

Insolubility is now a Tradition in Cyprus Talks

KASHMIR READER

Saturday | 22 July 2017
27 Shawwal-ul-Mukarram | 1438 AH

READER
7 Saturday
22 July 2017

OPED

Insolubility is now a Tradition in Cyprus Talks

HARUN YAHYA

"Negotiations on Cyprus first started in 1968 for the purpose of reaching a settlement between the Turkish and Greek communities that lived on the island. From Rauf Denktas to Mustafa Akinci, from Makarios to Nikos Anastasiadis, many leaders from both sides attended these negotiations. These talks have spanned almost fifty years and saw the supervision of a multitude of UN General Secretaries from Kurt Waldheim, Butros Gali, Kofi Annan and Ban-Ki Moon to Antonio Guterres. They were resumed in 2008 by Mehmet Ali Talat, the then President of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and Dimitris Hristofyas, the President of the Greek side once again with the hopes of finding a solution to the 'Cyprus issue.' From September 2008 until January 2010, the two leaders met a total of sixty times, but none of these meetings produced a result.

In May 2015, the talks were again resumed with the participation of the current leaders of the two communities and were overseen by Egon Bahr, EU, U.N. Special Cyprus Envoy. During the meetings, the parties discussed a variety of topics including 'Safety and Guarantees', 'Management and Division of Power', 'European Union', 'Ownership', 'Territory and Economy' but once again failed to reach an agreement. Despite unnecessary and risky concessions offered by the Turkish Cypriot side due to mistaken policies, no settlement could be achieved.

The reason behind the never-ending impasse in the talks, which may go down in history as the longest chain of unresolved negotiations, is not very complicated: It is because the two sides have different understandings of what is meant by a 'solution'.

The Greek Cypriot administration has never strayed away from the direction shown by the Greece administration and maintained its Meozi idea of one day being the sole ruler of the island. As a result, certain circles have continued to see the Turkish presence on the island as a minority that should eventually be ended, partly through assimilation and partly through deportation. To these circles, the first and most important step towards that goal is cutting off Turkey's aid to the Turkish Cypriots and turning it into an isolated, weak and defenceless community.

Naturally, without these conditions being met first, the Greek Cypriot administration will not even pay attention to other concessions granted by the Turkish side. This is also the reason why they are so relentless about their 'zero soldier, zero guarantee' position. In other words, to the Greek side, 'solution' means the Turkish acceptance of these conditions. As long as these conditions are not accepted, the Greek side will continue to walk out of the talks with accusations hurled at the other side.

The Turkish side, regrettably, both

The Cyprus talks, following a familiar pattern that became a tradition in the last fifty years, once again collapsed at the conference held at the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana. At the end of the ten-day talks attended by Greek and Turkish Cypriot delegations and the representatives of the guarantor states of Turkey, Greece and UK, the conference one more time closed without an agreement.

Negotiations on Cyprus first started in 1968 for the purpose of reaching a settlement between the Turkish and Greek communities that lived on the island. From Rauf Denktas to Mustafa Akinci, from Makarios to Nikos Anastasiadis, many leaders from both sides attended these negotiations. These talks have spanned almost fifty years and saw the supervision of a multitude of UN General Secretaries from Kurt Waldheim, Butros Gali, Kofi Annan and Ban-Ki Moon to Antonio Guterres. They were resumed in 2008 by Mehmet Ali Talat, the then President of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and Dimitris Hristofyas, the President of the Greek side once again with the hopes of finding a solution to the 'Cyprus issue.' From September 2008 until January 2010, the two leaders met a total of sixty times, but none of these meetings produced a result.

In May 2015, the talks were again resumed with the participation of the current leaders of the two communities and were overseen by Egon Bahr, EU, U.N. Special Cyprus Envoy. During the meetings, the parties discussed a variety of topics including 'Safety and Guarantees', 'Management and Division of Power', 'European Union', 'Ownership', 'Territory and Economy' but once again failed to reach an agreement. Despite unnecessary and risky concessions offered by the Turkish Cypriot side due to mistaken policies, no settlement could be achieved.

The reason behind the never-ending impasse in the talks, which may go down in history as the longest chain of unresolved negotiations, is not very complicated: It is because the two sides have different understandings of what is meant by a 'solution'.

The Greek Cypriot administration has never strayed away from the direction shown by the Greece administration and maintained its Meozi idea of one day being the sole ruler of the island. As a result, certain circles have continued to see the Turkish presence on the island as a minority that should eventually be ended, partly through assimilation and partly through deportation. To these circles, the first and most important step towards that goal is cutting off Turkey's aid to the Turkish Cypriots and turning it into an isolated, weak and defenceless community.

Naturally, without these conditions being met first, the Greek Cypriot administration will not even pay attention to other concessions granted by the Turkish side. This is also the reason why they are so relentless about their 'zero soldier, zero guarantee' position. In other words, to the Greek side, 'solution' means the Turkish acceptance of these conditions. As long as these conditions are not accepted, the Greek side will continue to walk out of the talks with accusations hurled at the other side.

