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Cyprus talks doomed to fail

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Cyprus talks will soon head to Geneva where discussions on territorial issues will be brought to the table. Shrugging all the warnings separating territorial aspects of the problem from the security and guarantees issues would weaken his hand, President Mustafa Akıncı not only agreed to split the two correlated issues, but also tried to present it to the Turkish Cypriot people as a success.

Surprisingly there are many supporters of Akıncı who also considered the decision to start talks on the territorial aspects of the problem abroad, as a success. How do these people ignore the fact that such a development unavoidably produces a less enthusiastic Greek Cypriot side at the discussions on the security and guarantees issue, which is of existential importance to Turkish Cypriots? Naturally, in an atmosphere of peace provided to the island by the Turkish troops in the 1974 Turkish intervention, the physical measures preventing thugs like the former EOKA terrorists or present day ELAM members, security and guarantees might not be given importance.

Besides, as Akıncı highlighted a while ago, establishing an EU-member federation changing

international conjectures should not suffice to compromise on the security system provided by the 1960 treaties. The 1960 Cyprus Republic was destroyed by those Greek Cypriots who objected a year after the establishment of the republic, which promised to join the two peoples of the island sharing sovereignty on the basis of political equality. On grounds they wanted efficiency within the government, however, the thugs of the 1960s wanted to seize the political rights given to Turkish Cypriots. When Turkish Cypriots objected and Turkey said no, they started a campaign of annihilation in 1963 that continued until Turkey's intervention in 1974. Since then the island has been divided, but in peace. The Greek Cypriot thugs now not only organized in ELAM but are also in all parties. There are ample Greek Cypriots who could not tolerate the federation with Turkish Cypriots on the basis of political equality and could attempt tomorrow through a parliamentary coup or through some other violent methods to convert the federation into a Greek Cypriot state again.

Greece was the instigator of the 1963-1974 annihilation campaign against Turkish Cypriots. It may unilaterally end its guarantor status. No problem. Britain has two sovereign bases, when called to act, they did not act either. Its continued guarantor status is of no importance to the Turkish Cypriots. If they want they might as well vanish completely from the island, no problem. But, Turkish Cypriots cannot do without Turkey's effective and physical guarantor status. Why would Greek Cypriots so diligently object to the guarantor status of Turkey if they do not have any desire to revoke the rights of Turkish Cypriots, and try to annihilate them, and engage in acts that might trigger a Turkish intervention again?

Would Akıncı be able to effectively discuss all these if the concessions on territory were all made and only the security chapter was left to be closed? Was it why his people told him from the beginning that guarantees were no longer a taboo subject; that should there be an agreement in all other five chapters, the talks would not be allowed to collapse over the security heading? How could Akıncı vow in newspaper interviews that continuation (how he never outlined publicly) of Turkish guarantee was a sine qua non for Turkish Cypriots if he could compromise all together on the issue? Was Akıncı trying to fool the Turkish Cypriot people and Turkey?

Alas, did we really complete discussions on all four chapters that Akıncı and Anastasiades imply sufficient competencies were achieved? For example, did Anastasiades agree on rotation of presidency? No... Did Akıncı deliver an unqualified yes on the cross voting issue? Well, I am afraid even Akıncı has walked that extra mile without having any idea what cross voting indeed produced. For example, if Akıncı agreed that a maximum 20 percent of the population of northern Turkish Cyprus, constituent state of the federation would belong to the Greek Cypriots, and if through cross voting there would be a 20 percent impact of the Greek Cypriots on the outcome of elections in north, would Greek Cypriots not have a 40 percent impact on elections in north?

Would that state still be a Turkish Cypriot state? Was it sane for Akıncı to accept such an arrangement without even getting a firm acceptance of rotation of presidency? Or was it sane to accept compromising so much and agreeing to separate the territory and the security issue and now come face to face with a Greek Cypriot demand that Turkish Cypriots should accept almost 30 percent reduction in their territory (Turkish Cypriots currently have 34 percent of the island) and agree to a 75-25 share of territory? Was it reasonable to accept to give half of the shores of

the north for the sake of a settlement under such terms?

Akinci accepting such a deal would not mean an end of the Cyprus dispute. Even under worst case scenarios Akinci cannot agree to immediately end Turkey's military presence in Cyprus. Greek Cypriots were not prepared so far to accept such a development. Nor would they accept whatever Akinci might give Turkish Cypriots having some degree of share in the sovereignty over the island. And Turkish Cypriots will not approve a deal that might leave them to the mercy of Greek Cypriots.