

# **INTERVIEW WITH GLAFKOS CLERIDES \***

## **THE CYPRUS PROBLEM**

### **TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION**

**This interview was conducted by Stephanos Constantinides \*\***

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean with an area of 9,251 square kilometers. It has a maximum length of 240 km from east to west and a maximum width of 100 km from north to south. It lies in the north-eastern corner of the East Mediterranean basin, at the meeting point of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa - a fact which has considerably enhanced the island's strategic importance and development.

The island has a population of approximately 750,000 of which 80% are Greeks, 18% are Turks and 2% are other minorities (Maronites, Armenians and others).

Cyprus appeared for the first time in the history of civilization in the 6th millennium B.C. during the Neolithic Period. Greek language and culture were introduced to the island in the 13th century B.C. by the Achaean Greeks who arrived and settled in Cyprus. Both Greek language and culture have been preserved to this day.

After being part of the kingdom of Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, a French dynasty was established in Cyprus during the Crusades (the Lusignans 1192-1489). Then the island was ruled by the Republic of Venice and, in 1571, it was conquered by the Turks. The Turkish period lasted until 1878 when the island was given to Great Britain.

Cyprus participated in the Greek War of Independence, during which a large number of Cypriots fought and fell on the Greek mainland. The question of the incorporation of the island in the Greek State (created in 1830) was raised soon after 1830. Since then the Cyprus people have continued to demand the union of Cyprus to Greece.

In 1955, after the long but unsuccessful demands of Cypriots to unite with Greece by peaceful means, the Cypriots took up arms against the British colonial power. In 1960 the island won its independence and was proclaimed a Republic.

The 1960 Constitution of the Cyprus Republic proved unworkable in many of its provisions (e.g. separate votes based on ethnic affiliation of members of

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Parliament and right of veto of each ethnic group) and this made impossible its smooth implementation.<sup>1</sup> In 1963 the president of the Cyprus Republic, Archbishop Makarios, proposed some amendments (e.g. a unified state vote) to facilitate the functioning of the State. The Turkish Government and the Turkish Cypriot leadership opposed these propositions. In December 1963 the Turkish reaction led to an open rebellion against the State. The Greek side accused Turkey of using the proposals for amending the Constitution as an excuse for putting into effect their long prepared plan for the partition of Cyprus. The Cyprus Government brought the matter before the UN Security Council and in March 1964 a UN Peace-Keeping Force (UNICEF) was sent to the island.

In July-August 1974 a coup was staged in Cyprus by the Greek military Junta for the overthrow of President Makarios. Turkey used this pretext to launch an invasion with a full-fledged army against Cyprus. Turkish troops occupied 37% of the island's northern territory.

The Turkish invasion and occupation have been condemned by international bodies, such as the UN General Assembly, the European Parliament, the Non-aligned Movement and the Council of Europe.

Several rounds of intercommunal talks between the island's two main communities (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots) have not led to any solution. The Greek side considers that this situation is due to the Turkish side's intransigence and continuing effort to partition and occupation of the whole island by means of maintaining an occupation army of 36,000 soldiers and by colonizing the occupied part of Cyprus with more than 90,000 settlers from Anatolia.

Furthermore on the 15th of November 1983 the Turkish side declared a separate "state" under the name of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". This move was condemned by the International Community and the UN Security Council adopted a resolution which deplores the declaration of the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus, considers the declaration as legally invalid and calls for its withdrawal. The same resolution calls upon all states not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus. No country, with the exception of Turkey, has recognized the so called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

A round of talks this year, held under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, Boutros-Ghali has not led to any progress. President Glafkos Clerides hopes that the start of negotiations - maybe in 1995 - on Cyprus entry into the European Union will force Turkey to be more reasonable in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem <sup>2</sup>.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali dated September 7th 1994, President Clerides reaffirms his conviction that the failure to make progress was due to the lack of political will both by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leader-

ship. He also makes clear that both sides must accept that the basis of any negotiations is the one stipulated by paragraph 2 of UN Security Council resolution 939 (29 July 1994), i.e. a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty and international personality and a single citizenship.

