in accession negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

(a) The European Council welcomes the launch of the talks aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem on 3 December in New York and expresses its strong support for the UN Secretary-General's efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

(b) The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. *If no set-*

*tlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors.*<sup>16</sup>

These decisions were received favorably by the governments in Athens and Nicosia. Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis declared his 'complete satisfaction.'<sup>17</sup> In a revealing statement, he also asserted the primacy of the Greek side's European approach: "*The central point of our strategy is the accession process of Cyprus. I leave aside the solving of the Cyprus Problem. We must ensure Cyprus' accession. The path of solving the Cyprus Problem is parallel.*"<sup>18</sup>

Cyprus' Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides clearly welcomed the Helsinki conclusions,<sup>19</sup> while President Clerides expressed his satisfaction.<sup>20</sup> He added that:

"Despite the fact that [the Helsinki Summit] provides that the solution of the Cyprus problem is not a precondition to the accession of Cyprus to the EU, I wish to emphasize that I will spare no effort to find an agreed, just, viable and workable solution compatible with the *acquis communautaire* and the code of human rights. The invitation to the Turkish Cypriot community to participate in the delegation negotiating Cyprus accession to the EU is still open."<sup>21</sup>

On the other side, Turkey's Prime Minister expressed his intense disapproval:

"We consider that it is extremely objectionable to create the impression that the accession process of the Greek Cypriot administration to the EU...would be pursued even if the talks on the Cyprus issue do not yield a result. Turkey's position on this matter is well-known. This position will remain unchanged<sup>22</sup>...the fact that there are two separate states on the island cannot be changed in any way...we can't accept any preconditions on Cyprus and Greece."<sup>23</sup>

Denktash, condemned and attacked what had taken place at Helsinki:

“Without a comprehensive settlement, we find it wrong, unjust and unacceptable to keep the EU membership door open to the Greek Cypriot side under the name of Cyprus.

We continue to strongly oppose, on the basis of law and international agreement, the process conducted by the EU with the Greek Cypriot side, under the title of “Cyprus,” which is one of the two parties in the island, in contravention of all norms of justice and realities.”<sup>24</sup>

The explanation for these furious reactions requires a discussion of the significance and implications of the Helsinki conclusions, to which we will turn next.

### **C. The Significance of the Helsinki Conclusions**

The decisions reached at Helsinki have significant consequences for both the Greek and Turkish sides, as well as the EU. For Cyprus, Helsinki represents a major breakthrough, since by disassociating its accession to the EU with the solution of its political problem, the island is almost guaranteed eventual membership. Helsinki also reduces — but does not eliminate — Turkey’s military pressure on the island. It now becomes more difficult for any serious military action to be undertaken by the EU-candidate Turkey. Also, threats that the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus might be annexed lose potency and credibility. It is not in the interest of Turkey to annex, since such a course of action would be tantamount to an abandonment of its efforts to join the European Union.

Furthermore, it should be clarified that despite any rhetorical statements, Helsinki nullifies in practice Turkey’s previous position that Cyprus could not join the Union prior to its own accession. Finally, by making membership prospects probable in the foreseeable future, Helsinki should provide the impetus and justification for significant and ultimately beneficial economic reforms. It therefore seems that “the [immediate] priority will be to reduce fiscal deficit through raising revenues, but the question of reducing growth in spending also has to be addressed.”<sup>25</sup>

For Greece, Helsinki effectively alters its strategy over Cyprus, since this issue is now Europeanized to a considerable degree. Greece can thus now rely upon the EU to evaluate, condemn and possibly deter military actions in the island. Turkish moves considered unacceptable to the EU may prove detrimental to the country's accession.

At another level, it should be explained that the Helsinki conclusions reflect once again the close interrelation between Greece's prevailing aspirations and beliefs, and the way it deals with Cyprus. Greece now "seeks to escape from being a Balkan country dependent on America, and to become a respected member of the [EU]."<sup>26</sup> Hence, the irredentism and nationalism of previous decades has now been replaced by a Cyprus strategy that is more European, more low key, and less confrontational.

