



CYPRUS CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PRESS RELEASE

Round-table discussion organized by the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs

An Assessment of the latest Report by the International Crisis Group CYPRUS: REVERSING THE DRIFT TO PARTITION Europe Report N°190

On March 4 2008, the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs organized a round table discussion to assess the latest International Crisis Group (ICG) Report, "Cyprus: Reversing The Drift To Partition" (Europe Report N°190, January 2008). Unlike the first Report "The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?" (Europe Report N°171, March 2006), which was considered to have been inadequately researched and had included many inaccuracies over several issues the second Report was perceived as a well documented paper. Nevertheless this recent Report too was also seen to maintain a certain bias.

The roundtable, which was chaired by Costas Yennaris, was attended ambassadors and senior diplomats stationed in Cyprus, academics, journalists, activists and students. The panelists, Prof. Michael Attalides, Rector of the University of Nicosia and Prof. Andreas Theophanous, the Director of the Cyprus Center for



European and International Affairs, presented their respective assessment on the new Report and responded to the audience's questions and comments.



M. Attalides emphasized that this latest Report, despite its shortcomings, is a significantly improved version of the previous one and pointed to the suggestion that mainland Turks should talk directly to Greek Cypriots. In relation to the substance of the problem he said that

it seems that the authors may be hinting at a future plan similar to the UN's Annan V. M. Attalides indicated that perhaps it was a mistake that the Greek Cypriots did not insist on the 1960 constitution as a starting point which of course could be amended.

A. Theophanous agreed with the points raised by M. Attalides and paid particular attention to the fact that the Report recommends that mainland Turks should talk directly with Greek Cypriots. He also referred to the terminology adopted in the Report which indirectly tries to equate the Republic of Cyprus with the occupied northern part of the island. He then analyzed the nature of the Cyprus problem and the possible ways forward. He stressed that the real issue was whether the two communities will choose to live side by side or together. Theophanous advocated a federal integrationalist model in which individual rights should be balanced with communal rights. He suggested that a better climate in Cyprus potentially through specific confidence building measures including the return of Famagusta in conjunction with a change in the policy of Turkey could lead to a breakthrough and a lasting settlement.

During the discussion it was also pointed out by both speakers that many efforts toward the solution of the Cyprus problem had usually been undertaken before critical political dates for Turkey. That in itself was not considered negative as long as there are no pressures toward the



Republic of Cyprus to accommodate the Turkish policy on Cyprus.