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The Security Dimensions of a Cyprus Solution

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ABSTRACT

As a new round of talks to reunify Cyprus continues, there is a real sense that a solution might at long last be possible. Significantly, there also seems to be a desire by the two sides to reach their own settlement with minimal external input. However, while most issues can be dealt with at a bilateral level, security is one specific area that necessarily requires outside involvement, whether in terms of input from Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom – the three Guarantor Powers – or from the wider international community. This paper explores the various dimensions of the security debate, examining the implications of a continued Greek and Turkish military presence on the island and the proposals for demilitarisation, which will require a rather more comprehensive approach to security than has hitherto been the case. In ensuring the island's domestic stability, as well as securing its external defences, inventive thinking will be needed to reach some form of acceptable mechanism to ensure the island's post-solution independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Keywords: Cyprus, Security, Defence, United Nations, NATO, OSCE, European Union, Britain, Greece, Turkey

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The Security Dimensions of a Cyprus Solution

1. Introduction

On 21 March, Dimitris Christofias, the newly elected President of Cyprus, and leader of the Greek Cypriot community, met his Turkish Cypriot counterpart, Mehmet Ali Talat, in Nicosia.¹ Emerging from their discussions, the two men announced that, after a four year hiatus, a new attempt to solve the Cyprus Problem would now be launched. The announcement was immediately lauded by the international community. Forty five years after the conflict first emerged, and three and a half decades after the island was divided, there now appeared to be a real prospect that finally the two sides could reach a settlement.² Such optimism was driven by the fact that unlike previous initiatives, this new attempt to find a settlement would be a process handled by the two sides themselves. The United Nations, which has traditionally taken the lead role in settlement efforts, would take far less prominent role than has traditionally been the case.³ While it would be ready and available to act as a mediator, or provide technical advice or assistance to the process, the effort to resolve the island's political problems would essentially be managed by the two

¹ Mehmet Ali Talat is the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which unilaterally declared independence in 1983 and is currently recognised only by the Republic of Turkey.

² There is an extensive literature on the Cyprus Problem. For some of the more recent works, see: Hannay (2005); Ker-Lindsay (2005); Tocci, (2007).

³ For the evolution of the peacemaking role of the UN in Cyprus, see Richmond (1998).

sides acting on their own accord, at least in the first instance. The value of this approach seemed to be confirmed when, just months later, in July, the two sides confirmed that high-level negotiations would now begin. This process officially started on 3 September.

While this attempt by the sides to find a solution on their own marks an important development, there is one area that cannot be tackled as a wholly indigenous issue to be resolved through direct discussions between the two sides: security. On almost every other key question, it is widely accepted that the two communities can, and should, find their own solutions free from external interference. Questions relating to constitutional structures and governance, territorial readjustment, the economy are all perfectly amenable to solution by the two sides with minimal external involvement. However, while the two leaders established a working group to examine security, the topic cannot be wholly, if not largely, addressed in a communal framework. For a start, security represents the key underlying problem between the two sides. While they may be able to trust each other on a number of practical day-to-day issues, it will take time for the legacy of the island's violent past to subside. Secondly, the current constitutional structure of the Republic of Cyprus, as established in 1960, gives Britain, Greece and Turkey a direct say in the political and security affairs of Cyprus. Thirdly, any agreement reached between the two sides will almost certainly have to be policed by an external body. And, lastly, questions arise over the defence of the island. To this extent, any discussions relating to security necessarily require a far broader,

international input. This article examines the various issues that arise when considering questions relating to security and the attempts to put in place a post-solution security regime.

2. Security as a factor in the Cyprus Problem

It is hard to downplay or minimise the role of security as a factor in the Cyprus Problem. Indeed, it can rightly be regarded as the most contentious issue that needs to be addressed in any settlement process. For example, in April 2004,⁴ 75 per cent of Greek Cypriots who voted against the UN proposals for reunification (the Annan Plan) cited fears over security as their primary reason for opposing the settlement.⁵ As far as many Greek Cypriots were concerned, the arrangements put in place under the terms of the UN proposal were wholly insufficient to reduce Turkey's influence over the island's affairs. Specifically, the proposals envisaged a continuation of the three 1960 treaties that formed a cornerstone of the constitutional settlement that formed the basis of the independent Republic of Cyprus.⁶ These three documents – the Treaty of Alliance, the Treaty of Establishment and the Treaty of Guarantee – allowed Greece and Turkey to station military forces on the island, granted Britain sovereign bases in Cyprus, and gave Britain, Greece and Turkey a right of

⁴ The text of the main provisions of the Annan Plan, including the Constitution of the United Cyprus Republic, can be found as an appendix to Ker-Lindsay (2005), pp.165-193.

⁵ Exit Poll, *Mega Television*, 24 April 2004. For an examination of how security affected Greek Cypriots at the time, see Lordos (2004) and Faustmann (2004). For an analysis of why the Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan, see Chadjipatellis and Andreadis (2007).

⁶ Constitution of the United Cyprus Republic. Article 6 and Article 18.

intervention, and allow Greece and Turkish to retain military forces on the island.⁷

The problem is that this issue marks a fundamental point of difference between the two communities. As far as most Greek Cypriots are concerned, any settlement must see the full withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island of Cyprus as well as the end to the right of intervention.⁸ Quite apart from the fact that these treaties were imposed on Cyprus in 1960, and that their continuation would amount to an ongoing infringement of the essential sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, or its successor entity, many believe that such archaic ideas have no place in governing the actions of a state in the 21st century, especially one that is now a full member of the European Union. In contrast, many Turkish Cypriots are equally insistent that any settlement must safeguard their physical security as a community and that this can only be achieved with the continued Turkish military presence on the island, protected under binding international agreements. In this context, the two communities remain fundamentally at odds with one another over the issue of security.

Addressing these diametrically opposed views will not be easy as it is not only centred on the security imbalance between the two communities in Cyprus, but also involves a wider regional security imbalance. On the island, there is a fundamental asymmetry between the two communities. The Turkish Cypriots,

⁷ The full texts of the three 1960 treaties – the Treaty of Alliance, the Treaty of Establishment and the Treaty of Guarantee – can be found in Macris (2003).