Concerning the Turkish side, the consequences of Helsinki regarding Cyprus are negative overall. Although Turkey's official position on the island's fate has remained unaltered, the conclusions of the European Council have fatally wounded its Cyprus strategy. According to Professor Thanos Veremis:

"Turkey considered Cyprus as conquered booty since 1974, and did not intend to allow any novelty that would put in doubt her control, not only over the occupied north but also in the independent south. The Turks were disposed to be engaged in the endless pantomime of bi-communal talks on the basis of the Makarios-Denktaş agreements for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, as long as nothing threatened the inertia of occupation. Their long-term goal had been the consolidation of the regime that existed on the ground, until they eventually succeeded in getting the Turkish-Cypriot [self-declared republic] recognized. Cyprus' application for EU membership [especially after Helsinki] radically altered these circumstances."<sup>27</sup>

Given the fact that Turkey also desires EU membership, it becomes extremely difficult to effectively attempt to delay or cancel Cyprus' eventual accession.

For Denktaş, Helsinki means that "it will be more difficult...to justify his boycott of accession talks being conducted by the Greek

Cypriots on behalf of the whole island.”<sup>28</sup> Even more importantly, the breakaway republic is now faced with the real possibility of Cyprus joining the EU, while itself remains isolated and non-recognized. Confronted with an EU-member Cyprus, the Turkish-Cypriots would have to compromise their demands and positions, in order to reach an agreement with the Greek-Cypriot side — for at that point only such an agreement with Cyprus would allow them to join the Union.

Also, if only Cyprus joins, according to Turkish Cypriot jurist Necati Munir Ertekim

“...EU rules would...mean that the Turkish Cypriots would lose [through the European Court] any protection that might negotiate against being swamped in Northern Cyprus by Greek Cypriots.”<sup>29</sup>

Finally, as regards the Union, Helsinki means that the EU will expand to include a country located in a crucial and strategically important part of the East Mediterranean, close to Middle Eastern oil routes and supply centers.<sup>30</sup> The security implications may prove of significance, especially if some of the more ambitious plans for the creation of an effective Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) materialize. It should be noted that Cyprus’ Ministry of Defense is currently drafting plans on how to provide extensive assistance in the implementation of CFSP decisions, and particularly to the planned rapid-reaction force that is to consist of some 50-60,000 military personnel.<sup>31</sup>

Also, the EU’s prestige will be greatly enhanced in the areas of diplomacy and foreign policy, if Cyprus’ accession becomes a catalyst for resolving the island’s political problem. Should this be the case, the Union will have succeeded on an issue which has defeated the better efforts of the United Nations, as well as those of numerous politicians.

Based on all of the above, it becomes evident that Helsinki constitutes a positive development for Cyprus and the EU, a considerable challenge and opportunity for Greece, and a loss of influence and means of persuasion for the Turkish side as regards Cyprus. Thanks to Helsinki, it can be concluded that for perhaps the first time since 1974, time is probably on the Greek side.



## D. Problematic Aspects of the Helsinki Conclusions

Casting some doubt upon the favorable implications of Helsinki for Cyprus, is the fact that the conclusions actually state that prior to the decision endorsing accession, “the Council will take account of all relevant factors.” An indication of how the Turkish side might interpret this phrase is given by a paper on this topic produced by Andrew Mango and posted on Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site.<sup>32</sup> The relevant factors are considered to the existing situation on the island, the high probability that ethnic conflicts lead to the seemingly permanent fragmentation of previously multi-ethnic states, and that Turkish-Cypriots simply do not support, at least for now, a federal system of government for Cyprus. Further relevant factors are the non-existence of a Cypriot nation, and that no bloodshed has taken place in Cyprus since 1974.<sup>33</sup> The end result of this analysis is a plea for the substantial delay in Cyprus’ accession, and in effect the negation of the Helsinki conclusions. However, Mango’s arguments lack balance, objectivity and relevance to such a degree that it is highly unlikely that they can produce their intended results.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the so-called relevant factors clause is intentionally ambiguous and could thus be interpreted at the appropriate moment in a variety of ways. For example, it has been argued that it could be construed to mean that:

“If the Greek-Cypriot side is considered not to have been sufficiently cooperative on the political problem of the island... then the disassociation of the political issue from accession, might be considered not in effect.”<sup>34</sup>

