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Analysis of the Two-State Solution in Cyprus: Historical Continuity and Contemporary Debates

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Abstract

The negotiations that have been carried out since 1968 in order to find a sustainable solution for the Cyprus issue have not yielded any results. The obsession of the Greek Cypriots that caused Cyprus conflict continues to dominate Cyprus and the equal rights and status of the Turkish Cypriot side are not observed in practice. Under these conditions, it is not possible to hold meaningful and effective negotiations. The belief of Greek Cypriots that Cyprus is a Hellenic Island is an obsession and unless this obsession is overcome, it is not possible to conclude this dispute on equal grounds. Emotions and prejudices of Greek Cypriots lie at the root cause of the Cyprus conflict. According to the science of conflict resolution, meaningful and productive negotiation is possible when the parties have a strong mutual need to resolve the conflict; when they cannot achieve their valued goals on their own; when they are equally harmed by the current status quo; the parties' vested/legitimate rights and equal status are respected; and they understand that they can achieve their goals by reaching an agreement with the collaboration of other party.

Keywords: Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots, conflict, federation, two state solution.

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Kıbrıs'ta İki Devletli Çözümün Analizi: Tarihsel Süreklilik ve Güncel Tartışmalar

Öz

Kıbrıs sorununa sürdürülebilir bir çözüm bulmak için 1968'den beri yürütülen müzakereler hiçbir sonuç vermemiştir. Rumların Kıbrıs sorununu yaratan saplantısı Kıbrıs'ta hakim olmaya devam ediyor ve Kıbrıs Türk tarafının eşit hakları ve statüsü pratikte hiç gözetilmiyor. Bu koşullar altında anlamlı ve etkili müzakereler yapmak ve eşitlik ilkesine saygılı bir sonuca ulaşmak mümkün değildir. Bu nedenle, bu tür anlaşmazlıkları çözerken, öncelikle anlaşmazlığa yol açan soyut temel nedenlere değinmek ve buna paralel ve bununla bağlantılı olarak, uzlaşmanın temel ilkelerinin gereklerini gözetmek gerekir. Kıbrıslı Rumların Kıbrıs'ın bir Helen Adası olduğuna dair inancı bir saplantıdır ve bu saplantı aşılmadığı sürece, bu anlaşmazlığın eşit gerekçelerle sonuçlandırılması mümkün değildir. Kıbrıslı Rumların duyguları ve önyargıları Kıbrıs çatışmasının temelinde yatmaktadır. Çatışma çözümü bilimine göre, taraflar çatışmayı çözmek için güçlü bir karşılıklılık ilkesine ihtiyaç duyduklarında; değerli hedeflerine kendi başlarına ulaşamadıklarında; mevcut statükodan eşit derecede zarar gördüklerinde; tarafların kazanılmış/meşru haklarına ve eşit statülerine saygı gösterildiğinde; ve diğer tarafın işbirliğiyle bir anlaşmaya vararak hedeflerine ulaşabileceklerini anladıklarında anlamlı ve üretken müzakereler mümkündür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıbrıs, Kıbrıs Türkleri, uyuşmazlık, federasyon, iki devletli çözüm.

1. Introduction

1.1 General Information about Cyprus

Cyprus is an island in the eastern Mediterranean basin. It is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after the Italian islands Sicily and Sardinia both in terms of area and population. Cyprus lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea at the crossroads between Europe, Africa and Asia. Cyprus has a great geopolitical importance. The closest neighbor is Turkey only 50 miles north of the Island. Other neighboring countries are Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. Greece is 330 miles far away from Cyprus. The country's population is divided ethnically, linguistically and religiously according to the current political division to a Greek part in the south of the island and a Turkish part in the north. Lefkosa (Nicosia) is the capital city of both Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Cyprus is located on many transit routes in the Eastern Mediterranean. Tankers constitute most of the Mediterranean's shipping traffic, which is equal to almost half of the world's shipping traffic. Therefore, the island has a strategic value. Fahir Armaoğlu[1] , who says that there are two basic elements in the geostrategic importance of the Mediterranean, which is like a closed sea, emphasizes that these elements are strategic islands and the strategic gates of the Mediterranean, and lists the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus as the gates connecting Europe, Asia and Africa, and Malta, Crete and Cyprus as strategic islands (Armaoğlu, 1983). Cyprus, also known as the unsinkable aircraft carrier, is not only of vital importance to Turkey's interests, but is also the center of electronic listening, monitoring and control systems thanks to the British bases located on the island, which are also used by Europe and the United States.

