

XIX. The Mediterranean Geopolitical Structure and the Matter of Resolving the Cyprus Issue in Accordance with the Annan Plan

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*Facts on the wider Greece-Turkey-Cyprus geographical complex
within the framework of the South-East Mediterranean*

Introduction-Abstract: This paper focuses on the question of discovering the keystone of the South-East (SE) Mediterranean geopolitical shell which is located on the crucial security problem faced by the state of Israel as well as on the question of how the Greek and Greek-Cypriot sides will cope with the impetuously immediate resolution of the Cyprus Issue in accordance with the Annan Plan on “a Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem”¹ which creates a new strategic image for Cyprus with significant medium and short term repercus-

1. The Plan was delivered by the UNO General Secretary, Mr. Kofi Annan to both sides (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot) following nine months of direct consultations between Messrs. Clerides & Denktash and 58 meetings in the presence of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus Mr Alvaro de Soto.

sions for the entire SE Mediterranean geopolitical complex – and the Greco-Turkish & Turk-Cypriot relations. This paper's conclusion is the proposal to politically handle all negotiations, namely to actually negotiate in principle – so that the Greek-Cypriot side shall not be held responsible for an a priori dismissal of the Annan Plan – but it is the author's estimate that the Greek and Greek Cypriot sides should not have accepted the said plan on 12/12/2002 unless it has incorporated the modifications suggested herein.

1. Description of the Mediterranean Geopolitical Complex Joints/Centres: Key features

The Mediterranean plexus joints are defined on the basis of the following characteristics:

- a) their role as dominant communications nodes,
- b) their role as places of energy deposits, natural reserves and resources,
- c) their role either as points of arms force accumulation as well as of political power concentration and dispersal or as secondary/submetropolitan centres of transference and imposition of hegemonic (metropolitan) power.

This metropolitan power is transferred or imposed via these Mediterranean geopolitical system joints either through the direct relations of the submetropolitan Centre/Joint in question with the Metropolis or through the influences and the interactions that are exerted on the Joint/Centre within the framework of the mechanisms of the International or Regional Collective Security Systems to which the specific Centre/Joint belongs.

2. Geographical Analysis of the Mediterranean Joints/Centres

2.1. The areas that fall under category (a) are: i) Gibraltar, ii) Malta, iii) the Gulf of Sidra, iv) the island of Crete, v) Cyprus, vi) Suez, vii) the Bosphorus strait, viii) the Dardanelles, ix) the Greek Eastern Aegean Sea including its insular complexes as the continuation of the Darda-

nelles' trade and military channel, x) the port of Thessalonica, xi) the Port of Volos and x) the Otranto-Corfu strait.

In conclusion, one can observe the significant difference in the density of such Centres between Eastern and Western Mediterranean, as well as the advantageous position of the Eastern Mediterranean basin.

2.2. Category (b) includes i) the Caspian Sea region, ii) the Eastern Aegean Sea region, iii) the Otranto-Corfu region, iv) the region off the shores of Cyprus-Alexandretta-Syria-Lebanon-Israel, v) the Gulf of Sidra [Libya], vi) Algiers and vii) Morocco.

In conclusion, one tends to – once again – underline the increased geopolitical importance of the Eastern Mediterranean basin by observing the accumulation of the geographical zones above.

2.3. Category (c) includes zones such as i) Southern Italy [NATO bases], ii) Northern and North-western Greece [NATO bases], iii) the island of Crete [US-NATO bases], iv) Cyprus [British and US bases], v) Malta, vi) Gibraltar [British sovereignty], ii) Israel [of Western geopolitical influence with substantial internal problems due to the burning Palestinian issue, viii) Iraq [pole of US geopolitical influence dispute and an active ally of Middle East Islamist movements] ix) Syria [ambivalent pole of US geopolitical influence dispute with an ambiguous stance towards the international Islamist movement], x) Lebanon [ambivalent pole of US geopolitical influence dispute as instrument of Syrian influence], xi) Egypt [of Western geopolitical influence with elements of instability due to the region's powerful Islamist movement which has a remarkable historical relation with the country itself], xii) that of Maghreb [zone of unstable Western geopolitical influence with a powerful and active Islamist movement], xiii) Iran [zone of intense US geopolitical influence dispute], xiv) Turkey [zone of western-oriented influence with political-social instability factors of Islamist and Kurdish origin as well as with significant problems concerning issues of political freedom and human rights].