⁸ A poll conducted in early September 2008 showed that 82 per cent believed that all Turkish troops should leave the island, while only 17 per cent accepted that some could stay. 'Poll shows little optimism for a solution', *Cyprus Mail*, 9 September 2008.

who represent approximately 20 per cent of the island's population, naturally fear the numerical strength of the Greek Cypriots, who represent almost all of the remaining population.⁹ They therefore see themselves as the endangered community, at risk from a far larger community that has attacked it in the past. In contrast, the Greek Cypriots tend to view things from a very different perspective. While they may be the majority on the island, Turkey's population of 70 million means that they in fact see themselves as the vastly weaker party in a regional context. Just as the Greek Cypriots outnumber the Turkish Cypriots by a ratio of 5:1 on the island, so Turks and Turkish Cypriots outnumber Greeks and Greek Cypriots by a similar proportion in the regional context. And just as many Turkish Cypriots believe that the Greek Cypriots wish to dominate them, if not eradicate them altogether, many Greeks, both in Greece and Cyprus, continue to believe that Turkey maintains expansionist aims, not only in Cyprus, but also in the Aegean.

This essential asymmetry, compounded by a deep sense of mistrust about the underlying motives each side has, makes any efforts at compromise extremely difficult. While the Turkish Cypriots may see the presence of Turkish forces on the island, which currently are estimated to be in the region of 35,000 troops (Jenkins, 2008), as a necessary guarantee of their safety and security vis-à-vis the Greek Cypriot community, the Greek Cypriots view them as a hostile

⁹ The relative figures have traditionally been as follows: Greek Cypriots (78 per cent), Turkish Cypriots (18 per cent), with the remaining 4 per cent made up of the three religious communities: the Armenians, Latins and Maronites. Of course, in the contemporary context, and especially with the influx of Turkish settlers in Northern Cyprus and the arrival of many EU citizens since accession, the demography of the island has changed significantly. In fact, Cyprus now has the highest number of immigrants per head in the entire European Union.

occupation force that could at some stage represent a threat to the rest of the island that remains under the full and effective control of the Government of Cyprus. The question, therefore, is how to address this military presence in a manner that is likely to leave the Turkish Cypriots feeling sufficiently secure that the Turkish Army will be able to continue to guarantee their safety and security, but in a manner that leaves the Greek Cypriots feeling confident that the sole purpose of these troops is to provide security for the Turkish Cypriots?

2.1. Reducing Greek and Turkish forces in Cyprus

In the first instance, it would seem necessary to address the fundamental concerns that exist between the two communities on the island. Managing this will not be easy, but some ideas have been advanced that might yet play a role. Most notably, it has been suggested that Cyprus would be demilitarised and all local defence forces would be disbanded. While this may certainly be a laudable idea, it does raise problems regarding the island's defence that will be examined later on. The problem, however, is that while the disbanding of local forces has been widely hailed as an important step in ensuring peace and security between the two communities – although, as will be examined, it opens up other questions – it does not answer the question of Greek and Turkish troops, despite the clear intention of the Greek Cypriots to ensure that demilitarisation refers to the removal of all forces from Cyprus.

While the Turkish Cypriots might be willing to forego a Cypriot defence force, as noted already they do not want to see the departure of all Turkish troops from Cyprus – a position that was restated by Talat just after the resumption of direct high level talks.¹⁰ The question is how to make this more palatable to the Greek Cypriots. First and foremost, it seems clear that the presence of such a large and well armed Turkish military force as currently exists is widely considered to be wholly unnecessary for the defence of the Turkish Cypriot community. A far smaller, lightly-armed force could perform the same role. Under the Annan Plan, there would have been a dramatic reduction in the number of troops. By 2011, the total number of personnel for each contingent would not exceed 6,000, falling to 3,000 by 2018. Thereafter the total number of Greek and Turkish personnel would have been limited to 950 and 650 respectively, with the arrangement being reviewed every three years with the eventual aim of the full withdrawal of such forces (Article 8). In the view of many Greek Cypriots, this was not enough. Instead, it has been suggested that a faster, and more significant, withdrawal schedule be put in place. This is certainly an idea that can be explored.

Meanwhile, other ideas have also been suggested. For instance, would it be possible to place the contingents under the authority of a wider peacekeeping mission? The problem with this idea is that Turkey may well object to any attempt to have their forces placed under external command in Cyprus, which remains a sensitive national issue. Therefore, while this might be worth

¹⁰ 'Turkish Cypriots: Security guarantees needed', *Associated Press*, 10 September 2008.

pursuing, it may be better considered as an intermediate-stage measure. In the first few years following a settlement, the contingents would remain independent, but after a certain period they would then be incorporated into a larger multinational force. Another question relates to the guarantees that could be put in place to ensure Turkish compliance with any agreement. One question frequently asked in 2004 was what would happen if Turkey argued that it was not able to reduce its forces for some reason? Would the international community be willing or able to enforce compliance under such circumstances? Of course, it should be stressed that an attempt to address some of these concerns in a UN Security Council resolution just prior to the referendum was vetoed by Russia – a move that was widely believed to have been taken at the behest of the Papadopoulos administration.¹¹ Nevertheless, the question of implementation of security issues is a very real fear on the part of the Greek Cypriots and is something that should be taken into consideration in any talks on security.

At the same time, any attempt to deal with the issue of the troops should also address the wider strategic dimensions of the issue. It is important to recognise that any decision to keep Greek and Turkish troops in Cyprus is likely to perpetuate a general feeling that Cyprus remains a potential flashpoint for ethnic conflict between the island's two communities, and that Cyprus remains

¹¹ 'What Was in It for Russia?', *Moscow Times*, 27 April 2004. 'Russian Veto defeats Security Council draft resolution on Cyprus', *UN News Centre*, 21 April 2004'; Tassos Papadopoulos insisted that he had not asked Moscow to block the resolution, but the Russian press reported that he had: 'Russia takes care of Cypriots', *Pravda*, 22 April 2004. The last time Russia had vetoed a UN Security Council resolution had been in 1993, on a question relating to the funding of UNFICYP.

a source of potential tension between Athens and Ankara. In this sense, it would seem worthwhile trying to present any decision to keep troops on the island in a way that would not suggest that they are there to protect the communities against one another. Instead, it would be worth trying to present their presence as a means of safeguarding a settlement against those marginal, but potentially violent, elements within the two communities that might try to disrupt a solution. The two contingents would be cast in terms of being the guardians of an overall settlement, rather than the guardians of their community.

