Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive

Updated July 24, 2018

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
R41136

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Summary

Almost eight months into 2018, unification talks that were intended to end the division of Cyprus after 54 years as a politically separated nation and 44 years as a physically divided country remain suspended until sometime in fall 2018. The long-sought bizonal, bicommunal, federal solution for the island remains elusive and, for some, looks to be in doubt.

The negotiations were suspended in July 2017, when talks held at Crans Montana, Switzerland, between Republic of Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci collapsed over the sensitive issues of Turkish troop levels on the island, future security guarantees, and political equality sought by the Turkish Cypriots. Cyprus negotiations typically have been characterized as exhibiting periodic levels of optimism, quickly tempered by the political reality that difficult times between Greek and Turkish Cypriots always lay ahead. Such was the case at Crans Montana, as the optimism expressed before the negotiations again fell victim to the harsh realities of five decades of separation, mistrust, misunderstanding, and, in some cases, both sides' inability to make the necessary concessions to reach a final settlement.

The talks have remained suspended despite 12 months of "reflection" that followed the collapse of the negotiations; an informal dinner between Anastasiades and Akinci in April 2018 at which the two leaders were unable to determine under what conditions the talks would be revived; and meetings between the U.N. Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar, and Anastasiades and Akinci. National elections held in June 2018 in Turkey, which holds a key to a final solution, also contributed to the delay.

On July 23, 2018, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's new U.N. envoy to Cyprus, Jane Lute, arrived in Nicosia to conduct consultations with the two Cypriot leaders. She will then meet with the three guarantor parties to the Cyprus issue to assess all of the perspectives and to determine if sufficient conditions exist to resume negotiations. It is unlikely that Lute heard much beyond the known positions or what U.N. Representative Spehar likely reported after her meetings with the two leaders in July. The issues that have separated the two communities and prevented a solution for more than four decades have long been clearly defined, and they have been repeatedly presented, debated, and, in some cases, rejected by both sides. Anastasiades likely repeated his willingness to resume the negotiations from where they left off in July 2017, and Akinci likely noted that resuming the talks where they left off will not result in a solution. After consulting all sides, Lute will report to Secretary-General Guterres in September on whether she sees constructive reasons for the U.N. to propose another round of U.N.-hosted negotiations. Guterres is expected to discuss the Lute findings with both Anastasiades and Akinci during the U.N. General Assembly meetings in September 2018 and then to decide whether to offer his good offices for a new round of talks.

For some observers, the issues that led to the talks' collapse, while not central to the questions of whether and under what conditions both sides could govern as equal partners under a federal structure after such a prolonged political separation, go to the question of trust between the two communities. Some believe that if the negotiations were to resume, presumably under a six-point "framework" proposed by Guterres in July 2017, both sides should agree to first resolve the governance-related issues that remain in disagreement (e.g., federal structure, presidency, voting, citizenship, property, economics, and territory of the states). These observers note that if the federal governance issues cannot be resolved, agreement on the security issues is even less likely. Nevertheless, rather than an emphasis on the convergences achieved thus far, troop levels and security guarantees continue to dominate the discussion. It also appears that concessions on these issues, perhaps along the lines suggested by Guterres's framework, may have become a prerequisite for resuming the talks, leaving little room for a potential solution.

The United States continues to affirm its long-standing interest in a just, lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue, in part because of the growing prospects that the Eastern Mediterranean, including a united Cyprus, can play an important role in contributing to regional stability and because of potential energy development in the region. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Wess Mitchell and others from the Administration have visited Cyprus in 2018 to receive updates on the prospects that talks will resume and to reiterate the Administration's support for a solution. The Administration also has expressed its support for the republic's right to explore for energy resources in its territorial waters free from provocations by Turkey. Assistant Secretary Mitchell expressed this view in a June 2018 speech at the Heritage Foundation and again before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Europe. Recent legislation introduced in both the House and the Senate has called for the United States to lift restrictions on arms sales to Cyprus. By contrast, the United States appears to want to downsize the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and to tie its continuation to progress toward a final solution.

This report provides a brief overview of the negotiations' history and a description of some of the issues involved in those talks.

Contents

Background 1
Annan Plan 2
The Christofias-Talat Negotiations: 2008-2010 3
A New Era: Christofias and Eroglu 5
New Year, Continued Stalemate, End of the Talks 7
Elections 2013: The Anastasiades Government and New Talks 9
Elections 2015: Akinci and the Resumption of the Negotiations 13
Mont Pelerin 16
Geneva Conference 17
Talks Suspended, Uncertain Times 19
Crans Montana—The Last Negotiation? 20
The Guterres "Framework" 22
Negotiations Collapse—Talks Suspended 22
Issues 24
Energy 32
Assessment 34

Figures

Figure 1. Map of Cyprus 2

Contacts

Author Information 38

Background[1]

The Republic of Cyprus gained its independence from Great Britain in 1960. At the time, the population living on the island was approximately 77% of Greek ethnic origin and roughly 18% of Turkish ethnic origin. (This figure has changed over the years as an influx of mainland Turks have settled in the north.) Maronite Christians, Armenians, and others constitute the remainder. At independence, the republic's constitution defined elaborate power-sharing arrangements between the two main groups. It required a Greek Cypriot president and a Turkish Cypriot vice president, each elected by his own community. Simultaneously, a Treaty of Guarantee signed by Britain, Greece, and Turkey ensured the new republic's territorial integrity, and a Treaty of Alliance among the republic, Greece, and Turkey provided for Greek and Turkish soldiers to help defend the island. However, at that time, the two major communities aspired to different futures for Cyprus: Most Greek Cypriots favored union of the entire island with Greece (*enosis*), while Turkish Cypriots preferred to partition the island (*taksim*) and possibly unite the Turkish Cypriot zone with Turkey.

Cyprus's success as a stable, new republic lasted from 1960 to 1963. After President (and Greek Orthodox Archbishop) Makarios III proposed constitutional modifications that favored the majority Greek Cypriot community in 1963, relations between the two communities deteriorated, with Turkish Cypriots increasingly consolidating into enclaves in larger towns for safety. In 1964, Turkish Cypriots withdrew from most national institutions and began to administer their own affairs. Intercommunal violence occurred between 1963 and 1964 and again in 1967. On both occasions, outside mediation and pressure, including by the United States, appeared to prevent Turkey from intervening militarily on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots. On March 4, 1964, the United Nations authorized the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to control the violence and act as a buffer between the two communities. It became operational on March 27, 1964, and still carries out its mission today.

In 1974, the military junta in Athens supported a coup against President Makarios, replacing him with a more hard-line supporter of *enosis*. In July 1974, Turkey, citing the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee as a legal basis for its move, deployed its military forces in two separate actions to the island and by August 25, 1974, had taken control of more than one-third of the island. This military intervention[2] had many ramifications. Foremost was the widespread dislocation of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot population and related governance, refugee, and property problems.

After the conflict subsided and a fragile peace took root, Turkish Cypriots pursued a solution to the conflict that would keep the two communities separate in two sovereign states or two states in a loose confederation. In February 1975, the Turkish Cypriots declared their government the "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus" (TFSC). In 1983, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash declared the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC)—a move considered by some to be a unilateral declaration of independence. At the time, Denktash argued that creation of an independent state was a necessary precondition for a federation with the Greek Cypriots.

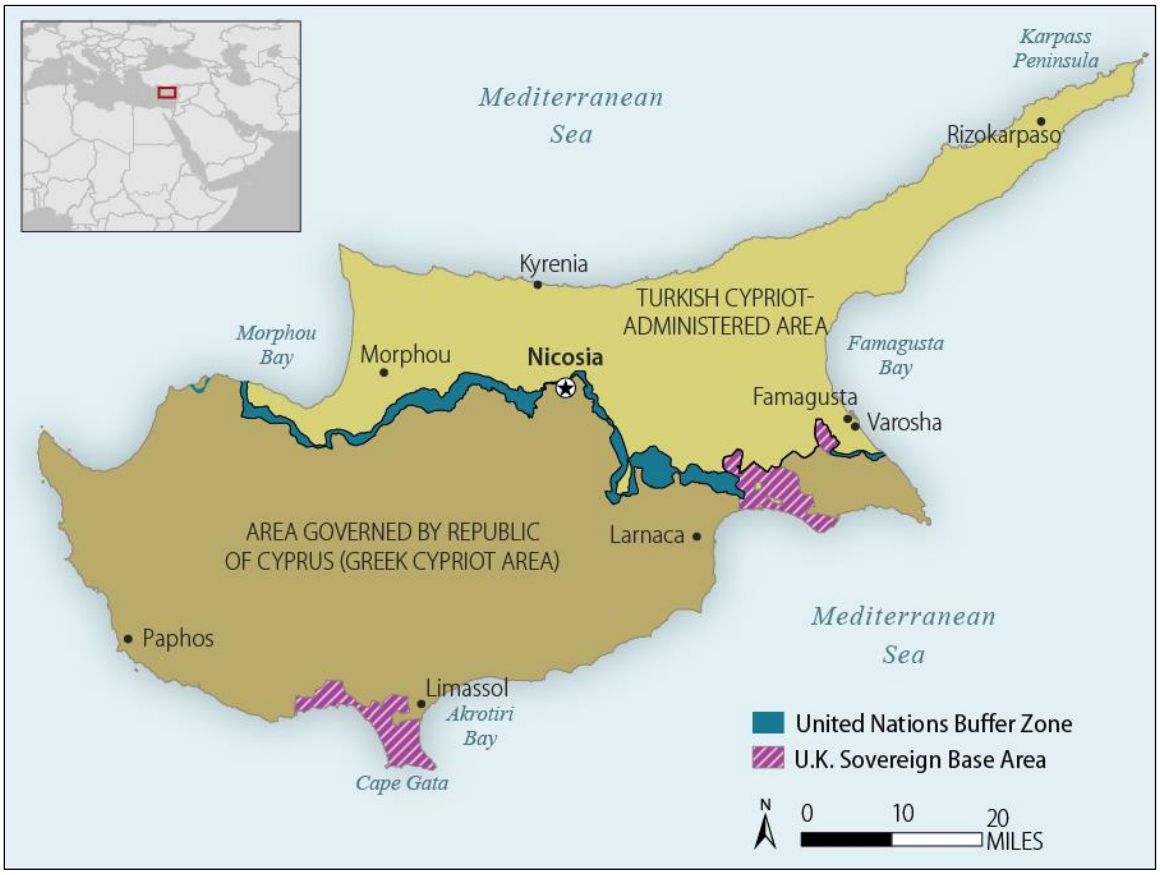
[1] Parts of this report are drawn from a more comprehensive history of the Cyprus negotiations included in out-of-print CRS Report RL33497, *Cyprus: Status of U.N. Negotiations and Related Issues*, available to congressional clients upon request.

[2] Turkey officially refers to its action as a "peace operation." The Greek Cypriots and much of the international community refer to it as an "invasion." Unofficial estimates indicate that Turkish military forces currently deployed in northern Cyprus range from 20,000 to 30,000.

However, he ruled out a merger with Turkey and pledged cooperation with United Nations–brokered settlement efforts. Thirty-two years later, only Turkey has recognized the TRNC.

Between 1974 and 2002, there were numerous, unsuccessful rounds of U.N.-sponsored direct and indirect negotiations to achieve a settlement. Negotiations focused on reconciling the two sides' interests and reestablishing a central government. They foundered on definitions of goals and ways to implement a federal solution. Turkish Cypriots emphasized bizonality and the political equality of the two communities, preferring two nearly autonomous societies with limited contact. Greek Cypriots emphasized the freedoms of movement, property, and settlement throughout the island. The two parties also differed on the means of achieving a federation: Greek Cypriots wanted their internationally recognized national government to devolve power to the Turkish Cypriots, who would then join a Cypriot republic. For the Turkish Cypriots, two entities would join, for the first time, in a new federation. These differences in views also affected the resolution of issues such as property claims, citizenship of mainland Turks who had settled on the island, and other legal issues. These differences in views continue to plague the negotiations even today.

Figure 1. Map of Cyprus



Source: Created by the Congressional Research Service.

Annan Plan

Negotiations for a final solution to the Cyprus issue appeared to take a dramatic and positive step forward when on November 11, 2002, then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented a draft of "The Basis for Agreement on a Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem," commonly

referred to as the Annan Plan. The plan called for, among many provisions, a "common state" government with a single international legal personality that would participate in foreign and European Union relations. Two politically equal component states would address much of the daily responsibilities of government in their respective communities. The Annan Plan was a comprehensive approach and of necessity addressed highly controversial issues for both sides.

Over the course of the next 16 months, difficult negotiations ensued. Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash was replaced as chief negotiator by a more prosettlement figure, newly elected "prime minister" Mehmet Ali Talat. Republic of Cyprus President Glafkos Clerides was replaced through an election with, according to some observers, a more skeptical president, Tassos Papadopoulos. The Annan Plan itself was revised several times in an attempt to reach compromises demanded by both sides. Complicating the matter even more, on April 16, 2003, the Republic of Cyprus signed an accession treaty with the European Union (EU) to become a member of the EU on May 1, 2004, whether or not there was a settlement and a reunited Cyprus.

Finally, after numerous meetings and negotiations and despite a lack of a firm agreement, but sensing that further negotiations would produce little else, on March 29, 2004, Secretary-General Annan released his "final revised plan" and announced that the plan would be put to referenda simultaneously in both north and south Cyprus on April 24, 2004. The Turkish Cypriot leadership split, with Denktash urging rejection and Talat urging support. Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos, to the dismay of the U.N., EU, and United States, but for reasons he argued were legitimate concerns of the Greek Cypriot community, urged the Greek Cypriots to reject the referenda. On April 24, what remaining hope existed for a solution to the crisis on Cyprus was dashed as 76% of Greek Cypriot voters rejected the plan, while 65% of Turkish Cypriot voters accepted it. In his May 28, 2004, report following the vote, Annan said that "the Greek Cypriots' vote must be respected, but they need to demonstrate willingness to resolve the Cyprus problem through a bicommunal, bizonal federation and to articulate their concerns about security and implementation of the Plan with 'clarity and finality.'"

The Christofias-Talat Negotiations: 2008-2010

As early as 2004, Talat, as Turkish Cypriot "prime minister," was credited with helping convince the Turkish Cypriots to support the Annan Plan and had been seen as perhaps the one Turkish Cypriot leader who could move the Greek Cypriots toward a more acceptable solution for both sides. For his efforts at the time, Talat, on April 17, 2005, was elected "president" of the unrecognized TRNC over the National Unity Party's (UBP) Dr. Dervis Eroglu, receiving 55.6% of the vote in a field of nine.

For roughly the next four years, to little avail, Cyprus muddled through a series of offers and counteroffers to restart serious negotiations even as the Greek Cypriots solidified their new status as a member of the EU, a status not extended to the Turkish Cypriots despite an EU pledge to try to help end the isolation of the north.

On February 24, 2008, 61-year-old Demetris Christofias of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) was elected to a five-year term as president of the Republic of Cyprus. Christofias was educated in the Soviet Union and is a fluent Russian speaker. He joined the communist-rooted AKEL party at the age of 14 and rose through its ranks to become leader in 1988. Christofias was elected president of the Cypriot House of Representatives in 2001 and won reelection in 2006.