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[1] **M. Fahir Armaoğlu:** Armaoğlu was a Turkish political historian and academic. He served as the dean of the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University and was a member of the board of directors in various higher education and finance institutions.

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1.2 Historical Back Ground of Cyprus

Cyprus as a small island in east of Mediterranean Sea has got a very rich history due to its geopolitical importance. As Cyprus is on the crossroad of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, the island faced invasions many times. Venetians ruled Cyprus from 1489 up till 1571. People living in Cyprus requested help from The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire to protect them from the cruelty of the Venetians (Serter and Fikretoğlu, 1988). As Cyprus was rich at agriculture, the soil was fertilized Ottomans conquered Cyprus in 1571. Ottomans applied "Millet System[2]" to the people of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots could practice the Orthodox Christianity and the Catholics had to choose to either leave the island or accept Islam or Orthodox religion. All these years the Orthodox Church became very powerful and the Church on behalf of Sultan collected the revenues from Christians (TRNC Information Department, 2008). After Ottomans conquered, the island the demography changed because many of the Catholics moved from Cyprus and many Ottoman soldiers, cavalries, skilled man from Anatolia moved in with their families (TRNC Information Department, 2008). In 1792, the Turkish population of Cyprus was % 55, but this amount went down to % 27 from 1900 because most of the man went to fight during the wars Turkey faced. The Ottoman rule had lasted 308 years.

Incidentally, Greece never ruled over Cyprus. In 1878, the island was leased to the British who wanted it to protect the newly opened Suez Canal which was very important because it cut the sea route to the Far East where the British had India and other territorial and commercial interests (Sonyel, 1978). The Ottoman Empire agreed to lease the island because it had recently fought the Crimean War with Russia and needed military support against that hostile country. The British made Cyprus their own in 1914 when the Ottoman Empire sided with the Germans against Great Britain and other European powers following the breaking out of the First World War. However, with the agreement made, the Ottoman Empire did not unconditionally give up its administrative and sovereign rights over Cyprus; this right was temporarily transferred to England by proxy. In 1915, England offered to give Cyprus to Greece on the condition that it would side with it in World War I, but Greece rejected this offer because it thought Germany would be victorious in the war (Erdemir H, 2001).

During this period, in response to the Enosis[3] activities of the Greeks on the island, the Turkish Cypriots were also working towards the return of the island to Turkey (Eroğlu, 2002).

Turkey accepted legally that Cyprus belonged to the British under the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 (Xypolia I, 2021). With the Treaty of Lausanne, England officially took possession of the island and declared the island a Crown Colony of England on March 10, 1925. The Crown colony in Cyprus was established in 1925 and continued until the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960.

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[2] Millet System: The term *millet* in the Ottoman Empire referred to a non-Muslim religious community. The Turkish term *millet* originally meant both a religion and a religious community. The Ottoman Empire's **millet system** was an institution wherein the minority religious communities of the Ottoman Empire were allowed to administer themselves in regard to justice, tax collection, and other important aspects of life. While the Ottoman Empire was a Muslim state and Muslim people made up the majority, it did rule over a vast expanse of land in which many Christian and Jewish people lived. Therefore, in order to govern these lands without pressing them into revolt, the Ottoman Empire developed the millet system.

[3] Enosis: The political union of Cyprus and Greece, as an aim or ideal of certain Greeks and Cypriots. The idea of enosis in British-ruled Cyprus became associated with the campaign for Cypriot self-determination, especially among the island's Greek Cypriot majority.

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2. The Republic of Cyprus

During the British rule of the island, the bicommunal nature of the country inherited from the Ottoman period continued. This means that the two communities socially lived side by side, contact being made for commercial purposes only. Since Cyprus remained outside the borders of the National Oath (Misak-I Milli) [4] and due to the international conjuncture, the alliances it was affiliated with and the agreements it was a part of, Turkey limited its relations with the Turks on the island to a cultural level until the 1950s(MoutsisI, 2014) Article 16 of the Treaty of Lausanne stated that Turkey would renounce all rights and titles over Cyprus and the other islands and that the future of the islands would be regulated by the relevant parties(Aksar and Suiçmez, 2001). According to this article, Turkey would not have any say in Cyprus. Therefore, the Turkish delegate objected to this part of Article 16 and had it removed from the text of the article. Thus, Turkey reserved its right to have a say in the future of Cyprus as one of the parties mentioned in Article 16 after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lausanne (Aksar and Suiçmez, 2001).