**Stephanos Constantinides** - Mr President, twenty years after the invasion of Cyprus and in spite of the continuing negotiations and painful concessions made by the Greek side since then, why has there been no solution to the Cyprus problem?

**Glafkos Clerides** - The reason why there has not been any progress towards the solution of the Cyprus problem is stated very clearly in the last report of the UN Secretary General to the Security Council. He states in his report that the Security Council and the Secretary General have tried repeatedly to produce progress but they all have failed because there is a lack of political will on the part of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership. He then goes on to analyse and states that whether we discuss the substance of the problem or measures for building confidence it's unlikely that we would produce results because of the lack of political will on the part of the Turkish-Cypriot side to negotiate a solution to the Cyprus problem. These are the words of the UN Secretary General and I think his diagnosis is perfectly correct. That is why the Security Council, in its last resolution, has included two very important paragraphs. Paragraph 2 of the Resolution, resolution number 939, states that the solution of the Cyprus problem must be based on one sovereignty, one international legal personality, one citizenship and the equal political status of the two communities within the context of a bizonal federation. We accept that.

The Turkish side not only doesn't accept it but Mr. Denktash<sup>3</sup> got his parliament to get the provision that unless the sovereignty of his so called state is recognized, he is not willing to negotiate<sup>4</sup>. In other words, he wants recognition that the occupied land is a separate sovereign state. And this is where we can make no progress towards the solution of the Cyprus problem.

The same resolution, requests that the UN Secretary General make a far-reaching and intense examination of the Cyprus problem and consult and recommend that the Security Council act with the guarantor powers, with the two leaders<sup>5</sup>, to find new and effective ways of promoting a solution, clearly indicating that present negotiations are not effective because of the lack of Turkish political will. And you cannot have negotiations with one side negotiating and the other lacking political will. In this respect, one must also examine the terrible negative influence of the large presence of Turkish forces in Cyprus. It is that influence which creates the lack of political will and to counter that fact, I had offered, in writing, to the UN Secretary General and to the other side to dis-

mantle the National Guard, to hand over all its weapons to the UN peacekeeping force, not to purchase anymore arms and accept military inspection by the UN. The money I would save by not maintaining a National Guard and not purchasing arms would be put in a UN account to be used for projects beneficial to both communities, with the understanding that the Turkish forces would be withdrawn, to pay the total cost of a larger peacekeeping force, provided that the Turkish-Cypriots hand over their weapons as well. In other words, we undertake to pay the total cost for an increase in the UN peacekeeping force, and to disarm ourselves, provided the Turkish forces evacuate the Island. Turkey refuses.

**S.C.-** How do you define now the position of the Republic of Cyprus in the light of this lack of political will on the part of the Turkish side, particularly on the part of Ankara to find a just solution of the Cyprus problem ?

**G.C.-** We will, of course, write to the UN Secretary General and we will inform him that we are ready to go into direct negotiations with the Turkish-Cypriot side in the presence of representatives of the Secretary General, provided the Turkish-Cypriot side accepts Paragraph 2 of the last resolution which provides one sovereignty, one international personality, one citizenship etc...etc..<sup>6</sup> We then will wait for the Turkish-Cypriot reaction. If they do not respond, then we shall have to consider a number of ways of promoting a solution. These different ways will be discussed with the Greek Government and the National Council <sup>7</sup>.

**S.C.-** Mr. Papoulias, the Greek Foreign Minister said that the Cyprus problem should be considered on a different basis from the one being followed in the last twenty years. As this phrase "to consider the problem on a new basis " has recently been used frequently, would you like, Mr. President, to explain how you understand it ?