Christofias's election had the backing of the Democratic (DIKO) Party and the Socialist (EDEK) Party. Christofias, in part, tailored his campaign to opposing what he believed was an uncompromising approach toward the Turkish Cypriots by his opponent, incumbent President

Papadopoulos, and the stagnation in the attempt to reach a just settlement of the Cyprus problem. Although serious differences existed between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides over a final settlement, Christofias took the outcome of the vote as a sign that Greek Cypriots wanted to try once again for an end to the division of the island. In his inaugural address, President Christofias expressed the hope of achieving a "just, viable, and functional solution" to the Cyprus problem. He said that he sought to restore the unity of the island as a federal, bizonal, bicommunal republic; to exclude any rights of military intervention; and to provide for the withdrawal of Turkish troops and, ultimately, the demilitarization of the island. Christofias also reaffirmed that the 2004 Annan Plan, which he himself opposed at the time, was null and void and could not be the basis for a future settlement.

After Christofias's election, Turkish Cypriot leader Talat, a long-time acquaintance of Christofias, declared that "a solution in Cyprus is possible by the end of 2008."[3] He also declared that "the goal is to establish a new partnership state in Cyprus, based on the political equality of the two peoples and the equal status of two constituent states."[4] While the negotiations between Christofias and Talat appeared to get off to a fast start, the differences in positions quickly became apparent, and the talks, although held on a regular basis, soon began to bog down. Talat wanted to pursue negotiations on the basis of the provisions of the old Annan Plan, while Christofias, mindful of the Greek Cypriot rejection of that plan, was keen to avoid references to it. Old differences quickly resurfaced. As the negotiations dragged on well into 2009, it appeared that impatience, frustration, and uncertainty were beginning to mount against both Christofias in the south and Talat in the north.

By the end of 2009, perspectives on both sides of the island began to change. Some suggested that the Greek Cypriots sensed that the talks would not produce a desired outcome before the April 2010 elections in the north, in which Talat, running for reelection, was trailing in the polls to Eroglu. If Talat lost, it was argued, the negotiations were likely to have to begin anew with an entirely different Turkish Cypriot leadership. Under that scenario, many Greek Cypriots, including members within the political parties of the governing coalition, seemed leery of weakening their hand by offering further concessions. Some Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, appeared to think that the Greek Cypriot side would not offer Talat a negotiated settlement, betting from the opinion polls in the north that Eroglu would win the April elections and would pull back from serious negotiations, at least for a while as he consolidated his new government and reordered Turkish Cypriot strategy. The Greek Cypriots could then blame the anticipated hard-liners in the north and their presumed patrons in Ankara if the talks collapsed.

As the negotiations entered 2010, it appeared that the window of opportunity to reach a final settlement, at least between Christofias and Talat, was closing fast. Despite the fact that the two sides had been in negotiations for almost 18 months and in close to 60 meetings, they appeared to have had very little to show for their efforts. In his New Year message to the Greek Cypriots, Christofias suggested that while some progress had been made in a few areas, the two sides were not close to a settlement. The intensive dialogue between Christofias and Talat resumed on January 11, 2010, but after three sessions the talks seemed to have reached a standstill, with the gap between the respective positions of President Christofias and Talat on many of the tougher issues seeming to be insurmountable.

The last formal negotiating session between Christofias and Talat concluded on March 30, 2010, with no new developments. In the run-up to the final session there was some speculation that both

[3] *Anatolia*, "I Am Hopeful About a Solution, TRNC President Talat," February 25, 2008, BBC Monitoring European, February 26, 2008.

[4] Mehmet Ali Talat, letter to the editor, *Financial Times*, March 5, 2008.

sides would issue a joint statement assessing the negotiations up to that point and perhaps even announcing some of the areas in which convergences between Christofias and Talat had been achieved. Speculation was that Talat had wanted something positive to take into the final days of the election campaign and had presented Christofias a report summarizing what the Turkish Cypriots understood to have been achieved. Christofias, however, was already under pressure from his coalition partner, DIKO, and former coalition partner, EDEK, not to issue such a statement, which could have been interpreted as an interim agreement.

On March 30, 2010, Christofias and Talat issued a short statement suggesting that they had indeed made some progress in governance and power sharing, EU matters, and the economy, but they did not go beyond that. On April 1, Talat, feeling he needed to say more to his Turkish Cypriot constituents about the negotiations, held a press conference at which he outlined his understandings of what he and Christofias had achieved to that point. Christofias would neither confirm nor deny what Talat had presented.

A New Era: Christofias and Eroglu

On April 18, 2010, Talat lost his reelection bid to his rival Dervis Eroglu of the UBP. Observers believe Talat's defeat was due to a combination of his failure to secure a settlement of the Cyprus problem after almost two years and his inability to convince the EU and others to help end what the Turkish Cypriots believed was the economic isolation of the north. Some observers also noted that an overwhelming number of mainland Turks who had settled in the north and who continued to identify more with mainland Turkey had little interest in unification with Greek Cyprus and voted for Eroglu because they believed his views were consistent with theirs.

Eroglu, then a 72-year-old physician and long-time politician, won the election with just over 50% of the vote. Eroglu was seen as having a style and harder-line views similar to former Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash, particularly in seeking more autonomy for each community. Eroglu also headed a party in which some of its followers had advocated a permanently divided island and international recognition for the TRNC. It was reported that during the campaign Eroglu may have suggested that perhaps Cyprus should consider a kind of "soft divorce" similar to what the Slovaks and Czechs did when they separated. During the campaign, Eroglu also criticized Talat for what he thought were too many concessions to the Greek Cypriot side, including the agreement that a reunited Cyprus would hold a single sovereignty through which both sides would reunite. Nevertheless, even while criticizing Talat's positions, Eroglu insisted that negotiations would continue under his presidency. Upon assuming his new office, Eroglu wrote a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressing his willingness to resume the negotiations under the good offices of the U.N. and at the point where the negotiations between Talat and Christofias had left off. Despite Eroglu's position regarding the resumption of talks, most political elements on the Greek Cypriot side saw Eroglu's election as a negative development and expressed their skepticism as to what the future would hold.

On May 26, 2010, President Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu held their first formal negotiating session. The meeting was held under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary-General's special adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer. Almost immediately, a controversy arose when it was reported that Downer read a statement from U.N. Secretary-General Ban congratulating the parties for starting the talks again from where they left off (including the confirmation of existing convergences agreed to by Christofias and Talat), for agreeing to abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions on Cyprus, and for suggesting that a final agreement could be reached in the coming months.

Downer's statement immediately drew criticism from several of the Greek Cypriot political parties that were concerned that the references to the convergences arrived at by Christofias and Talat were being considered as agreements by the U.N., a position not shared by the Greek Cypriots. On the other hand, apparently after the May 26 meeting, Eroglu made a statement that the Turkish Cypriots would not be bound by the statement of the U.N. Secretary-General, especially with regard to previous U.N. Security Council resolutions, some of which did include calls for Turkey to withdraw its troops from Cyprus. While Eroglu was trying to clarify that he accepted U.N. resolutions on the parameters of the negotiations, some in the Greek Cypriot leadership seem to question whether Eroglu was trying to redefine the basis under which he would proceed with the negotiations.

When the talks resumed in May 2010, Christofias and Eroglu, along with several technical committees and working groups with representatives from both sides, met regularly but made no apparent progress. In September, in an interview with Greek Cypriot press, Eroglu expressed his frustration with the process and accused the Greek Cypriots of treating Turkish Cypriot positions with contempt. He apparently suggested that Christofias needed to inform the Greek Cypriot people that any final solution would involve pain on both sides but also had to minimize social upheaval, especially among the Turkish Cypriot community. When asked what pain Eroglu was prepared to accept, however, he stated that it would not include giving up the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus or its flag or sending mainland Turks who settled in the north back to Turkey.[5] In October 2010, Turkish press reported that Eroglu appeared so frustrated with the negotiations that he suggested that Turkish Cypriots had become fed up and no longer believed in the possibility of a mutually agreeable settlement. "As time passes," he said, "the willingness of the two communities to live together is diminishing."[6] For his part, Christofias told the U.N. Secretary-General in September 2010 that both sides were not coming closer to a settlement and that Turkey, given its own domestic and regional problems, "was not ready to solve the Cyprus problem."[7]

Although assessments of the negotiations appeared to grow more pessimistic, additional sessions were held through the end of December. Talks were then suspended while Eroglu tended to medical problems. While both sides continued to talk and continued to pledge to seek a solution, neither side had indicated whether progress was being made or that any compromises were possible. On January 1, 2011, Christofias declared his disappointment over the passing of another year without a settlement and accused Turkey of not making any effort to promote a solution to the Cyprus issue.

In mid-April 2011, the Republic of Cyprus entered into a parliamentary election period that concluded on May 22. The outcome of the elections did not seem to suggest that the negotiating position of Christofias would require changes. Although opposition to what was perceived to be Christofias's concessions to the north was voiced during the campaign, none of the three parties with the most hard-line views—EDEK, the pro-Europe EVROKO party, and DIKO—increased its vote share. The impact of the elections would later prove problematic for the negotiations. Similarly, in national elections held in Turkey in June, Cyprus was barely an issue among the competing parties. After the election there was some speculation that then-Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, having won another five-year term, might have been prepared to inject some positive new energy into the Cyprus negotiations in order to help Turkey's flagging

[5] *Cyprus Mail*, "Eroglu: 'Treated with Contempt,'" September 19, 2010.

[6] *Hurriyet Daily News*, "Turkish Cypriot Leader Ready for Tripartite New York Meeting," October 22, 2010.

[7] *Cyprus Mail*, "Christofias: Two Sides Not Getting Closer," September 12, 2010.

accession negotiations with the EU. Later this seemed to have been a misreading of the prime minister's intentions.

New Year, Continued Stalemate, End of the Talks

Throughout 2011, Christofias and Eroglu continued their futile negotiations, which also included two meetings with U.N. Secretary-General Ban in another attempt by the U.N. to boost momentum for the talks. Ban insisted that the negotiations be stepped up and that the three would meet on October 30 to assess what progress had been achieved. The U.N. would then be prepared to organize an international conference to discuss security-related issues as Turkey suggested. This would be followed by plans to hold referenda on a final solution in both the north and south by the spring of 2012. The hope among some was that by intensifying the negotiations and reaching a solution by the end of 2011, a potentially reunified Cyprus would be prepared to assume the rotating presidency of the EU on July 1, 2012. By the fall of 2011, both sides seemed to have lost a clear urgency to achieve a final solution. Trying to reach a negotiated settlement by the end of October became impractical.

As 2011 ended, pessimism abounded, with many feeling that what had not been accomplished in the previous two years could become very difficult to achieve in 2012 as the Republic of Cyprus entered into full preparation for its EU presidency. Many felt that unless there was a major breakthrough in the negotiations by early 2012, the talks would become even more stalemated and could culminate in a potential dramatic turn of events by the summer.

Doubts about the prospects of a solution acceptable to both sides were also raised with the release of a public opinion poll that apparently found a growing negative climate and public discontent on the island, an increased ambivalence on the part of Turkish Cypriots, and a possible shift toward a no vote for reunification among Greek Cypriots. The poll also found that society on both sides needed to begin a very public discussion of the parameters of the negotiations and that confidence-building measures were needed to be implemented to increase the levels of trust in the peace process.[8]

As 2012 began, both sides were again preparing to travel to New York for a fifth meeting with Ban to assess the progress of the negotiations. Ban had asked both Christofias and Eroglu to come to New York on January 22-24 with significant offers in the areas of governance, economy, and EU affairs so that the "Greentree 2" meeting could facilitate a final deal that would allow the U.N. to convene an international conference in the spring to resolve security-related issues and allow referenda on a final agreement in both the north and south by early summer of 2012.

It appeared, however, that even before arriving in New York, neither Christofias nor Eroglu was willing or able to make necessary concessions on the difficult issues of property rights, security, territory, mainland Turks who had "settled" in the north, or citizenship—areas where both sides had long-held and very different positions. The uncertainty of what could be achieved prompted Christofias to question whether the meeting should take place at all. The lack of any progress to that point led some in the Greek Cypriot opposition to suggest the meeting be cancelled and warned Christofias not to accept any deadlines or U.N. arbitration or agree to an international conference without explicit agreements on internal issues.

Nevertheless, Greentree 2 took place, and it was reported that both sides had submitted to Ban extensive proposals that each felt could provide the basis for a solution. The Greentree meetings concluded without any new agreement to end the stalemate and led an apparently frustrated Ban to say that he would wait until he received a progress report from his special adviser at the end of

[8] Interpeace, "Latest Cyprus Poll Findings: Greek and Turkish Leadership Must Take Bold Action Now," July 5, 2011.

March 2012 before deciding whether to convene an international conference, despite Christofias's opposition to any such decision.

Christofias and Eroglu resumed their direct negotiations in mid-February, but it appeared unlikely that the stalemate could be broken at that point and that the potential for any agreement looked to be delayed—not only until after the EU presidency in the latter half of 2012, but also until after the February 2013 national elections in the republic. In early April, it was reported that the Turkish Cypriot side had suggested that the U.N.-sponsored talks be terminated once the republic assumed the EU presidency on July 1, 2012. This prompted President Christofias to respond that Turkish Cypriots were no longer interested in a solution, even though, as Christofias suggested, the talks could continue during the EU presidency, as the two issues were not related.[9]

In May 2012, and with the EU presidency fast approaching, Christofias understood that the talks could not have achieved anything positive, and although he insisted that the negotiations could have continued during the EU presidency, the U.N. did not. U.N. special envoy Alexander Downer then announced that Ban had decided not to call for an international conference on Cyprus due to the lack of agreement on core domestic issues and further stated that the U.N. would no longer host the leaders' "unproductive" talks. Downer said that the U.N. would reconvene the meetings "when there was a clear indication that both sides had something substantial to conclude."[10]

By mid-2012, the convergence of several factors led to the suspension of the talks. One factor was Christofias's intent to make the republic's presidency of the EU a success. Christofias clearly did not want a divisive debate over what would have probably been an unpopular agreement—even if he and Eroglu could have negotiated a settlement—to detract from or ultimately overshadow the Cyprus EU presidency. Eroglu's pronouncement that he would not meet directly with President Christofias during the six-month EU presidency, despite the fact that the settlement negotiations were not part of the presidency's mandate, was also a factor. The emergence of the fiscal and budget crisis in Cyprus brought on in the aftermath of the larger Eurozone crisis also contributed to the demise of the negotiations. Christofias realized that managing a serious fiscal crisis and the presidency of the EU simultaneously would leave, in reality, little time for him to continue any regular negotiations with Eroglu.

On May 14, 2012, recognizing his own internal political realities and reverting back to an earlier statement that he would not seek reelection if he was not able to resolve the Cyprus problem, President Christofias announced that he would not seek reelection in 2013, stating that "there are no reasonable hopes for a solution to the Cyprus problem or for substantial further progress in the remaining months of our presidency."[11]

By the end of May 2012, the U.N.-sponsored talks, having essentially reached a stalemate, were formally suspended. Neither Christofias nor Eroglu strongly objected to the U.N. decision. While both sides blamed the other for a lack of progress on an agreement, the reaction to the downgrading of the talks appeared to be muted among both the political leaders and the general publics in both communities.