More importantly still, any settlement must also be seen to play a part in the reduction of overall tensions between Greece and Turkey. Of course, the process of Greek-Turkish rapprochement, which has been ongoing since 1999, has served to lessen the threat of conflict in recent years.¹² However, a historic agreement on Cyprus, especially in the context of a settlement of the outstanding Aegean disputes, would represent a fundamental revision of Eastern Mediterranean peace and security. For far too long, Cyprus has been seen as a piece of strategic real estate by Athens and Ankara. To Turkey, Cyprus is viewed as way by which Greece can extend a front against the ‘soft underbelly’ of the Turkish peninsula (Birch, 2003). This concern must be acknowledged. At the same time, it should be recognised that without such a ‘perceived’ threat, whether real or not, Turkey’s rationale for retaining a major

¹² For an analysis of contemporary Greek-Turkish relations and the process of rapprochement see, *inter alia*, Aydin and Ifantis (2004); Carkoglu and Rubin (2005); Ker-Lindsay (2007); Öniş and Yilmaz (2008); and Anastasakis, Nicolaidis and Oktem (2009).

troop presence on the island is severely undermined. If one considers the positions of Greece and Turkey, it quickly become evident that Cyprus holds no offensive value for Turkey vis-à-vis Greece, nor does it have any defensive value for Greece vis-à-vis Turkey. Trying to attack Greece from Cyprus is pointless when Turkey has many facilities far closer. Likewise, for Greece, Cyprus cannot possible serve as a base from which to defend the Greek mainland, or even its most easterly islands. In this regard, placing Cyprus off limits to both sides in any meaningful military way by ensuring that the small contingents that remain are solely there for the purposes of communal protection would undoubtedly serve to enhance the overall process of Greek-Turkish détente and remove a source of friction. To this extent, the removal of all Greek and Turkish air and naval bases on the island, would undoubtedly contribute to the wider regional impact of a settlement and would also help to insulate Cyprus in the unfortunate event that there was a return to tensions between Greece and Turkey.

2.2. The Treaty of Guarantee and the right of intervention

While the question of the presence of Greek and Turkish troops is an important issue, it is intimately linked to the question of the Treaty of Guarantee and the right of intervention. As noted already, most Greek Cypriot remain deeply opposed to the 1960 agreements that vested Britain, Greece and Turkey with the constitutional responsibility to guarantee the sovereignty, independence and

territorial integrity of the new state and, under Article 4 of the Treaty, gave the three countries a legal right of intervention, either jointly or singly, to counter any perceived threat to the Republic of Cyprus.¹³ After all, it is this right that was used by Turkey when it intervened in July 1974, following a Greek military coup on the island, which overthrew the then president, Archbishop Makarios, and was widely seen as a prelude to the island's union with Greece.¹⁴ In contrast, the majority of Turkish Cypriots still view the Treaty of Guarantee as an essential element of their overall security.¹⁵ To this extent, the maintenance of the Treaty of Guarantee is often presented by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots as a fundamental red line that cannot be crossed in any negotiations.

Some form of compromise is therefore needed. One suggestion has been to introduce a term limit of some sort on the Treaty. For example, the treaty could be amended to expire when Turkey joins the European Union. This idea of a 'sunset clause' has in fact received widespread attention and is seen by many to be a rather obvious and logical approach to the issue. It is also an idea that might find favour in Turkey. For instance, in recent years several senior military commanders have noted that if Turkey were to join the European Union the issue of Cyprus, and the Aegean, could be solved very quickly –

¹³ The exact text reads as follows: 'In the event of a breach of the provisions of the present Treaty, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom undertake to consult together with respect to the representations or measures necessary to ensure observance of those provisions; In so far as common or concerted action may not prove possible, each the three guaranteeing Powers reserves the right to take action with the sole aim of re-establishing the state of affairs created by the present Treaty.'

¹⁴ For the most up-to-date analyses of the events of 1974, see Asmussen (2008).

¹⁵ A poll in 2005 showed that the continuation of the treaties was considered unacceptable by 60 per cent of Greek Cypriots, with only 19 per cent willing to accept their continuance. In contrast, 62 per cent of Turkish Cypriots saw their continuation as acceptable, whereas 28 per cent saw them as unacceptable (Lordos *et al.*, 2005:11).

even though he insisted that Turkish troops must remain in Cyprus.¹⁶ This indicates that they understand that EU accession will change the fundamental pattern of relations between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. Of course, the danger is that if Turkey does not join the European Union then it will retain this right of intervention in perpetuity. This is something that will also have to be considered, especially given the depth of opposition to Turkish membership that exists in parts of the European Union, notably France and Austria, which makes such an outcome a distinct possibility.

Meanwhile, other ideas have also been put forward. For example, it has been suggested by Greek Cypriots that any attempt to impose a demand that a right of intervention must be confirmed by the UN Security Council.¹⁷ This is an idea that would almost certainly be rejected by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.¹⁸ Such a system would place an unacceptable limitation of Turkey's right to act under what might be extremely pressing circumstances. Similarly, while one might suppose that the Greek Cypriots might be willing to accept a Turkish military presence stationed in the Turkish Cypriot areas, and limited to operating in those areas, thus preventing them from having access to Greek Cypriot areas, this is not the case. While the fear of Turkish troops operating in Greek Cypriot areas was indeed one of the key concerns expressed by many Greek Cypriots at the time of the 2004 referendum, the underlying danger with

¹⁶ 'H. Ozkok: Turkish Troops Must Remain in Cyprus', *MPA*, 18 October 2003.

¹⁷ Faustmann, 'Cyprus: Security Concerns and the Failure of the Annan Plan', p.52.

