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# Understanding the Cyprus Problem: A Small Chess Piece on a Huge Board

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## Abstract

The island of Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, has witnessed an intermittently-bloody conflict since the latter part of the twentieth century. This island has over the past fifty years turned into a battle ground between the Greek and Turkish ethnic groups. Consequently, hundreds have died and thousands have become refugees and despite various efforts by third-parties, no solution has been achieved to date. This paper examines both the external and internal history of Cyprus and argues that Cyprus has a history of being utilized as a pawn on a larger European chess board and that the present stalemate of Turkey-EU relations has more to do with internal EU politics than with the Cyprus *per se*.

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## Introduction

The island of Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, has witnessed an intermittently-bloody conflict since the latter part of the twentieth century. This island has over the past fifty years turned into a battle ground between the Greek and Turkish ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, hundreds have died and thousands have become refugees and despite various efforts by third-parties, no solution has been achieved to date.<sup>2</sup>

Firstly, to understand the history of the island of Cyprus, this paper will examine both the external and internal history of Cyprus and provide a detailed overview of its history prior to the Turkish conquest of 1571, and the effects of the 1878 Congress of Berlin, which effectively ceded control of Cyprus from Turkish suzerainty to British administration. This paper argues that Cyprus has a history of being utilized as a pawn on a larger European chess board. Towards this end, this paper will engage in a critical examination of the events leading to the British control of Cyprus because it lays down the foundation for the next 122 years of struggle.

Secondly, this paper will set forth a comprehensive analysis of the issue, reviewing both the internal and external dynamics of the conflict by using the rival-schools perspective by drawing on a number of authors who have examined this issue over the past thirty-six (36) years since the division of Cyprus. Each side has its own narrative for every significant event which has occurred in the history of Cyprus. On the Greek side, the year 1974 perpetuated the image of the “unspeakable” Turk as Orthodox Hellenism’s eternal enemy, out to expel them from their ancestral homeland, in a melancholic fatalism coloured by betrayal, defeat and loss. Conversely, 1974 is heralded as a “peace operation” and celebrated by Turkish Cypriots as “an antidote to Greek Cypriot oppression.” Neither side appears willing to acknowledge the other’s narrative – not accept but acknowledge.

Thirdly, this paper will examine the failure of the 2004 Annan Plan through the contemporary perspective of both Turkish and Greek historians. In essence, the Turks argue that they “voted for peace and [the] reunification” of Cyprus and entirely blame the Greeks for the failure of the peace plan. On the other hand, the Greeks argue that the plan was unfair and dictated to them entirely by the UN and was a “no go” from the beginning. This paper will argue that, notwithstanding the great fanfare with which the Annan Plan was introduced, the proposal was dead on arrival because of the European Union’s (“EU”) offer of full membership to Greek Cyprus, without any requirement on the part of the Greek half to accept the peace plan. This paper will further argue that a middle of the road approach to the issue is most appropriate because there were failures on both sides, not the least of which was both parties’ stubborn refusal to acknowledge the other side’s real and legitimate concerns, which serve as the greatest obstacle to peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Volkan (1989): 19.

<sup>2</sup> *id.*

Finally, this paper will examine the different aspects of the problem through the politicization of the Cyprus issue and conclude, what many historians and politicians have already perceived: the reunification of Cyprus has become the biggest stumbling block for Turkey's accession to the EU. Report after report by the EU Commission has condemned Turkey's purportedly illegal occupation of the northern part of the island, without any examination or analysis of the Turkish side's perspective. In addition, the EU has consistently ignored its promise to end the economic isolation of the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus if it votes "yes" to the Annan Plan. More crucially, this paper will argue that the biggest obstacle to a resolution of the Cyprus problem is the EU's ill advised admission of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU without any comprehensive solution of the Cyprus question thus alleviating any pressure on the Greek side to make necessary concessions for a compromise and providing a vehicle for other EU member states to silently torpedo Turkey's EU prospects. Consequently, the resolution of the Cyprus problem has become detached from the facts on the ground. In other words, the Cyprus problem has become a useful means to block, obstruct, and otherwise impede the necessary negotiations between the EU and Turkey by other EU member states, most notably Austria, France, and Germany and a resolution of the Cyprus problem has become antithetical to the foreign policy of the EU.

## I.

### History of Cyprus: A step-by-step analysis

The island of Cyprus is generally viewed as *uniquely* a Greek enclave, and historically a Greek island.<sup>3</sup> However, a historical assessment shows that this is not entirely correct. While it is not the ambit of this paper to examine the pre-1974 history of Cyprus, a detailed overview of the history of Cyprus, the history of Cyprus in relation to European history and politics in the late 19th century and early 20th century is, nonetheless, necessary to understand the problems that dominate Cyprus today.

#### A. Historical Perspective: Does Cyprus Belong to the Greeks?

##### 1. Rule by the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians and Romans, Venetians and the Ottoman Turks

Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean, Cyprus has long been the focus of political conflict.<sup>4</sup> It was invaded, bought and sold, and transferred from one ruler to another without the inhabitants ever being consulted. The occupying forces can be listed as the Assyrians (707-650), Egyptians (570-546), Persians (546-333), Ptolemies (320s-58), Romans (58 BC-330 AD), and Venetians (1489-1571). Cyprus was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1571. Under the Venetians, from whom the Ottoman Turks took over the island, the island's population had dwindled to little

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<sup>3</sup> Panteli (1984): 15.

<sup>4</sup> Yılmaz (2004): 30.

more than 200,000, consisting almost entirely of Greek speaking people.<sup>5</sup> After the 1571 conquest, about 30,000 Turks were sent in from the mainland in order to form a Turkish element in the population. Ottoman rule continued until 1878 and during that period, there was no overt conflict between the Turks and Greeks of the island. Rather, the Ottoman authority abolished feudalism and serfdom, terminating the Latin persecution of the Greek-speaking Christians as well. The Ottomans also officially recognized the Greek Orthodox Church as an autocephalous, self governing Archbishopric. The Greek Cypriots enjoyed selfgovernment, mainly through the church, which regulated their social, educational and religious affairs. As noted by Yılmaz, this system, indeed, fortified the cohesion of the ethnic Greek population.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. The Beginning of British Rule

As discussed more fully in the next section of this paper, with all of the added European intrigue, bargaining, and gamesmanship that went on, in 1878, the Ottomans “leased” Cyprus to the British with the understanding that the British would help the Ottomans’ defense against the Russians.<sup>7</sup> When the Ottomans joined the Central Powers in World War I, however, Britain unilaterally annexed the island (1914) and British rule was formally recognized by the Turkish government in 1923, with the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>8</sup>

## 3. Is Cyprus really a Greek enclave?

As shown above, while the island does have a uniquely Greek character, it cannot be said that it is a historically Greek island, any more than any other historically Greek colonies. Otherwise, most of the Mediterranean could be argued is really Greek, because the inhabitants, traders, and cultures of each of the previous powers and empires referred to above have had a significant impact on the demographics and history of Cyprus. In otherwords, as discussed more fully in the next section, this idea that Cyprus belongs exclusively to the Greeks is a view that sprung to the forefront with the rise of nationalism in the late 19th century. It is important to note that, as with most empires which once ruled vast swaths of land, it is not surprising that Greek culture and heritage were embedded into the island’s history.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., n.4 above, 30. *See also* Necatiğil (1982): 1-2 (although this is not a focal part of my paper, I would note that this is source is useful in also underscoring why, contrary to the Greek view, the 1974 invasion by the Turks was legal – it was enshrined in the Cypriot Constitution).

<sup>7</sup> Kinross (1977): 520-521.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, contrary to some Greek schools of thought,<sup>9</sup> such heritage and history does not *ipso facto* mean that the island is uniquely Greek or belong to the Greeks. Cyprus belongs to all of its inhabitants, all of which share a similar culture, heritage and history. However, to understand the depths of the present Cyprus conflict, we have to step back and look at the external dynamics in Europe and the European struggle for the balance of power as it existed in the late 19th century because, as more fully shown below, Cyprus became nothing more than a chess piece for the Great Powers. Next, we have to look at the present external dynamics in Europe and determine whether there are any similarities in these dynamics vis-à-vis Cyprus.