In early June, Kudret Ozersay, then the chief adviser to Eroglu for the negotiations, resigned, further signaling that the talks, even at the technical level, would not continue at the same pace. However, Ozersay was soon replaced by Osman Ertuğ as chief negotiator.

---

[9] *Famagusta Gazette,* "Eroglu Seeks Termination of U.N. Talks on Cyprus, President Says," April 12, 2012.

[10] *Cyprus Mail,* "U.N. Decides to Take a Back Seat," April 28, 2012.

[11] *Cyprus Mail,* "Christofias Bows Out," May 15, 2012.

Elections 2013: The Anastasiades Government and New Talks

In January 2013, the Republic of Cyprus entered a period of national elections. With Christofias out of the picture, Nicos Anastasiades of the center-right, democratic DISY party, with the backing of the conservative DIKO and EVROKO parties, emerged as the leader in early public opinion polls. DIKO had been part of the previous Christofias-led government but withdrew from the coalition in disagreement over some of the positions Christofias took in the negotiations with the Turkish Cypriots. Anastasiades's closest challenge came from the AKEL party itself, led by Stavros Malas. Although Anastasiades took the largest number of first round votes, he was forced into a runoff with Malas but eventually emerged victorious. During the campaign, neither candidate offered many concrete proposals regarding the negotiations with the Turkish Cypriots, as the fiscal and budget crisis took center stage.

Anastasiades, who had backed the 2004 Annan Plan for a Cyprus settlement, appeared cautious about his intentions other than calling for a settlement, perhaps not wanting to cause a public rift with his DIKO and EVROKO allies, who had opposed the Annan Plan. While foreclosing new discussions based on the old Annan Plan, Anastasiades had suggested that the basis of future talks would have to be broad understandings reached in 1977 and 1979 between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leadership at the time as well as a 2006 set of principles agreed to by former Cypriot leaders. He also suggested that as president he would not be directly involved in the day-to-day negotiations but would, in time, appoint someone as his representative and principal negotiator.

Upon being sworn in as president, Anastasiades did reach out to the Turkish Cypriots, referring to them as citizens of Cyprus but not giving any clear signal as to his timetable for restarting the negotiations. On the other hand, Yiannakis Omirou, then-leader of the parliament, stated that a new national policy was necessary: "We need to denounce the Turkish stance to the international and European community and redefine the Cyprus problem as a problem of invasion, occupation and violation of international law." The new policy, Omirou went on, "must set out the framework for a Cyprus solution and use Cyprus's EU membership and Turkey's EU prospects to exert pressure on Ankara to terminate the island's occupation and accept a solution, in accordance with international and European law."[12]

Initially, the Turkish Cypriots appeared cautious about which negotiating partner they expected to see across the table if and when the talks resumed. Would it be Anastasiades, who earlier was sympathetic to many of the provisions of the Annan Plan, or a different negotiator, who was critical of the previous government's negotiating positions and had teamed with what the Turkish Cypriots believed to be hard-line partners who either withdrew from the previous government coalition in part because of the reported "concessions" being offered by Christofias or were consistently critical of the previous government's approach? The Turkish Cypriots had also seemed to set a new standard regarding their own status as a prelude for resuming the talks. Eroglu had stated that the talks could not resume automatically from where they left off and had begun referring to the two "states," a "new dynamic," a "new negotiating table," and a timetable for concluding whatever talks did resume.

Even as Anastasiades was being inaugurated, he had to turn his attention to the serious domestic banking and fiscal crises facing the republic. At the same time, Turkish Cypriot and Turkish leadership began to publicly pressure Anastasiades to restart the settlement talks as soon as possible, although it appeared that the Turkish Cypriot side was not proposing any significant compromises or new ideas that would move the talks forward. This prompted Anastasiades to

[12] *Famagusta Gazette*, "House President: A New Policy on the Cyprus Problem Needed," March 2, 2013.

respond that he would not be forced to the bargaining table during this period of economic turmoil and was committed to first addressing the government's fiscal crisis.

In mid-May, Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides traveled to New York and Washington to assure everyone that the leadership of the republic was indeed interested in resuming the negotiations but that they needed time to get a handle on the economic crisis on the island. He also made it clear that the Anastasiades Administration would not be bound by any previous convergences discussed between his predecessor Christofias and Eroglu and would not agree to any definitive timetable to conclude the talks. Kasoulides also floated the old idea, previously rejected by the Turkish Cypriots (and opposed by some Greek Cypriots who wanted a comprehensive agreement), that as a confidence-building measure on the part of Turkey, the abandoned town of Verosha should be returned to "its rightful owners." In exchange, the Turkish Cypriots could be permitted to use the port of Famagusta for direct trade with Europe under the supervision of the EU. Turkish Cypriots also traveled to Washington with a more upbeat message that 2014 would be a good year to reach an agreement.

The Turkish Cypriots, however, rejected the return of Verosha and began speaking more publicly and more often of "the realities on the island," referring to two separate coequal states as well as timetables for concluding the talks. Eroglu had stated that "while there is a Greek Cypriot administration in the South, there is the TRNC state in the North." Ankara, for its part, had already suggested that while it was ready to say "yes" to a negotiated solution, a two-state option was viable if talks could not restart and produce a solution in a timely fashion.

Eroglu stated in December 2012 that "the Cyprus problem cannot be solved under existing conditions" and that "a possible settlement of the Cyprus issue could be viable only if it is based on the existing realities on the island," which acknowledges that "there were two different people having two separate languages, religions, nationality and origin and two different states" and that "certainly it was possible to find a solution to make these two people live together, however people should bear in mind, it is [not] realistic to establish one state from two separate states."[13]

In late May 2013, Anastasiades and Eroglu finally met, and Anastasiades restated his support for the resumption of the talks but again indicated that the talks could not restart until perhaps October 2013. In July, the Greek Cypriot National Council took the day-to-day responsibility for the negotiations out of the hands of the president, as had been the practice since 2008, and appointed Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis of the Foreign Ministry as the Greek Cypriot negotiator. This action increased speculation that the Greek Cypriots were close to proposing that preliminary discussions begin with the goal of resuming the formal negotiations.

Throughout the remainder of 2013 and into the beginning of 2014, both sides repeatedly argued over how to restart the talks despite repeated assurances from both sides that they remained committed to restarting the negotiations. Through that period, neither side had been willing to reach agreement on the language of what the Greek Cypriots insisted should be a "joint statement" redefining a set of negotiating goals or outcomes that both sides would strive to achieve. The Turkish Cypriots initially rejected the idea that such an opening statement was necessary but then decided to negotiate language they could be comfortable with. Negotiations between Mavroyiannis and Osman Ertuğ took almost six months to conclude.

On February 8, 2014, after what appeared to be a significant intervention by the United States, the Cyprus press reported that an agreement on the language of a "joint declaration" had been

[13] Statements made by Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu on various occasions in December 2012 as provided to CRS by the Turkish Cypriots.

reached and that Anastasiades and Eroglu would meet right away to relaunch the negotiations. This was further confirmed when the "joint statement" was released to the public a few days later.[14] The Declaration, which to some became the most comprehensive agreed document on the Cyprus question since the High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 or the Annan Plan of 2004, now serves as the basis of the current negotiations.

The agreement on the language of the joint statement, however, did not come without a political price for Anastasiades. On February 27, the leader of the government's coalition partner, DIKO, Nicolas Papadopoulos, announced that it was leaving the government in disagreement over the way President Anastasiades was handling the negotiations, much as they did when they quit the Christofias government.[15] It appeared that Papadopoulos—whose father, former President Tassos Papadopoulos, had opposed the Annan Plan—was concerned that Anastasiades had tacitly accepted some of the past convergences that DIKO had opposed. The fact that the joint statement referred only to a "united" Cyprus and not the Republic of Cyprus may have again suggested to DIKO that Anastasiades had come too close to accepting an autonomous Turkish Cypriot state over which the Greek Cypriots would have little or no authority or jurisdiction.

Curiously, Ertuğ left his post as negotiator after the Declaration was announced but continued to serve as Eroğlu's spokesperson. The Turkish Cypriots then reappointed former negotiator Kudret Ozersay, one seen as more willing to seek accommodation, as their representative to the talks. Negotiations resumed between Mavroyiannis and Ozersay, with Anastasiades and Eroglu meeting periodically. It remained unclear exactly where the starting point for each of the "chapters" of issues to be negotiated had been set. Both sides had earlier insisted that they would not be bound by past convergences thought to have been achieved in previous negotiations. However, the February joint statement referred to the fact that only "unresolved" issues would be on the table, suggesting that perhaps some previous agreements had, in fact, been accepted.

Such a long disagreement first over the need for, and then the language of, the joint statement indicated to many observers that it would continue to be difficult to reach a final solution, particularly in 2014, which marked the 40th anniversary of the 1974 deployment of Turkish military forces to the island and the 10th anniversary of the Greek Cypriot vote against the Annan Plan, events that would be observed in very different ways on each side of the island. The pessimism surrounding the potential continuation of the stalemate prompted one well-respected Washington think tank to suggest that a permanent separation of the two sides might become inevitable and that serious consideration should be given to such a possible outcome.[16]

The talks did resume in 2014, with Anastasiades and Eroglu meeting several times. In early July, Eroglu was said to have submitted a "roadmap" toward a settlement, which included a national referendum to be held by the end of 2014. This was apparently rejected by Anastasiades. Later in July it was reported that the Greek Cypriots had tabled a 17-point plan addressing their positions on issues for a future agreement while the Turkish Cypriots submitted a 15-point counterproposal. Both proposals were apparently rejected. Not only was there disagreement on how to go forward, but there had been reports that both sides had actually backtracked on several issues (see below). These and other reported roadblocks to the negotiations prompted Greek Prime Minister Antonis

[14] For text of the statement, see *Cyprus Mail*, "Joint Declaration Final Version as Agreed Between the Two Leaders," February 11, 2014.

[15] *Famagusta Gazette*, "DIKO Decides to Leave Cyprus Government Coalition," February 27, 2014.

[16] International Crisis Group, "Divided Cyprus: Coming to Terms on an Imperfect Reality," Europe Report 229, March 2014.

Samaras to say in July that no "significant progress" had been made[17] and the Turkish Cypriot official for foreign affairs, Ozdil Nami, to suggest "the peace talks were finished."[18]

The last meeting between Anastasiades and Eroglu before a break for the summer was held on July 26 and was reportedly a somewhat tense session, with Anastasiades expressing his frustration with the Turkish Cypriot side. In late August, the United Nations named Norwegian diplomat Espen Barth Eide as the Secretary-General's new special adviser on Cyprus. The talks, hosted by Eide, resumed in September, and when Anastasiades and Eroglu renewed their meetings on September 21, Turkish Cypriot negotiator Kudret Ozersay stated that he felt that "real negotiations are starting now."[19] Unfortunately, Ozersay's optimism did not last very long. Near the end of September, Turkey, sensing an increased interaction among the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and Egypt over energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, decided, in what was seen as a provocative act, to move its own seismic exploration vessel into the Republic of Cyprus's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the southern coast of the island. Turkey then issued what was referred to as a "navigational telex" (NAVTEX) stating that the seismic operations could last until April 2015 unless the Turkish Cypriots were given more of a role in decisions regarding the island's natural resources, specifically energy. Reacting to Turkey's decision to establish a presence in the Cypriot EEZ, President Anastasiades announced in October that he was withdrawing from the settlement negotiations and declared that the talks would not resume until the Turkish seismic vessel was withdrawn from Cyprus's EEZ and the NAVTEX was rescinded. By March 2015, the seismic ship had moved to the port of Famagusta, but the NAVTEX had not been withdrawn.

Although the Greek Cypriots insisted that all of the island would eventually benefit from any resources exploited in the waters off the coast, they pointed out that energy, under the provisions of the joint statement agreed to earlier, would be considered a "federal-level" issue and would become part of the dialogue once an agreement was reached. The Turkish Cypriots, for their part, demanded that energy issues become part of the formal settlement negotiations once they resumed. In late October 2014, with the negotiations suspended, Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ozersay was replaced by Ergun Olgun. The suspension of the talks, precipitated for some by an unnecessary action and a possible overreaction, again raised serious doubts regarding the commitment of both sides to achieve a solution that left one former British foreign secretary stating that "the international community should accept the reality that there is division and that you have partition."[20]

Through the first four months of 2015, the talks remained in suspension with Anastasiades continuing to hold that Turkey would have to withdraw its seismic ship, rescind the NAVTEX issued in January, and stop threatening existing energy exploration activities off the southern coast of Cyprus. Some believed that political pressure from what would be his normal domestic political allies had forced Anastasiades into a corner, preventing him from backing down from this demand despite some domestic and international pressure to do so. Others believed he was under pressure to hold off on the talks until the national elections in the north, scheduled for April 19, were concluded.

---

[17] *Famagusta Gazette,* "No "Significant Progress" in Cyprus Talks—Greek PM," July 28, 2014.

[18] "Cyprus Peace Talks Are Finished, Claims Ozdil Nami," Turkish Cypriot TV as reported in the *Famagusta Gazette,* July 18, 2014.

[19] Interview with Kudret Ozersay on Ada TV, September 2014.

[20] "Straw Calls for Acceptance of Cyprus Division," reported by the *Famagusta Gazette,* from an interview between former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and the Anadolu Agency, November 26, 2014.

By mid-April 2015, Turkey had removed its seismic vessel from Cyprus and did not renew the NAVTEX. However, the election campaign in the north had begun, and both sides accepted the fact that the negotiations would not resume until after the elections.

Elections 2015: Akinci and the Resumption of the Negotiations

On April 19, Turkish Cypriots went to the polls to elect a new "president." Seven candidates were on the ballot. The incumbent, Dervis Ergolu, emerged with a thin margin of votes over the runner up, Mustafa Akinci, but did not win enough to avoid a second round of voting. On April 26, in the second round of voting, Mustafa Akinci of the small, center-left, Communal Democratic Party (TDA) won the election to become the new leader of the Turkish Cypriots, defeating Eroglu with 60% of the votes. Akinci, a three-time "mayor" of the Turkish Cypriot-administered half of Nicosia, immediately announced that the negotiations would resume as soon as possible in May and that it was his intention to conclude a settlement agreement by the end of 2015. In congratulating Akinci on his election, Anastasiades confirmed that he, too, looked forward to restarting the negotiations as soon as possible.

Akinci leads a small political party that played little, if any, role in previous governments or the past negotiation process. His candidacy initially was criticized by some who claimed he was inexperienced. For others, Akinci entered the negotiations unencumbered with any preconditions for the talks or for a settlement. However, while Akinci controlled the "presidency," his party did not control the government. Akinci also did not initially meet with all of the other Turkish Cypriot political parties, and he seemed determined to rely on the business and nongovernmental organization (NGO) communities to help develop and articulate his negotiating positions.

It did not take long for the two sides to meet. On May 11, 2015, the U.N. Special Envoy hosted a dinner for the two leaders in what was described as a relaxed and positive setting. Akinci quickly named Ozdil Nami, the former "foreign minister" in the Eroglu government, as the new negotiator for the Turkish Cypriot side. On May 17, 2015, Anastasiades and Akinci held their first formal negotiating session. On May 23, the two leaders took the unprecedented step of walking together down Ledra Street, the symbolic dividing line of the island, in a show of solidarity and hope that this time things would be different. This was the first time that a president of the republic stepped onto territory normally referred to as "occupied" land. Since then, the two leaders have met regularly, including an intensified series of meetings in August and September 2016.

