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# ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION

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## **CYPRUS AND PARTITION:** **DIFFICULT BEDFELLOWS**

What I am going to present to you today is a mental basis, foundation, even, for approaching Cyprus and the idea of partition. You are not going to get typical international relations/political science presentation or a conceptual framework, as I believe that if you create a conceptual framework, this does not allow you to think freely. My foundation is the past. It is very important to look back into the past and to look backwards, as things follow what has already been and the past can, therefore, shed light upon the future.

I tend to follow Guicciardini, who basically says that things have always been the same, the past sheds light on the future, (the future of course doesn't exist), and that the same things return but with different colors. When you look at all sorts of areas of the world you will find very often that the same things really do return in different colors. There is an element of atavism. We are inherently atavistic as a species. So you will already begin to gather that I put more emphasis on human behavior as a factor in international relations than on pure theory per se.

I think that modern international relations thinkers, unlike the Renaissance ones, tend to escape from the awful smell of human characteristics such as greed, insecurity and fear, because they wish to be clinically pristine and ever so respectable and 'academic'. I do not consider many modern theories as relevant as some of the theories of Giambattista Vico, who believed in the cyclical theory of anarchy to order, back to anarchy and then back to order. There is also Guicciardini, whom I have just mentioned, who believed in the inherent goodness of man, but realized that there are all kinds of problems, and that everything depended on human characteristics, with fortune and providence thrown in.

I think that the more opinions, and the more theories, we have, the more confusing it becomes. I am not against theories per se, but many of those that we read, for example the fashionable theory of political realism, which also translates as power politics, help us to lose

sight of some of the real basic fundamental characteristics of human organization, which are in fact themselves responsible for relations between states.

I also believe that the essential factor to good diplomacy is precision, and I can quote Sir Harold Nicolson:

*‘The essential to good diplomacy is precision and the main enemy is imprecision’<sup>1</sup>*

I have detected that since the fall of the wall in 1989, since the capitalists lost their Devil and the communists lost their God, I have seen a creeping ambiguity in international law and ambiguous statements being made. I have seen people hiding behind generalizations far more than they used to. I think that these increasing grey zones are actually dangerous for the future as when you have semantically flexible zones, naughty forces can exploit these grey zones of floppy and expedient thinking. I think it is better to bite the bullet and be as precise as one can.

I would just like to give you a quote at this point which is a bit tongue in cheek, but nevertheless poignant. It is by Lin Yutang:

*‘Man’s love for words is his first step to ignorance, and his love for definitions the second. The more he analyses, the more he needs to define, and the more he defines, the more he aims at impossible logical perfection, for the effect of aiming at logical perfection is only a sign of ignorance.’<sup>2</sup>*

This reminds me of another quote by T.S Eliot from his play entitled *The Rock*:

*‘Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? And where is the word we lost in words.’<sup>3</sup>*

Having given you my own, admittedly idiosyncratic, mental foundation, let me once again highlight the dangers of enclosing oneself in a cage of paradigms and conceptual frameworks borrowed from physical sciences and applied to the abstract. This is a terribly difficult exercise as I do not think that it is possible to measure either the individual human mind or the mass human mind in a totally scientific fashion. I do not think that we have given enough thought to the human characteristic of insecurity. I believe that insecurity lies at the basis of everything else, if one considers the negative aspects of relations between states.

We can talk about structuralism, normative theories, constructivism, functionalism, modernization theories, positivism, post-modernism, pluralism, dependency theories, world systems theory or a combination of two or more of these. We can talk about all of these lovely labels, but I am not convinced that they can offer the complete answer when one is analyzing the relations between states.

I think the only answer, I have to say, is to be found in documents and history. I do think that we do not pay enough attention to going backwards into history when necessary. There is this

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolson, Harold, *Peacemaking 1919*, Universal Library Edition, no. 178 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965),p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Yutang, Lin *The Importance of Living*, (1938; London: Heinemann, 1976),p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> Eliot, T. S., *The Rock*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).

enormous obsession with going forwards and drawing a line under the problem, which actually usually means putting one's head in the sand. Very often you will find good things that have happened even two hundred years ago, which are simply forgotten about conveniently. The historian A.J.P Taylor said that Man learns from history how to repeat his mistakes. Very few try not to repeat the mistakes, often out of sheer laziness or fear of the boss.

This means that we end up with what I call a contrived content. This is a very presentable, very nice sounding idea. How many diplomats, negotiators and politicians actually have time to really think properly? As technology is moving so fast, and as we are consumed by an objective, we don't have the space any more to sit back and stare, as it were. Here is it particularly relevant to refer to the famous William Henry Davies quote:

*What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.*<sup>4</sup>

Things have not always been like this, but now we are involved in a whirlwind of objectives, ideas and negotiations, much of which, I have to say, are a charade. Even when we look at the allegedly naked facts, some times they have been marshalled into a propagandistic charade.

Now I will give you the main themes that I have detected and what we should be focusing on. I will give you a brief summary of my book.

