

Political Crisis in the “Republic of Cyprus”. Confrontation between Greek and Turkish Negotiators

Crans-Montana and Resignations

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Featured image: Historical map of Cyprus (Source: [Piri Reis / Wikimedia Commons](#))

After the disaster at Crans-Montana an embarrassed negotiating Greek team returned like wet cats with their tails between their legs attempting to justify and spin their failure.

A tired president, influenced by his inner core of “advisors” and politicians flew back feeling dejected. They are now busy trying to convince Cypriots they are not giving up but would seek ways to restart the Bi-Zonal, Bi-Communal Federation talks (BBF). During a televised news conference the President agreed to continue the negotiations on a prerequisite and conviction that a “solution” is achievable with the Turks. What a damn idea!



Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey in Saadabad Palace in Tehran, Iran (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Reality speaks louder than words. In Switzerland, the Greek team was entrapped by a much superior and shrewder negotiating team led by Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu the Turkish foreign minister – a cunning man who had a strategic plan in place and knew precisely what he was doing and where he was going in the interests of Turkey and not others.

Meanwhile throughout the talks, Akinci played the victim bride and hardly spoke. He was there as a flowerpot smelling the sweet scents of success. On the sly, he was actually one of the architects of Ankara's conspiracy to fool everyone. He behaved splendidly, acting damp as instructed by allowing Cavusoglu to do all the talking in a game of deceit!

Only Nicos Kotzias the Greek Foreign Minister smelled the stench of Mevlut Cavusoglu's devious intentions. Kotzias had the balls and the foresight to speak out against the Turkish Minister's devious behaviour and dubious remarks; remarks spoken with a forked tongue - there was no love lost between the two!

The Anastasiades team seemed quite prepared to make further concessions in exchange for a negotiated BBF solution. In the spirit of goodwill the President ignored the danger signs written on the wall and failed miserably to anticipate (or refused to accept) the obvious. Over optimistic and gullible the Cyprus team continued trusting that Turkey would change its behaviour and act honorably.



Nikos Kotzias, Syriza politician and present Foreign Minister of Greece, in 2013. (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

They dismissed the idea that a chameleon never reveals its true colours. Instead, they chose to behave as good Europeans and good Samaritans acting as obedient "good little boys and girls". Everyone knows what happens to both! They ignore the one critical rule known to all - that shaking a hand with Turkey one soon discovers a couple of one's fingers missing.

Meanwhile during the negotiations, not a single mention of the Republic of Cyprus was made. It was as if it never existed. For all intents and purposes the talks concentrated on establishing a New Cyprus between the "two communities" on a power-sharing formula of a non-existent mythological "federation". It was as if Anastasiades had forgotten that the people elected him as the President of the Republic and not a "community leader" as the UN, the EU and others presented him in the interests of the negotiations as not to offend Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

What a bloody mess! Turkey - as predicted - never had any intention of negotiating seriously and its presence at Crans-Montana was nothing less than window dressing and a PR exercise, knowing the world would be watching. This was a calculated move to pave the way forward and ultimately take possession of the entire occupied area. Sultan Erdogan did not waste time announcing that:

“it’s too bad the Greek side did not want a settlement. Turkey will now proceed with its plans B and C for Cyprus.”

It is only a matter of time before the next bombshell will come! Who will stop Turkey then? Nobody did in 1974!

Cavusoglu meticulously applied the Turkish conspiracy at Crans-Montana to the latter. For days the Turkish foreign minister, with a smiling face, kept making spoken but vague promises of Turkey’s “good intentions” for a solution (but never in writing) until he was ready for the good kill.

As it has turned out Cavusoglu and Akinci were there to retrieve as many concessions from the Greek side as possible! Exacerbated by the Turkish minister’s dishonorable and cunning attitude, the UN-Secretary pressed him to stop beating around the bush and put Ankara’s proposals on the table and in writing. It was then that Cavusoglu got offended and threw a tantrum including another bombshell half-hour before all collapsed.

He announced in not so many words that: “*with or without an agreement, the Turkish troops will never be withdrawn from Cyprus*” and neither would Turkey abandon “*the right to intervene in the island*”. If that was the Turkish position and red lines, then why go through the travesty of negotiating at all with such people?

Everyone at the conference was utterly shocked by Cavusoglu’s revelation on the two most important and critical issues of the negotiations. They finally recognized that Turkey never meant a single word spoken at the negotiating table but rather was playing for time in a shameful Ottoman game of political deception.

After ten days and a 15-hour session of non-stop negotiations UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced at 3am that he was

“deeply sorry to inform that despite very strong commitment and the engagement of all parties...the conference on Cyprus was closed without an agreement being reached” and then he went on to wish the “best for all the Cypriots in north and south Cyprus”.

As a seasoned diplomat, the UN Secretary-General stopped short of actually blaming Turkey for the collapse of the UN conference but ironically, he went on to admit the presence of two separate states- North and South Cyprus! Those words could now end up becoming an established term of a permanent partition of Cyprus under occupation.

As for the President and his team, reality had suddenly dawned on them! How could they be so wrong about their Turkish Cypriot compatriots after so many years of negotiations with them? They recognized that Akinci was not the well-meaning man Anastasiades had befriended and he helped to elevate his status to presidential prominence - albeit unofficial. After two years the on-off negotiations between the two “friends” finally came to an inglorious end and they went their ways. No one but Turkey is any the wiser for what the future holds!