The Turkish side, regrettably, both

"The final talks in Switzerland clearly showed the true intentions of the Greek administration and also proved that unless the Turkish side gave up on its red lines, the Greek side would never agree on a settlement regardless of any other concessions made. Indeed, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu made this point very clear in Crans-Montana and said, 'This is a final conference. This is the final time', and expressed his dismay with the 50-year-long stalling. He explained that the Greeks used prolonging the discussions as a tactic and said, 'We are not going to negotiate forever. If it is supposed to happen, it will; if not, the negotiations will be held in another dimension.'"

during the era of the Annan Plan and afterwards, made numerous unnecessary concessions that only served to harm the TRNC and its citizens and offered absolutely no advantage. These concessions included reducing the number of Turkish troops on the island and transferring lands and properties. However, the Turkish side had also red lines such 'Turkish troops remaining in the island', 'the continued guarantor position of Turkey', 'the continued right of Turkey to intervene in Cyprus, as regulated by international treaties', which the Greek side never accepted. It is only because of the Greek Cypriot rejection that the Turkish side did not have to proceed with the unnecessary concessions. This, in fact, had been a blessing for the TRNC and her citizens because the concessions could likely have proven seriously dangerous.

The final talks in Switzerland clearly showed the true intentions of the Greek administration and also proved that unless the Turkish side gave up on its red lines, the Greek side would never agree on a settlement regardless of any other concessions made. Indeed, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu made this point very clear in Crans-Montana and said, 'This is a final conference. This is the final time', and expressed his dismay with the 50-year-long stalling. He explained that the Greeks used prolonging the discussions as a tactic and said, 'We are not going to negotiate forever. If it is supposed to happen, it will; if not, the negotiations will be held in another dimension.'"

The Turkish troops on Cyprus are the biggest safety net of the TRNC's citizens and the only guarantee that the dark and bloody incidents of 70 years ago are not going to be repeated. Indeed, the recent decision of the Greek Cypriot's Parliament to introduce the commemoration of the 1950 Referendum about annexing the island to Greece, in other words, ENOSIS, at all Greek Cypriot public schools, clearly shows that the threat of seventy years ago is still very much alive.

never concede or negotiate away her rights that are recognized by an international treaty. Expecting Turks to give up on these rights, which include 'her right to unilaterally interfere in Cyprus', 'to have troops on the island', and 'guarantorship', is as Mr. Cavusoglu said, is a mere whim.

It should be noted that the Turkish Cypriots neither need nor are obliged to offer concessions such as a waiver of lands, transferring title deeds, sending Turkish soldiers away or accepting minority status or giving up on its earned rights and freedom; they also do not have to put up with the pressure and pestering of certain communities. Fancy promises like EU citizenship in exchange for concessions are only a part of the sinister ENOSIS plan to weaken the identity, roots, honor and values of the Turkish community on the island and to assimilate them before taking away their freedoms, properties and lands.

As a matter of fact, from the point of view of the Turkish community on the island, there is no 'Cyprus issue'. All their problems, pains and troubles already ended with the 1974 Peace Operation. The Greek and Turkish communities have been living in peace and brotherhood for decades now and experience clearly showed that the only system that could prevent a return to 70 years ago and that could ensure permanent peace and stability on the island is the 'two-state, two-community model'. As long as the parties agree on these fundamental principles, there is no reason why there shouldn't be further arrangements to ensure the harmonious, peaceful, safe, brotherly co-existence of the two societies on the island. Once this is achieved, the sides can mutually remove passport and visa regimes, grant mutual free movement rights and boost their social, cultural and trade relations, which will be no doubt great steps to ensure the further development and prosperity of the island for everyone.

—The author is a prominent Turkish writer and activist. He blogs at www.harunyahya.com

The Cyprus talks, following a familiar pattern that became a tradition in the last fifty years, once again collapsed at the conference held at the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana. At the end of the ten-day talks attended by Greek and Turkish Cypriot delegations and the representatives of the guarantor states of Turkey, Greece and UK, the conference one more time closed without an agreement.

Negotiations on Cyprus first started in 1968 for the purpose of reaching a settlement between the Turkish and Greek communities that lived on the island. From Rauf Denktas to Mustafa Akinci, from Makarios to Nikos Anastasiadis, many leaders from both sides attended these negotiations. These talks have spanned almost fifty years and saw the supervision of a multitude of UN General Secretaries from Kurt Waldheim, Butros Gali, Kofi Annan and Ban-Ki Moon to Antonio Guterres. They were resumed in 2008 by Mehmet Ali Talat, the then President of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and Dimitris Hristofyas, the President of the Greek side once again with the hopes of finding a solution to the 'Cyprus issue.' From September 2008 until January 2010, the two leaders met a total of sixty times, but none of these meetings produced a result.