¹⁸ Alexandros Lordos 'The Security Aspect of the Cyprus Problem: Towards a creative resolution', paper circulated in April 2008. The paper was subsequently printed in the *Friends of Cyprus Report*, Issue 51, Summer 2008, with responses by Costa Carras (A European Response) and Ustun Erguder (A Turkish Response).

this idea is that it might encourage Turkish Cypriots to remain in place in the Turkish Cypriot component state, thus perpetuating the divisions between the two communities.¹⁹

3. Protecting and preserving Cyprus I: Peacekeeping

Even if an agreement can be reached over the presence of Greek and Turkish troops on the island, and the limits of intervention, it is clear that some form of extra security will be needed to ensure that any agreement reached between the two sides holds. Most obviously, it is accepted that any final settlement will require some form of peacekeeping mission to be put in place. First of all, it should be pointed out that unlike many other international operations conducted in post-conflict societies in the past decade and a half – such as the UN missions in Cambodia (UNTAC), East Timor (UNTAET) or Kosovo (UNMIK) – Cyprus will not need a large civilian component, or executive administrative capability. By all accounts, both communities currently operate strong and functioning democratic systems. There is simply no need for the UN to manage the transition in any major way, let alone take over the actual administration of the country on a temporary basis.²⁰ Indeed, it hardly seems likely that it would have to carry out even basic functions, such as overseeing elections. Instead, any peacekeeping operation will have to perform fairly routine traditional peacekeeping duties, such as managing any outbreaks of

¹⁹ Alexandros Lordos 'The Security Aspect of the Cyprus Problem: Towards a creative resolution', paper circulated in April 2008.

²⁰ This idea has, nevertheless, been suggested (Richmond, 2006).

localised violence and conflict and monitoring the positions of Greek and Turkish military forces, should they remain.

In this sense, the most major question confronting any peacekeeping mission in Cyprus is the type of mission to be deployed. Is it still necessary to maintain a force of several hundred, as is currently the case with the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), or could these duties be carried out by a much smaller observation force? At the time of the 2004 referendum, it was recognised that a new UN mission, which would have taken over from UNFICYP had the Annan Plan been accepted, would have to be larger than the current mission. With greater freedom of movement, it was deemed necessary to increase the number of peacekeepers. However, whether such a large force would be needed today is certainly questionable. It has now been over five years since the line was opened, in April 2003, and since then the two communities have had fairly free access across the dividing line. Contrary to initial fears and expectations that the end of restrictions on movement across the Line might lead to new fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, in the time since the line was opened there have in fact been remarkably few serious incidents between the two communities.²¹ Indeed, in a review of peacekeeping conducted after the 2004 referendum, the idea of downgrading UNFICYP to an observer mission was even mooted.²²

²¹ As one prominent Greek Cypriot human rights lawyer commented to the author, since the line was opened in 2003, there have been many more, and far more serious, incidents between fans of rival Greek Cypriot football clubs than between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

²² 'Annan: Time for a Review of UNFICYP', *Cyprus Mail*, 3 June 2004.

While this idea was eventually rejected in favour of a major 30 per cent reduction in the number of troops serving with UNFICYP, which included a new operational concept that emphasised a more centralised mission, thereby reducing the need for forces all along the buffer-zone,²³ the fact that it was even suggested is indicative of a widespread belief that the era of direct intercommunal confrontation and fighting is over. Times have moved on and it now seems highly unlikely that the two communities would ever resort to armed conflict. While such a view would seem to be justified given the development of relations between the two communities over the past half-decade, there is undoubtedly a sense of caution. Indeed, a poll taken in September 2008 showed that this was the single greatest concern of Greek Cypriots when considering a solution.²⁴ While there would indeed seem to be good reasons to suppose that the era of armed conflict between the two communities is over, a settlement could open up new problems. For example, tensions may emerge over the right of refugees to return. Likewise, one cannot tell how politics will develop between the two communities. If tensions do emerge, then even relatively minor incidents can take on wider significance and can become an outlet for resentments and tension. At the same time, those actively opposed to an agreement may well seek to try to undermine the new state of affairs. One simply cannot discount the fact that there may be acts of

²³ 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus', *UN Security Council document S/2004/756*, 24 September 2004.

²⁴ As the report noted, 'As to the fears haunting Greek Cypriots in case of a solution, the biggest one (43 per cent) is that the accepted solution will not function and there will be disagreements and clashes. Other fears include the destruction of the Cyprus Republic (21 per cent) and the loss of national identity (20 per cent). Turkish Cypriots also fear that the solution will not work (36 per cent).' 'Poll shows little optimism for a solution', *Cyprus Mail*, 9 September 2008.

provocation staged to undermine the settlement and foster conflict between the two communities.

For this reason, and despite the apparent changes to the nature of the conflict on the island, it would seem prudent to maintain, if not increase the number of peacekeepers in Cyprus, at least until such time as the post-solution environment takes shape and a full reappraisal of peacekeeping needs can be carried out. Ultimately and eventually, it is to be hoped that Cyprus would not need a peacekeeping force at all. However, for the meanwhile, it seems likely that a fairly sizeable mission will be required in the event that a solution is reached. The question that will need to be answered, and which will be examined later on, is what organisation would be best placed to carry this out.

4. Protecting and preserving Cyprus II: External Defence

Important though it is, peacekeeping is just one part of the security equation. Another factor to be considered is the island's overall defence. Traditionally, security in the Cyprus context has been defined in very insular (in the true sense of the word) or regional terms. Essentially, it has been conceived of in terms of how to protect the communities from one another, or how to protect the island from Greece or Turkey. In reality, though, any thinking on Cyprus must necessarily take a far broader approach. According to the prevailing wisdom, this would have a generally positive effect on relations between the two communities following a settlement and has thus been repeatedly endorsed

by many sections of the international community, including both Britain and Greece.²⁵ Indeed, it has also been accepted as a basic principle of any settlement, as indicated in the 2004 UN reunification proposals, which explicitly called for the disbanding of such forces (Article 8).

