

CYPRUS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

Tim Potier*

Friday Lecture, 15th May 2009:
Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge

The average package tourist visiting Cyprus for his two-week summer vacation is unlikely to be aware of the pain lurking behind the warm summer beaches and cool mountain forests. Despite his enjoyment, probably he will not realise that Cyprus is spoken of, usually, in negative terms: of its uncompromising political climate and politicians; of how to avoid getting drawn into a peacekeeping operation appearing to lack a door marked 'Exit'; and of a conflict seemingly impervious to settlement. Certainly, this would have been the privately uttered impression of most within the international community until little over a year ago, but then something changed. Unexpectedly, the uncompromising incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos was defeated in the first round of Presidential elections in February 2008. Thus, leaving two candidates much more predisposed towards the likely type of settlement, one of the centre-right the other from the centre-left, left to 'slug it out' in the second round. In the end, victory was secured by the latter, Demetris Christofias, the leader of the Communist Party AKEL. Ever since, that traditional and deep-set sense of despondency has been lifted and, at last, Cyprus has a real opportunity to reunify.

Aphrodite's isle has a painful history, stretching over two and a half millennia of colonial occupation and subjugation. The last incumbent, Britain, relinquished its control in 1960 with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. However, it was an unhappy birth. A four-year guerrilla campaign of Greek Cypriot fighters had just completed a successful low-level insurgency against Her Majesty's armed forces. Turkish Cypriots had felt excluded, even threatened by the *EOKA* movement's demands for *enosis* (union, with Greece) and, perhaps not surprisingly, had established a paramilitary organisation of their own (TMT), in favour of *taksim* (partition, between Greece and Turkey) of the island. The north of the island being only a little over 70 kilometres south of Turkey, an ever watchful Ankara, prior to Britain, having under Ottoman rule for a little over three centuries served its term as the colonial power, added to a large percentage of Greek and Turkish Cypriots not desiring independence from Greece and Turkey respectively, it is hardly surprising that the Republic failed. On 30th November 1963, President Makarios, the leader of the Greek Cypriot community also, advanced a 'thirteen point' proposal aimed at reform of what had been a complex constitutional arrangement, seen (from their perspective) to disfavour the Greek Cypriots. In response, on 23rd December 1963, the Turkish Cypriots left all organs of government – they

* Associate Professor of International Law, Department of Law, University of Nicosia, Cyprus; Visiting Fellow, Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge.

have never returned – and withdrew into self-determined enclaves. The events of that autumn provoked intercommunal fighting which left hundreds dead.

Cyprus remained almost one-legged during the period until 1974, when, on 15th July, President Makarios was removed from power in a coup, the putschists backed by the military *junta* in Athens. The effects of the coup, however, were to be short-lived. Turkey, which had almost invaded twice before, in 1964 and 1967 (following, respectively, the siege at Kokkina and the capture of Kofinou), on Saturday 20th July launched a military invasion; the first forces landing at 05:30 at “Pente Mili” beach, a little to the west of the northern town of Kyrenia. By 16th August, when a *de facto* ceasefire was declared, the Turkish military was in control of 37% of the island, a position that remains to this day.

Since 1974, the United Nations, which has throughout led the diplomatic efforts to secure a settlement, has initiated many processes, nearly all of them bearing the name of the then serving Secretary-General. All, until now, have failed. The most recent, in 2004, albeit with the heavy intervention of a team of experts, contributed, for the first time, to the presentation of a nearly 10,000 page Comprehensive Settlement. A referendum was held (perhaps sensibly, this had not occurred in 1960). However, a 2:1 ‘yes’ vote from the Turkish Cypriots was offset by a 3:1 ‘no’ vote from the Greek Cypriot community (encouraged by the call of then President Tassos Papadopoulos for a “resounding no”). As a result, the ‘Annan Plan’ (see what I mean!) as it came to be known, was rejected, the prospect of reunification dying with it.

The international community, particularly those lead actors in respect of Cyprus (the three guarantor powers: Britain, Greece and Turkey, plus the United States), may have hoped, but could not have expected Papadopoulos’ defeat last year. The months leading up to the first round had been a period of much head scratching, simply waiting for the inevitable victory to occur. When it didn’t, in dramatic fashion, it was no surprise that the unexpected ‘shot in the arm’ would be acted upon and little time lost in reinvigorating a decidedly stalled process. In September 2008, after the completion of initial work by a range of (subject-oriented) working groups and technical committees, Republic President Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat, the Turkish Cypriot leader, commenced face-to-face talks. Although, to date, no dramatic progress has been made, there is reason, as I shall explain, for quiet optimism.