## **B. The European Balance of Power: A European Chess Board**

### **1. Treaty of San Stefano**

The Treaty of San Stefano was signed by Russia and Turkey on March 3, 1878 ending the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, with the territorial provisions of the Armistice Agreement of January 31, 1878.<sup>10</sup>

When the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano became known, there was a strong public reaction against Russia from the Great Powers of Europe. Faced with the strong opposition of both Austria-Hungary and Britain, Russia felt compelled to submit this settlement to a congress of European powers. After the London Protocol, they agreed to attend a Congress in Berlin to reconsider certain articles of the Treaty of San Stefano.<sup>11</sup> At this Congress, Germany sided with Austria and Britain. Russia had to wholly give up the Treaty of San Stefano and sign the Treaty of Berlin. The Treaty of Berlin left Russia diplomatically humiliated and the anger of Russia turned against Bismarck because he chaired the Congress.<sup>12</sup>

The Treaty of San Stefano was in effect a partitioning of the European part of the Ottoman Empire and the Treaty of Berlin, effectively nullified the Treaty of San Stefano.<sup>13</sup> While it is clear what the aims and aspirations of the various powers were at the Congress of Berlin—the Congress of Berlin altered the Treaty of San Stefano such that Austrian supremacy in the Balkans was substituted in place of Russian supremacy. This result was because Russian representatives at the Congress, Peter Shuvalov and Prince Gorchakov, did not anticipate the English and Austria-Hungarian cooperation and the degree to which San Stefano would be mutilated or they would not have agreed to the conference.<sup>14</sup> Also, in 1878 Russia could not face the danger of the formation of another Crimean coalition. Again, as in 1870, the Russian government found it difficult to break international treaties unilaterally. It was therefore forced to admit other powers into the sharing of the spoils of a war, which

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., n. 3 above, 10-15.

<sup>10</sup> Jelavich (1973): 108.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>12</sup> Medlicott (1938): 188.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>14</sup> Mosley (1934): 82.

it had won with difficulty and at high cost. The clear miscalculation by the Russians left them humiliated and left England and Austria-Hungary the clear victors of a war they had not fought.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. The Ottoman Empire and the European Balance of Power

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Great Powers of Europe had considerable interests in the Ottoman Empire. Political, economic, strategic and cultural, these interests had been largely acquired in the course of the eighteenth and, especially, the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century the periodic crises of the Eastern Question—that threatened fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire with its implied threat to European peace—had produced rivalry and tension among the Powers. Each Power had its particular concerns in the Ottoman Empire as well as its particular areas of concern, but so long as the Powers did not encroach seriously on each other's interest or special areas of interest significant disturbance was avoided. This view continued to be the predominant view until the rapidly growing system of alliances in Europe altered the landscape.<sup>17</sup>

First, we must look at what was happening in the Rhine because the question of predominance on the Rhine was through various arrangements and treaties connected with the question of predominance in the Balkans. In 1865 by the Convention of Gaustein, the Danes were forced to cede, Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburg to Austria and Prussia. This was, however, merely a stop gap: Bismarck had an understanding with France which would allow for Venice to be ceded to Italy and Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia. Hence the balance of power in Europe had changed.<sup>18</sup>

The close understanding between Russia and Germany grew because Russia facilitated the moves of Bismarck and kept England and France from doing anything. This was, in part, the result of the Alvensleben Convention, where Russia was only half-heartedly opposed to the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, despite the fact that she was pledged to uphold the 1852 agreement on Glucksburg. Russia in general favored Prussia with some misgivings but with an eye on the revision of the Treaty of Paris (1856).<sup>19</sup>

## 3. Russia Violates the Treaty of Paris

This led to German support for Russia when in 1870, Prince Gorchakov renounced the Black Sea neutrality clause of the Treaty of Paris on the grounds that the treaty had been violated with the unification of Romania and was against the security of Russia. The objections of the European powers at this led to a conference in London. This laid the groundwork for the change in European policy towards the Balkans from a policy of preservation to a policy of aggression.<sup>20</sup> It was clear that at the Congress of Berlin, no respect was paid to Turkey in terms of its rights rather, it was rather an agreement on which territorial claims all the powers could live with. The recommendations of the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. n.7, 517-518.

<sup>17</sup> Protheo (1920): 16-20.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. n.7 above, 520-25.

Berlin Memorandum, the Andrassy Note, the London Convention and the side negotiations of the Reichsdadt Agreement, Budapest Convention, Cyprus Convention and the preliminary settlements signed on May 30, 1878 between Britain and Russia, before the Congress of Berlin showed that a new period of Ottoman decline in both Europe and Asia was inaugurated.<sup>21</sup> The war and the motives of the Great Powers at the Congress had clearly demonstrated the defenselessness of the Ottoman Empire against the aggressive stance of the Balkan nationalities and the Great Powers.

#### 4. Austria and Russia Instigate Revolts in Ottoman Provinces

The crisis of 1875-78 started with a revolt in Bosnia-Herzegovina and ended with the Congress of Berlin.<sup>22</sup> The Congress of Berlin may be considered as a milestone in Balkan and European history because for Europe it marked the disintegration of the newly formed Dreikaiserbund (1872) and resulted in the renewal and intensification of Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans, which had started with the Crimean War (1856).<sup>23</sup> The Treaty of Paris, which ended the Crimean War, admitted the Ottoman Empire into the European concert, and explicitly guaranteed its integrity and independence. But the diplomatic and protective barrier did not last long as the balance of power in Europe shifted after four successive wars that broke out in Europe in little more than a decade: the French-Austrian War over Italy in 1859, The Austrian-Prussian attack upon Denmark in 1864, the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.<sup>24</sup> These wars shifted the balance of power in Europe from France and Austria to Germany and this period, which had started with the Russian denouncement of the Black Sea clauses in 1870 inaugurated a new period of Ottoman decline.

Bismarck endeavored to perpetuate his own accomplishments and the heads of the three Eastern Empires, Russia, Prussia, and Austria-Hungary met in 1872 and 1873 and agreed to cooperate in the preservation of peace.<sup>25</sup> In the event of war, they were to consult each other and were to refrain from any intervention in the Balkans, which would change the *status quo*. However, the agreement to freeze the *status quo* in the Balkans was easier to undertake than to enforce. The revolts that broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina, despite the efforts of the Dreikaiserbund members, spread and created international complications until eventually it disrupted the Dreikaiserbund and brought Europe to the brink of war.

The outbreak of the revolt in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to a certain extent instigated by the traveling of Emperor Francis Joseph to Dalmatia in the spring of 1875, during which the emperor received many petitions from the Christians of Bosnia-Herzegovina complaining of Turkish oppression and asking him for protection.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Count Julius Andrassy, the Hapsburg foreign

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Millan (1979): 406.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 408.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. n.17 above, 193.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., n. 10 above, 102.



Minister did not wish to see Serbia take over Bosnia-Herzegovina and was ready to have Austria take over the two provinces rather than Serbia get them. The result of the Emperor's trip was to stir up unrest in the Turkish provinces.<sup>27</sup> Once the revolt began it was sustained by Austrian and Russian officials, who sought to exploit it for their own purposes. Austrian officials in Dalmatia, many of whom were Serbo-Croats by race, gave aid and comfort to the rebels and similarly the Russian embassy in Ragusa, frankly admitted, "I did not create the situation but I profited by it. It began as a small stream, which might have been lost for want of direction; so I put up a stone here, and a stone there, and kept the water together."<sup>28</sup>

In July 1875, when the Christian peasants of Herzegovina had rose in revolt, Count Adrassy and Prince Gorchakov were both anxious to preserve the Dreikaiserbund and both knew that trouble in the Balkans could easily strain relations.<sup>29</sup> For this reason they took the initiative, together with their partner, Otto von Bismarck, in dealing with the disturbance. They persuaded the sultan to send a commissioner to Bosnia-Herzegovina to investigate the situation and they instructed their consuls to attempt mediation. These efforts came to nothing, and Count Andrassy now prepared a new reform program which provided for complete religious freedom, abolition of tax farming, agrarian improvements, a guarantee that provincial revenues should be spent on provincial needs, and the establishment of a mixed Muslim-Christian commission to supervise the working of these reforms. This Andrassy Note, was approved by the other powers and accepted by the Sultan early in February, however, it was rejected by the rebels because the rebels as useless without a guarantee by the powers.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile the fighting was spreading and there was a risk of it becoming a general Balkan conflagration.<sup>31</sup>