**G.C.-** When we say to consider the problem on a new or different basis, one has to consider two aspects : the first one refers to the high-level, Makarios-Denktaş and Kyprianou-Denktaş, <sup>8</sup> agreements and the second one to the invasion and occupation by Turkey. If to consider the Cyprus problem on a new basis means to abandon the high-level agreements I believe that it will be a serious mistake of a great political dimension. That's what the Turkish side is doing and we don't have to do the same but on the contrary, oppose this intransigence because if we mimic them, the UN General Secretary will deny the mandate of good offices he received in order to achieve a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus.

Concerning the second aspect, that is to say we don't negotiate as far as the occupation continues, it will be contrary to the UN resolutions because these resolutions call, of course, for the withdrawal of the occupation forces from Cyprus, but also for negotiations between the representatives of the two com-

munities. You can't accept only a part of the resolution and ignore the rest.

But if to consider the Cyprus problem on a new basis means that because of the lack of political will from the Turkish side we have to find new ways to achieve a settlement, then I agree. That's what the last Security Council resolution asks the UN General Secretary to do: to find more effective ways for the solution of the Cyprus problem.

S.C.- Don't you think that the negotiations on constitutional arrangements all these years distract from the essence of the Cyprus question? International public opinion is left with the idea that the problem is just a conflict between two communities, not an invasion and occupation of 37% of an independent state, the Republic of Cyprus, from Turkey.

G.C.- I don't think that this will happen in the new approach that we propose. According to this approach we will begin first of all with the question, does the other side accept the principle that it will be one sovereign state, one international legal personality for this state, one citizenship, etc.

If the answer is yes, then we will discuss the rest. Then there is the question of the Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus. When will they leave the island? What will be the future guarantees? What will the structure of the state be and how will human rights be preserved? And only then will we discuss the constitutional aspect of the problem.

S.C.- Mr. President, I can conclude from what you said that you are suggesting a new policy.

G.C.- Yes, we comply with the last resolution of the Security Council that gives the mandate to the UN General Secretary to look for effective ways leading to a settlement. Up to now things were not clear. We were asking for a solution based on a federation and Turks were asking for something else - two sovereign states - and we were discussing to find out what it is - between the two.

We propose to begin from where the UN Security Council put down in its last resolution. If the other side accepts it, then we will not discuss the constitutional aspect of the problem, but the question of the presence of the Turkish troops in Cyprus and the guarantees for the future of the Republic will be addressed. We don't accept Turkish, British or Greek guarantees for the independence of Cyprus (9). We have to find other kinds of guarantees, for example guarantees from the permanent members of the UN Security Council or from the European Union.

S.C.- What you want Mr. President, is to find security mechanisms to safeguard the independence of the Cyprus State.

G.C.- Of course. We have to find also mechanisms to safeguard human rights. And only after we find solutions to all these aspects of the problem, only then

will it be appropriate to discuss the constitutional framework. This is the only effective way to discuss the Cyprus question positively.

S.C.- I would like to ask you, Mr. President, if you are not promoting Mr Denktash - when you, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, discuss the Cyprus problem with him ?

G.C.- Well, it is clear from the UN Security Council resolutions that I discuss with Mr. Denktash not in my capacity of President of the Republic of Cyprus, but as the leader of the Greek community. And so Mr. Denktash represents the Turkish community and not its pseudo-state as he sometimes claims. The only state that the international community recognizes is the Republic of Cyprus.

S.C.- There is another problem, Mr. President. For twenty years now the Greek Cypriot side has negotiated with Mr. Denktash, but it is well known that behind him is Turkey. How can one clarify and show that Ankara is responsible for blocking the negotiations ?

G.C.- We don't have any other choice than to follow the guidelines of the UN Security Council resolutions that provide for negotiations between the two communities. We prefer of course, to discuss the Cyprus problem in an international conference with the participation of the UN Security Council permanent members. In such a conference Greece, Turkey, the Republic of Cyprus and representatives of the two communities will also be present. But unfortunately, Turkey refuses to accept such a conference.

I think that Ankara was always behind Denktash. But now, as Turkey supports the position adopted by the pseudo-state against a federal solution, it becomes clear to the international community that Turkey can't continue to play the role of the "good guy" leaving its puppet, Denktash, to play the role of the "bad boy".