Cyprus's relationship with Greece is due to the fact that it considers itself the heir of Byzantium and aims to achieve the Great Ideal (Megali Idea). Greek Cypriots, being Orthodox Christians, have adopted Greece as their homeland. According to the Megali Idea, which has become Greece's utopia, Cyprus will eventually fall under Greek sovereignty. The basis of the Greek-Turkish Cypriots' problem in Cyprus stems from this utopia of Greece. Greece's Megali Idea goals include the Mediterranean becoming a Greek sea, Cyprus being annexed to Greece and the recapture of Istanbul. Between 1925 and 1959, the Greeks made various attempts to change the status of Cyprus and ensure that the island was annexed to Greece. In 1928, Greece sent a note to Russia, England and France, expressing the idea of Enosis for the first time and requesting that the island be annexed to them. England rejected this request by changing its pro-Greek policy that it had followed until then. From this period onwards, the Greeks began to rebel against the British and burned the governor's mansion in 1931. At the end of World War II, the Greek Cypriots and the Greek Government confronted the British Colonial Administration with the new concept of self-determination, adopted by the UN, and the Greeks demanded that Cyprus be given to Greece. On February 28, 1947, the Greek Parliament unanimously voted to annex Cyprus to Greece (Millios and Kyprianidis, 2016). In return, they promised to provide bases in Cyprus to Britain and the United States. The Greek leader, Archbishop Makarios II, was constantly opposing Britain's Cyprus policies and rejecting every offer that did not include Enosis. The Turkish Cypriots rejected the British government's offer to grant autonomy to Cyprus because of their fear that this would facilitate Enosis, and the Greek Cypriots rejected it because they feared it would eliminate Enosis. While the activities of the Greeks towards Enosis continued rapidly, the signatures on the notebooks titled "I want Enosis" placed in Greek churches as a result of the cooperation of the Greek Cypriot Communist Party (AKEL) and the Church in 1950 spread throughout the world that 96% of the participants wanted Enosis (Yorgancıoğlu C, 2016). The Republic of Turkey took a passive stance against the aforementioned developments and remained outside the events (Bilge,1969). Speaking at the Turkish Grand National Assembly on January 23, 1950, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of

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[4] National Oath (Misak-I Milli): "National Oath" (Misak-ı Millî) adopted in the last session of the Ottoman Parliament in 1920. While expressing some political features, the National Oath also retraced the specific geographical borders of the future independent Turkish land.

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the Republican People's Party government, Necmeddin Sadak[5], declared, "There is no such issue as the Cyprus issue." Fuat Köprülü[6] , the first Foreign Minister of the Democrat Party that came to power in the same year, expressed almost the same words in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The passive attitude that Turkey adopted during these periods benefited the Greeks and Greek Cypriots who wanted Enosis. Greece took the Cyprus issue to the United Nations in 1954(Yorgancıoğlu , 2016). This incident further increased the Greeks' excesses. The United Nations General Assembly rejected Greece's proposal for "self-determination". After many negotiations Zurich and London agreement, signed on February 1, 1959, between the Turkish Cypriot people, the Greek Cypriot people, Turkey, Greece and England (Tuncer , 2002). This is the agreement that determines the formation of the independent state to be established in Cyprus. When the Greeks signed the Zurich and London agreements, they gave up on Enosis for a while. The Turkish Cypriots gained political equality and order came to the island for a short time. The Republic of Cyprus, established in 1960, lasted only three years.