i) The conclusion drawn from this brief overview of the above zones and their position is identical to those of 2.1. and 2.2.: the density of geopolitically significant Joints is much greater in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean basin than in the Western one.

ii) Another conclusion is that the hub of instability, conflicts and ideological-cultural as well as racial contradictions (Islamist movement, Kurdish and Palestinian issues) are focused mainly in the Southeastern and Southern Mediterranean.

3. Axes of Geopolitical Influence

In the Mediterranean basin, according to the analysis above, one can identify:

a) A horizontal zone of Anglo-Saxon geopolitical influence between the 33rd and 36th parallels, which is defined by points of established strategic Anglo-Saxon power in the form of military facilities, such as:

i) The Northern and Southern Iraq 'No Fly Zones' (above the 36th and below the 33rd parallel respectively);

ii) The US-Turkish military base of Lefkoniko on the Northern (occupied by the Turks) part of Cyprus, which the American side wishes to convert to a NATO one, in an attempt to transfer there several of the activities and facilities it enjoys at the Turkish base of Incirlik. The latter is considered by the US as strategically complementary to the one of Lefkoniko in safeguarding its interests in the Middle East. It should also be mentioned that the Lefkoniko base currently commands state-of-the-art anti-submarine equipment;

iii) The British bases of Dhekelia and Akrotiri on the Southern (free) part of Cyprus;

iv) The US and NATO bases of Crete;

v) Malta and

vi) The British bases in Gibraltar.

This Anglo-American zone of geopolitical influence, which divides the Mediterranean basin horizontally (North-South), may yield strategic control in case of nuclear or electronic warfare. On the other hand, it could also play an electronic espionage role in a region extending from the zone of Maghreb to the Crimean area with reference to ballistic nuclear defence.

At the same time, it could add to the US-British Echelon network services, the range of which is global.

a.1.) It is, of course, well known from the Makarios-Gromyko 'Gentlemen's Agreement' that –since 1974– British installations on Cyprus have been serving as centre and base of operations for US U-2 unmanned spy aircraft. Besides, two out of the 5 or 7 places in the world selected by the US NSA as bases of operations for the U-2 are Cyprus and Gibraltar. It is rather significant to stress that the latest U-2 can operate for 10 hours non-stop at an altitude of 70,000 ft. and is fully capable of exceptionally sophisticated electronic warfare. The extremely high altitudes at which it flies, renders the U-2 virtually invulnerable to modern

antiaircraft systems as was manifestly proven by the conflicts in Iraq and the other Middle Eastern crises.

These aircraft, like all the British military ones, use Episkopi as their primary air corridor whereas the one of Dhekelia may be used by smaller aircraft as well as the C-130 transports which can also carry Scorpion tracked vehicles, armed with 76mm guns. These vehicles (perfectly suitable in cases of chemical or nuclear warfare) are tremendously useful in the Middle East, especially against chemical and biological arsenal equipped states – such as Iraq.

Equally well known is the British intention – as was expressed approximately 18 months ago – to install two electronic warfare and information gathering antennas at the British base in Akrotiri, which alarmed the Cyprus government.

At the same time, Israel (through its ambassador in Nicosia, Mr. Michael Elikal) declared that it does not oppose the installation of the said antennas.

a.2.) The second most powerful (from the point of view defence and strategy) joint in the horizontal zone of Anglo-Saxon geopolitical influence is the US base of Suda, NW Crete, east of Chania. According to US sources, this is the largest and most importance American base of its kind in the Eastern Mediterranean. Inside the bay of Suda there is a permanent moorage that can host the entire 6th Fleet, while the surrounding area is equipped with a large variety of both ground and underground installations of all kinds.² This complex operates in conformity to the top-secret US-Greek Agreements of 1959 (Suda Bay Agreements, 13/7/1959 on the airfield and 30/12/1959 on the nuclear weapons) and serves primarily the US Navy as its major support centre in the region and secondarily NATO member-states.