If approached realistically and in good-will, the ‘relevant factors’ will probably refer to the situation existing on the island prior to accession (level of tensions, possibility of hostilities, etc.), as well as to the quality and intensity of the efforts that will have taken place by the parties concerned.<sup>35</sup> In this sense, it could perhaps delay Cyprus’ accession, but only if the Greek side is overwhelmingly viewed as responsible for blocking and sabotaging all attempts of solving the Cyprus Problem. Given the recent diplomatic record and Greece’s ability to block the

accession of other states to the EU, such a scenario, although certainly not impossible, must be judged somewhat unlikely.

Another recent negative development for Cyprus is related to the 16 December 1999 resolution that was submitted and subsequently approved by the Dutch Parliament. It noted that:

“In Cyprus peace between the Greek and Turkish communities is maintained only because of the presence of the UN’s peacekeeping force.

[The Parliament thus] believes that it is undesirable for the stability of the EU the accession of a country as a member state where a peace-keeping force is stationed and continues its activities.”<sup>36</sup>

This resolution does not amount to an annulment of the Helsinki conclusions. However, it does suggest ways in which Cyprus’ accession can be complicated and perhaps even delayed.

Finally, the post-Helsinki celebrations concerning Cyprus’ eventual accession must be tempered by the fact that the Union’s enlargement is being postponed. It seems increasingly likely that new members will not be accepted until 2005 or 2006, allowing for a sufficiently large time-frame for negotiations, and possibly various other developments that could adversely affect the resolution of the Cyprus Issue.<sup>37</sup>

## **E. After Helsinki**

The Helsinki conclusions acknowledged the series of ‘proximity’ talks that began on 4 December 1999 under the auspices of the UN between Clerides and Denktash.<sup>38</sup> They represented a very serious effort on behalf of the UN.<sup>39</sup> However, because Helsinki was probably overall positive for Cyprus, (which as previously explained has time on its side now), there ensued a rise in Turkish aggressive actions, rhetoric and intransigence. The result has been the gradual undermining and eventual suspension of the indirect talks.

On the eve of the of the third round that was to begin on 5 July in Geneva, Turkish troops moved some 300 meters into the Strovilia village near Famagusta, setting a check-point and occupying the place.<sup>40</sup> The Strovilia area represents a gray zone between the self-declared ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ and the sovereign territory belonging to the nearby British military base. Its eight inhabitants enjoyed a special status, not being under the direct and total jurisdiction of the government of Cyprus. However, the Turkish military move changed this situation, and perhaps more importantly, upset the territorial *status quo* for the first time since 1974.<sup>41</sup>

The Presidency of the EU (held by France) condemned the Strovilia episode, judging it “a bad measure at a bad time” and insisting that “at Strovilia the *status quo* must return.”<sup>42</sup> UN Secretary General Kofi Annan incorporated a similar message in a letter that he eventually sent to the Security Council.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly enough, however, the reaction of the Greek government was rather measured and restrained, despite the clear and unambiguous Turkish provocation.<sup>44</sup> This reaction stemmed from a decision that the raising of tensions and rhetoric would undermine the ‘proximity’ talks and ultimately support Denktash’s argument that it was impossible for the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to co-exist peacefully. Furthermore, Cyprus’ economy and accession prospects would also be damaged by an extreme Greek reaction.<sup>45</sup>

Given the Strovilia-related reactions, some have suggested that Athens did not remain fully committed to helping Nicosia. Characteristically, the former President of Cyprus and currently Speaker of Parliament, Spyros Kyprianou, claimed in an interview that Cyprus was being sacrificed by Greece in the pursuit of better relations with Turkey, under American guidance.<sup>46</sup> However, such concerns seem to ultimately be misplaced. What experienced politicians like Kyprianou are probably sensing, is that Greece has Europeanized its relations with Turkey, as well as to an extent its strategy for the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. Greece is not abandoning Cyprus, but also trying to help it through the EU — something that requires an appreciation of the existence of certain constraints to actions and rhetoric that were not necessarily present during previous years, when a more ‘independent’ and unilateral strategy was being pursued.