2.1 1963 Conflict

Disagreements and eventually clashes on the Turkish and Greek sides started in 1963. The Greek leader Makarios had stated to the press that she saw the 1960 agreements as a step towards Enosis. The aim of the Greeks was to get rid of the British as soon as possible and then strive for Enosis again. In a short period of three years, the Greek side began to question the applicability of the Cyprus constitution and later declared to the Turkish side and the guarantor states that they wanted to make changes to 13 articles (Ministry of Foreign Affairs,TRNC). Although separate municipalities, which are of great importance to the Turkish Cypriots, were foreseen in the Zurich and London agreements, they were prevented by the Greeks, except for the Nicosia municipality. They also proposed that with these 13 article amendments, the veto right of the Turkish vice president be abolished, less than 30% of Turks be appointed to state positions, and many other rights be restricted (Ministry of Foreign Affairs,TRNC). If the proposals were implemented, the Turkish Cypriots would be demoted from equal status to minority status. The Turkish Cypriots and Turkey did not accept these proposals. The failure to accept the constitutional amendment caused the Greek side to start terrorist activities. With the "Akritas Plan", which included the expulsion and/or destruction of the Turks from Cyprus, the Greeks began attacks on the Turks on December 21, 1963(Tuncer, 2002). The clashes on this day, known as "Bloody Christmas", soon spread throughout the island. Turks left their homes in 103 villages and migrated to areas where Turks were densely populated, and had to live in difficult conditions with limited means (Ministry of Foreign Affairs,TRNC). Some of the Turks were excluded from their workplaces, and some left their workplaces out of fear for their lives and moved to Turkish regions. On February 13, 1964, Turkey and on February 15, 1964, England applied to the UN Security Council to prevent the dangerous escalation in Cyprus. The UN Security Council passed resolution 186 on March 4, 1964, and foresaw the establishment of a "UN Peace Force" in Cyprus, but with this resolution, it stated that the legitimate

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[5] **Necmettin Sadak:** Necmettin Sadak was a *Turkish politician*, former minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and former chairman of the Turkish sports club Galatasaray.
[6] Fuat Köprülü: Fuat Köprülü (December 5, 1890 – June 28, 1966), also known as Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, was a highly influential Turkish sociologist, Turkologist, scholar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey. A descendant of the prominent Köprülü family, Fuat Köprülü was a key figure in the intersection of scholarship and politics in early 20th century Turkey.

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government of Cyprus was the government usurped by the Greek side(UN Security Council),1964). The Greeks still use this status to their advantage in the international arena. An embargo was imposed on the Turkish side until 1967. Inter-communal talks first began in Beirut in June 1968 and continued later in Nicosia (Coşkun, 2018).

2.1.2 1974 Turkey's Intervention in Cyprus and the Peace Operation

While the Turkish Cypriots were living under difficult conditions as refugees, a power struggle was ongoing among the Greeks. Those who wanted Enosis re-established the EOKA organization and established a secret organization supported by Greece called "EOKA-B" (Stern, 1975). Unrest began to occur between Makarios and the terrorist organization EOKA-B, which wanted Enosis. During this period, the views of Makarios and the Junta government that had been in effect in Greece since 1967 were different. Makarios opposed the declaration of Enosis as a result of military operations, stating that this would lead to Turkey's intervention. Makarios was in favor of the economic collapse of the Turkish Cypriots and the gradual breaking of their resistance. The EOKA-B organization was under the control of the Greek Cypriot National Guard (RMMO) and Greek officers" (Stern, 1975). Since they did not have different ideas, the Junta aimed to overthrow Makarios. On July 2, 1974, Makarios sent a letter to the President of Greece, General Gizikis, emphasizing that the EOKA-B organization was illegal and murderous. Makarios, who had the great support of Russia, pushed the Greek Junta government into a corner by challenging it and behaving in an uncompromising manner" (Stern, 1975). On the morning of July 15, 1974, a colonel in the Greek Regiment sent a message to the Greek General Staff saying, "Alexanderos has been taken to hospital," meaning "A coup has begun in Cyprus," and the coup was started and the news of Makarios' death was given on the radio; however, Makarios escaped being killed at the last minute and first went to the city of Paphos and announced to the public on a local radio that he was not dead. He later escaped by helicopter to British bases, from there to Malta and then to London. The operation to overthrow Makarios, in which the EOKA B organization actively participated, did not encounter much resistance and the putschists quickly seized power. Nikos Sampson, who became known as Tourkofagos (Turk-Eater), was declared "President" (Jensehaugen, 2017). The arrests of leftists and Makarios supporters followed. The EOKA B organization, which had been implementing political violence on the island since 1972 in order to overthrow Makarios, had signed a cooperation agreement with the Greek Regiment (Jensehaugen, 2017). Turkey could not accept the establishment of an anti-Turkish administration on the Greek side. For this reason, it offered to act jointly with England, which was also a guarantor, to establish order in Cyprus, but when the offer was rejected, it decided to intervene in Cyprus on its own (Przemyslaw, 2013). Turkey, which landed in Cyprus on July 20, 1974, announced that it had accepted a ceasefire following the three-day operation (Foreign Ministry of Turkey). Nikos Sampson handed over his duties to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Glafkos Clerides. On 25-30 July 1974, the Foreign Ministers of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom met in Geneva, Switzerland (Tuncer, 2002). During the meetings, it was decided that the Greek Cypriot forces would withdraw from the Turkish regions, that Turkey would not take any more land, and that another conference would be held in Geneva with the participation of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot representatives. However, the Greek National Guard army did not