The foreign ministers of the Dreikaiserbund met in Berlin in May 1876, and prepared a new reform program, the Berlin Memorandum, which was an extension of the earlier Andrassy Note. The Turkish government was to provide funds to settle the refugees in their homes, the Christians were to retain their arms for the time being, and the consuls of the powers were to supervise the implementing of these reforms. The Memorandum was submitted to the French and Italian and approved, however, the British government refused to follow the others and in doing so made the possibility of an early and peaceful settlement nonexistent. Benjamin Disraeli, then the Prime Minister of England, was determined to pursue an independent policy instead of following behind the Dreikaiserbund. The Memorandum had been prepared without Britain's being consulted and now it was presented for approval with the request for a reply in two days. Disraeli sarcastically observed that Britain was being treated as though she were Montenegro or Bosnia.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., n. 17 above, 204.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. n.17 above, 211.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 105.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 522-523.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., n.17 above, 211-213

The remainder of the year 1876 was characterized by intense diplomatic activity and the most important consequences were the Reichstadt Agreement reached by Russia and Austria on July 8, the Russian ultimatum to Turkey, which resulted in an armistice on October 31, and the International conference held in Constantinople in December 1876, and January 1877. The Reichstadt Agreement was a result of the mounting Pan-Slav agitation in Russia for assistance to the embattled Balkan Slavs.<sup>33</sup>

For the possibility of Russian intervention in the Balkans a prior agreement with Austria would be essential otherwise the Russian army would have had to run the risk of a repeat of the Crimean War. Therefore Count Andrassy and Prince Gorchakov met at Reichstadt and agreed that the prewar *status quo* should be restored if Serbia and Montenegro were defeated. But if the two Balkan States were victorious, Austria and Russia were to cooperate to regulate the territorial changes.<sup>34</sup> They agreed that no large Slavic state should be set up in the Balkans, but the exact details were not clear and a misunderstanding existed from the very start. Prince Gorchakov understood that in the case of victory Serbia and Montenegro, they would annex the larger part of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that Austria would receive only a small part of Bosnia. Count Andrassy, on the other hand thought that the larger part of Bosnia-Herzegovina would fall to the Hapsburg Empire<sup>35</sup>. This misunderstanding was to cause difficulties between the two powers before the crisis was resolved.

##### 5. Competing European Political and Policy Aims Leads to Russia's Declaration of War on the Ottoman Empire

During the opening months of the war after Serbian and Montenegro entered the conflict the Turks were winning the Pan-Slavs appealed to the Tsar and the Tsar finally took action and dispatched a forty-eight-hour ultimatum to Constantinople demanding an armistice of six weeks. The Turks accepted the armistice on October 31, 1876.<sup>36</sup> The powers agreed to send representatives to a conference in Constantinople to work out the terms. Hence, the Constantinople Conference opened on December 12, 1878; the British delegate was Lord Salisbury, and the conference quickly reached a compromise agreement. The main provisions were that Bulgaria should be divided into an eastern and western province, Bosnia-Herzegovina unite into one province, and each of the three provinces to have a considerable degree of autonomy, including a provincial assembly and a local police force. Serbia and Montenegro were to lose no territory and Montenegro was to be allowed to keep parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. These terms were presented as the "irreducible minimum" which the powers would accept.<sup>37</sup> The Turks rejected them, because they knew they had strong popular backing. The specific reason for this strong and profoundly stupid stand was because the British ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, constantly undermined Lord Salisbury in Constantinople. Elliot considered the terms

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 116-117.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., n.17 above, 213.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 124.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. n.7 above, 520.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., n.12 above, 186.

laid down by the Constantinople conference as “impossible demands.” As a result Lord Salisbury requested Elliot be removed from Constantinople, however, the request was denied because both Disraeli and Lord Derby shared Elliot’s views. In addition, Lord Derby had informed the Turkish ambassador the day before the conference opened that England would not “assent to, or assist in coercive measures against Turkey.”<sup>38</sup> Under these circumstances, the Turks under Mehmed Ali misunderstood the actions of England, France and Austria-Hungary. This can be mostly attributed to the ineptitude of Ali himself, as well as the serious lack of a well organized group of Turkish ministers. Abdul Hamid, over a period of two years changed the Grand Vizier more than six times, to play his enemies at home against each other.<sup>39</sup>

Russia anticipated the failure of the Constantinople conference and had opened negotiations with Austria beforehand in order to clear the way for action against Turkey. Russia had no choice in this matter because Russia could not wage war in the Balkans without the consent of Austria. On January 15, 1877, the two powers signed the so-called Budapest Convention. This provided that if the Constantinople Conference failed and war ensued between Russia and Turkey, Austria would remain benevolently neutral and in return could annex Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia was to regain the Bessarabian area lost in 1856 and like the Reichsdadt Agreement, this convention stipulated that no large state should be created in the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> These terms meant that in case of war Russia would do the fighting and Austria would derive most of the advantage. Russia therefore made a final effort for a peaceful settlement and she persuaded the powers to sign the London Convention on March 31, 1877, which merely asked Turkey to introduce those reforms, which she herself had already proposed. However, the Turks represented by Caratheodory Pasha; Mehmed Ali, a Prussian deserter and a Moslem convert, who was treated by Bismarck with exceptional rudeness and brutality, and his colleague, Sadullah Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador in Berlin not realizing the real atmosphere in Europe, stupidly rejected the proposal on the grounds that it violated the Treaty of Paris.<sup>41</sup> Finally, on April 24, 1877, after nearly two years of futile negotiations, Russia declared war upon Turkey.

#### 6. British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire

Russia began the war against Turkey under exceptionally favorable diplomatic circumstances. Both Austria and Germany were benevolently neutral while France and Italy were noncommittal and reserved. This left only Britain, and Disraeli was convinced that the Russians would be in Constantinople in nine weeks and that “it would take nearly that time for us to reach and entrench ourselves in the Dardanelles.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, he proposed Britain occupy Gallipoli for the duration of the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., n.17 above, 35.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 522.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 536.

<sup>41</sup> Kent (1984): 79.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., n.17 above, 34.

war. However, the cabinet rejected the proposal, fearing that it would lead to an alliance with Turkey.<sup>43</sup>

The Russians were making quick progress into the Balkans. They had traversed Rumania, and crossed the Danube on June 23 and then occupied the Shipka Pass, opening the way to southern Bulgaria. The further the Russians advanced the higher the tension mounted in Britain. Bismarck was gravely concerned with the danger of a general conflagration and again advanced his favorite scheme for a wholesale partition of the Ottoman Empire. However, Disraeli distrusted the German chancellor and refused to consider his proposal and convinced his cabinet to vote on July 21 that war should be declared if the Russians occupied Constantinople or did not make arrangements to retire immediately. The gathering tension however, subsided for some time when the Russians met an unexpected reverse at Plevna, a Turkish fortress located close to the Russian bridge over the Danube. The Russians made repeated attempts to take the fortress by storm but were repulsed with heavy losses<sup>44</sup>.