The problem is that while this may indeed help to reduce sources of friction between the two communities, one cannot overlook the fact that this could leave Cyprus in a very precarious position – if not now, then possibly in the future. Lying at the far eastern end of the Mediterranean, Cyprus is located in a distinctly unstable region. Apart from Turkey, its closest neighbour, which lies 40 miles north of the island, the nearest countries to Cyprus are Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. The Greek island of Crete, the nearest territory of another EU member state is 250 miles away. In this sense, it is perhaps unduly risky to conceptualise any solution relating to security purely in terms of local conditions, and within the framework of traditional Greek-Turkish rivalry. Any solution should also take into account the wider geo-political environment. Certainly, one can argue that Cyprus currently has good relations with almost all of its neighbours, with the obvious exception of Turkey, and that this would make thought of wider defence unnecessary. However, while this thinking might be appropriate under the current circumstances, is it likely to remain so in the future? It is also worth considering that security is not simply related to the threat from other states. In contemporary terms, security is defined to

²⁵ See, for example, 'British envoy agrees with demilitarisation, says Spokesman', *Cyprus News Agency*, 24 February 1997; '1997 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: The Edinburgh Communiqué', *Commonwealth Secretariat*, October 1997; 'Simitis-Clerides reaffirm common front, no postponement of S-300s', *Athens News Agency*, 28 August 1998.

include a range of other threat, such as terrorism and various forms of trafficking – be it drugs, weapons, or people. Cyprus needs to be able to manage these threats. Indeed, it is likely that many Cypriots would not feel entirely comfortable about disbanding their defence forces entirely.

To this extent, there are several ideas worth exploring. First of all, despite the prevailing support for removing all armed forces from the island amongst the current Greek Cypriot leadership, one obvious answer would be to abandon the idea of demilitarisation and allow Cyprus to retain a small military force of its own. This is an idea that has been put forward by some Greek Cypriots – including Ioannis Cassoulides, the DISY candidate lost the run-off vote against Christofias in the February 2008 presidential election – who argue that an alternative answer would be to create a professional army.²⁶ This idea certainly has a degree of merit. As noted, Cyprus does face external threats and security challenges that it will need to manage. However, the idea of creating a military force after a settlement is an idea that certainly carries risks. It should not be forgotten that one of the factors that led to the destabilisation of the 1960 constitution was the disagreement over the defence forces. While the Greek Cypriots wanted to have mixed units established, in line with the constitutional provision of a division of 60:40 between the two main communities, the Turkish Cypriots demanded separate Greek and Turkish Cypriot units. Such a problem could re-emerge in any new settlement, and will need to be tackled effectively if it is not to become an unnecessary source of tension between the

²⁶ Andreas Theophanous, 'A demilitarised Cyprus with UK bases and Turkish guarantees', *Cyprus Mail*, 5 October 2008.

two communities. How this could be done is not entirely clear, but experience from other divided societies, such as Belgium and Switzerland, might prove instructive should this option be considered at some point.

Another approach might be to argue in favour of creating limited defence capabilities. While a number of states that have been demilitarised have foregone any sort of defence forces, either because of a lack of any identifiable external threats or because their security is underwritten by another state,²⁷ there are states that, while not having standing armies, have chosen to retain certain defensive capabilities. For instance, Iceland, which is a member of NATO, does not have an army, but does retain an air defence system and an armed coast guard, the latter being utilised in a confrontation with Britain in the 1970s – the so called Cod Wars.²⁸ Likewise, Panama, while having no army, retains a range of defence capabilities.²⁹ To this end, a second alternative might be to consider allowing Cyprus to retain a number of defensive capabilities such as an armed coast guard and an air defence system, but not a standing army. An armed coast guard, for instance, would allow Cyprus to manage a number of key security issues, such as tackling various types of smuggling and trafficking. An air defence system could also provide Cyprus with an extra sense of security.

²⁷ The states without any armed forces include: Andorra, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Vatican and most of the Pacific island states (Fiji and Tonga being notable exceptions).

²⁸ 'On this day: 7 January 1976: Iceland and Britain clash at sea', *BBC News*.

²⁹ However, there are questions being asked about whether these forces are a de facto army. 'An Army is All but Name: Is Panama Really Demilitarized?', *The Panama News*, Volume 14, Number 10, May 19-June 7, 2008.

In the event that neither option is developed, the two most obvious options to handle the security of the island are the two least acceptable: Turkey and Britain. Turkey's proximity to the island, and its large military force, would in many ways make it an ideal option for overseeing the island's defence. However, it would be politically unacceptable to the Greek Cypriots under any circumstances. The legacy of the past is simply too great. While the Turkish Cypriots would undoubtedly be willing to see such a system put in place, if it were even to be put on the table, there is simply no chance that any Greek Cypriot would be willing to entrust their wider security to a country that they believe is determined to assert its dominance over the whole island. In fact, such an idea would be tantamount to making Cyprus an official protectorate of Turkey. Indeed, if such an idea were to be presented as part of any settlement it would all but guarantee that the settlement would again be rejected by the Greek Cypriot community, even if this was cast in terms of a minimal on the ground presence, such as managing air defence. But there are other reasons why this might not work. Having Turkey in charge of the overall security of Cyprus, an EU member, could serve as a sore between the two in the event that relations between Turkey and the EU deteriorate. Indeed, under these circumstances Cyprus could in fact become a pawn in the relationship, a situation that few in Europe would want to see happen. Indeed, even keeping the Treaty of Guarantee could be problematic in this context. In any case, for all these reasons, any suggestion that Turkey might be able to play a direct, let alone leading, role in the post-settlement defence of Cyprus – as logical as it

might sound in terms of Turkey's defence capabilities – is of no practical value as a suggestion.

The other alternative is Britain. This is a more plausible idea, but only marginally. At present, the United Kingdom still maintains a significant military garrison on the island, located in the two Sovereign Base Areas granted to Britain under the agreements that saw Cyprus become an independent state, in 1960. However, the United Kingdom is in no position to offer any real security to the island. The SBAs are quite clearly seen as serving British interests in the wider Middle East and providing vital support for military operations in the region. They are simply not equipped to carry out major defensive functions on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus, or a successor state. Of course, steps could be taken to upgrade the forces on the island, but this would be an extremely costly undertaking. More to the point, this is not something that London would want to take on, either politically or strategically. Notwithstanding the useful role the Bases continue to play at present, it is perhaps worth noting that Britain itself seems unsure about the future of the Bases, or at least a substantial part of them. Officially speaking, the line is that Britain retains full sovereignty over the Bases. However, there have been a number of very clear indications over the years that London might be willing to relinquish some of the territory under the right conditions. This was seen most

clearly in 2003, when Britain formally offered to cede the Western Sovereign Base Area to the post-solution Cypriot state in the event of a settlement.³⁰

More importantly, it is highly unlikely that either community would be willing to accept such a role being played by the United Kingdom, even if it could do so. For the Greek Cypriots, the presence of the SBAs is already seen as being a reminder of the island's colonial heritage. It is undoubtedly the case that most Greek Cypriots would like to see them removed and the land returned to the Republic of Cyprus.³¹ Indeed, there is a general sense that following a solution, the Greek Cypriots may well turn their attention to launching a campaign to remove the Bases.³² In contrast, while the Turkish Cypriots are certainly much more willing to accept a British presence on the island, and do not see the Bases as a major issue, let alone a bone of contention, they would nevertheless be hesitant about giving ultimate responsibility for the island's security to the British Government. As they see it, the British Government is naturally more inclined to side with the Greek Cypriots than with them. After all, the Bases are essentially located in Greek Cypriot areas.³³ Moreover, there is also a general line of argument that says that a British military presence on the island is

³⁰ 'Britain offers to hand over land on its Cyprus bases', *The Independent*, 23 February 2003.