The reaction to Akinci among some, although not all, Greek Cypriots appeared to be positive but restrained, with a somewhat upbeat "wait-and-see" attitude prevailing. Many appeared to be relieved that Eroglu and his hard-line approach to the negotiations were gone. With little in the way of determined political opponents acting as a restraint on his negotiating strategy, some felt that Akinci would be more willing to compromise on some of the issues Eroglu would not budge on. On the other hand, not knowing where Akinci's support for a final deal would actually come from, some were not sure exactly what Akinci could compromise on. In August 2015, Akinci held a round of visits and discussions with the political parties, NGOs, and the business community apparently to assess exactly how much leeway he had for compromise.

Turkey was another factor for Akinci. Akinci was not seen as a favorite of Ankara during the elections, and Ankara was likely surprised with the margin of his victory. The government in Ankara offered the obligatory congratulations to Akinci, and Turkey's President Erdogan visited the island to meet with the new leader. In fact, it was reported in the Turkish press that Akinci and Turkish President Erdogan had exchanged some unpleasant words immediately after the election. In his victory statement, Akinci reiterated his campaign position that the status of the relationship

between Turkey and Turkish Cyprus should change. "It should be a relationship of brothers/sisters, not a relationship of a motherland and her child," he had said.[21] This provoked a somewhat angry response from Erdogan and led the Turkish press to question the future of Turkey's support for the negotiations. In an editorial in the April 28, 2015, edition of the *Hurriyet Daily News*, the author suggested that

> Akıncı has been away from active politics for more than a decade. His team is mostly composed of young people unaware of the delicacies and history of the Cyprus problem. Anastasiades might try to score an easy victory. If the Cyprus talks between the "novice" Akıncı team and a ravenous Anastasiades team somehow agree on a deal that favored the demands of the Greek Cypriots, Akinci could dangerously risk fundamental demands of the Turkish Cypriots, forcing the whole process to be derailed in a manner very difficult to revive with extreme effort.[22]

In an August 2015 interview, Emine Colak, the former Turkish Cypriot "foreign minister," indicated that Turkey was not trying to manipulate the peace talks and seemed, for the moment, content to let the Turkish Cypriots negotiate their own agreement.[23] Some observers attributed this "hands-off" approach by Turkey as a reason why a positive atmosphere had surrounded the talks and why some concrete progress seemed to have been made.

Over the summer and fall of 2015, as the negotiations continued on a regular pace, several new "confidence-building" measures were initiated. The two leaders agreed on the opening of a new border crossing at Deryneia, and for the first time in 40 years, electricity connections between the two sides were reestablished. Returning Verosha to the Greek Cypriots continued to be a confidence-building measure that Anastasiades endorsed, but that issue was mostly deferred by Akinci.

Despite the positive atmosphere surrounding the talks, there were words of caution, particularly from Greek Cypriots, who reminded everyone that there was still a lot of ground to cover.[24] For instance, in early September 2015 several Greek Cypriot political parties officially rejected the notion of a bizonal, bicommunal federation as a part of the solution to the Cyprus problem and criticized reported convergences on population size in the north, the rotating presidency, and particularly Turkey's security role.

The concerns expressed by the Greek Cypriot opposition were not just reserved for Anastasiades. In late December 2015, Akinci, in an interview on Turkish television, seemed to outline some very basic bottom lines, referred to as his "wish list," on the issues under negotiation. The reaction to Akinci's comments drew swift and negative reaction from several Greek Cypriot political leaders, suggesting that trouble for the talks was brewing just below the surface. Former House Speaker Yiannakis Omirou described Akinci's remarks as "highly indicative of the Turkish side's intentions," and said "Turkey effectively seeks to legalize the results of its 1974 invasion. He [Akinci] continues to support the preservation of Turkey's role as a guarantor, and insists on unacceptable views on political equality and rotating presidency."[25] For some in the opposition, this was a warning to Anastasiades that he should seriously rethink his views if he had made any concessions on those issues.

---

[21] "Erdogan Engages in War of Words with New Turkish Cypriot Leader," *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 26, 2015.

[22] "Akinci Won, Now What," *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 28, 2015.

[23] "Turkey Not Manipulating Cyprus Peace Talks," *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 2, 2015.

[24] "Euphoria over Cyprus talks not justified," *Famagusta-Gazette*, October 17, 2015.

[25] "Akinci's Insistence on 'Wish List' Will Not Bring Desired Results, Spokesman Said," *Cyprus Mail*, December 30, 2015.

During 2016, the road to a settlement remained difficult and, beyond the negotiators themselves, became somewhat more complicated. Internally, in the north, disputes among the political parties in early 2016 forced the more "friendly-to-Akinci" government coalition to collapse. A new, more conservative Turkish Cypriot coalition government formed that did not include representatives from Akinci's party or parties from the previous coalition. The government was led by "Prime Minister" Huseyin Ozgurgun, whose support for the negotiations went from lukewarm to marked by serious doubts. Ozgurgun became more critical of the talks and spoke out forcefully in favor of retaining Turkish security guarantees. In an August 2016 interview, Ozgurgun reminded observers that Akinci's negotiating team did not include any representatives from the government, suggesting that the government and the negotiators were "disconnected."[26] The government also included "Deputy Prime Minister" Serdar Denktash, the son of the former icon of the Turkish Cypriots. Some believed that he retained his father's hard-line skepticism of any deal and had suggested that if an agreement was not reached by the end of 2016, a referendum should be held in the north to determine whether the Turkish Cypriots wanted the negotiations to continue in 2017. Such a referendum idea was dropped as the negotiations entered 2017. Then-"Foreign Minister" Tashsin Ertugruloglu, who opposed the Annan Plan, also had become more public in expressing the view that no agreement could be achieved. These three influential figures eventually became a political problem for Akinci as negotiations toward a tentative agreement were pursued.

In the south, elections were held in spring 2016 for the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives. The two largest parties, the governing DISY party and the pro-settlement AKEL, lost some ground, and for the first time a nationalist/populist party (ELAM) entered the House. This party was seen by some as an offshoot of the radical right Golden Dawn in Greece. Although small in number, like several of the other parties, ELAM is skeptical of any power-sharing arrangement with the Turkish Cypriots. In addition to ELAM, in September 2016, the DIKO and Green parties suggested that the parliament pass a resolution stating that no agreement could include "foreign guarantees" and "foreign troops." DIKO's chairman reportedly stated that there no longer was confidence in the president.[27]

Despite the internal political developments, both sides proceeded with the negotiations through 2016. The mood appeared to be as positive and constructive as it had ever been, at least among the negotiators, with more frequent references to being farther along on the road to a settlement than in the past. There were also more positive stories in the international press and significant expressions of support for the negotiations from many world capitals, indicating perhaps that progress was actually being achieved.

Despite the level of optimism displayed by the leaders of the two sides, many recalled a similarly hopeful atmosphere in early 2008, after Christofias was elected president on a campaign filled with commitments of a quick conclusion to the negotiations. At that time, Turkish Cypriot leader Ali Talat declared that because he and Christofias shared the same vision of a future for Cyprus, the two could overcome years of disagreement and mistrust and that the negotiations could conclude within six months. Akinci's declarations regarding a quick settlement by the end of 2015 raised expectations, but that deadline, never accepted by Anastasiades, was missed—as, subsequently, was the end of 2016 target.

[26] "No government representative in Cyprus talks: Ozgurgun," North Cyprus News, August 2, 2016.

[27] "Green party wants binding House decision on Cyprus problem," *Cyprus Mail*, September 1, 2016.

To most observers, the two leaders seemed to have come closer to reaching a settlement than at any time since 2004, when the Annan Plan for a settlement and unification of the island was actually voted on (and ultimately rejected by the Greek Cypriots).

However, the normal frustrations that inevitably appear in these negotiations again mounted over the two sides' inability to establish an end point at which time an agreement—not perfect, but acceptable to both sides—would be reached. Some Turkish Cypriot leaders, including Akinci, had begun to suggest that the round of talks in 2016 could be the last if an agreement was not reached.

By the beginning of August 2016, both sides had insisted that significant convergences acceptable to both leaders had been reached on many issues. At this point, the leaders again raised the possibility of reaching an agreement by the end of 2016. Such a timetable would have allowed them to hold referenda in both communities by spring 2017, possibly before the next presidential election cycle began in the republic.

Having agreed to try to reach a settlement by the end of 2016, Anastasiades and Akinci accelerated their negotiations after a short early August recess. In late August and early September, eight intense sessions were held in advance of the U.N. General Assembly's annual meeting in mid-September. The idea was to achieve enough progress by then on many of the basic issues that both sides would then ask the U.N. Secretary-General to convene a five-party conference (with the two Cypriot communities and the security guarantee countries, Greece, Turkey, and the UK) in December to discuss the issue of security guarantees and finalize an agreement.

Although no five-party conference was announced at the U.N. meeting, the two leaders returned to Cyprus and agreed to another series of accelerated sessions in October and November, to further address the issue of territory and to move to a multiparty conference on security guarantees with the intention of finalizing an agreement.

Despite the progress in areas such as economic affairs, EU affairs, citizenship, and governance structures, serious differences on a rotating presidency, territory, and the sensitive chapter on security guarantees—the first time these issues had been formally discussed since the 2004 Annan Plan—remained wide enough to prevent an actual agreement from being achieved during those sessions.

Mont Pelerin

In November 2016, both sides agreed to travel to Mont Pelerin, Switzerland, to further address the more difficult issue of territory and to move to an agreement on holding a five-party conference on security guarantees. During the first week of the Mont Pelerin talks, which began on November 8, progress was reported on several issues and maps depicting what both sides thought should be the new boundaries of the new constituent states were discussed.

Disagreement over the amount of territory both sides would eventually claim and the number of displaced persons (mostly Greek Cypriots) who would be allowed to return to the new territories brought the talks to a standstill. The Greek Cypriots demanded that some 90,000 displaced Greek Cypriots be returned to new territory that would come under Greek Cypriot administration. The Turkish Cypriots insisted that the number be closer to 65,000. Faced with the loss of territory and a potential influx of Greek Cypriots into areas once controlled by the Turkish Cypriots, Akinci suggested that no deal on territorial adjustment could be made without a discussion and agreement on security guarantees.

President Anatasiades rejected the security-guarantee demand, noting that the Mont Pelerin sessions were only intended to reach an agreement on territorial adjustment and, if accomplished,

a discussion of the security issues would be held. Amid this disagreement, the meetings were suspended for one week while both sides consulted with their advisers. Apparently, during this time, Ankara reiterated that the Turkish Cypriots should not agree to any territorial concessions without security guarantees, which could only be agreed to in a five-party or a multiparty conference to include Turkey. When the talks reconvened on November 20 and 21, 2016, no agreement could be reached, as the Turkish Cypriots insisted on a date for a five-party conference and maintained that both territory and security be included in those talks. The Greek Cypriots refused to agree to set a date for the five-party conference, and the talks ended.

Both sides returned to Cyprus to reflect on the negotiations and to decide how to proceed. The Greek Cypriots wanted the resumption of the talks to begin where the Mont Pelerin talks on territory ended, including the presentation of maps defining new territorial boundaries. The Turkish Cypriots insisted that the talks could only restart if the Greek Cypriots agreed to a formal date for a five-party conference on territory and guarantees.

Not wanting to lose the momentum achieved at that point or to have the talks end, Anastasiades and Akinci on December 1, 2016, after a dinner hosted by U.N. Special Adviser on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide, agreed to meet as necessary in December 2016 and early January 2017. The goal was to bridge the gaps and resolve the disagreements that existed on most issues. In agreeing to the additional meetings, both sides set a timetable that included the following:

- After the additional meetings, the leaders would meet in Geneva on January 9, 2017, to discuss and wrap up all pending issues, outside of territory and security.
- On January 11, 2017, the two sides would present their respective proposed maps for a territorial adjustment.
- A five-party conference with the participation of the guarantor powers would be convened on January 12, 2017, to discuss and settle both the territory issue and the future of security guarantees, paving the way for a final agreement.

These new developments again reinforced the observation that Anastasiades and Akinci still felt that a final agreement looked to be achievable. Both leaders subsequently instructed their negotiators to meet regularly and agreed to meet with each other as necessary until January 9, 2017, when the negotiations would reconvene in Geneva. After the missed opportunity at Mont Pelerin, Anastasiades's decision to resume the talks was not without additional controversy. In December 2016, after the announcement that the talks would resume, the leaders of DIKO, EDEK, the Citizens Alliance, and the Greens criticized Anastasiades's decision to accept an international conference on guarantees before resolving the other issues, as he had promised. Anastasiades reportedly was accused of giving in to Akinci's demand for a five-party conference on security without having achieved any territorial adjustments. The Citizens Alliance leader, Lillikas, supposedly asked for Anastasiades's resignation.

Geneva Conference

On January 9, 2017, Anastasiades and Akinci, accompanied by their negotiating teams, leaders of the major political parties, and EU representation, convened in Geneva, Switzerland, to begin what was hoped to be the final phase of the negotiations. The meeting also ushered in a new, historic element of the talks in that the guarantor nations, including Turkey, would be present at the negotiating table.

For some, it was curious that Turkey agreed to go to Geneva while Ankara worked through a controversial constitutional referendum at home. Ankara had to be aware that any security concessions in which Turkey was required to withdraw its military forces or forego its right to

defend northern Cyprus, at the demand of the Greek Cypriots or Greece, could have been interpreted as weakness, even as Ankara was trying to keep Iran's influence at bay and to negotiate with Moscow over Syria and with the United States over the Kurds. However, once Turkey agreed to attend the Geneva conference, the Greek Cypriots could have used any Turkish refusal to offer meaningful compromises on security and guarantees to prove that Turkey was not interested in seeking a fair solution.

Ankara's decision led some to wonder if its presence at Geneva was merely intended to reinforce Akinci's earlier demands that Anastasiades agree to such a conference or to demonstrate that Turkey, despite Greek Cypriot claims that Ankara was not interested in a solution, was indeed willing to continue negotiations. However, Turkey's apparent opposition to certain territorial concessions that Akinci may have offered seemed to complicate the negotiations at a critical time. It is conceivable that Ankara's strategy to inject new complications at Geneva could have been Turkey's attempt to stall the negotiations and build international pressure on the Greek Cypriots to compromise, even on an interim basis, on Turkish troops and guarantees, which would have allowed Turkey's military a face-saving exit from Cyprus and would have reassured the Turkish Cypriots that they would still be protected.

The Geneva meetings apparently began on a positive note with what was reported to be a convergence on the sticking point of a rotating presidency and even more public references to a "United Federal Cyprus." Nevertheless, on January 11, 2017, when both sides presented their proposed maps for territorial adjustment to the U.N., the negotiations appeared to veer off course. Although the differences in the amount of territory each side demanded came within approximately 1% of each other, the symbolism of the differences was notable. Each side found the other's demands to be unacceptable. For instance, the Greek Cypriot map included the return of Morphou, whereas the Turkish Cypriot map did not.