Plevna finally fell on December 10, after the defendants were starved out. The Russians resumed their advance and by January 4, 1878, reached Sofia. The Turks appealed to England to mediate, however, the Tsar refused and referred the sultan to the Russian commander in the field. Armistice negotiations began on January 19, 1878 and by that time the Turkish defenses were crumbling. Reports reached London that Adrianople could not be held and that the road to Constantinople was wide open and Disraeli tried to move the Austrians to mobilize but they were committed by the Budapest Convention and refused to move unless the Russians actually violated its provisions. By January 31, Russian troops occupied San Stefano, ten miles from Constantinople and Disraeli then finally persuaded the cabinet on January 30 to order the fleet to Constantinople, though the foreign minister, Lord Derby resigned in protest. The order was recalled after false preliminary reports that the Russian forces were withdrawing and on February 12, 1878 Disraeli again ordered the fleet to steam to Constantinople. This time the orders were carried out. The Treaty of San Stefano was signed on March 3, 1878.<sup>45</sup>

The crisis brought the re-emergence of Britain as an active force in European affairs after a period of isolation under Gladstone. The Treaty of San Stefano provided that Bosnian-Herzegovina be granted the reforms proposed by the Constantinople Conference, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were to be made independent, Bulgaria was to be established as an autonomous principality with an elected prince, Batum, Kars, Ardahan, and Bayazid in eastern Asia Minor were to be ceded to Russia and thus a greater Bulgaria was to be created and European Turkey virtually annihilated. Russia thus gained access to a wide sphere of influence in the Balkans and left only Albania, Macedonia and a small part of Thrace with Constantinople as a part of European Turkey. These terms, gave Russia predominance in the Balkans and a strong position in Asia. The Russians undoubtedly expected

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., n.17 above, 45.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., n.7 above 524.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 525.

opposition to this settlement mainly from the British, and probably took more than they expected to keep in order to have some surplus for bargaining.<sup>46</sup>

7. The European Powers Require Russia to Submit the Treat of San Stefano for their Approval and Revision

The Treaty of San Stefano was seen in Europe and throughout the Balkans as a flagrant violation of other European Treaties, notably the Treaty of Paris and the Reichstadt and Budapest agreements. As Lord Beaconsfield saw it: “The sultan of Turkey is reduced to a state of absolute subjugation to Russia... We therefore protest against an arrangement which practically would place at the command of Russia, and Russia alone, that unrivalled situation and the resources which the European powers placed under the government of the Porte.”<sup>47</sup> Lord Beaconsfield from the outset contended that Russia must submit the terms of any treaty with Turkey to the judgment of Europe. The European powers had been responsible for the treaties of 1856 and 1871, which could not be modified without their assent. Russia had already agreed in principle to the convening of a congress but with the proviso that she might select which articles of the treaty should be raised for discussion. The British government, however, insisted that the Treaty as a whole should be raised and when Russia refused this, Lord Beaconsfield resorted to a show of force, calling out the reserves and ordering a force of Indian troops to proceed through the Suez Canal to Malta. This show of force by Britain coincided with the mobilization, in defense of her own Balkan territorial interests, of Austria-Hungary, which had initially put forward the idea of a conference.<sup>48</sup>

8. Congress of Berlin and the Partitioning of Ottoman Europe

At the preliminary negotiations before the convening of the Congress of Berlin, it soon became clear that the Ottoman Empire had as much, if not more, to fear from the neutral states, Britain and Austria-Hungary, as from the belligerent Russia. Not only had these powers no intention of supporting the interests of the Ottoman Empire, but by 1878 it was clear to Constantinople that they too had wide designs on the empire. In fact, the eastern crisis of 1875-1878, which on the surface involved the question of the relations of the Ottoman Empire with the subject people and the Balkan governments, served to cover an equally significant action of Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia to carve out territories and spheres of influence from Ottoman dominated lands.<sup>49</sup>

The Austria-Hungary program for peace had been made clear in previous agreements with Russia, in the Budapest and Reichstadt agreements and in negotiations with the other powers—control of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a predominant position on the Danube, and a sphere of influence in the western Balkans, extending over Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 279.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 527.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 527-528.

<sup>49</sup> Munro (1918): 34-35, 38-39.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The Russian program for the peace was developed during the war in conferences in the field between the Tsar and his advisers. The division which developed among the Russian leaders concerned not only the gains which should be made, but also the extent to which the wishes of the other European powers could be ignored. Those who sought to achieve a maximum program also wanted to negotiate the peace terms unilaterally with the Turks, despite the fact that they would inevitably conflict with other European treaties.

In the winter of 1877-1878 a program for the peace was drawn up which would have ended Ottoman rule in Europe and which also would have given Russia a strong strategic position in Asia Minor from which she could have made further moves toward Mesopotamia and the Persian gulf. Specifically the plan called for the Russian reacquisition of southern Bessarabia, which removed a further humiliation inflicted by the Treaty of Paris, and the annexation of Kars, Batum, and Ardahan on the Asiatic frontier. In the Balkans Serbia, Rumania, and Montenegro were to be made independent. Most significant, a large Bulgaria, including all of Macedonia, was to be established, which it was assumed would remain in close political association with St. Petersburg. These terms were in conflict with other European treaties, notably the Treaty of Paris and the Reichstadt and Berlin agreements. Faced with the strong opposition of both Austria-Hungary and Britain, Russia felt compelled to submit this settlement to a congress of European powers. Britain sent its fleet to the Straits on February 3, 1878 raising questions about the passage of the straits and Austria-Hungary went so far as to start mobilizing its 1.1million troops.<sup>51</sup>

The British policy was slow to develop through the spring of 1878. The British policy was developed chiefly as a countermove to the expansion of Russian influence in Asia. During the course of the war there was much discussion and debate on policy between those who wished to continue the Crimean system of the defense of the Ottoman Empire and those whose sympathies lay more with the Christian subject nationalities. When the terms of the Armistice Agreement and the Treaty of San Stefano became known, there was a strong public reaction against Russia. It was this belligerent spirit, rather than Gladstonian sympathy for the Balkan Slavs, which was now to exercise the most influence over British leaders. The direction of this sentiment was not, however, toward upholding Ottoman prestige, but rather toward reasserting the power and position of the British Empire. Faced with the enormous expansion of Russian influence under the Treaty of San Stefano, the British government, after Lord Salisbury became foreign secretary in March 1878, mounted a vigorous counter-offensive.<sup>52</sup>

#### 9. Britain Acquires Cyprus

It was the British program to support the Hapsburg claims on Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the monarchy's desire for a partition of the large Bulgarian state. The line of the Balkan mountains was to mark the limit of the Russian satellite Bulgaria; the rest of the territory was to be returned to some sort

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., n.22 above, 410-412.

<sup>52</sup> Lee (1934): 96-97.

of subject relationship with Constantinople. The national claims of the Greeks were also to be supported so that this state would form a balance against the Slavic Balkan nations. The real British gains were to be made not in Europe, but in the Ottoman Asian lands. Russia was to be compelled to yield some of her claims in Ottoman Asia and in return the rest of the Ottoman Empire was to be protected and defended through a defensive alliance with Britain and the adoption of an internal reform program.<sup>53</sup>

Germany sided with Austria and Britain. Russia had to wholly give up the Treaty of San Stefano and sign the Treaty of Berlin. The Treaty split Bulgaria into three parts (Bulgaria proper was to be independent, Eastern Rumelia and Macedonia were to be ruled under Turkish sovereignty) and brought Bosnia-Herzegovina under Austrian military occupation-but not annexation.<sup>54</sup> Russia felt diplomatically humiliated and the anger of Russia turned against Bismarck because he chaired the Congress. The Russians, under Shuvalov and Prince Gorchakov, did not anticipate the degree to which San Stefano would be mutilated before a settlement could be arranged that was satisfactory to all the great powers.

During the Spring of 1878, as it became apparent that the traditional Palmerstonian policy was at an end, Lord Salisbury's policy toward the Ottoman Empire became more complicated as it was evident that Ottoman rule in certain areas of the Balkans could not be restored even if England wanted to. Therefore, beginning in late 1877, it became English policy to secure for itself, a strategic port either in the Black Sea or in the eastern Mediterranean which would provide Britain with a naval base closer to Suez and the Straits than Malta. In March 1878, the decision was made to choose the island Cyprus. The terms of the Cyprus Convention of 1878 stated that should Russia take Batum, Kars, or Ardahan, Britain would support the Ottomans in the defense of the rest of its possessions. In return the Ottoman Empire was to surrender Cyprus to Britain and to introduce reforms in her Asiatic provinces.<sup>55</sup> Since the British government had already agreed to allow Russia Batum and Kars, the agreement was bound to take effect. This treaty, when taken together with the other plans for economic exploitation of the empire assured Britain a predominant position in Constantinople. It is important to note, that from this time on, Britain, who had previously not shared with Russia, Austria, and France in the large scale partition of Turkish lands, was to join those with direct designs on important areas of Ottoman possessions.<sup>56</sup>

The real gainer in the Treaty of Berlin, was England. By refusing the plan of partition and by preventing its being imposed upon her by a dissolution of Turkey, England had frustrated the scheme which was intended to strengthen the Imperial Alliance and secure Germany's domination in Europe. The dissolution of that Alliance meant the weakening of Germany and the strengthening of England.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 532.