³¹ For an analysis of the various ways in which the SBAs shape relations between Cyprus and Britain, see Theophanous and Tirkides (2008). Further information on the organisation and administration of the Bases from the British Ministry of Defence, can be found at < www.sba.mod.uk >.

³² As President of the House of Representatives, Christofias called for the removal of the Bases. 'Pay up and get out', *Cyprus Mail*, 20 April 2007. However, in June 2008, following a meeting with Gordon Brown, which was widely seen as an effort to improve relations between Britain and Cyprus, which had been strained following the 2004 referendum, he took a more careful tone, noting that, 'The existence or demolition of the bases is not on the agenda now. It's something that will be discussed together with Turkish Cypriots as owners, as partners of a united Republic of Cyprus, after the wounds have healed.' 'A new era in relations with Britain', *Cyprus Mail*, 6 June 2008.

³³ The Western SBA, which is composed of Akrotiri and Episkopi, is located near to the port city of Limassol on the island's southern coast. The Eastern SBA, which included Dhekeleia, is located near to Larnaca, also on the south coast, but has a northern perimeter than runs along the buffer zone.

actually a security threat in its own right and should be removed – remembering that the threat to British forces in Cyprus was the reason cited by the British Government for the invasion of Iraq, in 2003. In this sense, and in the same way as having Turkey defend the island would make Cyprus more vulnerable, having a British military presence on the island might also create a threat to the island.

5. The Role of International Security Organisations

Under these circumstances, a natural alternative would be to look to see what other organisations or bodies would be tasked with responsibility for addressing these elements of Cyprus' internal and external security.

5.1. United Nations (UN)

As suggested earlier, the first organisation that comes to mind when one thinks of managing post-settlement security in Cyprus is the United Nations. Since 1964, the UN has been vested with responsibility for maintaining peace and security on Cyprus. This has been done through the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), established under the terms of Resolution 184 (1964).³⁴ While there are good reasons to maintain a UN peacekeeping presence in Cyprus, there are also valid arguments to suggest that other alternative options could be explored. For a start, after almost half a century in Cyprus, it might be

³⁴ For more on the history of UN peacekeeping on the island see, inter alia, James (2002); Stegenga, (1968); Harbottle (1971); Lindley (2001); Henn (2004).

time to draw a line under the UN's commitment to the island and signal a new start by introducing a new peacekeeping body to the island. This would also provide an opportunity for the focus of the island's security to be shifted towards more appropriate regional bodies.

But even if the UN were to remain responsible for peacekeeping, it would not be able to provide the wider external security that the islands needs. For a start, it seems highly unlikely that there would be a widespread desire to see the United Nations take on such a major responsibility for the defence of a member state. Secondly, who would contribute to such a force? In order to create a viable mission, major questions relating to command and control and interoperability would have to be answered. There would also be the major question of who would provide the equipment. Traditionally, UN forces have tended to operate only with light arms. However, to manage a wider security operation, ships and aircraft would be needed. This would appear to be far too significant a commitment for the organisation, even if the majority of the costs for such a mission were to be carried by the Cypriot state.³⁵ Therefore, for the element of external defence, other options would need to be explored.

5.2. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Another option would be NATO. At first glance, this would seem to be a natural and ideal option for dealing with both internal and external security.

Quite apart from the fact that both Greece and Turkey are members of the

³⁵ That said, there have been various discussions over the years about developing a standing UN military capability that could be used either in a peacekeeping role, or in a war fighting capacity in the case of interstate conflicts. For a recent examination of some of these ideas see Codner (2008),

organisation, it also unites most of Cyprus' European partners, and also provides the added security that comes with the overarching role played by the United States. Indeed, granting NATO a direct peacekeeping role in Cyprus was explicitly suggested in 1999 by the Clerides Administration as part of its longstanding proposal for the overall demilitarisation of the island.³⁶ However, the use of NATO in this role is extremely problematic in a number of ways. For a start, while there are many Greek Cypriots who would support a NATO peacekeeping presence on the island, many others have traditionally opposed NATO involvement in Cyprus, as indeed has Turkey, and would be likely to do so in the future for reasons of history and contemporary politics.

Shortly after independence, the option of Cypriot membership of NATO was raised. However, it was quickly rejected by the Greek Cypriots who believed that the organisation would always attach greater weight and significance to Turkey's views, rather than those of Greece (Clerides, 1993:124). At the same time, Turkey objected to membership on the grounds that it would make intervention, if so required, significantly more difficult.³⁷ Instead, the new Republic of Cyprus opted to join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a body it remained a member of until 2004, when European Union membership required it to leave.³⁸ Likewise, just three years later, in 1963, when fighting broke out between the communities, the Greek Cypriots rejected proposals to establish a

³⁶ Ghada Khouri, 'Cypriot Foreign Minister Proposes Demilitarization As Solution to Age-Old Conflict', *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, April/May 1999, pages 15, 76.

³⁷ Osman Orek, the first Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cyprus, interview with the author, 1996.

³⁸ For an overview of Cyprus' relations with the Non-Aligned Movement, see, 'The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cyprus Question', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus* < www.mfa.gov.cy > (Last accessed on 10 April 2008).

NATO peacekeeping force on the island, instead pressing for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission. Thereafter, US support for the military junta in Greece, whose attempted coup in Cyprus in July 1974 led to the Turkish invasion, has left a strong legacy of anti-American sentiment across the Greek Cypriot political spectrum.