What are the main conclusions that I have grasped so far from fifteen years of research and much time spent looking at the diplomatic documents pertaining mainly, but not exclusively, to the Cyprus issue, and also looking at Anglo-French and Anglo-American relations on Cyprus, going off at useful tangents when I can, and even looking at Russia on Cyprus and the Soviet Union on Cyprus?

What I have found from my research is that from the mid-fifties, the United States began to take over in the Middle East. Britain was a bit irritated and confused by this. Britain was a reflection of poor Anthony Eden's brain. I am afraid to say he got ill, and Britain irritatingly slowly gave its Middle Eastern interests, and other worldwide interests, to the US. They had already handed Greece over to the US in 1947. That is all connected to the civil war which I will not go into. It features as a small part of my book, but it isn't directly relevant to what I am talking about here.

What I detected was an increasing British foreign policy/ military policy dependence on the United States of America, particularly since 1963, when British policy was literally to say: 'Oh, we can't stand this problem; lets just hide behind the Americans.'

The paradox there of course is that the United States of America had no real legal *locus standi* vis-à-vis Cyprus; however, in reality their position was different. One thing that needs to be identified in order to come up with a solution is to explore the relationship between British policy on Cyprus and that of the US.

Directly connected to this issue is the question of the bases. In 1974 Britain tried to give up its bases. I have established this from the documents that I have here. They tried to give up the

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from the poem 'Leisure' by William Henry Davies.

bases for many reasons. Firstly, this is because in 1963 the UK itself questioned the legal validity of the very treaties that had established the Republic of Cyprus.

It wasn't all bad, and in fact I think that a solution would have to refer back to the 1960 treaties but improve them by bringing in European *acquis communautaire* laws as well, because in its purest form the treaties, but particularly the Treaty of Guarantee, are undoubtedly not only antithetical to ideal European norms, but also to the United Nations Charter. British diplomats admit, and even the Law Lords themselves admitted, that the Treaty of Guarantee, which is also a rat on Britain's back, was contrary to and overridden by Article 103 of the United Nations Charter.

This is a very sensitive and difficult area. One can therefore argue that the 1960 settlement was not as good as it could have been. We know that foreign interests took priority over local democracy, and that the inhabitants of Cyprus were left to themselves to talk about such basic but vital matters as borders between communities, after the treaties had been signed. This wasn't very responsible, as such matters should have been sorted out before the treaties were signed.

Anyhow, as I said earlier, Britain was unable to give up the bases. Kissinger himself had already said in 1957 that Cyprus would be a staging post for the Middle East, and then he referred to Cyprus as a an important square on the world's 'chequer board'.<sup>5</sup> He also said that Cyprus was very important in the context of the Arab/Israel dispute. So there can be no doubt, and it is too obvious to be a conspiracy theory, that Cyprus is, and I will use Kissinger's words again, a "piece of real estate"<sup>6</sup> for outside powers.

The third factor that I will mention now is the Russian factor, and this is not often mentioned. Why did Britain get Cyprus in the first place? It was the Russian obsession. I do not think that the alleged end of the Cold War ended the obsession with Russia. I think that the Cold War to some extent was an excuse for deeper geopolitical interests which transcended the alleged huge ideological communist/capitalist debate.

Russia acts much more slowly but much more surely. I think that the Russians are increasing slowly but surely their influence in, what can I think be justifiably termed as their 'own backyard'. This is another game which is being played in what is fashionably termed 'the greater Middle East'.

I also think that regionalization is a great contributing factor to international chaos as it creates economic borders which do not necessarily correspond with cultural borders and, in turn, this divides people.

I think that the Russian factor is something that should be taken very strongly into account, as some people think that in a few years, Russia will have more influence on Turkish foreign policy than even the US. I cannot prove that but I do think that, the way I see Russian foreign policy developing, one should see to what extent Russia can help with the Cyprus issue. This is a factor which needs more thought.

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<sup>5</sup> Southern Europe Department to Minister of State, 27 October 1976, FCO 9/2388, file WSC 023/1, pt. H, memorandum, in Mallinson, William, '1976: British Cyprus and the Consolidation of American Desires in the Eastern Mediterranean,' *Defensor Pacis* 21 (Athens, September 2007).

<sup>6</sup> As above

Another factor which currently needs to be taken into account is the fact that the US, from its own geostrategic standpoint, considers Turkey to be more important than Britain. I will read you a quick quote from my book which is taken from a secret British paper of 1975:

*'We should also recognize that in the final analysis Turkey must be regarded as more important to Western strategic interests than Greece, and that if risks must be run, they should be risks of further straining Greek rather than Turkish relations with the West.'*

And that is reality. Turkey is important, for whatever reason. Defining interests is not actually always that easy. It is not always easy to find out what the precise interests are, as I think very often it is interests for the sake of interests. This is tied in with a lack of specificity.

A third major factor which has come out of fifteen years' research is the UK's strong criticism of Turkish policy. This might strike you as being strange and it makes me think of a type of schizophrenia, as they agree that what the Turks are doing is awful, but do not dare say this in public, because they have their friends the Americans to think of.