True, two blemishes have recently appeared. First, on 19th April, in parliamentary elections held in the north, the leftist government of Ferdi Sabit Soyer, made up largely of members of the political party formerly led by Mehmet Ali Talat, was resoundingly defeated by the centre-right (and much more nationalist) National Unity Party (or UBP), of Dervis Eroglu. To this extent, at least, Mr Talat now has an unwelcome ‘partner’, unlikely, in principle, to be ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’. Yet, it was noticeable, immediately after the declaration, that the new ‘Prime Minister’, Mr Eroglu, was at pains to stress that whilst he would appoint a representative to accompany Mr Talat during meetings with President Christofias, he was fully supportive of the current process and in favour of a solution (if not quite the same one as Mr Talat). More recently, the second blemish, in the case of *Apostolides v. Orams*, the European Court of Justice, on a reference by the Court of Appeal under Article 234 EC, ruled

that the fact that a judgment given in a member state of the European Community concerned land in a part of that state over which the state did not exercise effective control did not mean that the judgment was not subject to recognition and enforcement in other member states (meaning, for the purposes of Mr and Mrs Orams, the UK). To my mind, these two blemishes are unlikely to derail the process. Mr Eroglu will secure no political advantage by attempting to scupper a process that has the full backing of the entire international community and, most important of all, and for his political constituency, Ankara. It was noticeable that the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan was swift to warn Mr Eroglu, following his victory, not to do anything to undermine the process. Furthermore, the Orams ruling, whilst tendering very worrying news for foreign nationals (mainly, but not exclusively, British) who had purchased property on Greek Cypriot-owned land, is unlikely to affect the bulk or mood of many Turkish Cypriots (within a market that had already, and partly because of the case, dried-up), and, if anything, is only likely to ratchet up the urgency for an agreement.

In an article I wrote for the online edition of *Europe's World* in November and since published, I held that an agreement would be reached between the two sides by the end of 2009. When writing the piece, I felt that I was the only person thinking, let alone conveying, such an outcome. Before Christmas, the (particularly print) media was talking-up the lack of progress in the talks and the near futility of the exercise; senior politicians, even within the Cyprus government, were, no doubt deliberately, talking-down any movement towards the meeting of minds. Privately, however, and during this period, I was being told a different story: that the atmosphere was good and cooperative, and that whilst either side *was* focusing on its maximal positions, there was every reason to believe that accommodations could be reached.

What makes the current process different from those that have gone before is that, for the first time since 1974, the leaders of both communities appreciate and broadly accept the likely bizonal, bicomunal federation that would emerge. This is not to suggest that differences have been erased, but at least there is a strong willingness and determination amongst them both to secure the much-vaunted settlement, in what has, for too long, been regarded as a hopeless, near-frozen, conflict. Besides, each has their own special reasons for desiring a swifter peace.

Mehmet Ali Talat was given a strong warning from his Turkish Cypriot community in the recent elections. A community not only humiliated by the outcome of the 2004 referendum, but also angered by a perceived failure (of the European Union, in particular) to keep 'promises' made beforehand, regarding the lifting of travel and trading restrictions on the north. Although not entirely promises, heavy expectations *were* built up nonetheless. Arising from the defeat of his governmental partners, Mr Talat will be much more conscious than his Greek Cypriot counterpart of an alarm clock ticking ever louder. Presidential elections are due in the north in April 2010. Whilst Mr Eroglu has not confirmed he will stand (be reminded: he is a politician), he almost certainly will and, if no agreement has been reached by then, ought to have a good chance of victory. A necessary parenthesis: conscious of an opportunity to avoid his own (personal) humiliating outcome, it was interesting that, even before the elections, Mr Talat had indicated that he might not stand for re-election if no

agreement had been reached by the end of 2009, the eve of the commencement of the Presidential election campaign. Besides these, Mr Talat will also be aware that the demographics of the north are continuing to change to the detriment of more reunification-minded Turkish Cypriots. Turkish migration to the island has further accelerated in the period since 2004 and, without question, exaggerated Eroglu's victory. Continued isolation and (from their perspective) Greek Cypriot political intransigence, has made the Turkish Cypriot community ever more fractious and Mr Talat ought to realise that failure in 2009 might not only spell his own political demise, but, in the eyes of his community, the final demise of any prospect of reunification of the island, also. Naturally, Mr Talat is not (solely) the Turkish Cypriot community. No agreement will be reached, nor any concession made without the approval of Ankara. However, Turkey will be conscious of an opportunity to remove the 'Cyprus headache' from its EU accession negotiations, in what, without question, is *the* Turkish foreign policy priority for the current generation. Ankara is not going to jeopardise this opportunity, finally, to cement its status as a European nation and power for the sake of certain constitutional legal details. Therefore, expect Messrs Erdogan and Talat to remain in unison.

President Christofias, unlike Mr Talat, does not face the problem of a looming election. However, he *will* have taken note of the trend in opinion in the north and that the opportunity of 2009 (that word and year again) may never be bettered. *He* leads (also, if you like, *de facto*) a political party within his own community which has always been most in favour of reconciliation and reunification. His (and his party's) call, in 2004, for a 'no' vote was made with much reluctance and personal disappointment, in contrast to the almost triumphalist public pronouncements of his predecessor. As a 'refugee' himself, he will be aware that the time is fast approaching when those claiming their property (if ever) will be the Greek Cypriot children, even grandchildren of former inhabitants. He will be aware, also, that the currently favourable blend of Greek Cypriots too young to remember the events of 1974, mixed with those who *do* recall an undivided Cyprus is fast being buried under the ground.