All this has naturally affected wider perceptions towards NATO across Cypriot society, particularly on the left. NATO is still viewed with deep distrust, particularly by the members of AKEL, the Greek Cypriot communist party, which remains the strongest single political party on the island, and regularly attracts 30-35 per cent of the Greek Cypriot vote.³⁹ The election of its leader, Demetris Christofias, to the presidency in February 2008, means that Cyprus also has a communist leader for the first time in its history. While the party is in many ways a social democratic party for most practical purposes, it nevertheless retains a strong rhetorical link with traditional communist orthodoxy. Many, if not most, members still retain an affinity for Russia, and hold NATO, as the key Western security apparatus, responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this sense, having NATO peacekeeping force in Cyprus would be unacceptable. So too would joining Partnership for Peace (PfP), the gateway to eventual membership of the organisation, which the Government of Cyprus has steadfastly refused to consider, even since leaving the NAM, and which is opposed by President Christofias.⁴⁰ In this sense, even though the

³⁹ For an analysis of AKEL, see Dunphy and Bale (2007:287-304).

⁴⁰ 'A glance at Dimitris Christofias, winner of Cyprus presidential election', *Associated Press*, 24 February 2008.

island is now a member of the European Union, the past continues to affect contemporary debates on the issue of Cyprus' relations with the West as a whole.

But AKEL's objections are also likely to be shaped by more contemporary concerns. Most importantly, it is very sensitive to Russian concerns about the extent of NATO expansion – an issue that was highlighted by the Russian-Georgian Conflict in August 2008. Quite apart from understanding, and sharing, Moscow's concerns on this issue, many in AKEL, and in Greek Cypriot society more widely, would not want to antagonise the Russian Government. While there is an obvious imbalance in their relationship, Cyprus and Russia have a close relationship, and the two in fact perform useful roles for one another. For the Greek Cypriots, Russia is a vital ally in its attempts to limit, or stave off, what it believes to be undue pressure from the United States and Britain in terms of a solution. The most obvious way in which it is able to do this is by its veto powers in the UN Security Council. This was seen when Russia blocked a UN resolution on security in the run up to the referendum. Moreover, Russia served to ensure that any suggestions that UNFICYP be substantially cut, or downgraded to an observer mission, following the referendum in 2004, both of which were feared by the Greek Cypriots, were blocked (Ker-Lindsay, 2006:415). In return for this support, Cyprus acts as a useful voice for Russia in certain international fora, such as the Council of Europe and, most importantly of all, the European Union.⁴¹ In this regard, it

⁴¹ This was confirmed to the author by several European diplomats.

can be argued that while Cyprus may not be a major partner for Russia, they have performed useful roles for each other.

Still, it must be recognised that despite the ongoing opposition to NATO by AKEL in recent years there appears to have been a marked shift in thinking amongst many Greek Cypriots towards NATO. This appears to be particularly obvious amongst those on the centre-right and also, it would seem, amongst moderate nationalists.⁴² As a result, there appear to be a body of opinion that seems willing to take a more positive view of NATO as an obvious body to secure the island's security, and have openly suggested as much.⁴³ However, even amongst those that might be more predisposed towards NATO than was once the case there is still an element of doubt and mistrust. Although many Greek Cypriots recognise that NATO has changed since the end of the Cold War, they nevertheless remain wary about being integrated into an organisation where the United States still wields such direct and significant control. The old fear that the organisation would put Turkish interests above those of Greece, let alone the Greek Cypriots, is likely to remain strong. To this extent, many Greek Cypriots will want to keep a security balance and have a Russian counterweight available. All this means that the deep distrust, if not hostility, towards NATO amongst a significant proportion of Greek Cypriots, coupled with Nicosia's continued friendship with Russia, means that NATO is unlikely to be a viable

⁴² When discussing the question of security with one very senior Greek Cypriot diplomat, who had been closely aligned with the Papadopoulos administration, the question of closer ties with NATO arose. The diplomat said that he personally saw this as an obvious choice, but that it would not happen under the current AKEL administration.

⁴³ For example, this was suggested by Alexandros Lordos in a paper circulated in early 2008, entitled 'The Security Aspect of the Cyprus Problem: Towards a creative resolution'.

option for managing post-solution security, either in terms of peacekeeping or in terms of the island's wider defence and security needs.

5.3. European Union (EU)

Looking beyond the UN and NATO, a third option would be to look at some form of European Union presence. Again, this could be problematic. For example, such a force is likely to be unacceptable to the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, who could well argue that as Turkey is not a member of the European Union, whereas Greece is, the force would not be truly impartial. Such a concern would also be echoed in Turkey, where there may well be fears that any attempt to intervene in the face of an EU force could have very serious implications in terms of Turkey's overall relationship with the Union. Such concerns are not without justification. Even if the Greek Cypriots were to be excluded from decision-making on the issue, one must recognise that the force could also be subject to pressure from Athens, and might even involve Greek decision-makers in a direct way – for example, either in Brussels or as part of the civilian component of the force. Even if this were not the case, one must recognise that the perception of impartiality is just as important as being impartiality.

Ironically, the Greek Cypriots might not be that in favour of the idea either. Once again, there are questions relating to the degree to which the European Union would be capable of undertaking wider security duties relating to the island's defence. With no standing army of its own, the European Union would

be unable to perform a long-term defence role in Cyprus at present. To do so would also require close co-operation with NATO, which would almost certainly have to be closely involved in terms of equipment and facilities. As such an arrangement would require the consent of all NATO members, this would again give Turkey a major say over the defence and security of the island. In this sense, a European Union approach would seem to have limited application at this stage, for both political and practical reasons. But this is not to say that this will not change. In the event of Turkish membership of the Union, it may well be the case that the European Union could take on a much larger role in Cyprus, in both a peacekeeping capacity, if still needed, and in terms of defence.