More specifically, it comprises the following installations: i) a warship refueling base in the area of Akrotiri, Chania; ii) a base at the port of Suda, equipped with a special pier from the Paliosuda islet for unloading and storing war material at the Marathi area of Suda, which is the location of fuel, arms, and ammunition depots. It is a storage place for nuclear weapons (shells, torpedoes, bombs and mines) for the US Navy and Navy Air Force weapons systems. This ammunition is labeled “Nuclear and Conventional War Reserve Material, WRM” and

2. See Ch. Z. Sazanidis, *Xenoi, vaseis kai pyrenika stin Ellada* [Foreigners, Bases and Nuclear Weapons in Greece], vol. II, Thessalonica, 1985, 373-375.

is always ready for emergency use; iii) an airbase used as an advanced station for aeronautical cooperation flights and Navy air reconnaissance operations as well as an alternative airstrip for aircraft carrier planes. It is where the P-3C Orion navy cooperation aircraft operate from, some of which belong to the MARAIR-MED allied command, their mission being to observe and monitor all surface and submersible craft in the Eastern Mediterranean and iv) Navy communications detachment for linking the complex with all other US bases and 6th fleet craft in the Mediterranean. The operational capabilities of this base are perfectly clear, especially should the need arise for deployment in the Middle East.

One can also identify:

b) A zone perpendicular to the aforementioned one, linking i) Port Said at the Suez Canal [wherefrom passes approximately 30% of the Middle Eastern crude oil on its way to NW European markets and the ones overseas through Gibraltar] with ii) the port of Thessalonica – and subsequently the port of Rotterdam, the largest spot oil market in the world.

c) A diagonal zone to the previously described horizontal one of Anglo-Saxon influence, which connects the Dardanelles with Gibraltar.

Both of these zones are characterised by hydrocarbon transports and are fully controlled by NATO (especially Anglo-Saxon) defence mechanisms.

4. Incorporating the Cyprus Issue to the abovementioned geopolitical framework in the light of the Annan Plan proposal

4.1. Geopolitical reality, as is currently understood by the USA, has the following features:

4.1. a) Cyprus controls a most crucial part of the Mediterranean, which:

1) is the end point of all oil pipelines from Mosul and Kirkuk through Yumurtalik and – eventually – the port of Alexandretta;

2) will be the end point of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipe upon completion;

3) is the end point of the Syrian coastline (Latakia) oil pipelines as well as of the Lebanon ones (Sidon);

4) is the Eastern Mediterranean end point – through the Suez Canal – of all trade routes for Persian Gulf oil, directed towards the Western markets.

4.1b) The 100 km-wide air space between the apex of Cape St. Andrew and Latakia (Syria) can be fully controlled by air forces stationed on Cyprus and cooperating – defensively – with Damascus. That would also be the case for Syrian air forces, were they cooperating with Nicosia.

Tel-Aviv is, as can be expected, most cautious towards such an eventuality, given that no one could endure Israeli officials that such an agreement would not end up yielding negative repercussions on the country's national interests.

As an example thereof, one could mention the Defence Agreement between Israel and Turkey [the latter having rather tense relations with Syria due to the Euphrates river waters dispute], which aims, inter alia, at creating “strategic depth” for the Israeli Air Force in case Syria attacks Israel. The said aim would be annulled should the aforementioned cooperation between Nicosia and Damascus become a reality, with incalculable implications for Israeli security.

Moreover, the possibility of a unified and sovereign Cyprus having a pro-Arab stance in the defence sector, is interpreted by Tel-Aviv as the ultimate threat to its national security because on the one hand it would cut be off from all air & sea routes for defence or attack operations against Arab territory and on the other hand it could provide a base for similar offensive activities against it.

According to the Israeli understanding of security, the sole guarantee is full Anglo-Saxon military control over the Cypriot state, which would never allow the Republic of Cyprus to make such a pro-Arab turn – especially at the present conjuncture, i.e. the imminent US operation in Iraq.