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(Wertheim) withdraw from the regions it occupied. The Turkish army carried out the 2nd peace operation and later declared a ceasefire again as a result of UN mediation (Foreign Ministry of Turkey). On October 1, 1974, the name of the Turkish Cypriot Administration was changed to "Autonomous Turkish Cypriot Administration" On 13 February 1975, the name of the Turkish Cypriot Administration was changed to the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus.

3. Efforts of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot Sides to Fınd a Solution in Cyprus

The bi-communal talks, which began in 1968, continued until 2017 with occasional interruptions, but no conclusion was reached. The failure of the negotiations held under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) for the solution of the Cyprus issue in 2004 and 2017 made a new evaluation necessary (Şahoğlu, 2023).

The failure of the Crans-Montana summit, which was defined as the "Final Decision Conference" at the end of negotiations that have been going on for nearly 50 years, has once again revealed the conflict in the consensus model envisaged by the two sides with all its nakedness (Olgun, 2020). While the Greek Cypriot side, with the support of Greece, aimed for a unitary state free from Turkey's guarantee on the basis of the 1960 Cyprus partnership Republic, which they occupied and monopolized and wanted to maintain their dominance over, in the negotiations, the Turkish Cypriot side sought to establish a new partnership based on equality, in accordance with the parameters of the envisaged consensus. As a result, the point reached in the negotiations is not compatible with the realities of the island and region, nor with the parameters of the compromise agreed upon. It is accepted by some newspapers published in the South and even political circles that the Greek Cypriot side and Greece are responsible for the failure of the Crans-Montana talks (Olgun, 2020).

According to the science of conflict resolution, meaningful and productive negotiation is possible when the parties have a strong mutual need to resolve the conflict; they cannot achieve their valued goals on their own; they are equally harmed by the current status quo; the parties' vested/legitimate rights and equal status are respected; and they understand that they can achieve their goals by reaching an agreement with the other party (Wertheim) These conditions do not exist in Cyprus. Unfortunately, the obsession that caused this conflict continues to dominate Cyprus and the equal rights and status of the Turkish Cypriot side are not observed in practice. Under these conditions, it is not possible to hold meaningful and effective negotiations and achieve a result that respects the principle of equality. In order to resolve such disputes, it is necessary to first address the abstract root causes that led to the dispute and, in parallel and in conjunction with this, to observe the requirements of the basic principles of reconciliation. The root cause of the Cyprus conflict lies in emotions, prejudices and obsessions. The Greek Cypriots' belief that Cyprus is a Hellenic Island, this is an obsession and without overcoming this obsession, it is not possible to conclude this conflict on equal grounds (Savrun, 2017). The non-material dimension of such conflicts is more effective than the material dimension because emotions, prejudices and obsessions usually dominate in such