After the Strovilia episode, an article by Turkey's Foreign Minister Ismail Cem in the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* added insult to injury, since it was perceived by the Greeks as further (albeit rhetorical) provocation. Its tone was unfriendly, and the references to the existence of various minorities in Greece came as an unwelcome surprise.<sup>47</sup> Concerning the substance of Cem's remarks on Cyprus, they revealed that Turkey's position remained firm and unaltered: in favor of a loose confederation and opposed to Cyprus' accession. However, despite the harsh language, this ought not to have come as a complete surprise to the Greek side, given the Turkish post-Helsinki statements that were previously presented.

Meanwhile, the third round of 'proximity' talks ended disappointingly for Cyprus. The Greek-Cypriots concluded that the UN Secretary-General's representative, Alvaro de Soto, was rather unsympathetic to their concerns and willing to discuss a series of issues and possibilities deemed totally unacceptable. Most importantly, it appears that de Soto also entertained the possibility of discussing a solution on the basis of confederation — something that is anathema to the Government of Cyprus.<sup>48</sup> Of course, it must be stressed that adding this option on the agenda does not mean that is being officially endorsed by the UN. Furthermore, there is no guarantee of any final agreement on confederation. Nevertheless, this development was indicative of the fact that the negotiations were not going particularly well for Clerides.

The fourth round of 'proximity' talks began on 12 September 2000. Cyprus' President felt that his negotiating power was being undermined by Simitis' public insistence that negotiations ought to be pursued by Cyprus regardless of whether many of Denktash's positions were deemed unacceptable.<sup>49</sup> A further blow came from Kofi Annan who stated the following:

“...I believe that the time has come to move forward. From the [proximity] talks I have noticed that both parties share the common desire to succeed through negotiations, *in which each party represents its own side and no other, as politically equal*, [in achieving] a compre-

hensive settlement that should enshrine a new partnership on which to build a better future in peace, security and prosperity on a united island. In this spirit...I reached the conclusion that *the equal status of the parties in a united Cyprus* must and should be recognized explicitly in the comprehensive settlement, which will embody the results of the detailed negotiations required to translate this concept into clear and practical provisions.”<sup>50</sup>

This was considered to be perilously close to the UN recognizing the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ or espousing a position in favour of an eventual settlement on the basis of confederation. Particularly alarming was also the fact that Annan made no reference to any UN Security Council resolutions. A furious Clerides threatened to abstain from further talks, and Greek diplomacy was energized in an attempt to secure a favourable clarification of the General-Secretary’s statement. Eventually, some verbal explanations were offered by Annan during a long private meeting with Clerides, and were judged to be sufficient.<sup>51</sup> However the mood had soured and the round ended in failure with some (temporary) recriminations amongst the Greek side.<sup>52</sup>

The fifth round of ‘proximity’ talks demonstrated the hardening of the Turkish side on the Cyprus Issue. More specifically, with the full backing of Turkey, Denktash decided to walk out, declaring that the whole process was merely a “waste of time.”<sup>53</sup> The Turkish-Cypriot leader claimed that there should have been no agenda and no references to UN Security Council resolutions, and condemned the “UN’s attitude [that] accepted the Greek-Cypriot government as Cyprus’ only legal government.”<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps though, the Turkish resolve to abandon the UN-sponsored negotiations represented (at least to some extent), a response to the ‘Turkish Accession Partnership’ document. It was prepared by the EU Commission and linked Turkey’s accession with the resolution of the Cyprus Issue by recommending that Turkey:

Support strongly in the context of the political dialogue the UN Secretary General’s efforts to bring the process of finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem to a successful conclusion.<sup>55</sup>

The Turkish government was displeased with this statement, and declared that “Turkey...has always kept the Cyprus issue separate from EU candidacy [sic].”<sup>56</sup> Denktash’s subsequent stance at the UN probably provided an apt illustration of this attitude.

