

THIS IS 2014 NOT 2004: A PUZZLED RESPONSE TO A "REBUTTAL"

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My article "The Cyprus Problem in 2014: Three Differences from 2004 and one Similarity" appeared in In Depth, Volume 10, Issue 4. A text entitled "Rebutting Rector Attalides Position: "The Cyprus Problem in 2004...", by Aris Petasis appeared in In Depth, Volume 10, Issue 5. On the one hand it is very welcome that someone has read, perhaps reflected on, and even took the trouble to argue with my article. On the other hand the attempted rebuttal is puzzling as it widely misses the main point of my article, and seems to consist of a knee-jerk reaction against the Annan Plan. Mr. Petasis has of course every right and some justification to criticize the Annan Plan. But why do it in a rebuttal of my article, an article which does not in any way defend the Annan Plan? What concerns me is that in doing this he misrepresents the contents of my article.

How off the point Mr. Petasis rebuttal is, is indicated by the fact that he announces the title of my article to be "The Cyprus Problem in 2004..." and not the real title, which is "The Cyprus Problem in 2014: Three Differences from 2004 and one Similarity". There is a very great difference between the two titles, including ten years temporal difference, as well as the statement of the fact that the author (Attalides) is writing about the situation in 2014, and considers it to be different to that in 2004. Mr Petasis probably wrote "2004" instead of "2014" as a typing error, but this error raises the question of whether his thinking about the Cyprus problem might be stuck in 2004. This is reinforced by the fact that in his rebuttal he refers not at all to the situation in 2014, which forms the substance of my article.

Not surprisingly in view of this, the main conclusion Mr. Petasis comes to is totally irrelevant to my article and misrepresents it: After criticizing the Annan Plan, his conclusion is that if the Annan Plan were to appear again it should be rejected. This however has nothing to do with my article, and is seriously misleading as far as the central point of my article is concerned. Anyone reading Dr. Petasis article, who had not read mine, or who had read my article, but could not recall its content, would have been led to think that in my article I had advocated voting in favour of the Annan Plan if it appeared again. In reality there was nothing of the kind, or remotely similar to this in my article. To the contrary, the main conclusion of my article was that unless the "*acquis*" of the Cyprus Problem changes, then Greek Cypriots would probably again vote against something like the Annan Plan.

It is also puzzling that Mr. Petasis does not seem to notice that in the whole of my article I do not advocate any particular position, and merely make a series of observations.

Mr. Petasis devoted a large part of his rebuttal to proving that it is not true that people in 2004 had voted "no" for economic reasons. But this again contains a misrepresentation of what I argued. I gave three reasons not one, for people voting no in 2004: The positions taken by the political and religious leadership, the economic facts of the situation, and the contents of the Annan Plan ("the *acquis* of the Cyprus Problem").

Finally, he is factually mistaken about his third main point. It is not true, as writes, that the two largest parties supported the Annan Plan. Only the leader of the Democratic Rally did so. With this exception, all the parliamentary parties, including AKEL, and of course the President and the Archbishop, advocated a "no" vote in 2004.