

CYPRUS SOLUTION? A SWOT ANALYSIS

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A number of actors and observers are expressing the view that the time could be ripe for the negotiations now beginning to succeed, and solve the Cyprus problem, yet in the situation there are not only strengths, and opportunities, but also weaknesses and threats. Here is an attempt to list some of them:

Strengths:

1. President Anastasiades is not a populist politician and has proved that he can stand up to populist pressures.
2. There are new faces on both sides, Andreas Mavroyiannis, Nicos Christodoulides, Ozdil Nami and Kudret Ozersay. Though they will no doubt ably and insistently support the positions of their sides, they do not use the wooden language frequently heard in the past.
3. The United States has an interest in the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean, and an active involvement in the process, which is consistent with a durable solution of the problem.
4. Interrelated with the above is the need of all in the region, and beyond, to ensure and safeguard the peaceful use of the extensive energy resources of the Levant Basin.
5. There is a hint of awareness developing both regionally and globally, of the need for the reorganized Republic not to be subject to the vicissitudes of Turkey's policies and politics, which, if it became policy for significant actors, could strengthen the position of the weaker side in the negotiations, the Greek Cypriot side.
6. Turkey's issues and failures in the foreign policy based on the new geopolitical visions, may reorient it towards the EU, at least to a greater extent than the past three years.

Weaknesses:

1. The new wine will be fitted into the old bottles of "bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality as defined by the United Nations." With the exception of the Greek Cypriot opposition parties, no one seems prepared to question the *sui generis*, problematic "acquis" of the Cyprus problem.
2. This partly derives from the wide divergence of what the ideal solution would be for the two sides, which on the Turkish Cypriot side emphasizes community rights or even state equality, while the Greek Cypriot side emphasizes citizen equality and human rights.
3. Unclarities in high places continue. When the President of Greece rejects the "*faits accomplis*" of the invasion is he rejecting "bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality?". And when he says that the solution must be consistent with the European *acquis*, does he include the rights infringed in 1974, or is he talking about the future?

4. The development of the political situation in Turkey is uncertain and historically this has on occasion in the past been expressed in its foreign policy.

Opportunities:

1. The political right is in charge on both sides in Cyprus. The right is not as vulnerable and sensitive to charges of lack of patriotism as the left is, while the opposition on both sides seems supportive.
2. The very weak economic situation of both sides has shifted motivations and built up more support for a solution of the problem. The energy deposits create motivation on both sides to build a situation where they can be securely exploited and the benefits shared.
3. There is an opportunity for confidence building measures with real impact and popular support. The cultural heritage project led by Takis Hadjidemetriou has succeeded in showing that Cyprus can, at least partially, restore the monuments of its cultural heritage, and that this can be in the interests of all. The Varosha project has at least some support on both sides and of the White House, and could contribute to confidence and to the economic recovery of the whole island.
4. On the Greek Cypriot side it seems that the two largest parties will be able to support the President, while the President also occupies himself with the difficult political problem of maintaining the necessary parliamentary majority to deal with the economic situation.
5. The Government in Ankara may be looking for a possible achievement/success.
6. Finally, but not of least importance, the European Union, but also the Council of Europe institutions could provide a legal and regulatory context for the agreement itself, for resolving possible differences after an agreement is reached, but also, and this could be crucial in the long run, for regulated evolution of what is agreed towards an institutional and legal system which is closer to the European norm.

Threats

1. The reaction of Turkey to the exploration of the Cyprus EEZ by the Cyprus Government has been gun-boat diplomacy. This threat persists despite the fact that Cyprus has strong international support for its rights on the EEZ. The danger is increased by the fact that Turkey is unpredictable at the moment. And it still has an enormous military presence in the occupied part of Cyprus, which it refuses to reduce.
2. Cyprus is located in one of the most dangerous regions in the world. Turkey is not the only possible threat. The re-organized republic, if achieved, will need to have a military capability and an alliance. The planned "demilitarization" is not the solution.
3. The solution arrangements, to the extent that they are known from past negotiations, will be extensively based on ethnic distinctions,

including a concept of "internal citizenship" on ethnic grounds. This runs counter to western concepts of citizenship and threatens to impede citizen loyalty to the Republic and democratic evolution in the Republic.

4. There are asymmetrical dangers after a solution. On the Turkish Cypriot side the greatest danger may be that Turkey will retain control over the community after a solution, and through the community and the constitutional arrangements, on the Republic of Cyprus. (The danger is augmented through the proportionately massive presence of settlers from Turkey). On the Greek Cypriot side, the government of the Greek Cypriot region will continue to be the most powerful of the three governments on the island, politically and economically, and unless this power is reflected in the Federal government, there may be imbalance of the Gorbachov/Yeltsin kind.