After failing to accept each other's territorial demands, the negotiations ran into additional problems on January 12, 2017, when the five-party negotiations convened. Ankara rejected the Greek Cypriot territorial demand and insisted that Turkey's security role in the north be preserved; Greece insisted that Turkey's security role end. Other issues, including political equity concerns expressed by the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey's curious demand that the EU's four freedoms (movement of people, goods, services, and property rights), implied in any solution, also be applied to Turkish citizens living in the north, became sticking points. Apparently realizing that the security-guarantee issue and Turkey's future role in the north would not be resolved, and with Anastasiades's rejection of the introduction of the four freedoms proposal, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu departed Geneva. The conference ended, with some questioning why Turkey even attended the meeting. Both sides returned to Cyprus empty-handed and disappointed.

Although the Geneva talks came to a surprising and disappointing end, with each side blaming the other, Anastasiades and Akinci would not let the failure to make any significant progress end the momentum for which they had been praised earlier in the conference. The leaders agreed to establish a working group of technical experts to continue ironing out differences and prepare for new meetings later in January or February 2017. That working group returned to Mont Pelerin for two days of what Greek Cypriot negotiator Mavroyiannis described as very positive discussions.[28]

Once again, Anastasiades and Akinci were unable to overcome some of the barriers that have blocked their ability to secure a final agreement. In addition, the strong statements voiced by both Greece and Turkey regarding security guarantees raised concern among some that the

[28] Comments of Andreas Mavroyiannis at a discussion held at the Atlantic Council, March 8, 2017.

negotiations had, in part, been taken out of Cypriots' hands and put into the Turkey-Greece relationship.

Equally important to the two sides' inability to overcome long-standing differences was the fact that political opposition to the two leaders' negotiating positions had begun to increase. Some in the opposition feared that Anastasiades had come under pressure from the international community to accept only a reduced Turkish military presence in the north and some form of right of intervention. Some complained that U.N. Adviser Eide was favoring the Turkish Cypriot view of "reduce but not remove" Turkish troops or security guarantees. Although opponents of the talks on both sides were invited to Geneva, four of the five major Greek Cypriot political parties took issue with Anastasiades over his positions. Akinci fared no better, with leaders of the Turkish Cypriot government apparently objecting to the map he presented. The opposition forces were so effective at making their views known that Anastasiades had to ask his detractors to calm down and Akinci asked his people to have patience.

Talks Suspended, Uncertain Times

The two sides' inability to make discernable progress toward a final solution at both Mont Pelerin and Geneva underscored the difficulties of reaching agreement on both territorial adjustments and security guarantees. Turkey's injection of the four freedoms issue could have been an attempt by Ankara to stall the negotiations until after the April referendum in Turkey, while Akinci still wanted Anastasiades to step back from his reported comments that the Turkish Cypriots had to face the fact of a minority status on the island. Nevertheless, as was the case after the failure of Mont Pelerin, both sides anticipated that the two leaders' good relationship would allow negotiations to resume, at least between the Cypriots, after a short time of reflection.

The talks did resume on January 27, 2017, and two additional sessions were held in the beginning of February. During that time, the discussions focused on the four freedoms issue and on how and when a possible second Geneva conference could be convened. Anastasiades continued to refuse to discuss the four freedoms and called on the EU to support his position that only the EU could make that decision once an agreement was reached and the north entered the EU. Akinci, for his part, suggested that a new Geneva conference could be held by the end of March 2017, although many thought that unlikely given the mid-April referendum in Turkey.

On February 13, however, the negotiations hit a wall. That day, the Greek Cypriot parliament approved a proposal submitted by the right-wing ELAM political party to introduce an annual event in the form of a reading and discussion in public schools to mark the January 1950 referendum on *enosis* (the union of Cyprus with Greece). Nineteen members of parliament from five parties voted in favor of the proposal, 16 AKEL MPs voted against, and DISY MPs abstained. Akinci was livid that Anastasiades's party did not oppose the legislation and demanded that Anastasiades take action to retract the resolution. Akinci notified the Greek Cypriots that the meeting of the technical negotiators scheduled for the next day would be canceled.

When the two leaders met for their regularly scheduled meeting on February 16, 2017, Akinci insisted that Anastasiades reverse the parliament's decision on a commemoration of the 1950 referendum, claiming the *enosis* issue underscored Turkish Cypriot concerns for their safety and security after a settlement and reinforced the argument for why Turkish troops should remain in the north. When Anastasiades reacted by trying to downplay the legislation's significance, a debate ensued. Reportedly, Anastasiades left the room for a break and, when he returned, found that Akinci had left the meeting. Both sides blamed each other for walking out of the meeting.

Over the next eight weeks, no meetings were held between Anastasiades and Akinci despite efforts by U.N. Special Adviser Eide and others to jumpstart the talks. Akinci stated that he would

not return to the table until the *enosis* issue was retracted. In an interview with Anastasiades, the president said he hoped the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey would reconsider the suspension and return to the negotiating table but he did not expect this to happen before the April referendum in Turkey.[29]

While the talks were suspended, each side continued to blame the other for ending the negotiations, and each claimed that it was ready to resume discussions. Although Akinci and other Turkish Cypriot leaders were clearly angry over the *enosis* issue, some believe Akinci also was stalling on behalf of Turkey, since Ankara could not negotiate on security guarantees and troop deployments until after the vote on the constitutional referendum in Turkey.

Eventually, the Greek Cypriot parliament took action to partially reverse the *enosis* requirement by turning the decisions over how the Greek Cypriot school system would address the historical event to the Education Ministry. Although some in the north complained that this was not enough, and many in the south complained that the government had capitulated to the Turkish Cypriots, Akinci felt Anastasiades had made the effort to diffuse the tension and agreed to return to the talks.

On April 11, 2017, after eight weeks of suspended negotiations, both sides agreed to resume the talks and scheduled additional meetings throughout May.

Although it is unclear whether any additional progress was made during the renewed negotiations, both sides did eventually begin to discuss the possible need for a new conference on Cyprus in Geneva that would again include the guarantor powers. However, there was prolonged disagreement over the conditions and issues to be addressed at a second conference. The Turkish Cypriots argued that Anastasiades placed preconditions on the meeting and that all outstanding issues should be tackled simultaneously. The Greek Cypriots appeared to want Geneva II to reverse the order of issues to be discussed, with negotiations on territory and security guarantees held first; if those negotiations were successful, the remaining issues in all negotiating chapters would then subsequently be resolved. Both sides agreed that a Geneva II conference would continue until all issues were resolved or until it was agreed that no solution was possible.

Crans Montana—The Last Negotiation?

When the talk of a "Geneva II" conference began to run into trouble as both sides debated whether either side was setting preconditions that had to be met before any session could be convened, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres invited both Anastasiades and Akinci to New York for a June 4 dinner discussion on the viability of a second U.N.-hosted session in Geneva. After the dinner, both sides announced that a new conference would take place beginning June 28 at Crans Montana, just outside Geneva, with the purpose of finalizing an agreement, including on security guarantees and territory. Guterres also announced that U.N. Special Adviser Eide would prepare a common document to guide the discussions on security and guarantees, after consulting with the two Cypriot sides and the guarantor nations.

After leaving New York, Anastasiades traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with Vice President Pence and others to discuss expectations of the upcoming Crans Montana conference. He also appeared to be interested in seeking a U.S. commitment to speak to Ankara in support of finding the necessary compromises needed to secure an agreement. Speaking to a group at the German Marshall Fund, Anastasiades again raised the idea of creating an international police force that would provide the necessary security guarantees sought by the Turkish Cypriots until the provisions of any final agreement were fully implemented and the north was fully integrated into

[29] Interview with President Anastasiades, Cyprus Weekly, February 24, 2017.

the EU structures. When he earlier offered this proposal, Anastasiades indicated that Greek, Turkish, or UK forces could be part of the multinational force. However, some had suggested that a possible compromise on the concept of a multinational security force could allow Turkish military police or other security forces to be part of such a force but perhaps only if those forces remained in the north and would be under operational command of a third party, such as the U.N., the United States or NATO.

Following the announcement of the new conference in Crans Montana, U.N. Special Adviser Eide contacted officials of Greece, Turkey, the UK, and the two Cypriot parties to collect the "bottom line" positions of all sides on the security guarantee and troop level issues. Eide suggested he would discuss the outline of his findings with Anastasiades and Akinci, as well as the level of compromise each side may have been willing to entertain to reach an agreement. Eide hoped to present his document not as an official U.N. document but as a "working roadmap" to what the five parties would negotiate at Geneva. Presumably, Eide considered including other options for providing security, such as a multinational security force. Simultaneously, the other unresolved "domestic" issues would be discussed.

Observers of the negotiations were relieved that both sides, along with the three guarantor parties, particularly Turkey, were willing to resume at Crans Montana what had begun at Geneva in January. Others, however, remained skeptical of what actually could be accomplished, as there appeared to be little or no change in the positions on security guarantees and troops on either side. In addition, both Cypriot sides seemed to have changed their strategies for this new conference. It seemed clear at the outset that Anastasiades wanted to reach an agreement on the elimination of Turkish security guarantees and the removal of Turkish troops first; otherwise it would likely provide little political advantage for him to reach agreement on any other issues. For Akinci, it appeared that if he could win enough concessions on issues such as political equality and a rotating presidency, and could be comfortable as a coequal partner in the future of Cyprus, he might have been able to help Turkey make the necessary concessions on security that Ankara may not have been willing to accept otherwise.

In the election-charged atmosphere in Greek Cyprus, not everyone was pleased with the outcome. Anastasiades's political opponents accused him of abandoning all the preconditions he set for convening a new conference, including the debate on security and territory as a matter of priority. They also accused him of delegating to the U.N. the role of preparing a document on security, therefore giving up the Cypriot ownership of the process and placing the most crucial issue in the hands of Special Adviser Eide, who many felt had a biased attitude favoring Turkey.

Before the opening session of the Crans Montana conference, controversy arose over the security-related "roadmap" U.N. Special Adviser Eide was preparing. In one report, Anastasiades apparently objected to some of the provisions, suggesting they were not points put forward by the Greek Cypriots and that he would not discuss the document in its current form. Eide apparently then abandoned the idea of tabling the discussion paper.

On June 28, 2017, the Crans Montana conference opened, with both sides putting forward their long-held positions on security and their differences on the domestic issues. Almost immediately, and predictably, the talks became deadlocked over the security issues. The original plan for the conference called for U.N. Secretary-General Guterres to arrive in Crans Montana on June 30 to review the progress and hold additional meetings with the leaders. After arriving in Crans Montana and facing a deadlocked conference, Guterres apparently issued what was referred to as a "non-paper" addressing six points that he felt needed to be resolved and instructed the two sides to develop a package of proposals in response to his "framework" over the July 1-2 weekend. Guterres said he would return to Crans Montana if the proposals appeared to generate positive movement in the negotiations.

The Guterres "Framework"

Secretary-General Guterres's proposed "framework" set out six points for discussion. On *security*, the Guterres paper seemed to suggest that both sides "must begin to recognize that in Cyprus a new security system was needed and not a continuation of the existing one."[30] On *troops*, Guterres suggested "that there should be a rapid reduction from the first day, gradually decreasing within an agreed timetable to numbers that would be in line with the old Treaty of Alliance: 950 Greek officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and 650 Turkish officers, non-commissioned officers and men."[31] On *territory*, Guterres's document says the Turkish Cypriot side needs to adjust the map to address some concerns of the Greek side. On *equality*, the framework seems to suggest that Turkish nationals living on Cyprus should have a quota that is equitable and that a further discussion is needed on what "equitable" means. On *property*, the framework suggests that in areas that would be returned to Greek Cypriot administration, the rightful owner would have preferential treatment, but not 100%. In areas that would remain under Turkish Cypriot administration, preferential treatment would be given to current users, but not 100%. And finally, on *power sharing*, Guterres suggested that the issue needed to be discussed further, particularly on the issue of the rotating presidency.

Negotiations Collapse—Talks Suspended

On July 3, 2017, both sides presented their counterproposals, which they claimed represented concessions from their previous positions. Turkey insisted that security guarantees under the existing treaties be retained but appeared to offer a proposal that included the withdrawal of most Turkish military forces. A small contingent of both Greek and Turkish forces would remain and their continued deployment would be reviewed in 15 years. The Greek Cypriots insisted that the Treaty of Guarantee be abolished, that most Turkish forces be withdrawn immediately, and—although a small contingent (less than 1,000 each) of Greek and Turkish forces could initially be deployed—that there had to be a clear, short sunset date for those forces to leave. Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu stated that Turkey could not accept a "zero guarantees, zero troops" option and apparently warned that this would be the final conference and that a settlement had to be reached.[32]

After several days of talks, little movement was achieved. It was reported that positions may have even hardened between July 3 and July 7, with Turkey insisting on a larger force to remain permanently and the Greek Cypriots withdrawing their proposal for a limited contingency force. Apparently there were also disagreements on several of the governance issues, such as the rotating presidency, the return of the town of Morphu to Greek Cypriot administration, and the rights of former and current owners of property located in the north.

On July 7, 2017, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres acknowledged the failure of the negotiations to reach an agreement and announced that the conference would be closed. Guterres indicated that Special Adviser Eide would present a summary report to the Secretary-General and that the Secretary-General would issue a final assessment later in the year.

On September 28, 2017, Secretary-General Guterres issued his report. While offering a fairly positive assessment of the level of "convergences" both sides had made on each of the six negotiating chapters, his assessment seemed to indicate that only the economic chapter may have been ready to be closed, while the others still had issues to be worked out. In his conclusion,

[30] United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on his Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus*, September 28, 2017.

[31] United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on his Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus*, September 28, 2017.

[32] Reported in *Kibris*, July 1, 2017.

Guterres stated, "I am convinced that the prospects of finally pushing this process 'over the finishing line' will remain elusive without the strongest of political will, courage and determination, mutual trust and a readiness on the part of all parties to take calculated risks in the last and most difficult mile of the negotiations." In the end, he said a "historic opportunity was missed."[33] Guterres, however, reiterated that the U.N. would be available to continue to host future discussions, if and when both sides were ready.

In stating their assessments of the conference, both Cypriot sides blamed each other for refusing to make concessions. The Greek Cypriots and Greece also placed blame on Ankara. President Anastasiades indicated that he was ready to resume the negotiations, and, despite Guterres's assertion that this was not the end of the road, several news outlets reported that comments by Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu suggested a Turkish decision to abandon the U.N. framework (bizonal, bicommunal federation) as a solution to the Cyprus problem and to move on to a "Plan B." Several in the Turkish Cypriot government also echoed the theme that negotiations under the current U.N. structure were over. Others pointed out that Akinci may have suggested that the solution of a federation was not possible and that the Turkish Cypriot community would continue to improve its international relations with Turkey's assistance.[34] On August 5, 2017, it was reported that in a speech, Akinci suggested that the only solution now may be for two separate states to exist as neighbors, both in the EU.[35]

In a late September meeting at the International Republican Institute in Washington, then-Turkish Cypriot "foreign minister" Tashsin Ertugruloglu stated that the Turkish Cypriots have moved on to a new view that any future negotiations must be based on two states, and that a solution could only include a confederation. More interesting for some at the meeting was Ertugruloglu's suggestion that he could envision establishing an autonomous republic where the Turkish Cypriots would leave authority on foreign affairs and defense to Turkey while the Turkish Cypriots would self-govern internally.[36] Ertugruloglu's comments were met with a good deal of opposition in Cyprus, including from some Turkish Cypriots.