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conflicts. Ergün Olgun[7] and Osman Ertuğ[8] evaluate that this development, which means that the time and energy spent at the negotiation tables for decades has been wasted on the assumption that the Enosis ideology, which is the main source of the disasters in the recent history of Cyprus, has remained in the dusty pages of history, and that the aim is not to establish a new partnership based on equality with the free will of the two peoples, but to create a structure dominated by the Greek element, and that this has rendered the negotiation process for a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation meaningless. The Greek Cypriot side has been playing games with the Turkish Cypriot side and the international community by giving the impression that they are discussing a federation at the table, and their main aim is not to reach an agreement, but to destroy Turkish Cypriots with the isolation/embargoes they have imposed on our people and the intense propaganda activities they have carried out. As experts on the subject have stated, federations can only be established between equal peoples/political structures that have a wide range of common interests/goals, need each other and act in a spirit of sincere cooperation to achieve their common interests/goals, not between communities with completely opposite visions/goals, values and emotions. The basic elements of such a constructive spirit are mutual respect and trust. This latest development, which is concrete evidence that the egocentric Enosis mentality that disregards the Turkish Cypriot people on the Greek Cypriot side not only exists but also continues to live, has further deepened the trust gap between the two peoples on the island. In her interview published in the Filelefteros newspaper on February 26, 2017, Greek Cypriot leader Anastasiades showed what kind of mentality she has by reducing the political equality of the Turkish Cypriots to the level of a "privilege" and almost a favor by mentioning the "minority / majority" relationship in the search for reconciliation in Cyprus. All these statements are contrary to any federation spirit, and are also diametrically opposed to the established United Nations parameters on the Cyprus issue (Çimen, 2024). The truth is that the Greek Cypriot side has never been able to internalize or digest the concepts of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and political equality that it seems to accept on paper. Returning to the table under the same conditions as if nothing had happened and continuing the negotiations from where they were left off would not only mean continuing an exercise that has become meaningless, but also giving credence to the hegemonic mentality of the other side and, in a possible compromise, giving up on real equality and accepting the status of a "privileged minority" at best. However, Turkish people believe that it is high time that, as administrators and people, focus all their energy on developing the State both internally and externally, instead of relying on federal solution searches that have long lost their validity in light of the realities we find ourselves in. It is obvious that the palliative steps they can take will not change or eliminate the deep-rooted Enosis culture in the South (Çimen, 2024). Under these conditions, continuing the so-called federal partnership negotiations and expecting hope from them is like saying amen to a prayer that will not happen. Recent developments have revealed that the problem in Cyprus is not in the technical details of a possible agreement, but in the peoples' basic vision and approaches. While Turkish

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[7] Ergün Olgun: Mustafa Ergün Olgun is the Former Undersecretary of the TRNC Presidency and Coordinator of the Turkish Cypriot Technical Committees which negotiated the 2004 United Nations Comprehensive Settlement Plan for Cyprus. He is also former coordinator of the Presidential Consultative Council for the Negotiating Process and External Relations Coordinator of the Besparmak Think Tank Group.

8 Osman Ertuğ: Osman Ertuğ is former TRNC Presidential Negotiator, Spokesperson and Special Advisor on Diplomacy, he is a retired ambassador and former undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of TRNC.

Cypriots talk about a partnership based on equality, the Greek Cypriot side talks about a "minority/majority" based on numbers. This shows that both parties do not share the same goals and vision. It is an undeniable fact that the search for a federal solution in Cyprus, which has been going on for nearly 57 years, has come to an end, and this has been witnessed by the international community, be it the UN or the EU.

A new process has now begun, and this is not a process that is indexed to the Greek Cypriot side and will condemn Turkish Cypriots to an indefinite process again, but a process aimed at determining the conditions of how both parties will live in good neighborly relations on the basis of two States. According to Prof. Dr. Hasan Ünal "Stating that the idea of a "federation" was proposed as a "magical" idea in the international community to the two ethnic elements that were in conflict during the Cold War; with the end of the Cold War, the fairy tale of a federation also ended."

The UN has taken the role of mediator in the negotiations that have been going on for many years. However, no results have been reached in the negotiations. The fact that the EU currently sees the Greek Cypriot Administration as the representative of the entire island, accepts the Greek Cypriot Administration as a member, and puts forward the Cyprus Problem as a precondition for Turkey's EU membership negotiations is a reflection of the failure of the negotiations. It does not seem possible to implement a solution within the scope of this model in the coming years due to security concerns between the two communities (Akgün, 2018, p. 105) Federations, which are expected to be formed within the framework of cooperation, trust and friendship, are formed between societies whose national goals and interests intersect (KKTC Cumhurbaşkanlığı Arşivi, 1990). In Cyprus, the national goals of the two nations that have long harbored anger and suspicion towards each other are conflicting rather than intersecting. In order to be able to talk about a security environment in Cyprus where the two nations can continue to exist, there must be a solution where the two nations will live under independent administrations, within the framework of the lessons learned from past events. Instead of the mutual sympathy, tolerance and assurance that one community will not dominate the other, which was expected to exist between the two nations in Cyprus, mistrust prevails in inter-communal relations. This mistrust manifests itself in negotiations and subsequently as a crisis. "When federations around the world are examined, it is possible to observe that they function healthily, are long-lasting and that societies living under the federation roof continue their lives in peace if the following elements are present: a. The tolerant nature of the units coming together under the federation, ensuring that they cannot gain superiority, b. A common perception of threat in the elements coming together, c. Their need for each other, d. The size, number and homogeneous distribution of the federated state/canton/provinces, e. The geopolitics of the federation." (Önbaş, 2021, p. 76) When it comes to Cyprus, the existence of a power difference will be a very important problem in the federal state system. Because in all of the proposals regarding Cyprus, the Greek side is one step ahead due to its large population. This poses a great threat to the Turkish side in the process. While the Greek side has achieved the goal of a unitary state through the "republic" it has usurped since 1963, the applicability of the bi-communal federation system is questionable. Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw stated that a federal state order would not be a solution in Cyprus and that under current conditions, a two-state solution would