As a final point, one can most easily reach the conclusion that any decision pertaining to the solution of the Cyprus Issue, compatible with the interests of Hellenism, must under no circumstances be reached before completion of the Anglo-American (and their allies') intervention in Iraq for the disarmament and/or the overthrowing of Damascus' Baath regime. All the more so, given that the change in Baghdad's regime, which will be the result of this (mainly) Anglo-Saxon intervention, will yield new a new balance in the Middle East and will undoubtedly create all the prerequisites considered by Israel as necessary for the consolidation of its security.

4.1c) The zone between the 35th and 36th parallels, which includes – to the east– Cyprus (Episkopi, Akrotiri, Larnaca and Lefkoniko), Crete (Suda) and –to the west– Malta and Gibraltar, constitutes a particularly significant assortment of geostrategic supports for the Anglo-Saxon sea forces that control through this geostrategic axis the entire Mediterranean from end to end –i.e. the tumultuous Maghreb. The axis in question is the egress for all Persian Gulf and Caspian basin oil deposits en route to the Atlantic via Gibraltar.

An independent, bi-communal and bi-zonal Cyprus with an autonomous, powerful and single state personality, which would be capable of overcoming any artificial hindrances that are –and will still be– placed on behalf of Ankara, and which would be capable of becoming a full member of the European Union in the form described above, would definitely force Brussels to deal seriously with the security issues of this part of the Eastern Mediterranean.

This means that the constant high pressure from Turkey on the Greek Cypriot side creates conditions of instability in this strategic area but mainly in the Northeastern part of this hypothetically enlarged European Union, to the extent that such a pressure (of Turkish origin) would have the expected destabilizing impact at both a political and national level in Athens. This version could mean two things for Brussels: either the EU, no longer able –more obviously now than ever– to give Athens (as well as the European public opinion) a plausible excuse, de facto waives all rights to the protection of its interests in its –most significant– North-eastern part and annuls itself by admitting to the “mythical element” of European integration (which presupposes the implementation of the CFSP); or it decides to strenuously confront the source of these destabilizing pressures (namely Turkey).

It is a dilemma that Brussels must be prepared to face, especially in view of the Greek Cypriot side and Athens adopting the Annan Plan Appendix E, Article 4.

In order to clarify things, let us make some remarks on the Annan Plan and the existing geopolitical imperatives:

I. Remark on Israel's security

From the above analysis, one can deduce that an already safe Israel (that is to say before any “solution” of the Cyprus Issue) denotes a

downgrading of Turkey's strategic importance, its geopolitical preferences and choices in the region and accordingly its choices in the resolution of the Cyprus Issue that would lead to an upgrade of the Greek Cypriot and Greek negotiating position a propos the said question.

II. Remark on the role of the Dardanelles-Aegean Sea-Cyprus geopolitical complex

The role of the Dardanelles-Aegean Sea channel and Cyprus' position with reference to it and its function is indeed fundamental in the case under examination.³

Taking into consideration the gambling odds⁴ of distributing the Dardanelles geopolitical control among the CIS, Turkey and the NATO, the geostrategic value of the Aegean Sea-Cyprus geopolitical complex is greatly enhanced.

Compliance, insecurity and inertness on behalf of the Greek side with regard to the issue of co-producing weapons systems with Israel and promoting similar defence-technological collaboration with Tel-Aviv, will undoubtedly be the result of the thus far negligence displayed in the promotion of Greco-Israeli relations. Furthermore, it shall lead to the relegation of Greece's importance in the geostrategic components of Anglo-Saxon geopolitical considerations, while the country's strategic gap in the Aegean and Mediterranean region will be fulfilled by the plethoric presence of the neighboring Turkey, our "friend" and "ally". The consequences shall be well known and the responsibilities grave.

III. Remark on the Annan Plan

Article 4 of Annex E is particularly dangerous for the quality of the

3. I. Th. Mazis, «Geopolitical Analysis of the Dardanelles-Aegean Sea Trade Channel», O.P. 97. 19, ELIAMEP, 1997, 16 ff.

4. This term implies the case in which American manipulation of the Islamic phenomenon in Turkey, Afghanistan and most recently the attempt against Khatami's Iran, shall lose control of the situation for the benefit of the extreme, radical and political Islam. All the more so today, at a time when geopolitical volatility in NE Mediterranean, Middle East, the Arab-Persian Gulf and the Balkans have turned NATO's Southern Wing to a par excellence front of direct confrontations, characterised by varying strategic interdependencies, political-ideological contradictions and widening defence fissures.