Furthermore, it emerged in late November 2000 that the Turkish government was discussing the scenario of integrating the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ as the country’s 82<sup>nd</sup> province. Apparently the planning efforts (presented at a Cabinet meeting) were at an advanced stage and involved the coordination of several Ministries.<sup>57</sup> However, it must be noted that only 8% of Turkish-Cypriots appear to be in favor of integration with Turkey.<sup>58</sup>

It should also be stressed that preparing for a specific possibility is not tantamount to its adoption or implementation. Nevertheless, in conjunction with Denktash’s position (he has so-far resisted pressure to attend the sixth round of ‘proximity’ talks), it can be concluded that the Turkish side has pursued a tough diplomatic stance, probably in an attempt to maximize concessions in most fronts prior to Cyprus’ likely EU accession.

Even if the ‘proximity’ talks do not resume, some form of further negotiations will eventually take place. It can also be expected that immense pressure will be exercised on the Cypriot government to make substantial concessions. However, a ‘cornered’ Cyprus on the eve of accession does not necessarily have to accept a diplomatically humiliating situation. It might decide to accept membership, end attempts for a negotiated settlement, and forego its claims over the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,’ while probably also withholding its recognition. In such a scenario, Cyprus accepts permanent partition, enters the EU, and abandons the breakaway republic with areas like Strovilia under its control, but with no prospects of accession, politically and economically weak. Of course, such a scenario is not very probable, and unlike the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, does not represent the best possible solution for the Greek-Cypriots. Nevertheless, it can be contemplated and perhaps implemented, because of the near-certain membership decided at Helsinki.

Helsinki does not represent the end of the Cyprus Issue. As accession nears, pressure will continue to increase by the Turkish side in order to get the best possible deal prior to Cyprus joining the Union. The possible conclusion of the UN-sponsored 'proximity' talks, Greek-Turkish relations and Turkey's relationship with the EU, as well as domestic politics in all of the states involved, will certainly influence developments. The fact remains, though, that the Helsinki conclusions have permanently altered the dynamics of the diplomacy surrounding Cyprus. Accession may indeed prove the catalyst for a solution, even if this takes place literally at the 'eleventh hour.' In this sense, Helsinki probably represents the beginning of the end of the Cyprus Issue.

#### NOTES

1. Hitchens Christopher, **Hostage to History: Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger**, (Verso, London, 1998), p. x.
2. For some of the more recent and important studies that deal in considerable detail with the history and diplomatic record of the Cyprus Issue, see Hatzivasiliou Evanthis, **Britain and the International Status of Cyprus, 1955-1958**, (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1997); Holland Robert, **Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus 1954-1959**, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998); O'Malley Brendan and Craig Ian, **The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion**, (I. B. Tauris, London 1999); Rizas Sotiris, **Union, Division, Independence: The United States and Great Britain in Search of a Solution to the Cyprus Problem 1963-1967**, (Vivliorama, Athens, 2000) [in Greek]; and Stefanidis Yiannis, **Isle of Discord: Nationalism, Imperialism and the Making of the Cyprus Problem**, (C. Hurst and Co, London, 1999). It should also be mentioned that the final volume of Henry Kissinger's memoirs includes his previously promised and much anticipated account on Cyprus. See Kissinger Henry, *Years of Renewal*, (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1999), pp. 192-239.
3. See Couloumbis Theodoros, **The Cyprus Issue: Mistakes, Lessons and Prospects**, (I. Sideris, Athens, 1996) [in Greek].

4. See Theophanous Andreas, “The European Union and the Cyprus Issue,” in Yalouridis Christos and Tsakonas Petros eds., **Greece and Turkey After the End of the Cold War**, (I. Sideris, Athens, 1999), pp. 396-7 [in Greek].

5. The so-called ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ was unilaterally declared in 1983. It has only been recognized by North Korea and Turkey, the latter having some 30,000 troops stationed there.

6. See Hitchens, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

7. Clerides was re-elected in 1998.

8. See Theophanous Andreas, **Cyprus in the European Union and the New International Environment: Challenges and Prospects**, (I. Sideris, Athens, 2000), p. 169 [in Greek]. A connection between accession to the EU and a solution to the Cyprus Issue was not always evident. For example, it is noteworthy that in the seminal study of Greek-Turkish relations by Ambassador Theodoropoulos, the chapter on Cyprus includes no reference to the then EEC. See Theodoropoulos Vyron, **The Turks and We**, (Fittrakis, Athens, 1988), pp. 251-65, [in Greek].