In such a situation, people with a sense of dignity often resign as a matter of honour for failing their duty. No matter how one sweetens the end result, the Anastasiades team has been outsmarted by Turkey’s well-thought strategy forged before their arrival in

Switzerland! There are no greys in negotiations but simply “failure” or “success” and the talks in Switzerland have failed for the third time in the past six months. That’s not a sign of success but a sign of political incompetence!

The honourable thing to do now is for the President to resign in a dignified manner. Mr. Anastasiades should step down and call for immediate elections. He should also consider firing en-masse his advisors and party hacks for cultivating an over-optimistic climate, misleading the public and failing to anticipate Turkey’s next move.

There is one problem – Cyprus never had a strategic long-term counter-attack plan in place. When it comes to the Cyprus issue, policies are always changed for political convenience each time a new President is elected and that’s the problem!

In the absence of powerful independent Think Tanks the results are always the same – dismal and catastrophic to say the least! That’s what has been happening in Cyprus – the dependency on inglorious politicians of a politicocracy without merit but nepotism.

Drawing from past experiences the UN conference at Crans-Montana should never have started – the talks were doomed to fail from the very start. Why did the President insist so strongly? People will never know for real. One does not make up a flippant strategy and committing the nation to becoming hostage to political incompetence.

What now?

Crans-Montana may well turn out to be a blessing – at least the Republic of Cyprus has not been decimated to accommodate Turkey’s grandiose geopolitical plans. In fact the UN-Secretary General saved the Republic and that’s the positive side of it all.

No matter how disappointed the President and his party – including the leftists may feel – the collapse should be considered as an optimistic step forward and not negative. As a politician, Anastasiades and his inner clan faced a similar leadership challenge during his UN Annan Plan pet project; the electorate rejected it outright in a referendum!

Thankfully the Republic has been protected this time around but the President’s leadership is in question.

The Cyprus government will now be impelled to forge a new foreign policy by recognizing that the existing one has been a shambles. Out of the ashes of the Crans-Montana fiasco, one thing has become clear; the Turkish Cypriots must decide if they want to be a part of the Cyprus Republic, or be a part of Turkey. They certainly cannot have it both ways. Enjoy EU privileges the Republic has to offer and at the same time demanding union with a third country and military occupier of their homeland.



The Turkish Cypriots can either work together with the Greek Cypriots for the unification of Cyprus by refusing outright political integration with Ankara – like the Greek did with Athens – or they can join Turkey ruled by Sultan Erdogan; a dictator who has recently imprisoned over 150.000 innocent Turks. The recent imprisonment of a Turkish Cypriot Mufti in Turkey on trumped up charges clearly shows that no one is safe with Erdogan in control.

In fact, the 120.000 Turkish Cypriots living in the occupied area face a real threat of extinction from nationalists, illegal settlers (450.000) and ISIS “sleeper” terrorist units lodged in their midst. Unless the Turkish Cypriots pick up the Greek Cypriots’ olive branch of friendship and reconciliation, their community is doomed.

Time for serious action!

Under the current developments radical decisions need to be applied and a dynamic new foreign policy put in place immediately. After years of negotiations, the old policies have proven wrong and failed big time. A Revolution of the Mind is critical if the Republic is to start exerting serious political and economic pressure against Turkey but also against the TC elite and supporters of the status quo.

As a start, the government must shut all crossings to stop the movement of people, goods and services between the two sectors; drop the BBF idea and seek out ways within the perimeters of the UN and work with the Turkish Cypriots for another type of solution; stop outsiders and tour operators using the Republic’s airports transporting thousands of tourists to the occupied area; revoke all EU passports and Cypriot citizenship including privileges now enjoyed by TCs living in the occupied area; ensure that EU funding and taxpayers money stops flowing in the occupied area; make it abundantly clear that the Republic is an integral part of the European Union and can no longer be taken advantage of; put a string of EU and Cypriot flag banners along the crossings to remind everyone – friends and foes – that the Republic is a vital part of the EU and not a place of political abuse or convenience; punish severely those that break the laws conducting business and illegal activities including smuggling between the two sectors; stop all medical privileges, welfare benefits and other dispensations to TCs that live in the occupied area but who take advantage of what the Republic has to offer them; stop providing free services to Turkish sectors and isolate politically the pseudo-regime that represents Turkey’s interests and not the interests of the Turkish Cypriots.

Certainly the Cyprus government knows on how to apply a strong offensive strategy rather than to continue the current placating policy. Faced with a decisive strong Cyprus government, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots may start to “Think out of the Box” and

negotiate honorably. If not, the status quo will continue for years to come but without the Turkish Cypriot community.

There is a long road ahead full of obstacles but it is the only homeland Greek and Turkish Cypriots have. One hopes they will not abandon it to the whims of Turkey's brute force but choose reconciliation as a way forward and reunite the island democratically under one-man-one-vote on the basis of UN/EU Human Rights and in respect of Rule of Law and not Rule of Man.

May common sense prevail and bring peace to this strife-torn island that everyone want a piece of its entrails.

Author's Note: After so many years of writing over 400 articles about the social, political and economic issues related to Cyprus this is the last and final article written by the writer on the subject.

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