“common state” of Cyprus relations with the European Security and Defence Policy given that the former introduces to the latter’s framework the Provisions of the Guarantor and Alliance Treaties along with all additional Protocols thereof (Zurich-London). Through these it also introduces the decisive role of Turkey in European Defence and Security issues through its role as “guarantor power” of the said Agreements.

Besides, it is well known that, following the 1974 Turkish invasion, the Greek Cypriot side stated many a time that it would never consent to a solution, which would renew this right of unilateral intervention, because geographically (as well as geopolitically) the sole national-state actor in the region capable of actually using it, is Turkey.

Conclusion drawn from I), II) and III)

Adoption of the Annan Plan by the Greek and Greek-Cypriot side prior to any development in the disarmament of Damascus’ Baath regime would precariously increase Turkey’s negotiating power in issues relating to the European Policy of Defence and Security in the Middle East and would render it a more valuable strategic ally of Israel with reference to the latter’s flaming security and defence issues. This attribute of Turkey in relation to Israel will cause the latter to take Turkey’s side on numerous issues, which will not necessarily be to the best interest of the Greek and Greek Cypriot side in Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea in particular, with multiple negative effects for all of Hellenism in the SE Mediterranean.

IV. Remark on the European stance with regard to the matter of resolving the political issue of Cyprus, before the latter’s accession to the European Union (Attachment 2 of the Annan Plan)

In view of what is analyzed above, one should also reevaluate the (up till recently) fervor of Greece’s European partners to resolve the Cyprus Issue ahead of the Cypriot Republic’s formal accession to the EU in April 2003: it was all about the European countries’ – and their Union’s – fear not to open the door to an existing and perpetuating problem that could be able to protractedly hinder EU institutional functions pertaining to the total of European countries.

However, this new “*solution*”, as proposed by Mr. Annan,⁵ intensifies and renders the ramming of the European Union’s institutional operation by Turkey (a non-member state) a “*constitutional and fixed*” reality. All the more so due to the Provisions concerning the Turkish Cypriot side’s function in the constitutional plane, which may be used by Ankara and particularly as to the function of this provision within the framework of the EU as described in Attachment 2 of the Annan Plan.

So, one can clearly see and identify the Anglo-Saxon interest in turning the “*single state of Cyprus*” into a battering-ram of all EU actions, especially those that have to do with issues of Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, at both London’s and Washington’s command – due to the existing “*special relationship*” between the two aforementioned capitals.

Conclusion drawn from IV)

The question that must be put at this point by Greece (the EU member state) at both a geopolitical and a political level is what the European Union – at long last – wants!

Is it a permanent vacillation, blunder and dysfunction – due to the controlled interventions of a non-member state, namely Turkey – especially subsequent to its enlargement through the addition of another ten (10) countries or is it its successful and efficient function to the benefit of ALL contracting parties?

V. Remark on the substantial abolishment of the “acquis communautaire”, with respect to the Greek Cypriot side

(Points of “internal citizenship” and “return of refugees”)

V.1.) The “acquis communautaire” is in no way satisfied and I refer to the points on “internal citizenship” that, inter alia, fully enhance the national-state elements of the Turkish Cypriot pseudo-state, which is not recognized by any UNO member.

5. Allow me the euphemism of “Mr. Annan having drawn up the Plan”, despite the fact that it is well known by all contracting parties that 2/3 of the Plan were actually drawn up by Sir David Hannay (the British representative) and the remainder by the USA, which are not a part of the EU.