5.4. Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

However, there are other organisations that can be considered. One obvious option would be the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This body, which acts as, ‘a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation’, has considerable expertise covering a range of conflict management tasks, having undertaken missions throughout the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁴⁴ The other advantage is that its 56 members include all the main protagonists – Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Britain, Russia, the United States and the other members of the European Union. It would therefore seem to be a good

⁴⁴ For an overview of OSCE missions see, ‘Survey of OSCE Long-Term Missions and other OSCE Field Activities’, Conflict Prevention Centre, *Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*, SEC.GAL/145/07, 25 July 2007.

candidate for some sort of conflict management role in Cyprus after a settlement. Obvious tasks might include running a peacekeeping operation. However, the Organisation also has experience of border management tasks, which could help in terms of managing a number of the non-state threats to the island's security. And while it may not be able to provide the high level security that Cyprus might need, the presence of a significant OSCE mission composed of a number of key international actors, and with an explicit responsibility for managing broader post-settlement security, would almost certainly act as a deterrent to any external aggressors. However, the role of the OSCE might also be enhanced further if Cyprus were to be able to manage certain security functions on its own and if the mission were to be backed up by some other forms of security guarantee.

5.5. Other options for consideration

In trying to secure the island's external defence, consideration will have to be given to the wider political constraints that have already been outlined. However, there is certainly room for inventive thinking on this issue. It may well be possible to reach an answer that would address Greek Cypriot and Russian concerns, but would also allow the island to receive the adequate security and safeguards it needs in such a difficult neighbourhood. One suggestion might be to examine the possibility of putting in place a Security Council guarantee of some sort, under the terms of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. This would be coupled with a statement reaffirming the essential neutrality of Cyprus. This, in turn, would then be factored in to any

arrangement to provide extra external guarantees as part of the security arrangements envisaged under a final agreement, such as the creation, for example, of an OSCE mission. However, polls have shown that even this idea, which certainly has merit, might not be enough to win Greek Cypriot support. Even though the Turkish Cypriots seem strongly in favour of such an idea, Greek Cypriot opinion was effectively evenly divided over the issue. Once again, concern seemed to be centred on British and US influence over the Council (Lordos *et al.*, 2005: 11-12).

6. Conclusion

As the 2004 referendum showed, security remains a key question in any effort to reunite Cyprus. Whether justified or not, many Greek Cypriots see security – cast specifically in terms of security from Turkey– as the paramount issue to be addressed in a settlement.⁴⁵ Likewise, Turkish Cypriot often emphasise the importance of maintaining a clear external guarantee regarding their safety and security in the face of a perceived threat from the far more numerous Greek Cypriots. Therefore, without an agreement on the fundamental question of security, one could go so far as to say that an acceptable solution to the Cyprus Problem is unlikely to occur. However, to reach this point, it needs to be recognised that any agreement on security must not only address the

⁴⁵ In an editorial published at the start of talks, Alvaro de Soto, the former UN Special representative referred to the Greek Cypriots demands for the withdrawal of Turkish troops as ‘emotional and overrated’. Alvaro de Soto, ‘Cyprus: Another false Dawn?’, *International Herald Tribune*, 28 March 2008.

fundamental imbalance that exists between the two sides, but must also take into account the deep-seated concerns that the Greek Cypriots hold vis-à-vis Turkey.

Managing this will not be easy as it requires balancing local and regional factors. However, some ideas do stand out. For instance, it is widely recognised that there will have to be a reduction in the number of Greek and, more specifically, Turkish troops on the island. However, this should be done in such a way as to reinforce the message that the troops that remain are not there to serve as the defenders of one side against the other, but are there to defend a settlement. Similarly, these forces should not serve as a source of tension between Greece and Turkey, either at the time of a settlement or in the future. They should be relatively lightly armed, and neither Greece nor Turkey should maintain other significant military facilities on the island, such as naval or air bases. In terms of other ideas, it might be worth exploring the idea of incorporating the remaining forces within a peacekeeping force at some appropriate moment after a settlement, as an intermediate step towards their full withdrawal. As for the Treaty of Guarantee, the idea of a 'sunset clause' still remains the strongest idea.

While the internal dimensions of the problem are important, there still remain two key questions to be answered. The first of these relates to peacekeeping. Any agreement will have to include a peacekeeping element. Quite how active or overt this needs to be will have to be examined in the context of an overall

settlement. Despite the generally non-confrontational, if not cordial, way in which relations between the two communities have developed since the Green line was opened in 2003, it seems likely that a fairly significant peacekeeping force would be needed following a settlement, at least for the first few years. Many Greek and Turkish Cypriots are obviously worried about a return to violence in the event of a settlement breaking down, and there is always a danger that this may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. This raises a question as to what would be the best body to undertake this. One obvious solution would be to continue with the United Nations, perhaps renaming the force to reflect the new state of affairs. However, there is also a good argument to free up UN resources and indicate a new situation by putting in place a force from another organisation, operating with UN Security Council authorisation. One obvious choice would be NATO. However, this is unlikely to be acceptable to the Greek Cypriots, for a variety of reasons relating to history and ties to Russia. Another option, therefore, would be to explore the potential role to be played by the OSCE. In contrast, the European Union would be unlikely to be seen as an acceptable neutral party by the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, but may well be able to develop a stronger role at some point in the future.

A second dimension is the external defence and security of Cyprus. While questions relating to security have usually been defined in terms of the relations between the two communities or between the Cyprus and the two motherlands, Greece and Turkey, one also has to recognise that there is a far larger dimension to the island's security that needs to be considered. One idea would

be to abandon the principle of demilitarisation in favour of a small professional defence force. Alternatively, an intermediate approach could see Cyprus retain an air defence system and a naval force. However, if full demilitarisation is to be introduced, as appears likely, then sound measures will have to be put in place to secure the island from external threats. Again, NATO is unlikely to be an acceptable option, given traditional Greek Cypriot scepticism, if not hostility, towards the organisation. Likewise, neither Britain nor Turkey, can take on this responsibility. At the same time, the European Union is hardly an effective body to undertake these duties. This question will need to be addressed in greater detail.

While security certainly represents a difficult issue, it is clear that finding the necessary solutions to this dimension of the Cyprus Problem is far from impossible. The key elements are all in place. It just requires decision to be made on how best to balance out the various concerns of the two sides that ensures that the internal and regional dimensions of the problem are neatly addressed in a manner that allows the Turkish Cypriots to feel safe vis-à-vis the Greek Cypriots, the Greek Cypriots to feel safe vis-à-vis Turkey and the people of Cyprus to feel safe against other external threats to the island.

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