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be the only solution on the island. (CNN Türk, 2021). The UN Special Representative for Cyprus cannot criticize the Turkish side's insistence on the two-state solution model and that this model is now the only solution method, as if the Turkish side is displaying an unsolvable and uncompromising attitude. This is an acceptance that what happened in the previous solution methods was not a progress made, but rather unsuccessful attempts that were tried but could not be implemented. The only time during negotiations between Turkish and Greek Cypriots where they reached a very close stage to federation was the years of 2000-2004, when Annan Plan was established. The Annan plan envisaged a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation (BBF), consisting of two equal constituent states, one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot, each with its own flag, constitution, parliament and national anthems as is the case with all federal states. For political equality to be safeguarded, neither of the two constituent states would be able to unilaterally amend the constitution of the United Cyprus Republic which would have single sovereignty and one international personality.

Kofi Annan's plan for the reunification of Cyprus, which was voted on by both sides of the island in separate referendums, appeared doomed to failure after the largest Greek-Cypriot political party announced its opposition to the settlement. %75.83 of The Greek Cypriots rejected and %64.90 of Turkish Cypriots accepted the Plan. This showed that the Greek Cypriots are not ready to share the power and establish federated states. The lessons learned from this process are important for any future attempt to reunify Cyprus.

Over the past twenty-one years, Turkish Cypriots' confidence in a federal solution has significantly eroded. In its September 28, 2025 edition, Kıbrıs Gazetesi, a national mainstream newspaper, featured on its front page the analysis of GENAR Research President İhsan Aktaş regarding a recent survey conducted ahead of the presidential elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

The survey focused on what is widely regarded as the most pressing issue in Cyprus. Within Cypriot politics, political parties adopt differing positions on various matters, particularly concerning models for a resolution to the Cyprus problem. A deep division exists between the ruling National Unity Party (UBP) and the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) regarding this issue. While the CTP advocates for a federal solution, the UBP supports a two-state model. In the upcoming election, the UBP is supported by the Democratic Party (DP) and the Rebirth Party (YDP), whereas the CTP is aligned with the Social Democratic Party (TDP) which reflects a polarization at the same time.

As such, the survey posed a critical question to the public: do they support a federal solution or a two-state solution? The findings revealed that 58.9% of respondents favored a two-state model. Many Turkish Cypriots are concerned that a federal settlement would result in the termination of Turkey's guarantor status. Conversely, Greek Cypriots, who view Turkey as a threat, are keen to see the guarantor system abolished. Under these circumstances, reaching a mutual agreement on a federal solution appears increasingly unlikely.

Turkey is strongly supporting two state solution. On July 18, 2024, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) unanimously adopted a resolution entitled '50th Anniversary of the Cyprus Peace Operation.' The resolution underlined that a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus can only be achieved through the recognition of the inherent rights of the Turkish

Cypriot people, as well as the confirmation of their sovereign equality and equal international status. It further emphasized that a two-state solution would contribute to stability and durable peace in the Mediterranean region. The resolution reiterated that the sole and definitive solution on the island lies in the recognition of the Turkish Cypriot people's inalienable rights and the affirmation of their sovereign equality and equal international standing (AA, 2024). President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, recalling that he delivered messages concerning regions that hold a special place in Türkiye's foreign policy during his address to the 80. UN General Assembly, said*: 'We once again strongly defended the just cause of the Turkish Cypriots. Based on the reality that there are two separate states and two separate peoples on the island, we reiterated our call for the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (AA,2025).*

While proponents argue that the recognition of the "Republic" and the pursuit of a two-state solution represent the appropriate course of action, the opposition maintains that such efforts have amounted to little more than decades of fruitless attempts.