The only person who tried to break that mould was Edward Heath. Of course he was an admirer of De Gaulle, and didn't like Kissinger.

Britain's biggest criticism of the Turkish Government can be found on page thirty five of my book. Just to give you a very quick example, a senior British diplomat wrote:

*'It is tiresome that the Turkish Cypriots are behaving in this aggressive and pettifogging way (Their obsession with percentages is perhaps illuminating in connection with the causes of the breakdown in inter-communal negotiations 1960-1963!)'<sup>7</sup>*

Let us not forget that the British foreign office also helped President Makarios in drafting the famous "Thirteen Points" and then tried to cover up their help, while later admitting it. They were helping Makarios, as they apparently thought that the amendments were reasonable, and would work. There are still a few documents that are not available, so this is an area in which I cannot talk with major certainty, but it is recognized that the British did help him with the drafting of those thirteen points that led to the immediate breakdown, and the anger, about what had happened in 1958.

Many Greek Cypriots obviously still resented the 1958 riots, and with a young state which had still not developed its institutions quite clearly, the fanatics took over. This happens in many countries, even more institutionally developed countries.

So in such a young state, it was clear that the "Thirteen Point" business would lead to such a breakdown of the constitution, which it did.

Then we have another quote from the late 70's:

*'And the Turkish Cypriots, supported by Ankara, have consolidated their hold on the north to such an extent that makes them more than ever reluctant to yield anything near the minimum acceptable to the Greek side as a basis for a settlement.'<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Prendergast to Fern, 30 September 1970, letter, FCO 9/1178, file WSC 10/14.

<sup>8</sup> Phillips to Foreign Secretary, despatch, 24 August 1976, FCO 9/2376, file WSC 011/7.

Connected to this is another quote:

*“The Prime Minister said that his experience of the Turks was that they pocketed whatever was offered and asked for more”*

I am not giving you my personal view on Turkish negotiating behavior here, but the above are the views of British diplomats and policy formulators.

Another major factor, which I know we are aware of, but which has again not been considered sufficiently in a possible settlement solution, is the linkage with the Aegean. This was the major secondary effect of the invasion of Cyprus in July and August 1974.

This is now, understandably, very cleverly and skillfully used by the Turkish government vis-à-vis Cyprus. Cyprus is in fact a lever for Turkish claims in the Aegean, and that lever is now there to stay. This is the hard reality of international relations. Turkey will undoubtedly try to gain as much advantage as it can in terms of the continental shelf for some kind of settlement over Cyprus. That has come out in the documents as well. The only debate is whether Cyprus and the Aegean are chickens or eggs.

I have detected a greying in precision when looking at international law. I would at this point like to give you an amazing quote by an international lawyer called Mark Weller. He represented the Kosovo delegation at Rambouillet before the 78 day bombing, and wrote a very serious paper which was published just before the bombing began in Yugoslavia. The paper ended with the convoluted sentence:

*“The connection of the legal justification of humanitarian action with the aim of achieving FRY/Serb acceptance of the Rambouillet package in its entirety, if it is maintained, would represent an innovative but justifiable extension of international law”<sup>9</sup>.*

Now when you have got such linguistically bulimic meaningless statements by such high level serious lawyers, I get worried. Such statements detract from precision and are dangerous and irresponsible. I think that precision needs to be borne in mind when one is involved in international negotiations. Much of the EU’s current malaise and lack of cohesion can be attributed to a lack of precision. The current ineptitude and uselessness of the European project is relevant here: the EU is increasingly becoming a big feckless marketing organisation, without real political gumption. There is a clear lack of cohesion and coordination, hence the use of Cyprus by certain forces to weaken European integration.

If Cyprus were ever allowed to become a proper fully-fledged and completely sovereign member of the European Union and part of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy, that would be anathema to the current Turkish regime and part of the US government and Britain. Cyprus is also used in the EU context as a lever to weaken the organization.

Therefore, I think that the only thing that the Cyprus government can do is to itself put forward, unilaterally, a beautiful solution based only on the *acquis communautaire* and the Treaty of Rome, and on parts of the Treaty of Lisbon. They should present this as simply a

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<sup>9</sup> Private Secretary to Prendergast, 30 March 1978, *letter*, PREM 16/1671.

<sup>10</sup> Weller, ‘The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo’, *International Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2. Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, April 1999, p.251.

working paper. That way it would be difficult to accuse the Cyprus government of rejecting proposals, because the whole game around these proposals simply seems to mean that the Turkish side is more interested in tactics and procedures than in any actual substance.

Were the Cyprus government to come up with proposals based essentially on European and United Nations law, then it would be very difficult to argue with that. If a proposal is presented in a very nice friendly way and say is open to negotiation, then it will make it more difficult to repeat the charade of linkage between the Aegean and Cyprus.

I hope that I have given you enough food for thought on this issue, and I hope this will provoke some interesting discussion on the topic.

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