S.C.- Mr. President, what about the relations of the Republic of Cyprus with Greece, and especially the joint defense doctrine ?

G.C.- I think that there has never been such close cooperation in the past between the two countries. The joint defense doctrine is absolutely necessary since Turkey has 37 thousand soldiers on occupied Cyprus. We will continue military cooperation with Greece as long as the Turkish troops are in Cyprus. Greece has the responsibility to defend Cyprus according to the treaty of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and the treaty of guarantee of it's independence (Greece is one of the guarantor powers of Cyprus).

S.C.- Mr. President I would like to have your thoughts about the European orientation of Cyprus. Do you think that Cyprus will soon be a member of the European Union ?

G.C.- I believe that Cyprus will ensure its security inside the European Community, that is why we try to accelerate the process of entry into the

European Union. We are a small country, too far from Greece and too near to Turkey. If we enter the Community, this will facilitate the solution of the Cyprus problem. Why? Because if Turkey has any expansionist visions on Cyprus, and it has, it will be forced to abandon them from the moment we will be part of Europe.

And after abandoning these expansionist plans, Turkey will seek a solution to the Cyprus problem. It will not be in its interest to occupy 37% of the territory of Cyprus and to miss the benefits of the European Union.

S.C.- Which are the potential perspectives on becoming a member of the European Union ?

G.C.- I believe that from an economic point of view we have no problem. They told us that we fulfill the conditions for entrance to the European Union. Of course the European Union prefers to find a solution to the Cyprus question before the island's entry. Nevertheless, there are serious indications that if there is no progress to such a solution as a result of Turkish intransigence, we will still have the chance to enter the Union. And I hope the negotiations on Cyprus' entry into the European Union will begin early 1995. But I don't believe we will be accepted before the Union resolves its own institutional problems. Because of its enlargement the problem of how they will function is put into question. For example, will Europe continue to function by consensus? Will every country continue to have a right of veto?

S.C.- Mr. President, do you believe that the key to a solution of the Cyprus problem is founded in Europe and not in the USA ?

G.C.- No, the key to an immediate solution is still founded in the USA. If the USA exercises the necessary pressure on Turkey this will open the road for a solution. But as the USA has other interests, the support of Europe will be useful because from the moment we will begin the negotiations for entrance into the Union, Turkey will understand that it will be difficult to continue its expansionist plans on Cyprus.

We are pleased that the European Union appointed, for the first time, an observer to the negotiations on the Cyprus problem. The observer's mandate is not only to inform the European Union on the progress of these negotiations, but also to inform them if the discussed solution will be in accordance with the Union's fundamental principles. And this is very important for us.

S.C.- So, you consider that the role of Europe is important in the effort to find a solution to the Cyprus question.

G.C.- Yes it's important and it may oblige Turkey to be reasonable.

S.C.- What about the role of the Cypriot and Greek diaspora and their contribution to the efforts to find a solution to the Cyprus question?

**G.C.-** Well, we appreciate this contribution and we consider the role of our compatriots abroad as very important. Hellenism all over the world always gave us support and it continues to defend the just cause of Cyprus.

### Notes

1. The 1960 Constitution was imposed by an international treaty. It provides for a Greek Cypriot President and a Turkish Vice-President of the Republic not elected by the whole people but by their own separate communities. The President is the head of the Greek community and the Vice-President is the head of the Turkish community. The Vice-President is excluded from representing or being deputised for the President. These functions are held by the President of the House of Representatives who is a Greek Cypriot. The Council of Ministers is consisting of ten members, seven Greeks and three Turks. The Greek and Turkish Ministers are to be nominated and dismissed by the President and the Vice-President respectively. The right of veto granted to the Vice-President on fundamental laws and on decisions of the Council of Ministers leads to a situation of co-presidency. The separation between the two communities was also applied to the House of the Republic. 70 per cent of members were to be elected by the Greek community (80% of the population) and 30 per cent by the Turkish community (18% of the population). Separate majorities of the Greek and Turkish members were required for a number of laws, especially laws imposing taxes or modifying the electoral law.