In May 2015, the talks were again resumed with the participation of the current leaders of the two communities and were overseen by Espen Barth Eide, U.N. Special Cyprus Envoy. During the meetings, the parties discussed a variety of topics including 'Safety and Guarantees', 'Management and Division of Power', 'European Union', 'Ownership', 'Territory and Economy' but once again failed to reach an agreement. Despite unnecessary and risky concessions offered by the Turkish Cypriot side due to mistaken policies, no settlement could be achieved.

The reason behind the never-ending impasse in the talks, which may go down in history as the longest chain of unresolved negotiations, is not very complicated: It is because the two sides have different understandings of what is meant by a "solution."

The Greek Cypriot administration has never strayed away from the direction shown by the Greece administration and maintained its Megali Idea of one day being the sole ruler of the island. As a result, certain circles have continued to see the Turkish presence on the island as a minority that should eventually be ended, partly through assimilation and partly through deportation. To these circles, the first and most important step towards that goal is cutting off Turkey's aid to the Turkish Cypriots and turning it into an isolated, weak and defenseless community.

Naturally, without these conditions being met first, the Greek Cypriot administration will not even pay attention to other concessions granted by the Turkish side. This is also the reason why they are so relentless about their 'zero soldier, zero guarantee' position. In other words, to the Greek side, "solution" means the Turkish acceptance of these conditions. As long as these conditions are not accepted, the Greek side will continue to walk out of the talks with accusations hurled at the other side.

The Turkish side regrettably, both during the era of the Annan Plan and afterwards, made numerous unnecessary concessions that only served to harm the TRNC and its citizens and offered absolutely no advantage. These concessions included reducing the number of Turkish troops on the island and transferring lands and properties. However, the Turkish side had also red lines such 'Turkish troops remaining in the island', 'the continued guarantor position of Turkey,' 'the continued right of Turkey to intervene in Cyprus, as regulated by international treaties,' which the Greek side never accepted. It is only because of the Greek Cypriot rejection that the Turkish side did not have to proceed with the unnecessary concessions. This, in fact, had been a blessing for the TRNC and her citizens because the concessions could likely have proven seriously dangerous.

The final talks in Switzerland clearly showed the true intentions of the Greek administration and also proved that unless the Turkish side gave up on its red lines, the Greek side would never agree on a settlement regardless of any other concessions made. Indeed, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavuşoglu made this point very clear in Crans-Montana and said, 'This is a final conference. This is the final time', and expressed his dismay with the 50-year-long stalling. He explained that the Greeks used prolonging the discussions as a tactic and said, 'We are not going to negotiate forever. If it is supposed to happen, it will; if not, the negotiations will be held in another dimension.'

The Turkish troops on Cyprus are the biggest safety net of the TRNC's citizens and the only guarantee that the dark and bloody incidents of 70 years ago are not going to be repeated. Indeed, the recent decision of the Greek Cypriot's Parliament to introduce the commemoration of the 1950 Referendum (about annexing the island to Greece), in other words, ENOSIS, at all Greek Cypriot public schools, clearly shows that the threat of seventy years ago is still very much alive.

For these reasons, it is clear that Turkey will never concede or negotiate away her rights that are recognized by an international treaty. Expecting Turks to give up on these rights, which include 'her right to unilaterally interfere in Cyprus,' 'to have troops on the island,' and 'guarantorship,' is as Mr. Cavusoglu said, is a mere 'dream.'

It should be noted that the Turkish Cypriots neither need nor are obliged to offer concessions such as a waiver of lands, transferring title deeds, sending Turkish soldiers away or accepting minority status or giving up on its earned rights and freedoms; they also do not have to put up with the pressure and pestering of certain communities. Fancy promises like EU citizenship in exchange for concessions are only a part of the sinister ENOSIS plan to weaken the identity, roots, honor and values of the Turkish community on the island and to assimilate them before taking away their freedoms, properties and lands.

As a matter of fact, from the point of view of the Turkish community on the island, there is no 'Cyprus issue.' All their problems, pains and troubles abruptly ended with the 1974 Peace Operation. The Greek and Turkish communities have been living in peace and brotherhood for decades now and experience clearly showed that the only system that could prevent a return to 70 years ago and that could ensure permanent peace and stability on the island is the 'two-state, two-community model'. As long as the parties agree on these fundamental principles, there is no reason why there shouldn't be further arrangements to ensure the harmonious, peaceful, safe, brotherly co-existence of the two societies on the island. Once this is achieved, the sides can mutually remove passport and visa regimes, grant mutual free movement rights and boost their social, cultural and trade relations, which will be no doubt great steps to ensure the further development and prosperity of the island for everyone.

Adnan Oktar's piece in Kashmir Reader:

<http://kashmirreader.com/2017/07/22/insolubility-now-tradition-cyprus-talks/>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/insolubility-is-now-a-tradition-in-cyprus-talks>