The suspension of the negotiations in July 2017 carried over into 2018 (referred to as a period of reflection) as both sides prepared to hold national elections. The 2017 introduction in the Greek Cypriot parliament of the controversial proposal to recognize the 1950 *enosis* referendum by several opposition political parties posed a serious challenge to Anastasiades and the negotiations. When the election campaign began, some observers felt Anastasiades could again come under a good deal of pressure from his presidential opponents for his failure to gain an acceptable outcome at Crans Montana and his role in squelching the *enosis* effort. Some believed that entire episode raised the issue of trust with Akinci. During the election campaign, negative views about the negotiation framework were expressed by several Greek Cypriot presidential candidates who questioned the continuation of the goal of a bizonal, bicommunal, federal solution.

Many in the north who once looked favorably on Anastasiades's efforts to seek a solution began to feel that the election campaign would leave Anastasiades little room to argue for a settlement if he were reelected.

Anastasiades was reelected president after a second round of voting. Unlike when Anastasiades was first elected as a pro-Annan Plan leader, however, this time many Turkish Cypriots, including

[33] Report of the Secretary-General on His Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus, September 28, 2017.

[34] Reported in *Politis*, July 7, 2017.

[35] Comments by Akinci reported in *Yeniduzan*, August 5, 2017.

[36] Comments of Tashsin Ertugruloglu, noted by the author of this report, at the International Republican Institute, September 26, 2017.

Akinci, apparently did not anticipate much of a change in the positions Anastasiades had taken during the negotiations. Akinci then stated that the negotiations could not resume under the same U.N. parameters that existed before the collapse of the talks, which he believed had yielded little return. Akinci raised the issue of political equality and demanded a deadline as preconditions for the resumption of talks. Most observers believed the bizonal, bicommunal approach was still valid, but it was unclear whether the new framework raised by Akinci meant a simple review and public agreement on how both sides defined a bizonal, bicommunal federal solution or whether Akinci had begun to shift to a looser "confederation" approach with two separate states. It also was unclear how existing U.N. parameters could be changed.

Immediately after the elections in the south, parliamentary elections took place in February 2018 in the north. The election outcome resulted in a new four-party coalition government that some believed would likely be more supportive of Akinci's efforts to renegotiate a new approach to a solution with Anastasiades than the previous government, which was led by those opposed to an agreement or skeptical that an acceptable agreement could be achieved. The new government included two former Turkish Cypriot negotiators, Ozdil Nami (the most recent negotiator) and Kudret Ozersay.

The negotiations, however, did not resume immediately after the elections. Anastasiades restated his readiness to restart negotiations and invited Akinci to meet with him informally to discuss the road ahead. Akinci signaled his intention to meet with Anastasiades but only to try to determine exactly what Anastasiades wanted to negotiate and how long it might take. Akinici reiterated his view that the framework of the negotiations had to change. In the interim, tensions over the issue of energy resources spiked, forcing both sides to delay any new meeting.

On April 16, 2018, the two leaders sat down over the course of three hours of meetings and dinner, hosted by the U.N., to discuss the road ahead for the negotiations. Expectations were low, and after the meeting both sides acknowledged that no progress had been made with respect to changes in positions or if and when the negotiations would resume. Each side suggested that the other needed a change in attitude for any new negotiations to be successful.

Issues[37]

Throughout much of the recent history of the Cyprus negotiations, both sides have periodically reported that various levels of *convergences* had been reached, mostly on the issues of EU affairs, governance, economics, citizenship, and how to resolve and compensate for disputed property. As intensely as the Cyprus negotiations have been followed in the press and by outside observers, it has always been difficult to determine with any specificity exactly what either side means by the term *convergences* when referring to agreements on the issues under negotiation. The negotiations are conducted under the principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed"; thus, the term *convergences* has been used to describe likely agreement without admitting that agreements have actually been reached until all issues have been resolved.

In his April 1, 2010, press conference, former Turkish Cypriot leader Talat stated that 31 "joint documents" had been prepared addressing a range of issues. It appeared that both sides agreed in principle that the new federal government would have powers over external relations, EU policies, citizenship, budget matters, and economic coordination. Within these, for instance, was apparently an understanding that one side would hold the portfolio of the foreign minister and the other side would hold the EU portfolio. Still another point had the equal constituent states

[37] This section, on the issues under negotiation, will look back at the positions taken by previous leaders and will refer to new developments between Anastasiades and Akinci.

covering most of the remainder of the governance issues. These convergences seemed to have been written into the later 2014 joint statement between Anastasiades and Akinci. It also appeared that the two sides had agreed on a Senate, equally represented, and a House proportionally represented based on population. There was also reportedly a convergence on a new judicial court that would have equal Turkish and Greek Cypriot representation and an agreement that Cyprus would be represented in the European Parliament by four Greek and two Turkish Cypriot members of parliament. A federal supreme court also was identified in the joint statement. Apparently, on April 15, 2018, in an interview in the Greek Cypriot *Politis*, Greek Cypriot negotiator Mavroyiannis confirmed that many of these *convergences* had been reached.[38]

When Anastasiades and Akinci began their negotiations, it was not clear specifically what the starting point of the negotiations had been beyond the joint statement issued in 2014. Eroglu apparently drew some pretty strong red lines around some issues, and Akinci initially had not appeared, at least publically, to have adopted or refuted any particular positions advocated by Eroglu, although many expected that to happen on some issues. Although reports out of Cyprus by the end of 2016 suggested that more than 90% of the governance, power sharing, economy, and European Union issues had fallen under the term convergences, other reports indicated that many technical issues remained unresolved. In his September 2017 report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres appeared to reaffirm that these convergences had been reached.

One issue both sides continued to differ over was how a new, united Cyprus would be created. The Greek Cypriots assumed that the new unified state would evolve from the existing Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriots wanted the new state to be based on two equal "founding states." Eroglu had reiterated that he was not prepared to give up the TRNC. The Turkish Cypriots also wanted the new entity referred to as something other than the "Republic of Cyprus." The joint statement agreed to by Anastasiades and Eroglu in 2014 simply referred to a "united" Cyprus, not a united "Republic of Cyprus." The Anastasiades/Akinci talks initially seemed to suggest that the new entity could be referred to as something such as the "Federal or United Republic of Cyprus," but it was unclear how the two sides would get there. In mid-December 2015, Anastasiades stated that "no one was aiming to abolish the Republic of Cyprus," rather "what we are pursuing is the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus into a bizonal, bicommunal federation."[39]

In public statements, including in Washington in summer 2016, then-Turkish Cypriot "foreign minister" Ertugruloglu and others suggested that no agreement could be signed between the leadership of a "Republic of Cyprus" and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot "community." For Ertugruloglu, it appeared that sovereign equality was not the same as political equality, suggesting that the Turkish Cypriots could not accept an agreement unless it was signed by two equal sovereign leaders, implying that recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was a requirement for a final agreement. In response, then-Greek Cypriot government spokesman Nicos Christodoulides said under no circumstances can "the regime in the occupied areas be upgraded since it is the product of an illegal action."[40] In late 2016, as both sides talked about convening a five-party conference to settle the issue of security and to sign a new agreement, controversy erupted over whether the Greek Cypriots would be represented as the republic. Anastasiades stated that the Republic of Cyprus, as a signatory to the Treaty of Guarantee, had to be represented at the conference. During the Geneva talks in January 2017, the term "United

[38] Report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on the mission of his good offices in Cyprus, September 28, 2017.

[39] "President Anastasiades Hopes for Cyprus Solution in 2016," *Famagusta-gazette.com*, December 15, 2015.

[40] Statement by Nicos Christodoulides at the World Energy Congress in Istanbul, October 2016.

Federal Cyprus" appeared in numerous references to the federal entity that would be created by an agreement. In addition, the Turkish Cypriots apparently also raised the idea that political equality had to include equality for Turkish Cypriots in the new federal entity and that they could not accept a "minority" status or representation in any new federal entity.

More recently, the Turkish Cypriots championed the concept of "effective participation," meaning that on any decision taken at the new federal level, there would have to be at least one positive Turkish Cypriot vote in favor of the decision for that decision to take effect. Anastasiades suggested this would effectively give the Turkish Cypriots a veto over every decision that its representatives did not agree with. When the Crans Montana conference began, it appeared that Anastasiades and Akinci may have worked out an understanding on both the issues of political equality and effective participation, but such a convergence was not made public. In April 2018, Anastasiades appeared to have suggested that codecision could not be accepted. Since then, Akinci has continuously demanded agreement on political equality for the Turkish Cypriots, suggesting this issue remains unresolved.

One highly sensitive issue under the governance chapter involves that of a *rotating* president and vice president for an elected term. The Greek Cypriots reportedly had proposed the direct election of a president and vice president on the same ticket with weighted cross-community voting for a six-year term. The president would be a Greek Cypriot for four years, and the vice president would be a Turkish Cypriot; they would then rotate offices, with the Turkish Cypriot becoming president for two years. Turkish Cypriots initially proposed that the executive have two alternating presidents elected by the Senate. Turkish Cypriots were opposed to a single list of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot candidates to be elected by all of the people of Cyprus principally because Greek Cypriots, by virtue of their majority, could in effect elect the Turkish Cypriot candidate of their preference. At some point, former Turkish Cypriot leader Talat seemed to have made a significant concession in agreeing to accept the Greek position for the election of a president and vice president but only with a weighted cross-community system to address the Turkish Cypriot concerns over the power of the Greek Cypriot majority to elect the Turkish Cypriot candidate, even though he continued to have doubts about direct popular voting.

Although the idea of a rotating presidency was not new, opposition to the proposal was, and continues to be, vocal on the Greek Cypriot side, as many Greek Cypriots apparently could not accept the idea of being governed by a representative what many believe is still the Turkish Cypriot minority.[41] It had been reported that in July 2014, Anastasiades retreated on the notion of a rotating presidency, proposing the old idea that future presidents be Greek Cypriots and future vice presidents be Turkish Cypriots elected directly by all voters. The Turkish Cypriots rejected the proposal. Akinci, in early August 2016 and subsequently on numerous times, suggested that a rotating presidency elected with weighted voting was a must in order to have political equality.

Although a rotating presidency would apply only to the federal entity and would have limited authority over the daily lives of most citizens in either community, several Greek Cypriot political parties continue to oppose the concept. Greek Cypriot Archbishop Chrysostomos stated his opposition to a rotating presidency, saying that no population of only 18% should be permitted to elect the president.[42]

During the Geneva conference, it was reported that a five-year rotating presidency would be created with the Greek Cypriots holding the office for approximately a little over three years and a Turkish Cypriot for just under two years. However, other iterations of the convergence also had

[41] According to a poll conducted by the EDEK party in the spring of 2010, over 70% of Greek Cypriots polled expressed opposition to a rotating presidency.

[42] According to an op-ed by Rasih Resat in KIBRISPOSTASI, October 2016.

arisen. It was reported that at Crans Montana, Anastasiades had held out a concession on the rotating president in return for a Turkish concession on security guarantees. In April 2018, Akinci reiterated that the issue of a rotating presidency had not been resolved and was an absolute requirement on a 2:1 basis. Akinci stated that Anastasiades had not reconciled this matter with the Greek Cypriots.

The presidency, however, was only one of several sticking points. For instance, the question of which community would hold the portfolio of foreign minister and how external policy would be made also was controversial, as both sides hold different views on, for instance, Turkey. It also was unclear how a new Turkish Cypriot state could maintain traditional ties to Ankara or the Greek Cypriot state could maintain ties to Athens in light of long-held hostility toward both Greece and Turkey.

The thorny and emotional issue of *property* had been the focus of a significant debate between by Anastasiades and Akinci. As a result of the ethnic strife of the 1960s and the deployment of Turkish military forces on the island in 1974, it was estimated that over 150,000 Greek Cypriots living in the north were forced south and close to 50,000 Turkish Cypriots living in the south fled to the north, with both communities leaving behind large amounts of vacated property, especially in the north. Greek Cypriots had long insisted that the original and legal owners who lost properties in the north must have the right to decide how to deal with their property, whether through recovery, exchange, or compensation. Turkish Cypriots believe that the current inhabitant of a property must have priority and that the issue should be resolved through compensation, exchange of alternate property, or restitution. To try to help resolve some of the property issues, the Turkish Cypriots established the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) to hear cases related to Greek Cypriot property claims in the north. The Greek Cypriots initially rejected the IPC. Only a few private Greek property owners have filed claims for compensation with the IPC, and funding for the IPC has become controversial in the north.

Although the gap in the respective Cypriot positions on property had been wide, it appeared that positive movement had been achieved by 2017. In July 2015, Anastasiades and Akinci seemed to agree that former property owners would be offered various choices regarding their claims that would allow all involved to be fairly compensated. For the Turkish Cypriots, however, only a limited number of Greek Cypriots would be permitted to return to or take actual ownership of their properties. However, it appeared that any settlement might involve between €25 billion and €30 billion, a price tag the new "federal" entity might not be able to afford. At Crans Montana, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres's six-point framework proposed that in areas that would be returned to Greek Cypriot administration, the rightful owner would have preferential treatment. In areas that would remain under Turkish Cypriot administration, current users would have preferential treatment.

The question of overall *territory* that would come under the jurisdiction of the two equal states remains in dispute. The Turkish Cypriot side of the "green line" currently includes approximately 37% of the island and includes several areas that had been inhabited almost entirely by Greek Cypriots before the 1974 division, such as Varosha, Morphou, and Karpas. Greek Cypriots have long wanted all of that territory returned, which would leave the Turkish Cypriot side controlling about 28% of the territory. At the time, Christofias resurrected an older proposal that would have the Turkish side return the uninhabited city of Varosha to Greek Cyprus in exchange for opening the seaport of Famagusta for use by the Turkish Cypriots to conduct international trade. The port would be operated by the EU and a joint Greek/Turkish Cypriot administration, thus allowing direct trade between northern Cyprus and the EU. The European Parliament declined to consider an EU Commission initiative to permit direct trade on technical grounds, but its 2011 report on

Turkey's EU accession progress (introduced in parliament in 2012) called for that very trade-off offered by Christofias.

After the 2013 Greek Cypriot elections, President Anastasiades resurrected the proposal in the form of a "confidence-building" measure to test the sincerity of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey to move forward in the negotiations. In early August 2014, it was reported that Anastasiades had upped the ante by suggesting that no agreement could be reached unless the town of Morphou was also returned to the republic. The Turkish Cypriots quickly rejected the idea, saying the town would not be returned.[43] After Turkish Cypriot leader Akinci took office, Anastasiades again included the Varosha/Famagusta option as a confidence-building measure. As in the past, Akinci rejected the return of Morphou as part of a final settlement. Understanding the sensitivity of this issue for both leaders, Akinci had suggested that the discussions of territorial adjustments be held off the island and away from potential leaks that could set off a firestorm of protests from either side.

At the November 2016 meetings at Mont Pelerin, Switzerland, the two sides agreed to discuss three issues regarding territory: percentage of land to be administered by each constituent state, the number of Greek Cypriots who would be allowed to return to the new territories given back to the Greek Cypriots, and the shoreline. Following Mont Pelerin, both sides, in agreeing to meet in Geneva in January 2017, agreed to present maps indicating their proposals for a territorial adjustment.