The London Agreement laid down the limits of the revision of the Treaty of San Stefano, and Russia was able now to consent to its being discussed as a whole at the Congress, without fearing unacceptable demands being put on her.<sup>57</sup>

The Congress of Berlin was opened on June 13, 1878. Bismarck elected as president, proposed at once that the questions should be discussed according to their importance, and that therefore that of Bulgaria should be first.<sup>58</sup> Russia and England agreed in London as to the boundaries and division of Bulgaria, but the question of the organization of the southern part was left to be settled at the Congress.<sup>59</sup>

The main objective of Disraeli, at the conference, was “consolidating and restoring the authority and stability of Turkey.”<sup>60</sup> At the Congress, however, the Tsar specifically requested the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the province, seeing it as a measure of security. Both England and Russia remained equally unyielding and the impasse was only solved when Bismarck tried to mediate and stopped the British delegation from going home. It is also important to note that in this conflict over Bulgaria, England was strongly supported by Austria.<sup>61</sup> Austria-Hungary had promised such support before the Congress in return for England’s support of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Disraeli wrote to the Queen, “Throughout the discussion, Austria entirely supported England.”<sup>62</sup> The Russians had counted upon England’s opposition, but the attitude of Austria came as a painful surprise to them. The Tsar told the Prince of Hesse that Andrassy was pushing to war, and that if he were placed between war and humiliation his chose was made. The Russians were discontented still more with Bismarck, who while refusing to interfere with Austria-Hungary in their favor, supported every one of Austria-Hungary’s proposals.<sup>63</sup>

After Bulgaria, the Congress discussed the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The principle agreement prior to the congress was that they were to be occupied by Austria-Hungary. The Sultan ordered his representatives to refuse the occupation, however, Bismarck argued about the impossibility of the execution of reforms foreseen in the Treaty of San Stefano for Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the ineptitude of the Turks to administer these provinces.<sup>64</sup> Without specifically demanding them for Austria, Bismarck argued that he could only accept a solution that would guarantee their permanent appeasement. Lord Salisbury then tried to convince the Congress that a permanent appeasement was only possibly by giving the province to Austria-Hungary. Bismarck of course supported the measure

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., n.12 above, 258-260.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., n.49 above, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 110.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 111-120.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 519.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



and the other Powers associated themselves with it. Only the Turkish representatives protested against it, however, they were quickly silenced by the British delegates and Bismarck himself.<sup>65</sup>

10. Cyprus As A Chess Piece In the European Balance of Power

The next question was of the Russian territorial gains in Asia minor. By the London Protocol, Russia promised to restore Bayezid and the valley of Alashkert to Turkey and in return, England agreed not to contest the acquisition of Batum and Ardahan, however, reserving for herself the right to protect Turkey from the dangers which these acquisitions might bring about in the future, which as discussed earlier is tied in with the British agreements in the Cyprus Convention. This protection was offered at the price of the occupation of Cyprus. On July 1, an annex to the Convention was signed by which England engaged to restore Cyprus in case of Russia abandoning her conquests in Asia.<sup>66</sup>

With the settlement of these issues, the main conflict between the Powers of Europe were removed. The Russian domination of the Balkans was abandoned, but the change produced by the war could not be completely annulled, and Austria and England therefore sought territorial compensations of themselves in order to strengthen their position in the East at the expense of Turkey. Throughout this period, the Ottoman Empire was without effective allies, and although the British and Russians displayed concern for the fate of the Ottoman subjects and about Turkish maladministration, at the Berlin Conference they showed no hesitancy about making gains at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. It is most significant to note that from this period forward Britain, who had previously not shared with Russia, Austria, and France in the large scale partition of the Turkish lands, was to join this group with direct designs on important areas of Ottoman possessions.<sup>67</sup>

Bismarck's program of partition of Turkey was based on the premise that all the Powers should obtain some territorial compensation from Turkey. Although this program, fortunately for the Turks, was not realized entirely, it was in this spirit that the questions were settled at the Congress. The Treaty of Berlin was in fact a compromise between Bismarck's plan of partition and Disraeli's plan of maintenance of Turkey—a compromise which was imposed by the results of war.<sup>68</sup>

Russia's associates in the war, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania, were not admitted to the Congress, the Powers, including Russia refused to recognize them formally since, the conclusion of peace with Turkey had only been between Russia and Turkey, therefore the other Powers considered the Eastern Question as a matter of their own, irrespective of the wishes of the ethnic people of the Balkans.<sup>69</sup>

Serbia, Romania and Montenegro were declared independent and took an obligation to maintain religious equality and freedom of worship. For other provinces of European Turkey, new

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., n.52 above, 97-99.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 127-128.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., n.7 above, 536.

reforms were to be adapted to the specific needs of the population, and their execution was to be supervised by the Great Powers.<sup>70</sup>

Although the Treaty of Berlin represented a diplomatic defeat for Russia, it was not a complete disaster. The situation created by the Treaty of Berlin marked a considerable advance on the way of weakening Turkey and the emancipating the Christians. The whole northern half of the Balkan peninsula was removed from Turkish control. A new Christian state was created on the Black Sea, and Serbia and Montenegro were enlarged. Though separated by the Sandjak, they constituted together with Bulgaria a chain of Christian states stretching from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. The purpose for which Russia fought was thus materially achieved.<sup>71</sup> The changes effected in 1878 owing to Russia's sacrifices were the foundation for the successes achieved in 1912 during the first and second Balkan Wars.<sup>72</sup>

While Austria was dominating the Balkans, Bismarck failed to realize his plan of partition of Turkey, the purpose of which was to isolate France, to direct all the Powers to mutual rivalry, which would prevent anti-German coalitions and give them the same interest in preserving the *status quo* as Germany had herself. However, the strains created thereby destroyed the Dreikaiserbund and had a negative effect in the long run. It was replaced by a dual alliance between Germany and Austria. This alliance became the pivot around which revolved the whole system of European Powers. Russia and France stood isolated and divided, were both looking for German support (in the Mediterranean, Africa etc.). Russia found herself compelled to return to the alliance of the three Emperors and accept there a subordinate position, in order to escape isolation and check Austria's supremacy in the Balkans.<sup>73</sup>

Viewed in retrospect of the next decade the Congress of Berlin seemed to be a manifest success of Bismarckian policy. The situation created by the Congress of Berlin, strengthened the position of Germany and gave her an unrivalled influence in Europe. However, this policy backfired in the long run. Based on the system of playing off one power against another power, this game was not safe. Sooner or later those powers and states would realize the identity of their interest against Germany and would unite to defend them. As a result, Russia and France concluded an alliance and secured England's support for it, and by promoting Austria's interest against the Russians, Germany tied her fate with that of Austria-Hungary.

The real gainer from the Treaty of Berlin was England. By refusing the plan of partition of Turkey, England had frustrated the scheme which was intended to strengthen the Dreikaiserbund and secure Germany's domination in Europe. The dissolution of that alliance meant the weakening of Germany and the strengthening of England.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 542.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., n.10 above, 127.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

## 11. What Lessons Can Be Drawn from the Congress of Berlin?

By examining the consequences of the Congress of Berlin, it is evident that the many provinces of the Ottoman Empire were nothing more than small chess pieces in the European balance of power, that were used as objects for negotiation and bartering, ostensibly under the guise of protecting the minority Christian rights in the Balkans. However, the ultimate results of the Congress of Berlin show that the European powers were less interested in protecting any particular minority group's rights and more focused on extending their spheres of influence and, in the case of Germany, Austria and Russia completing the wholesale ejection of the Muslim Turks, from Europe – a process that had been almost five hundred years in the making for Christian Europe.

### II.

#### **How Does the Consequences of the Congress of Berlin Relate to the Cyprus Conflict Today?**

As evident from the contrasting viewpoints presented below, there is significant disagreement as to relations between the two communities before the British assumed control of Cyprus in 1878.<sup>75</sup> However, it is generally agreed that in the period after the British took control of Cyprus "Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot nationalism and intercommunal distrust slowly intensified."<sup>76</sup>

#### **A. The British Administration of Cyprus**

##### 1. The Fragmentation of the Two Communities Under British Rule Plants the Seeds of Mutual Distrust and Failure to Acknowledge the Other Side's Narrative

As noted by Yılmaz, the British "allowed the communities to set up separate school systems, both of which imported teachers from the respective mainlands who taught children to see themselves as "Greek" or "Turkish, not "Cypriot."<sup>77</sup> History in each community has represented its own people as consistently heroic and the other as consistently barbaric."<sup>78</sup>

On the other side, the Greek Cypriot writer Yiannis Papadakis noted that in school, Greeks were taught that "the Turks were nomads, people with no civilization, people of the horse and the sword, descendants of the Mongols, infidels, people of no real religion. People of the Koran, Muslim fanatics... And I was a product of that history."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> See Yılmaz, n.3 above, 17 and compare Xydis (1973).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 7-15.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Papadakis (2005): 4.