9. The Commission’s opinion was endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 4 October 1993.

10. InternetSite: [http://www.pio.gov.cy/docs/euro/european\\_union/commission/commission19930630.htm](http://www.pio.gov.cy/docs/euro/european_union/commission/commission19930630.htm); emphasis added.

11. For the relevant paragraphs of the conclusion of the Council of Ministers meeting of 6 March 1995 see Internet Site: [http://www.pio.gov.cy/docs/euro/european\\_union/european\\_council/concl19950306.htm](http://www.pio.gov.cy/docs/euro/european_union/european_council/concl19950306.htm).

12. For the entire text of the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council, see Internet Site: <http://www.europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/index.html>

13. The most significant, thoughtful and in-depth analyses and interpretations of the Helsinki conclusions as viewed by key politicians, academics and decision-makers in Greece, can be found in Couloumbis Theodore and Dokos Thanos, eds., **Review of Defense and Foreign Policy 2000: Greek-Turkish Relations 1999-2000**,



(ELIAMEP and Paratiritis, Athens, 2000) [in Greek]. See also CNN.com, “Turkey Hesitates But Accepts EU Membership,” Internet Site: <http://www.urfa.net/cnn/>; **Financial Times**, “Dramatic Shift In Relations Between Old Enemies,” Internet Site: <http://www.ft.com/ftsurveys/country/scb43e.htm>; **Time**, “The State of the Union,” Internet Site: <http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/1999/1220/helsinki.html>.

14. Papandreou George, “Greek-Turkish Relations: From Confrontation to Cooperation and the Building of the Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” in Couloumbis and Dokos, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

15. See Theodoropoulos Vyron, “We Need Reason To Be Master,” in Couloumbis and Dokos, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

16. “Conclusions of the Presidency, Helsinki 10 and 11 December 1999”; emphasis added. See Internet Site: <http://www.europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/index.html>

17. See Internet Site <http://www.greekembassy.org/press/bulletin/dec99.html>. On the same site it is reported that US President Bill Clinton ‘sent a letter of congratulations to Mr. Simitis, expressing his “respect and appreciation” for the Greek Prime Minister’s “responsible” position.’ It should also be added that many of the opposition parties in Greece were more skeptical in their reactions to the Helsinki conclusions. See **To Vima**, 12 December 1999 for complete coverage on this point.

18. **To Vima**, 12 December 1999; emphasis added.

19. See Internet Site <http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/can/199/9912.can.html>.

20. See **Ta Nea**, 13 December 1999.

21. See Internet Site <http://www.greekembassy.org/press/bulletin/dec99.html>.

22. Internet Site: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/add/candidate.htm>. This is an unofficial translation.

23. Quoted by CNN.com. See Internet Site: <http://www.urfa.net/cnn>.

24. Denktash's statement was made on 11 December 1999. For the full text, see Internet Site: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/add/helsinki.html>
25. **Financial Times**, "Reform Process Speeded Up For Accession," Internet Site: <http://www.ft.com/fteuro/qb32e.htm>.
26. Hitchens, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
27. **I Kathimerine**, 20 August 2000. On the Makarios-Denktash agreements, see Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
28. **Financial Times**, *Survey: Greece 1999*. Internet Site: <http://www.ft.com/ftsurveys/country/scb43e.html>
29. Kyle Keith, **Cyprus: In Search of Peace**, (Minority Rights Group International, London, 1997), p. 31.
30. For a sophisticated, in-depth and well argued analysis of how perceptions of Cyprus' military and geo-strategic importance influenced and often determined its fate, see O'Malley and Craig, *op. cit.*
31. See **I Kathimerine**, 13 August 2000.
32. "Cyprus and the European Union: The Relevant Factors" paper presented by Andrew Mango at the conference on "New Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy in the year 2000 and Beyond" organized by Turkish Foreign Policy Institute, 24-25 March 2000.' See Internet Site: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/add/amango.htm>. Andrew Mango is the author of a recent (and rather well received) biography of Atatürk (**Ataturk**, John Murray, London, 1999). It is to be hoped though that this study is more objective than Mango's web paper.
33. As regards the last assertion, Mango probably has in mind the kind of massive deaths that were the result of the 1974 Turkish invasion. For an account of relatively recent events leading to bloodshed in Cyprus, admittedly at a small but still unjustifiable scale, see Keith Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 32 and O'Malley and Craig, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-1.
34. Valinakis Yannis, "The Decisions at Helsinki and EU-Turkish Relations," in Couloumbis and Dokos., *op. cit.*, p. 100. This essay probably represents the closest and most thoughtful reading of the Helsinki conclusions. Although critical and skeptical, it is not unfair or alarmist.