2. Cyprus signed on December 1972 an association agreement with the European Community and initialled on May 22 1987 a Customs Union agreement. In July 1990, Cyprus applied to the European Union for full membership. The European Commission issued a favorable opinion on June 30, 1993. The leaders of the European Union, who met in Corfu from June 24 to June 25 1994, also expressed a favorable opinion to include Cyprus in the EU enlargement procedure.

3. On August 29, 1994, the Turkish side officially rejected federation as the basis for a Cyprus settlement.

4. The Turkish position is that of two sovereign states in Cyprus forming a kind of confederation.

5. According to the Zurich and London agreements (February 1959) establishing the Republic of Cyprus, Great Britain, Greece and Turkey are the three guarantor powers of the Independence of Cyprus (Treaty of Guarantee).

"The two leaders" is a reference to the leaders of the two communities of Cyprus, Greek and Turkish.



6. Resolution 939 adopted by the UN Security Council on 29 of July 1994.

7. The National Council is a consulting body presided by the President of the Republic and comprising the main political parties of Cyprus.

8. These agreements provide the guide-lines for a solution of the Cyprus problem and have been signed by the president Makarios and Kyprianou and the Turkish-Cypriot leader Raouf Denktash.

9. As it has been noted, Great Britain, Greece and Turkey are, according to the Treaty of Guarantee (Zurich and London agreements of 1959), the three guarantor powers. It is interesting to note, however, that this treaty was imposed upon Cyprus and is contrary to international law and the UN Charter.

## **DOCUMENT**

### **UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION (186) OF 4 MARCH 1964**

**The first session of the United Nations Security Council on the substance of the Cyprus question commenced on 18 February 1964, and went on until 4 March, when the following resolution was adopted unanimously:**

#### **The Security Council,**

**Noting** that the present situation with regard to Cyprus is likely to threaten international peace and security and may further deteriorate unless additional measures are promptly taken to maintain peace and to seek out a durable solution,

**Considering** the positions taken by the parties in relation to the Treaties signed at Nicosia on 16 August 1960,

**Having in mind** the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and its article 2 para 4, which reads: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,"

1. **Calls upon** all member-states, in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, to refrain from any action or threat of action likely to worsen the situation in the sovereign Republic of Cyprus, or to endanger international peace;

2. **Asks** the Government of Cyprus, which has the responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of law and order, to take all additional measures necessary to stop violence and bloodshed in Cyprus;

3. **Calls upon** the communities in Cyprus and their leaders to act with the utmost restraint;

4. **Recommends** the creation, with the consent of the Government of Cyprus, of a United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus. The composition and size of the Force shall be established by the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Governments of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Commander of the Force shall be appointed by the Secretary-General and report to him. The Secretary-General, who shall keep the Governments providing the Force fully informed, shall report periodically to the Security Council on its operation;

5. **Recommends** that the function of the Force should be, in the interest of preserving international peace and security, to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and return to normal conditions;

6. **Recommends** that the stationing of the Force shall be for a period of three months, all costs pertaining to it being met, in a manner to be agreed upon by them, by the Governments providing the contingents and by the Government of Cyprus. The Secretary-General may also accept voluntary contributions for that purpose;

7. **Recommends** further that the Secretary-General designate, in agreement with the Government of Cyprus and the Governments of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, a mediator, who shall use his best endeavours with the representatives of the communities and also with the aforesaid four Governments, for the purpose of promoting a peaceful solution and an agreed settlement of the problem confronting Cyprus, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, having in mind the well-being of the people of Cyprus as a whole and the preservation of international peace and security. The mediator shall report periodically to the Secretary-General on his efforts;

8. **Requests** the Secretary-General to provide, from funds of the United Nations, as appropriate, for the remuneration and expenses of the mediator and his staff.