As noted by Denктаş, Turkish teachers came to Cyprus bearing the new ideologies of "Kemalism" from Turkey's new secular ruler – Ataturk.<sup>80</sup> Ataturk had switched the communal, Islamist vision of the former Ottoman rulers to his new Turkish-based Kemalist ideology, which emphasized nationalism as the binding force of Turkish identity – abandoning allegiance to the caliphate, which Ataturk abolished in 1924.<sup>81</sup> "By identifying with Ataturk's vision of Turkish nationalism, the Turks of Cyprus were also asserting their sense of separate identity from their Greek Cypriot neighbors."<sup>82</sup>

In addition, language was also a source of separation on the island with few Greek Cypriots speaking Turkish.<sup>83</sup> Unsurprisingly, as the two communities began their process of self-segregation less and less members of the "other" community learned their neighbor's language - meaning contacts between the two became increasingly limited and each respective community believed that it was in the "right" and the other in the "wrong."<sup>84</sup>

What constituted right for the Greeks meant enosis (union) with the Greek state.<sup>85</sup> What constituted right for the Turks meant taksim (partition) of the island.<sup>86</sup>

## 2. The Post-World War II ("WWII") Period

Subsequent to WWII, the anti-colonialist wave which swept much of the world also reached Cyprus.<sup>87</sup> In response to the anti-colonialist wave, by 1955 the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters ("EOKA"), was formed to fight for Cypriot independence. The EOKA was also closely identified with the cause of enosis and was exclusively Greek – thus encouraging another, exclusively Turkish organization called the Turkish Defense Organization ("TMT") to form which further divided the two communities. Distrust built further because TMT aligned itself with British colonialists and engaged in "limited intercommunal fighting with the Greek Cypriots until a ceasefire was implemented in 1958."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Denктаş (2004): 17.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. *See also* Hannay (2005): 38.

<sup>85</sup> Stephens (1996): 51.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., n. 80 above, 29.

<sup>87</sup> Marikedes (1977): 23.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Independence From British Rule in 1960

The island of Cyprus gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960. The 1960 independence formulated a complex power sharing structure pursuant to which there was to be a Greek Cypriot president and a Turkish Cypriot vice-president who was given veto power. The 1960 Cypriot constitution also "incorporated the guarantee treaty between Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Britain" which outlawed enosis and taksim and allowed Greece, Turkey or Britain to take steps to unilaterally remedy a breach of the treaty.<sup>89</sup> This is a point that is often overlooked by Greek historians who claim that the 1974 Turkish invasion, discussed later in this paper, was illegal. On other hand, not surprisingly, given the incorporation of the guarantee treaty into the constitution, most Turks argue that Turkey's invasion was legal. This complex arrangement for Cyprus, given its unworkable power sharing arrangement, held the seeds of the destruction of bicomunal existence on Cyprus.<sup>90</sup> The president of Cyprus at the time, Archbishop Markarios, never supported the constitution and insisted it wouldn't be binding on Greek Cypriots after independence.<sup>91</sup> As noted by Marikedes, the Cypriot constitution of 1960 "institutionalized ethno-communalism, because it failed to take into account "the psychological and sociological fact that the power-protection system" increased "suspicions, antagonism and conflict between the communities because of the discriminations and uncertainties involved."<sup>92</sup> "The sectarian and divisive provisions of the 1960 arrangement constituted the seeds that led to its collapse three years later."<sup>93</sup>

As argued by Yılmaz, the 1960 Cypriot constitution was a failure for the reasons stated above and because it did nothing to encourage consensus between competing factions within the government. Furthermore, the Cypriot constitution of 1960 cemented this state of affairs and did nothing to ameliorate it. As noted by Yılmaz, the "birth" of Cyprus as an independent state more closely resembled that of an arranged marriage neither party wanted – with both parties in love with different suitors who hovered at the edge of the wedding yet refused to say "I object" when asked.<sup>94</sup>

### 4. The Breakdown of the 1960 Constitution Leading to the Turkish Invasion of July and August 1974

As noted above, the constitutional arrangement quickly proved unworkable because "both identity groups remained adversarial... with each seeking to gain advantages within the new

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., n.80 above, 33; see also n.87 above, 26.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., n.80 above, 36.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., n.87 above, 41.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Yılmaz, n.3 above, 49.

arrangements."<sup>95</sup> "None of it functioned – except one provision that permitted Greece and Turkey to maintain several hundred troops on the island."<sup>96</sup> In effect, the 1960 constitution froze the situation and provided an unworkable framework in which to resolve issues of dispute – which neither party was willing to do.<sup>97</sup> Thus, both sides adhered strictly to their ethnic identity and no mechanisms were put in place to foster even the beginning of a Cypriot identity separate from ethnicity.<sup>98</sup>

Not surprisingly, the first intercommunal violence broke out “shortly before Christmas” in 1963 after Makarios unilaterally threatened to change the constitution.<sup>99</sup> Consequently, British forces left their sovereign bases, which had been ceded to them pursuant to the 1960 Cypriot constitution, and intervened to halt the violence – establishing the "Green Line" which still divides Nicosia today.<sup>100</sup>

## **B. The Turkish and Greek Narrative: A Rival School Perspective**

### **1. The Turkish Historians Approach: Trauma of the Turkish Community**

As noted by Denктаş:

"It is difficult to overestimate the magnitude of the 1964 crisis for the Turkish Cypriot community. This was a seminal event for them. The Greek Cypriots failed to comprehend the significance of the 1964 crisis in the Turkish Cypriot narrative. Their inability to grasp the centrality of this "chosen trauma" only compounded the "mistrust factor" in any prospective endeavor toward coexistence and reunification. Cast in bereaved language, the 1964-1974 trial would underline all future negotiating predispositions for the Turkish Cypriots."<sup>101</sup>

As a result of the events of 1964 "the remainder of the 1960s and the early 1970s saw continuing hostility and increasing segregation between the two communities, punctuated by intermittent crises sparking Turkish involvement and repeated calls for enosis by nationalist elements in the Greek-Cypriot community."<sup>102</sup>

In the Turkish view, the events of 1964 represent a "chosen trauma"– an event which has gathered in their historical memory and has become mythologized by the group. As further noted by Denктаş, "one of the biggest problems is that the Greeks tend to forget what the others suffered and remember only their own sufferings. We went through difficult times in 1963 but Greek Cypriots

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<sup>95</sup> Xydis (1973): 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Denктаş, n.80 above, 51.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 33.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 37.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 38.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., n.80 above, 63.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

never mention these. But Greek Cypriots went through difficult times in 1974. But the Cyprus problem did not start in 1974."<sup>103</sup>

## 2. The Greek Cyprus Historians Approach: Trauma of the Greek Community

From the Greek point of view, Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in July 1974 is the event which led to the partition of the island and the forced displacement of over 250,000 Greek Cypriots. For Greek Cypriots this event, hailed as "liberation" by Turkish Cypriots, was as traumatizing as the 1964 crisis and subsequent exile to small enclaves was to the Turkish Cypriots.<sup>104</sup>

The Turkish invasion was in response to a coup engineered in Athens by the right-wing junta then in power and led by Cypriot Nikos Sampson, who has widely been characterized as "an extremely violent man... well-known for his hatred of Turks" who once advocated "cleansing the island of the stench of Turks," Turkey began a two-part invasion designed to "establish facts on the ground."<sup>105</sup>

The first part of the invasion, on July 20th, was followed by ethnic cleansing of Cypriot Turks by the Greeks from all Greek-held areas. The second part of the invasion began on August 14th, following the end of talks in Geneva between the three guarantor powers designed to seek a settlement to the previous round of fighting, and this time Turkey pushed inwards from the beachheads it had established, causing greater displacement of people, both Greek Cypriots heading south and Turkish Cypriots heading north and eventually occupying almost 37% of the island. From the Greek viewpoint, the events of 1974 leading up to the invasion of Turkey, constitute their own "chosen trauma" in the same manner the events between 1964 and 1974 mean to the Cypriot Turkish population.<sup>106</sup>

As shown above, both the Turkish side and the Greek side have their own narrative for every significant event which has occurred in the history of Cyprus. "The year 1974 perpetuated the image of the unspeakable Turk as Orthodox Hellenism's eternal enemy, out to expel them from their ancestral homeland, in a melancholic fatalism colored by betrayal, defeat and loss."<sup>107</sup> On the Turkish side, the invasion of 1974 is heralded as a "peace operation" and celebrated by Turkish Cypriots as "an

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. n.87 above, 45.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. n.80 above, 67.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. n.87 above, 71.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 73.

antidote to Greek Cypriot oppression."<sup>108</sup> Neither side appears willing to acknowledge the other's narrative – *not accept but acknowledge*.