The Turkish side emphasizes that the North must be strengthened as never before with Turkey's support, asserting that within the TRNC the only viable path is to press the Greek Cypriots toward a power-sharing arrangement, which until now has been recognized solely by Turkey.

The opposition, however, contends that more flexible federation and cooperation models with the Greek Cypriots could provide a "more realistic" framework for resolution. Turkey, for its part, continues to support the two-state policy and has elevated it to the level of national policy.

4. Two-State Solution as a Realistic Alternative in Cyprus

In Cyprus, while under an independent joint state administration, it is seen that it is not possible for two societies to live in sustainable security and peace in a unitary and federal system. When the attitudes of the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus-Greece duo, the attitude of the UNSC, the attitude of the EU and the attitude of the UN General Assembly are evaluated, it will be seen that the TRNC is ignored and the EU member Greek Cypriot Administration is accepted as the sole legitimate representative of the nations on the island. When the Cyprus issue is evaluated by taking all these into consideration, it can be said that the two-state solution is the viable solution alternative for two communities with different cultures and identities. Although they live on the same island, it is not possible to bring together the two communities that do not have common points in terms of language, religion and nationality within the framework of the identity of "Cypriot" in terms of the history of the island. For this reason, the idea of a two-state solution on the island, proposed by the Turkish Cypriots, has been accepted by both Turkey and the TRNC for some time. This solution brought to the forefront not the coexistence of the two communities but their bringing together as neighboring countries. The two peoples living on the island will have a more respectful relationship with each other, with their own independent states continuing to exist, the disputed areas being shared, and physical borders being more clearly defined. In this way, the long-term problem has potential to be solved peacefully in a short term.

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On the island, the presidency is largely a symbolic position; however, it is highly significant as the president represents the Turkish Cypriots in negotiations on resolving the Cyprus issue. According to the elections held on Sunday, October 19, the leader of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP), Tufan Erhürman, won the presidency. Before the election, Erhürman had announced that, if elected, he would resume official negotiations with the Republic of Cyprus, the last of which took place in 2017(Kıbrıs Raporu,2025). CTP leader Tufan Erhürman received 62.76% of the votes, while incumbent President Ersin Tatar secured 35.81%. Erhürman stated, "It has never been possible to define a foreign policy on Cyprus without consulting Turkey, and it will never be possible during my term either." (Kıbrıs Raporu,2025)

President Tufan Erhürman emphasized that launching a new negotiation process in Cyprus depends on four concrete and indispensable preconditions, otherwise, instead of a "negotiation table," only a "discussion table" could be set. In an interview with Anadolu Agency following the handover ceremony at the Presidential Office, President Erhürman outlined the Turkish Cypriot side's position regarding a new negotiation process, linking it to four main conditions: Security, Political Equality, a Timeline, and the Lifting of Isolations (BBC, 2025).

Drawing attention to increasing regional security risks and the growing foreign military presence in Southern Cyprus (including Israel, the United States, and France), Erhürman stressed that Turkey's guarantor status on the island is non-negotiable. He made it clear that political equality, as defined in UN resolutions, cannot become a bargaining element at the table. The President underlined that the Turkish Cypriot community has lost patience with prolonged and fruitless negotiation processes and called for adherence to the timeline condition proposed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres following Crans-Montana. Erhürman also emphasized that the continuing isolations imposed on the Turkish Cypriots despite their will expressed in the Annan Plan referendum are illegitimate, and he demanded that an international commitment be made to lift these isolations before the start of any new process.

5. Conclusion

The two-state solution in Cyprus emerges as a pragmatic and increasingly discussed alternative amid the prolonged stalemate of reunification efforts. Decades of failed negotiations under the bi-communal, bi-zonal federation model have revealed the deep-rooted political, cultural, and security divisions between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Given these persistent realities, a two-state framework—based on mutual recognition, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation—could offer a more sustainable basis for stability on the island.

However, such a shift requires not only political will from both communities but also a re-evaluation of the international community's long-standing assumptions about the Cyprus question. A realistic approach must balance principles of sovereignty, security, and self-determination while ensuring that peace and cooperation remain central goals. Ultimately, recognizing the two-state solution as a viable alternative does not signify the abandonment of reconciliation but rather the adaptation of peace efforts to the complex historical and geopolitical realities of Cyprus.

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