Besides, Mr. Ecevit himself stated on 13 November that “for the first time, the possibility of an equitable presence of both sides is ensured by the United Nations”(!), characterizing the Annan Plan as “a pleasant development”(!). Furthermore, the adoption of this “internal citizenship” aims secondarily at institutionally abolishing the “*acquis communautaire*” by impeding the free settling and –naturally– acquisition of wealth on behalf of the Greek Cypriots in the Turkish Cypriot confederate state. In addition, one should think hard about the Annan Plan provision which considers that no “component state” law is weaker than “common state” one and, of course, about the fact that the “component confederate states” may have Trade and Cultural relations with other countries independently of one another as well as to cooperate with the “common state” of Cyprus on all issues, including those pertaining to the latter’s foreign relations. I do not believe this applies in the case of the Swiss cantons or in that of Belgium!

V.2.) Moreover, the problem of the refugees’ return to their homes is particularly knotty as regards the acceptance of the “*acquis communautaire*” on behalf of the suggested solution. Two (2) decades later, 20% of the refugees will have returned to their homes. After these twenty (20) years, the percentage of repatriated Greek Cypriot refugees shall not exceed 33% in total, as well as per Municipality and Community of the Island!

In what respect is served the freedom of movement, settlement or wealth acquisition, as *sine qua non* European prerequisites? How many refugees will still be alive in order to return home after twenty year-long negotiations, combined with the provisions relative to the rights of sovereignty and citizenship of each “component state”?

VI. The problem of the Supreme Court’s “supragovernmental” capabilities and competences (Article 6 of the Foundation Agreement, Appendix A of the Annan Plan) It is obvious that paragraph 3 of the above article attributes “supra-governmental” capabilities and competences to the Supreme Court which –by the way– has neither democratic ratification nor a precise personality. The term “non-Cypriot”, employed to describe the determinant minority group of judges does not inspire the utmost confidence concerning the impartiality of the said body and exposes both the EU and the Greek Cypriot side to the danger of reaching decisions which may be dictated by EU members of highly “heretical” behavior (the UK) or non-members of the European Union (Turkey, the USA).

Final conclusion – Political Strategy Proposal (based on I, II, III, IV, V and VI)

A) Consequently, in order to better serve and protect European and national interests, the Annan Plan Foundation Agreement (pp. 1-37 and 117-138) must not be signed before the Copenhagen Summit Meeting, so as not to be included in the relevant decision thereof. On the contrary, any retreat or attempt to disengage from this plan will be tantamount to the invalidation of Cyprus' European Union accession process.

This is something that needs to be taken seriously under advisement, combined with the most important fact that the remainder of the text (pp. 38-50 and 52-116) constitutes the object of negotiation only by name, given that –in case of disagreement between Messrs. Clerides and Denktash– the General Secretary of the UNO, Mr. Annan, will impose the will of the “United Nations Organisation” in a decisive and binding way.

B) In any case, the Greek and Greek Cypriot side must formulate and submit to Turkey a specific political proposal, the main elements of which should be on the following axes:

1st) An increase of the Presidents' tenure to four (4) years;

2nd) A change in the special majorities of the Upper House (Senate);

3rd) The Upper House (Senate) shall be composed at a ratio of 7:3 and

4th) The Supreme Court “supra-governmental” competences shall be abolished even if it retains the structure proposed (the participation, by 1/3, of some “international factor” of unknown form and origin). This body can, under no circumstances, be the decisive element for the resolution – and within ten (10) days at that – of the “deadlocks” faced by the two sides – the source thereof being all too familiar – given that such a fact would cancel the political procedure and the power of politics itself, rendering the “common state” of Cyprus “a problematic state under court supervision” as pertains its relations with the international community but also a battering-ram against European decisions and planning.

Should this proposal not be accepted, negotiations may resume even after 12/12/2002 – albeit without the two sides having signed Mr. Annan's Foundation Agreement.

With respect to the case of Greek and Greek Cypriot political op-

position forces in Greece and Cyprus respectively, the author hereof estimates that they will most probably not associate their positions with similar gruesome and nationally deleterious prospective decisions of the Greek Cypriot side. He, furthermore, estimates that (in this instance) the Greek major opposition party has the ability to forestall the Greek government from signing –until 12/12/2002– the Annan Plan’s Foundation Agreement, by stating directly and publicly its objections and by clearly dissociating itself.

It will, thus, both offer the utmost service to Hellenism and safeguard its dignity.

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