As noted, the Turkish Cypriots administer approximately 37% of the island. At Geneva, the Greek Cypriots proposed long-standing views that the boundaries be redrawn such that the Turkish Cypriots would control approximately 28.2% of the island and that some 90,000 displaced Greek Cypriots could return to those areas gained back by the Greek Cypriots. Some of the territory—such as the cities of Verosha, parts of Famagusta, and Morphou—would come under direct control of the Greek Cypriots whereas other areas that once had large Greek Cypriot populations would either come under control of the Greek Cypriots or become "enclaves" under the administration of the new federal government. The Greek Cypriots also wanted additional shoreline along the east coast of the island, including part of Karpas.

The Turkish Cypriots insisted on controlling at least 29.2% of the island, with as straight of a border between the two constituent states as possible; no enclaves; and only 65,000-72,000 returning Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots also expressed a willingness to meet the Greek Cypriot demand for more shoreline, but only if the new shoreline territory was made into state parks so that no new Greek Cypriot communities could settle in those areas.

On all three points, the leaders failed to reach an agreement at Mont Pelerin and again in Geneva in January 2017. For the first time at Geneva, both sides had presented maps outlining the territorial concessions they were prepared to make. However, when the Turkish Cypriot representatives rejected the return of Morphou, which was included in the Greek Cypriot map, and insisted that additional territory, including the area of Kokkina, be added to Morphou and remain under Turkish Cypriot jurisdiction in exchange for Verosha and parts of Famagusta, the discussions broke down. Both sides apparently withdrew their maps.

At Crans Montana, it was reported that Akinci appeared willing to return part but not all of the town of Morphu to the Greek Cypriots but that Akinci wanted to retain additional territory that the Greek Cypriots had requested be returned.

[43] *Famagusta Gazette*, "No Solution to the Cyprus Problem Without Return of Morphou, President Says," August 14, 2014.

In July 2010, President Christofias, seeking to unlock the stalemate on territory, tabled a *citizenship* proposal that would have linked property, territory, and the number of citizens permitted to reside in the north into one agreement. The offer included an agreement to allow 50,000 mainland Turks who had settled in the north to remain in the north. Eroglu had indicated that any final solution could not result in significant social upheaval in north Cyprus, meaning that significant numbers of citizens of the north, whether from the mainland or not, could not be forced to leave, and only a small number of Greek Cypriots would be permitted to return to property in the north. Eroglu rejected the offer from Christofias, stating that "no one on Cyprus is any longer a refugee" and that sending mainland Turkish settlers back to Turkey was not something he could agree to. Eroglu had also reiterated in his talks with Anastasiades that the number of mainland Turks who had settled in the north and who would be allowed to remain on the island would have to be higher than previously discussed.[44]

After the joint statement was agreed to in February 2014, Turkish Cypriot representatives were reported to have stated that no citizens of the north would be required to leave the country.[45] In a talk given at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC, on February 28, 2014, the then-Cyprus ambassador to the United States speculated that a resolution of the Cyprus problem could conceivably allow for mainland Turks, who came to the island as long ago as 40 years and had established clear roots in the north, to remain on the island.

Akinci, perhaps not wishing to antagonize what had become a majority of the population in the north, initially stayed away from this issue. However, apparently through the negotiations he and Anastasiades may have agreed to at least set population sizes in both of the "constituent" states that would emerge as part of an agreement. The population for the Turkish Cypriots was apparently set at 220,000, although Akinci seemed to want another 50,000, while the Greek Cypriot population would be approximately 802,000.[46] This ratio, while including a sizable number of mainland Turks who have since become citizens in the north, would be close to the ratio of the island's population in 1960. Nevertheless, several of the Greek Cypriot political parties appear to remain opposed to any agreement that would allow a large number of "settlers" to remain on the island.

In the summer of 2016, there were reports that Ankara had wanted the Turkish Cypriot government to speed up the process of "citizenship" for more of the mainland Turks living in the north. In August, some news accounts in the media claimed that the Ozgurgun government was trying to rush citizenship for around 26,000 additional mainland Turks before a final agreement was reached.[47] Greek Cypriot political parties jumped on the news and claimed Ozgurgun was trying to sabotage the negotiations.[48] In January 2017, it was reported that Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Turkes stated that there were some 300,000 Turkish Cypriots in the north so the population sizes of the two constituent states would have to be adjusted.[49] In May 2017, Anastasiades reportedly told a meeting of the Greek Cypriot National Council that Akinci had retreated from previous convergences, including accepting a 4:1 ratio of populations.

---

[44] *Cyprus Mail*, "The Most Blatant Mockery of Negotiations," July 27, 2014.

[45] *Famagusta Gazette*, "Jittery Turkish Settlers Seek Clarifications as Cyprus Talks Resume," February 19, 2014.

[46] "Pressure on Akinci to Grant Citizenship to 26,000 Turks in Cyprus," *Famagusta News*, December 7, 2015.

[47] "North issuing citizenship to 500 settlers a month," Cyprus Mail, August 22, 2016.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Comments of Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Tugrul Turkes to an audience in Istanbul, reported by CYBC Radio, January 25, 2017.

In his September 2017 report to the Security Council, Secretary-General Guterres stated that the "sensitive issue of citizenship, with its links to other key aspects, including the exercise of civil and political rights in the future united Cyprus, was almost completely concluded, with only certain details left to be agreed."[50]

Next to the property and territory issues, the issues of security guarantees and Turkish troop deployments continue to be the most difficult bridges to cross. These issues became real stumbling blocks as the two sides met in Geneva in January 2017 and at Crans Montana in July 2017, and they resulted in the collapse of both meetings. The Greek Cypriots long have argued that all Turkish military forces would have to leave the island, beginning immediately after an agreement was adopted. They argue that the U.N. or the EU can offer security guarantees to all citizens in the two member states. Therefore, once the entire island became part of the EU, the Greek Cypriots see no reason for guarantees from third countries, such as Turkey, Greece, or the United Kingdom.[51] By contrast, Turkish Cypriots and Turkey long had maintained that the 1960 Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance must be retained in some form in any settlement, because, without guarantees, the Turkish Cypriots would feel insecure based on their history with ethnic violence on the island in the 1960s. They continuously point out that the U.N. had forces on the island even before the 1974 violence that were unable to prevent the military coup against the Makarios government or to protect the Turkish Cypriot population. They argue that the Greek Cypriots maintain a 12,000-man, fully armed National Guard, while the Turkish Cypriot security forces are smaller and less well equipped and have to rely on the presence of the Turkish military for security. Eroglu had stated on several past occasions that "the security guarantees with Motherland Turkey could not be changed."[52] After the February 2014 joint statement was agreed to, it was reported that Eroglu had again stated that Turkish troops would not leave the island.[53]

It remained unclear for a while whether Akinci held the traditional Turkish hard line. He clearly did not want to antagonize Ankara over this issue by going too far into the negotiating process without including Turkey, but he also appeared to have not gone out of his way to focus on the issue. Some suggested that Akinci, while not wanting to abandon the Treaty of Guarantee altogether, may have been willing to adjust the provisions regarding when or under what pretext Turkey could intervene in northern Cyprus in the future and to include the gradual withdrawal of most Turkish military forces, leaving only a small garrison on the island. In one August 2016 news article, it was suggested that Anastasiades had put forward the option that a multinational police force, made up of U.N. or EU personnel with some Turkish police, could be created to support the new federal entity. The Turkish Cypriots and Turkey rejected the idea.

In the lead-up to the Mont Pelerin and Geneva conferences, most of the public demands for continued Turkish security guarantees and military presence in the north came from former "foreign minister" Ozgurgun and others in the Turkish Cypriot government who had stated that no agreement could be accepted without the guarantees. Ozgurgun reportedly stated that in conversations with Akinci, he was assured that Turkey must continue to play a role in the security of the north.[54] Nevertheless, as the negotiators at Geneva opened the security guarantees "chapter," the rhetoric increased. Greek Cypriots, and Greece, continued to insist that no guarantees were necessary and, on their part, no agreement could be accepted that would allow

[50] Op. Cit.

[51] *Cyprus News Agency*, "Cypriot FM: No Derogations from Acquis During a Solution," November 14, 2008, BBC Monitoring European, November 17, 2008.

[52] Comments from the speech of Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu commemorating the Turkish intervention in Cyprus, July 20, 2011.

[53] "AKEL: Pay No Heed to Eroglu's Rhetoric," *Cyprus Mail*, February 22, 2014.

[54] "No Turkish guarantees–no deal: Ozgurgun," *North Cyprus News*, March 17, 2016.

Turkey to intervene on the island or to retain a military presence there. In April 2016, the Greek foreign minister reportedly suggested that no final agreement on Cyprus could be achieved until all Turkish military forces agreed to leave the island. With the two sides dug in, compromise seemed unrealistic.

Once formal talks on security were begun in late fall 2016, both Cypriot sides appeared to soften their positions. In November 2016, Athens and Ankara agreed to begin bilateral discussions over the future of the guarantees in advance of a meeting between the respective prime ministers and any five-party conference on the issue. According to some sources, although Turkey appeared willing to discuss a revised agreement on security, Ankara initially did not want to discuss the abolition of the guarantees or the complete withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Cyprus. Ankara apparently raised the idea of the establishment of a military base in the north and suggested that the timetable for the reduction of the Turkish military on the island could be 10-15 years. The Greek Cypriots would not accept such provisions but reportedly may have proposed that a small contingent of Turkish troops could remain, but only for a short period of time.

At Geneva, Turkey, clearly keeping in mind the fate of its own constitutional reform referendum in April, took a hard line on the issues of continued Turkish security guarantees and troops on the island. The Greek Cypriots and Greece took a similar hard line in opposition to Turkey's continued presence. Apparently, at Geneva, Anastasiades reoffered his proposal for an international police force, this time, however, noting that Greek, Turkish, or UK forces would not be part of that multinational force. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots rejected the idea again. Russia and others also suggested that the U.N. Security Council could serve as the initial guarantors of security, but that too was brushed aside. At Geneva, the EU was fully represented by the Commission President and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, with each offering assurances that any solution could be adequately implemented and enforced by the EU. Nevertheless, the EU was not able to convince either Ankara or the Turkish Cypriots that it could guarantee the security and fair treatment of the Turkish Cypriot community, even though the north would become fully integrated into the united Cyprus under EU law. The lack of any appreciable progress on the security issue, in part, resulted in the January 12, 2017, session in Geneva being cut short without a resolution.

The February 2017 dispute over the introduction of the *enosis* legislation in the Greek Cypriot Assembly (see above) led Akinci to complain that the *enosis* issue underscored Turkish Cypriot concerns for their safety and security after a settlement and reinforced the argument for why some level of Turkish troops should remain in the north as well as the need for some type of guarantees for Turkey to assist the Turkish Cypriots, if conditions changed on the island.

During the suspension of the talks between February and April 2017, U.N. Special Adviser Eide was reported to have been working out the details of some kind of bridging compromise between the two positions on security as a way to move the talks forward until after a solution was agreed and implementation begun. When the two sides announced that a new conference would be held in late June 2017 at Crans Montana, it was also revealed that Eide would prepare a security "roadmap" from which all five parties could negotiate. The Eide proposal would not be issued as a formal U.N. proposal but as a working paper that would outline the various positions each side had taken on the issue of security guarantees and the possible compromises that could be accepted. Although Eide consulted with the guarantor parties and the two Cypriot leaders, Anastasiades apparently objected to parts of the Eide document and the paper was not presented.

At Crans Montana, the same security issues quickly forced the negotiations into deadlock. Although Turkey appeared ready to discuss the removal of most of its troops after an agreement was reached, Ankara rejected any "zero troops, zero guarantees" option and insisted on maintaining a small contingent of forces on the island for at least 15 years, when the issue would

be revisited. Turkey refused to agree to any changes to its right to intervene in the north, although the Turkish Cypriots appeared to indicate some flexibility by Ankara on this as the presence of a contingent of Turkish military forces on the island could be used to respond to any problems incurred by the Turkish Cypriots during the implementation of an agreement. The Greek Cypriots and Greece held to their positions that the Treaty of Guarantee be abolished, although Greece suggested a new "treaty of Friendship" between Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, which apparently would allow for consultations on complaints that implementation of the agreement was not being fulfilled from either Cypriot side. Greece and the Greek Cypriots again insisted that all Turkish troops be withdrawn from the island, although Anastasiades may have appeared ready to accept a small contingent of Turkish troops to remain on the island but only if that provision included a date for the final withdrawal of the remaining Turkish troops.

The Crans Montana talks clearly proved that the differences between the two sides on these two security issues have become too high a barrier to be the starting point, or focus, for any new rounds of negotiations that may begin later in 2018. For many, these issues should be reserved until all the outstanding governance issues have been resolved and an international conference on security can be established again. By July 2018, it appeared that both sides may have set the need for concessions regarding the security-related issues as a precondition for resuming the talks. The Greek Cypriots are insisting that Turkey change it position on retaining troops and security guarantees and the Turkish Cypriots are insisting that Anastasiades drop his "zero troops, zero guarantees" position.

Energy

The introduction of the issue of *energy resources* resulted in yet another complication in the talks and has stalled the negotiations at times. The energy dispute has led to accusations, threats, and further distrust between the republic, the Turkish Cypriots, and Ankara. Initially, some observers thought the energy issue could have become a rallying point for stepped-up and hopefully successful negotiations in which both sides would enjoy the economic benefits of the newly found resources. However, the atmosphere quickly became poisoned. For some, the energy issue has become not only another lost opportunity but also the issue that could doom the talks altogether.

For the Greek Cypriots, exploiting energy resources offered a potential financial windfall that could help the Cypriot economy and establish Cyprus as an important energy hub for Europe. The Turkish Cypriots, arguing that the energy resources belonged to all of Cyprus, feared the loss of significant revenue to their economy as long as the Greek Cypriots refused to include them until a solution to the division of Cyprus was concluded. For Ankara, insisting that the Turkish Cypriots be involved in the decisionmaking process may have been seen as the only practical way to preserve Turkey's position as a main supplier of non-Russian gas to Europe. Ankara supported the conclusions of some in the industry that the fastest and least expensive route to transport Israeli and Cypriot gas to Europe was via a pipeline through Turkey.

For Eroglu, the energy issue had to be a part of the negotiations. The Greek Cypriots rejected such a proposal, stating that energy issues would be dealt with under any new "federal" system agreed to in the negotiations. Akinci, at first, seemed reluctant to press this issue, apparently accepting Anastasiades's promises that energy wealth would be shared by both sides and how that would be accomplished would be left to another time once a settlement was agreed. However, in July 2016, after the republic announced that it would proceed with the issuance of new licenses for additional gas exploration in the Cyprus EEZ, and in August 2016 when it was announced that the republic and Egypt would sign an agreement that could allow Cypriot gas to be shipped to Egypt in the future, both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots raised objections, with some claiming

these actions would harm the settlement negotiations. At Geneva, and despite the news that the French energy corporation, Total, would begin additional exploration in summer 2017 and that Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and Italy would renew discussions of a possible gas pipeline to Europe via Greece, the issue did not seem to impede discussions of the other, more immediate issues.