3. What Lessons Can Be Drawn from the 1974 Partition of the Island into the Root Cause of the Problem?

The Cyprus conflict and the resulting invasion by Turkish forces in 1974 and subsequent partition and lack of progress on the reunification front is, in many ways, the latest conflict between the Greek and Turkish states or, as suggested by Volkan, a “significant part of the larger Greco-Turkish issue with a thousand year history.”<sup>109</sup>

In light of this past history, the challenge must be then, how can the international community wean both the Greeks and the Turks away from this dynamic and encourage the development of a Cypriot identity separate from reliance on the ethnic or religious identity of either of the guarantors of Cyprus's two major communities.<sup>110</sup>

### III.

#### **Efforts At Reunification: Why Have they Failed?**

##### **A. A Reluctance for Reunification**

Since the 1974 Turkish invasion, all of the parties have manifested a reluctance to create, operate or re-establish a unified independent Cyprus where Turkish and Greek Cypriots would peacefully coexist on the basis of a shared understanding of the relationship between the two communities. The parties have held, and continue to hold, mutually incompatible views on the means by which they could satisfy their fundamental needs.

The Cyprus conflict is, by all accounts, complex and clouded with issues of ethnic nationalism, and discrimination. The contrasting and rival approach of each community, as evident in the writings of the historians of both communities present a dizzyingly complex problem from which to embark on successful peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies.

##### **B. Efforts to Resolve the Cyprus Conflict**

In the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion, there were numerous efforts to negotiate a new state structure between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots with the assistance of Dr. Kurt Waldheim, former UN Secretary General, but none succeeded. The Turkish side demanded a Greek-Turkish bi-

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., n.80 above, 37.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., n.1 above, 41.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 39.



regional federation with strong regional governments, whereas the Greek side favored a multi-regional or cantonal federation with a strong federal government. With the talks ended without solution, on February 13, 1975, a “Turkish Federated State of Cyprus” (TFSC) was proclaimed in the northern part of the island.<sup>111</sup>

After the establishment of the TFSC, inter-communal talks were resumed and continued throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, but as in the earlier efforts, no agreement was reached because the parties could not reach a consensus.<sup>112</sup> On November 15, 1983, the TFSC made a unilateral declaration of independence as the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (TRNC). As with the previous Turkish Cypriot Government, the TRNC was recognized only by Turkey and in April 1984, full diplomatic ties were established between the two countries.<sup>113</sup> Since then, further efforts have been made, some of which with the help of third-parties.

### **C. The UN 2004 Annan Plan**

The most recent, and perhaps the most popular peace effort on Cyprus, was former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s 2004 peace plan. Unlike past attempts, the Annan Plan as it has common been called, generated great hopes for the international community as it received a certain degree of support from the Cypriot communities, as well as Athens and Ankara.<sup>114</sup> It also succeeded in arranging a referendum on April 24, 2004 between the parties for the first time. However, the referendum was rejected by the Greek Cypriot side and approved by the Turkish Cypriot side. Consequently, the stalemate continues although negotiations intermittently go on between the Cypriot leaderships.<sup>115</sup>

#### **1. Past Efforts to Reunify Cyprus**

Given the past history noted above, it must be understood that a quick resolution to the Cyprus conflict is simply not possible. In other words, the conflict is not simply a conflict of substantive issues, such as territory, refugees, etc., but mostly a conflict of mistrust, fear and suspicions, rooted in historical hostilities. On the otherside of the equation, despite its complexity and difficulty, the Cyprus conflict somehow needs to be resolved. It creates emotional problems for Greek Cypriots, who still harbor a wish to “own” the whole island, as well as for Turkish Cypriots, who have over thirty years’ experience in running their own lives and businesses as a separate community. A settlement can be reached in one of the two ways: Either the two communities themselves will reach an

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid. n.80 above, 74.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Hannay (2005): 1-4.

understanding or the international community will devise and impose a solution. The latter has actually been tried before, in the 1959 and 1960 Zurich-London Agreements, of which Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain were a part. That solution did not last.<sup>116</sup>

## 2. Turkish EU Accession Negotiations vis-à-vis the Cyprus Conflict

In 1963, the Republic of Turkey became only the second country after Greece to sign an ‘association agreement’ with the predecessor of the EU, the then European Economic Community.<sup>117</sup> This so-called Ankara agreement envisaged full membership, for which Turkey formally applied in 1987 (but was rejected on technical grounds).<sup>118</sup> However, progress in EU-Turkey relations remained painfully slow, not least because successive governments in Ankara failed to address blatant democratic shortcomings.<sup>119</sup> In 1999, the EU finally accepted Turkey as a candidate for membership. This status upgrade ushered in a period of vigorous reforms.<sup>120</sup>

In 2004, the European Commission judged that Turkey had done enough to fulfil the political aspects of the Copenhagen accession criteria.<sup>121</sup> The EU governments decided unanimously to let Turkey start membership negotiations in December 2004. However, the EU’s apparent agreement to let Turkey join turned out to be shallow. The EU’s original ‘framework’ for the negotiations included the option of permanently denying the Turkish people the right to work in other EU countries without a permit – one of the four fundamental freedoms of the EU single market. It also contained provisions for the disbursement of aid to Turkey under different rules from those applied to other member-states. Not surprisingly, the negotiations framework made many Turks question whether the accession talks would lead to full membership or some sort of second-class status.<sup>122</sup>

## 3. The Failure of the Annan Plan: Diverging Schools of Thought

After months of campaigning and preparation, in April 2004, under the auspices of the UN, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots held referendums on the Annan plan to re-unite their island.<sup>123</sup> While the Turkish Cypriots accepted the so-called Annan Plan, the Greek Cypriots rejected it.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Hampson (196): 540.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., n. 115 above.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ulgan (2010): 3.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

(a) The Failure to Consult Cypriots Themselves

Why did the Annan Plan fail? One school of thought has argued that Annan made a strategic mistake, as a third-party, by forming the plan by himself and his foreign consultants, without consulting, or consulting adequately, with the Cypriot leaders and communities.<sup>125</sup> As noted by Yılmaz, no matter how good it is, no third-party can understand, and feel, a conflict as much as the parties themselves.<sup>126</sup>

(b) Greek Cypriot as a Single Issue Member State in the EU

Another school of thought, points to the results of the failed Annan Plan. The Turkish Cypriots voted for the Annan Plan and got nothing in return aside from broken promises from the EU. On the other hand, less than a week after the referendum failed, The Republic of Cyprus (i.e. the Greek half), joined the EU as part of the ‘big bang’ enlargement in May 2004.<sup>127</sup> Since then, Cyprus has become a ‘single issue member-state,’ using its seat at the Brussels table to gain advantages vis-à-vis Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot part of the island. It has obstructed EU-Turkey talks and blocked the opening of various ‘chapters’ (areas of EU law and policy that Turkey needs to adopt before it can join).<sup>128</sup> It has also prevented the EU from passing a regulation that is needed to let Northern Cyprus trade with the rest of the EU – a promise that EU leaders made in 2004, but which has never been kept.<sup>129</sup> In response to the EU’s failure to keep its promises to the Cypriot Turks, Turkey responded by refusing to open its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and planes, even though a previous agreement with the EU requires it to do so.<sup>130</sup> In 2006, the EU reacted to Turkey’s refusal by suspending eight of the 33 chapters of the *acquis communautaire* that Turkey needs to negotiate; subsequently France blocked the opening of five chapters because it has opposed the possibility of Turkish accession from the beginning, and not to be left out, Cyprus having the joined the EU club blocked the opening of five other chapters – in essence, the Turkish-EU negotiations have been brought to a stalemate just like the resolution of the Cyprus conflict itself.<sup>131</sup>