35. On this point, see **To Vima**, 19 December 1999 and a regional report on Cyprus by the Western Policy Center that can be found at the Internet Site: <http://www.westernpolicy.org/publications/reports/2000/a/cyprus.asp>.

36. See Theofanous Andreas, **Cyprus in the European Union and the New International Environment: Challenges and Prospects**, (I. Sideris, Athens, 2000), p. 27 fn. 1 [in Greek]. The wording of the resolution is taken from a document distributed by the Embassy of Cyprus at the Hague. See also **Eleftheros Typos**, 11 March 2000 for an analysis of the annual Cypriot report on the Cyprus Issue that reveals comments made by the Foreign Ministers of Holland and Italy in line with the resolution of the Dutch Parliament but prior to Helsinki.

37. See **The Economist**, 10 June 2000 and **The Economist**, 15 July 2000.

38. The two leaders never meet face-to-face, but actually have separate meetings with the UN's General Secretary Kofi Annan, as well as other UN officials. The first round of 'proximity' talks took place in New York during 3-14 December 1999, and the second in Geneva during 31 January to 8 February 2000.

39. See **Emerisia**, 26 June 2000.

40. See **The Economist**, 15 July 2000 and **Eleftherotypia**, 3 July 2000.

41. Some Greek newspapers decided to call the Strovilia military action Attila-3, linking it with the two Turkish invasions of the summer of 1974. For example, see **Eleftherotypia**, 7 July 2000. For some perceptive comments on the naming of the 1974 operations, see Hitchens, *op. cit.*, pp.119-20.

42. **Eleftherotypia**, 12 July 2000.

43. See **Eleftherotypia**, 22 July 2000. An earlier letter was more 'neutral' stating plainly what had taken place. See **Eleftherotypia**, 12 July 2000.

44. See **I Kathimerine**, 9 July 2000.

- 45 On this point, see **Eleftherotypia**, 11 July 2000.
46. For the text of the interview, see **Eleftherotypia**, 21 August 2000.
47. See **To Vima**, 6 August 1999. For the official response of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see Internet Site: [http://www.papandreou.gr/August2000/ypex\\_ana\\_cem\\_02082000.html](http://www.papandreou.gr/August2000/ypex_ana_cem_02082000.html).
48. See **Eleftherotypia**, 7 August 2000.
49. See **Eleftherotypia**, 5 September 2000.
50. Cited in **Ta Nea**, 14 September 2000; emphasis added.
51. See **To Vima**, 16 September 2000.
52. See **To Vima** 22 September 2000, **Eleftherotypia**, 23 September 2000, In.gr, 25 September 2000 at Internet Site: <http://www.in.gr/innews/narticle.asp?nid=33634> and **Eleftherotypia**, 29 September 2000.
53. **Eleftherotypia**, 25 November 2000.
54. Ibid. See also In.gr, 16 February 2001 at Internet Site: <http://www.in.gr/news/print.asp?nid=55171>.
55. EU Commission, "Turkish Accession Partnership", 8 November 2000. It can be found at Internet site: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/EU/explanatory.htm>.
56. See Internet Site: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adc/accesionpartnership.htm>.
57. See **Flash.gr**, 3 January 2001 at Internet Site: [http://greece.flash.gr/politics/2001/1/3/3774id/print\\_version.htm](http://greece.flash.gr/politics/2001/1/3/3774id/print_version.htm).
58. See **The Economist**, 24 February 2001. In the same article it is revealed that 90% of Turkish-Cypriots favor joining the EU.