After the Geneva conference, Energy Ministers from the Republic of Cyprus, Israel, Greece, and Italy unveiled plans for an East Mediterranean pipeline running all the way from Israel to the coast of Greece and on to Italy. Total also announced that it would begin a new round of exploration in Cypriot waters during the first few weeks of July 2017. As expected, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots reacted negatively, with Ankara threatening to take actions if the drilling commenced before an agreement on the Cyprus issue was achieved.

As the Crans Montana talks approached, the energy issue again came into play. In May 2017, Akinci stated that the next several months would be crucial in part because of the expected launch of new hydrocarbon exploration activities off the coast of south Cyprus. Turkey stated that it would begin its own exploration in two areas in Cypriot waters that Turkey claims are part of its EEZ and announced that a series of military exercises in the region had been scheduled for July. Some observers believed that Turkey's actions and Akinci's comments were an attempt to pressure Anastasiades to delay the exploration, particularly if the Crans Montana negotiations showed some promise. Others felt this move could set the stage for another confrontation between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus.

When the Crans Montana conference collapsed, French energy firm Total moved its drilling platform, the West Capella, to its drilling site and commenced drilling in mid-July 2017. Ankara reiterated its objections, and Turkey issued a new NAVTEX reserving an area southwest of Cyprus for naval exercises with live ammunition. In the end, Total completed its drilling without incident. This new round of exploration apparently resulted in negligible findings. The Greek Cypriots had also approved additional drilling in 2018 by Total and Italy's ENI as well as by Exxon/Qatar. The ENI group began new drilling on December 31, 2017, in a new area. In February 2018, ENI announced that the drilling had produced a significant find of gas. ENI then announced it would move its drilling platform, Saipem 12000, to another area that is also claimed by Turkey. On February 11, Turkish warships appeared in the waters off the southern coast of Cyprus and attempted to impede the movement of Saipem 12000 to the disputed area. The Greek Cypriots, supported by the EU and others, reacted negatively to Turkey's activity.

Over the course of February and March, both Akinci and Ankara restated that the resources around the island belonged to all Cypriots and that the republic should halt further exploration and drilling unless the Turkish Cypriots were included in the planning and decisionmaking, a demand again rejected by Anastasiades. Turkey stepped up its military threats and indicated it would begin its own drilling inside one or two of the disputed blocks in the Cypriot EEZ. Some believe Turkey was concerned that the new gas finds could be significant enough to encourage the Greek Cypriots and others to move forward with various shipping and pipeline options that would exclude the possibility that the gas could eventually be piped across Turkey to Europe. Others felt the Greek Cypriots were trying to apply maximum pressure on the Turkish Cypriots to agree to compromise on several issues demanded by the Greek Cypriots as part of an eventual solution.

The United States and the EU both intervened, restating the republic's right to explore for natural resources in its EEZ but asking both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to tone down the rhetoric and for Turkey not to provoke additional tensions over the energy issue. In a March 15, 2018, press conference welcoming the visit to Cyprus of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Wess Mitchell, U.S. Ambassador Cathleen Doherty stated that while the United States supported the republic's right to exploratory activities in its EEZ, the island's energy

resources should be fairly shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. The Ambassador said that even if the drilling located additional gas deposits, it may not be possible or feasible to commercialize those deposits right away, as costs associated with extraction and transportation may not make the resources viable. She noted that it could take several years, even decades, before all the conditions were right for revenues to begin flowing. In the interim, Ambassador Doherty intimated that the two sides and Turkey should stop the feuding and focus on a solution to the island's division.[55] Assistant Secretary Mitchell, in a recent speech at the Heritage Foundation, reiterated the U.S. position and stated that Turkey should tone down its provocations in the waters south of Cyprus.[56] He restated that view one week later at a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Assessment

When Mustafa Akinci was elected as leader of the Turkish Cypriots in 2015, many believed the window of opportunity for a permanent settlement of the Cyprus problem, for all intents closed by Ergolu, had been reopened. As "mayor" of the Turkish Cypriot portion of Nicosia, Akinci had been praised for working cooperatively with his Greek Cypriot counterparts on a number of infrastructure projects, leading some to take a positive view of the possibilities of a settlement between Anastasiades and Akinci.

While the political environment on both sides of the island immediately after the election of Akinci had taken on a positive air, with predictions that the negotiations could conclude quickly, the scene reminded Cyprus observers of the 2008 election of Christofias and the almost giddy atmosphere that arose over a possible quick solution to the division of the island with Turkish Cypriot leader Talat. Akinci, much as Talat had with Christofias, declared that he and Anastasiades were of the same generation and could relate more easily to each other and better understand the measures that both sides would have to take to achieve a solution.

Negotiations between Anastasiades and Akinci, once begun, got off to a fast start. For many, the first 20 months of the Anastasiades/Akinci era went well. Both leaders seemed to enjoy meeting with each other and doing public events together in a show of solidarity. The positive atmosphere of the negotiations raised hope among some that these two leaders might just reach a settlement. And, although the issues that have separated the two communities and prevented a solution for more than 44 years have long been clearly defined and repeatedly presented and debated by both sides, the chemistry between Anastasiades and Akinci, seen by many as an improvement over the Anastasiades/Eroglu relationship, seemed to allow the leaders to overcome some of the traditional barriers to a settlement more effectively than previous attempts by Cypriot leaders.

However, as the talks progressed, with more references to agreed *convergences*, both Anastasiades and Akinci, as those before them had experienced, began to hear public controversy and criticism of the negotiations emerge from the skeptics and opponents of an agreement.[57]

Despite domestic opposition in both communities and the inability to reach concrete agreements on several governance issues, as well as the security and guarantees issues, Anastasiades and Akinci, at least publicly, seemed determined to continue to seek a solution. The intensity of the negotiations beginning in fall 2016 and continuing through Mont Pelerin and Geneva in 2017 earned both leaders international praise for their commitment and persistence.

[55] Remarks presented at a press conference held by U.S. Ambassador Cathleen Doherty, Nicosia, March 15, 2018.

[56] Speech given by Assistant Secretary of State, Wes Mitchell, at the Heritage Foundation, June 6, 2018.

[57] "EDEK Back Sizopoulos in Rejection of BBF," *Cyprus Mail*, June 15, 2015.

To most observers, the fact that Anastasiades and Akinci appeared to have come closer to reaching a settlement by early 2017 than at any time since 2004 and that both sides, plus Greece and Turkey, were willing, after the failure at Geneva, to come together again at Crans Montana for another attempt to resolve their differences seemed to call for optimism. Indeed, although a solution for that final settlement remained elusive, the negotiators maintained a level of optimism that a breakthrough was possible.

The failure of the Crans Montana conference, despite the framework presented by U.N. Secretary-General Guterres, appeared to be directly related to the disagreement over security issues. Akinci appeared unwilling to accept the replacement of Turkish security guarantees with guarantees from the EU or an interim international security force, despite the fact that Turkish troops that might have remained under a compromise could have provided security to the Turkish Cypriots during the time the agreement was being implemented. And Ankara was not willing to forego its geostrategic interests and influence over the island by accepting a longer-term "zero guarantees, zero troops" option.[58] Turkey insisted that some level of troops would remain on the island either permanently or at least for several years. Anastasiades again rejected those demands.

In addition, during the conference, Greek and Turkish Cypriot negotiators appeared unable to address the remaining unresolved differences with respect to governing the island under a federal structure. Akinci apparently indicated that he and Anastasiades no longer shared the same vision of what constituted a bizonal, bicommunal federation. Reports suggested that several governance issues, long thought to have been part of the oft referred *convergences*, such as the rotating presidency, Turkish Cypriot codecision power, and the population mix in the north, not only appeared to remain unresolved but also may have been pulled back from the status of convergences. Some observers believed that if the two sides could not find common agreement on the governance issues, then arguing over troops and security, as seen at Geneva and Crans Montana, was a futile exercise.

During March and April 2018, as both sides struggled over the issue of resuming negotiations, they seemed to consider the idea that any new negotiations should begin with the governance issues. In an April 2018 interview in *Politis*, Greek Cypriot negotiator Mavroyiannis admitted that there were differences in every negotiating chapter but that the Greek Cypriot side had accepted the effective participation of the Turkish Cypriots in a council of ministers, the parliament, an equally divided senate, and the judiciary. Mavroyiannis also suggested that the Greek Cypriots could accept a rotating presidency but only with a single ticket and weighted voting.[59] Akinci suggested that the issue of a rotating presidency, among others, had not been resolved.

Although the April 16, 2018, dinner between Anastasiades and Akinci reportedly was amiable, no agreement was reached on the resumption of the negotiations, perhaps as a result of Akinci's demands that any resumption of the talks include a new format and a deadline for how long the talks should last and Anastasiades's insistence that the talks resume where they left off at Crans Montana, apparently with no deadline. Some observers believed that if resuming the talks where they left off at Crans Montana meant starting with the security issues, then the talks were unlikely to resume.

In May 2018, Akinci, despite his earlier comments regarding a new format for the talks, suggested that negotiations could possibly resume from where they left off at Crans Montana if both sides agreed to adopt the six-point framework presented by U.N. Secretary-General Guterres on June 30, 2017, as a strategic agreement. Akinci was criticized in the north for indicating a

[58] Exchange of notes between CRS analyst and a Greek Cypriot citizen, January 2017.

[59] Interview with Greek Cypriot negotiator Andreas Mavroyiannis, *Politis,* April 16, 2018.

willingness to resume the Crans Montana talks and for possibly accepting a framework that referred to an eventual elimination of Turkish forces and security guarantees. Anastasiades rejected a strategic agreement approach and countered that a Guterres document of July 4, 2017, should be the framework used. Akinci claimed there was no July 4 document, and the two sides have argued that point ever since.

Other issues also complicated the resumption of the talks. In June 2018, Turkey held national elections for president and parliament. No negotiations could have been held until after that vote. Then, the traditional August break would force the resumption of the talks into fall 2018, if at all. In April 2018, Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu visited the north and suggested that the Turkish Cypriots consider negotiating for a "confederation" of two equal states instead of a federation. In May, Cavusoglu again stated that the talks should shift to a confederation approach. Akinci apparently did not embrace that approach, and the Greek Cypriots rejected it outright arguing that it did not fall within the agreed framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation. Finally, the ongoing dispute between the republic and Ankara over additional energy exploration in the republic's EEZ that likely would take place in the coming months remained a spoiler in the resumption of the talks.

Most observers believe that however unsuccessful the negotiations have been to date, the bizonal, bicommunal, federal approach remains valid. Akinci apparently does not intend to embrace Ankara's suggestion to shift to a looser confederation approach with two separate states, possibly preferring to return to the Guterres framework for one last try, but only if a deadline is established to either reach an agreement or end the talks. It remains unclear how much support Akinci will continue to command from the government or the population for this approach. It is also unclear how his demand for setting a deadline to conclude the talks, a provision that no Greek Cypriot leader has ever accepted, would be included.

In July 2018, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres appointed a new U.N. envoy to Cyprus, Jane Lute. Lute's mission was to conduct consultations not only with the two Cypriot leaders but also with Athens, Ankara, and London to assess their perspectives on the future of the Cyprus problem and determine if sufficient conditions exist for the resumption of the negotiations. This mission was somewhat similar to a series of meetings that U.N. Special Representative in Cyprus Elizabeth Spehar conducted in late June and early July 2018 with Anastasiades and Akinci, although she also discussed another six-month extension of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNPFICY). It was unclear why Spehar's observations could not have helped the Secretary-General make a determination on the political will of both sides to conclude a successful solution. After her meetings, Lute will report to the Secretary-General on whether or not she sees constructive reasons for the U.N. to propose another round of U.N.-hosted negotiations. Many observers, despite what they may see as less-than-optimal conditions, likely assume that neither Cypriot leader will be willing to walk away from the negotiations and that Lute will not see potential hurdles to the resumption of talks as too difficult to overcome. In that case, her recommendation likely would be that the U.N. not abandon the negotiations. With that, Guterres likely would propose that the U.N. was ready and willing to host another round of talks. That decision likely would come on the side of the fall U.N. General Assembly session, where Guterres is likely to meet with both Anastasiades and Akinci.

A fall 2018 resumption of the negotiations would then seem to depend on whether Anastasiades and Akinci could agree on a single version of the Guterres framework under which the negotiations would resume and on whether the stalemate over the security issues could be put aside to restart the discussions. Even then, Akinci may still demand a deadline to conclude the talks, a condition that may receive some support from the U.N. this time. If both leaders agree on one version of the framework, this agreement would raise some interesting questions. For

instance, would Akinci drop his demand for a strategic agreement on the six-point framework? Would Anastasiades accept a U.N.-suggested target deadline to conclude the talks? Could both Cypriot sides and Ankara accept the idea that a new security framework was needed, particularly one that does not envision Turkey's right to unilaterally intervene on the island and which would necessitate that Ankara accept a reduction of its military forces to something less than 1,000, with an eventual phaseout of all troops? Would Anastasiades accept the continued deployment of some Turkish troops, even if the troops were under U.N. command, for several years, or at least until the north came into full compliance with the EU's *aquis*?

By contrast, what if Akinci holds to his position that resuming the talks at the point they left off at Crans Montana likely would accomplish little and pursues an original suggestion by former "Deputy Prime Minister" Serder Denktash to hold a referendum in the north to ask the Turkish Cypriots whether they want the negotiations to continue? What if the Turkish citizens voted "no"? Or, what if the Turkish citizens were asked if they wanted the negotiations to continue under some other framework and they voted "yes"?

If Anastasiades and Akinci could reach agreement on which framework would be used to restart the negotiations, could they start by resolving only the federal-level issues of governance, which both sides have indicated already contain many convergences? And if so, could they then turn to another international conference to address the security issues? Resolving the governance issues first could provide Akinci the opportunity to determine whether such an agreement could satisfy his aspirations of Turkish Cypriot political and economic equality as a partner on Cyprus. If so, could he argue successfully to his citizens that the new federal structure, with the guarantees of EU law and a more robust U.N. peacekeeping force in place, might be enough to accept a new security arrangement regarding Turkish troops or Turkish security guarantees? Would Turkey forego its determination to keep its military permanently on the island in exchange for an agreement Akinci, and the Turkish Cypriots, felt provided for the safety and welfare of the Turkish Cypriots?

At the same time, many observers believe relations between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots have become so tense that neither side can back down from its security demands, leaving little room for optimism that any kind of a solution can be achieved. Many also wonder whether either leader could sell any agreement to his community at this point.

Some long-time observers of the negotiations in the international community expressed a deep sense of concern for the direction the dispute has taken since Crans Montana. For instance, in late 2017, the Business Monitor International, part of the Fitch Group, downgraded its assessment of a new unification deal from slim to extremely remote.[60]

Some believe the resumption of negotiations will be difficult, as both sides likely would have to step back from the positions they have maintained since Crans Montana. Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw restated a previous assessment that "from the Greek Cypriot point of view, conceding political equality with the Turkish Cypriots means giving power away. But absent a real incentive for both sides" to actually reach an agreement, "the reality is that no Greek Cypriot leader will ever be able to get their electorate behind a deal. The status quo for the south is simply too comfortable."[61]

At this point, a final settlement for Cyprus remains elusive.

[60] Business Monitor International, September 28, 2017.

[61] Jack Straw, "Only a partitioned island will bring the dispute between Turkish and Greek Cypriots to an end," *Independent*, October 2017.

Author Information

Vincent L. Morelli
Section Research Manager

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.