4. Conclusions to be Drawn from Turkey-EU Relations Vis-à-Vis Cyprus

On the Turkish side of the equation, the trauma caused by the break-up of the Ottoman Empire has resulted in an overriding concern for the unity of the nation state. However, Turkey has been

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. n.3 above, 6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. n.115 above, 3.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., n.121 above.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

holding multi-party elections since 1946, and democratisation has now gone far enough to create an atmosphere in which today's debates in Turkey reflect the heterogeneity of Turkish society.<sup>132</sup> However, the trauma caused as a result of European intervention and participation in the break up of the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century has not been forgotten by Turks. The Turks believe the dispute over Cyprus is nothing more than a veil over deep-rooted European sentiment that Turkey has no place in Europe, and Turkey is not European. In essence, the island of Cyprus is playing the same role that it did in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin and WW II: a chess piece in a wider game of the European balance of power.<sup>133</sup> Many EU states, while outwardly supporting Turkish accession to the EU, are perfectly content with Turkey's negotiations with the EU being held hostage and, in effect, killed by the actions of Cyprus. In many ways, it can be viewed (and has been viewed by the Turks) that the EU admitted Cyprus as a preventive block against possible Turkish accession.

Indeed, more recently, as revealed by numerous leaked Wikileaks documents, days after the Annan Plan referendum, EU Commissioner Chris Patten suggested Cyprus should never have been allowed into the EU.<sup>134</sup> In the cable, Patten accused the Cypriot government of "blatant efforts to stifle opposing views" during the referendum while hinting that former President Tassos Papadopoulos was a "dubious character." The leaked cables shed light on the "random thoughts" of Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations between 2000 and 2004, shared over dinner with a US official.<sup>135</sup> Patten further noted that "Cyprus, for instance, probably should not have been admitted, but the Greeks insisted on Cypriot admission as the price of agreeing to some of the northern European candidates."<sup>136</sup>

#### IV.

#### Conclusion

##### A. The Outsiders Must Stop Intervening in the Cyprus Conflict

The essential question that must be asked, in light of the history of the Cyprus conflict presented above, is will the essential balance between external inputs to the negotiation and Cypriot ownership of the outcome prove possible to strike, as it has never been possible to do before?<sup>137</sup> And, will the outsiders, which have intervened in Turkish, Greek and Cypriot affairs for over century, be willing to give the UN and the EU the unified support without which their negotiation efforts surely

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., n.115 above, 2-4.

<sup>134</sup> <http://eu.greekreporter.com/2010/12/03/patten%E2%80%99s-wikileaks-cable-described-tassos-papadopoulos-as-a-%C2%ABdubious-character%C2%BB/>

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. (the cables note that, among other things, Patten highlighted that Croatia was probably far more prepared for EU membership than Bulgaria or Romania which he described as a "feral nation." The latter two countries joined the EU three years later in 2007 while Croatia remains a candidate country.)

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., n.115 above, 2-4.

fail; or will the tensions within the EU over Turkish accession mean that Cyprus continues to be a mere pawn on a wider chess-board?<sup>138</sup> These are difficult questions to answer, questions which are widely overlooked because of a complete ignorance of history by both domestic and foreign politicians, and the ethnic populations each of, which fail to acknowledge the other group's narratives.<sup>139</sup>

**B. The Cyprus Conflict Must be De-Politicized and Must Focus On Its Roots: Each Party Must Understand the Other Party's Narrative**

As shown above, through the examination of the external and internal history of Cyprus, there is no easy or quick solution to the problems separating Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Both sides have outstanding claims and deeply mistrust one another.

As noted by Yılmaz, closely linked with the problem is the psychological barriers between the two Cypriot communities.<sup>140</sup> As suggested by Yılmaz, the issue requires particular attention and calls for carefully-planned strategies, which target areas of nationalistic education on the island that leads historic enmities to be transmitted from one generation to the other, mutual stereotypes that inhibit creative thinking and dialogue, as well as economic gap between the two communities.<sup>141</sup>

**C. Turkey's EU Accession Negotiations Must Be Decoupled from the Resolution of the Cyprus conflict**

Turkey's EU accession must be decoupled from a solution to the Cyprus problem. Towards this end, the EU must redouble its efforts to unblock the Cyprus stalemate by living up to its 2004 promise to the Turkish Cypriots to allow direct trade with the rest of the EU.<sup>142</sup> This promise was made in return for a "yes" vote in the failed 2004 Annan Plan referendum.<sup>143</sup> If this promise is kept, the onus will shift to Turkey, to unblock its ports and normalize relations with the Greek half of Cyprus. This in turn will allow the EU to unblock the negotiation chapters, which were originally blocked due to Turkey's refusal to open up its ports to the Greek half of Cyprus. However, recent developments on this front are entirely unpromising, as the European Commission, after finally taking up the direct trade proposal with Northern Cyprus, ruled that it was without authority to involve itself on issues of trade – this is despite the fact that the new 2007 Lisbon Treaty gave the Commission exactly that authority.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., n.3 above, 3-4.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., n.121 above.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=quagmire-2010-11-22>

Next, as noted by Turkish *Hürriyet* daily writer Yusuf Kanlı, the EU must acknowledge that the admission of the island of Cyprus to the EU, before a settlement of the Cyprus problem, was a mistake and the rest of the EU must apply pressure on Cyprus to transform itself from the “single issue member state” it has become, towering over Turkey and threatening to hold the entire accession negotiations hostage, to a member state that tries to find a solution to the problem as quickly as possible.<sup>145</sup> The alternative of continuing the course is simply destined for failure. The Greek half of Cyprus, a nation of less than 500,000, has tried the present course of action for 36 years and it has not led to results. This is despite the fact that it has succeeded in numerous international circles and in the public relations sphere of earning almost universal condemnation for the Turks and white-washing the history of the island – in other words, it has succeeded in silencing the Turkish narrative. However, this required transformation of Cyprus from a “single member state” is entirely an unrealistic proposition, not the least because politicians seldom acknowledge mistakes, and because the admission of Cyprus was the *quid pro quo* -- the price the EU was willing to pay to secure Greek approval for the admission of other European states, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, as a part of its “bing bang” enlargement, which was realized in 2004 and 2007. In sum, the EU knew exactly the predicament it was getting itself into and was perfectly content with the potential results.

The present state of affairs should not surprise anyone because, as was the case during the 19th century, the island of Cyprus has become a mere pawn on a wider European chess board. Many member states hide behind the Cyprus problem to stall accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey.<sup>146</sup> The Cyprus conflict has increasingly become detached from the facts on the ground and increasingly been politicized through outside forces, as evidenced by the useful political cover it has provided for various EU member states such as France and Germany to stall Turkish accession to the EU.

#### **D. The Peace Process Can Be Reinvigorated Despite the Failure of the Annan Plan**

As shown above, the failure of the Annan Plan on the Greek side was due to the pushy and over optimistic aims of the plan. However, a “bottom up” approach by dealing with the larger, community based problems to help both communities understand one another is necessary to form cohesion and strike a unified Cypriot identity. Indeed, as shown above, there has never been a “Cypriot identity” and unification will require the creation of such an identity for mutual understanding and trust to take place. However, so long as the Cyprus conflict is tied to Turkey’s EU accession negotiations, this process, which should have started thirty-six (36) years ago when Turkey

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

invaded, will never occur because it does not serve any of the political or economic interest of the foreign actors.

Ironically, if Turkey's EU accession fails, as many of the foreign actors hope to serve their own political agenda, the island faces the real and undeniable certainty of permanent division – a fact of life that both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots will have to live with. Fortunately, unlike most other conflicts, it is likely that this conflict will be resolved one way or another in the next five years because, given the fact that Cyprus has blocked five of the EU accession chapters and France has blocked another eight of the EU accession chapters, there are hardly any new chapters left for the EU and Turkey to negotiate and this problem will come to a head: either permanent partition or a decoupling of the external forces, which have prevented a resolution.

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