Of course, mutual friendship and sympathy between the two leaders will not mask very real differences between the two sides. The Greek Cypriots desire a total demilitarisation of the island (including of Turkish troops). The Turkish Cypriots don't, regarding such Turkish presence as vital, even, in light of past experience, for the sake of the community's survival. The Greek Cypriots desire an end to the triangular guarantor system. The Turkish Cypriots don't, being grateful, rather, for a Treaty that helped justify (as they describe it) the 1974 "peace operation", in their defence. The Greek Cypriots desire a reunified Cyprus enshrining the right to freedom of movement and of residence. The Turkish Cypriots don't, fearing, in light of their approximately 3:1 numerical disadvantage, being 'swamped' / even bought out by much wealthier Greek Cypriots. By contrast, the Turkish Cypriots desire a looser (rather than a stronger) federation, with economic independence (as opposed to a unified economy), and a more complete exchange of property (instead of more extensive rights of restitution): the contrary, in each case, being desired by the Greek Cypriots. Until now, this core but by no means exhaustive list of differences has appeared to render the prospects of any reunification almost insurmountable, accentuated after the 2004 referendum experience. What, however,

the little over past 12 months have suggested is that with a sufficient level of shared political patience and willingness to compromise, a degree of common ground (previously unheard of, in the context of Cyprus) *can* be achieved, with the prospects for success (that is, reunification), in the end, being distinctly possible.

The process is drawing towards the end of its first stage, the chance for each side to 'lay out its stall' and present their more maximal positions. If all goes well, by the beginning of July, the second 'give and take' stage will commence, during which it will be hoped that differences will be narrowed, accommodations reached and compromises traded on the less vital matters which, both sides would acknowledge, in any settlement process would never give rise to perfect outcomes. By mid-autumn, this ought to leave only the most difficult and disputed subjects outstanding for final compromises, hopefully with the least UN-inspired arbitration, towards a final and comprehensive settlement by the end of the year. Such agreement would be followed, say, in mid to late January by a 'second' simultaneous, and separate, referendum of the two communities. For reasons which I will now outline, I would expect a 'double yes' this time and, by early next year, Cyprus to have been reunified.

It has become a familiar refrain amongst Turkish Cypriots, these last couple of years, that their community would not vote 'yes' next time. I have never been persuaded by this argument. Although Turkey is likely to become a member of the European Union, probably during the coming decade, there is no guarantee. Cyprus, of course, is a member and will remain a member. Turkish Cypriots would benefit immediately and directly from any reunification. Besides, what advantage in waiting and risking when unification with their Greek Cypriot cousins would also contribute to a fast increase in their standard of living and a guarantee of future prosperity. Mehmet Ali Talat would receive considerable political credit for securing an agreement not dissimilar to the one in 2004, and for not having compromised vital Turkish Cypriot (read: Turkish) interests. Even the party of Mr Eroglu, the only major Turkish Cypriot party to call for a 'no' vote in 2004, would, probably, be compelled to advocate a 'yes' vote this time, realising that any attempt to swim against the tide would consign his constituency (politically) free from office for the short to medium term. Consequently, I expect, amidst the excitement of any agreement, the Turkish Cypriot 'yes' to be higher this time than last.

It is within the Greek Cypriot community that (outside) eyes would be most turned, however. 25% is not the best platform, one must admit, but it is near certain that all bar a couple of handfuls of that quarter of the Greek Cypriot community, which voted 'yes' last time, would be expected to vote 'yes' again. The difference this time would be that both major political parties, making up around 65% of the total (Greek Cypriot) vote - namely President Christofias' AKEL (which, remember, backed a 'no' in 2004) and the centre-right Democratic Rally (DISY), the only major Greek Cypriot party to call for a 'yes' last time - *would* be expected to unite around a 'yes' now. This would be likely to place the remaining parties, lacking the forcefulness, energy and intellect of the late Tassos Papadopoulos (who died in December) to rally around, somewhat on the defensive, and, as a result, it is likely that some personalities within centrist DIKO and socialist EDEK, desirous not to be seen to be swimming against *their* (apparent) tide, would publicly come out in favour of a 'yes'. Put

all of this together and the Greek Cypriot community ought to be able to muster a 60% 'yes' vote, the minimum required to ensure that the 'day after' (reunification) is not greeted with civil unrest.

Reunification will provide much-needed relief for an international community angst-ridden by events in Iraq and Afghanistan; divided over Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and, perhaps, beginning to fear that the globe's 'frozen conflicts' might not thaw out towards territorial integrity-driven outcomes after all. By the turn of the year, and at a time when the world would have just lifted itself out of the depths of the current recession, Cyprus would enjoy a considerable 'peace dividend' – in expanded trade, inward investment *and* tourist arrivals – besides the personal recognitions that would be invested upon Christofias and Talat. Suddenly, instead of being a problem and the recipient of endless delegations telling the locals 'how to do it', Cyprus would be able to export its own know-how of 'how *they* did it'.

All would seem set fair. Yet, the above may not be realised, Cyprus may disappoint again and the "consequences of failure" not only have serious implications for the island, but for the international community in respect of the settlement of other conflicts also.

There are three possibilities besides an agreement and reunification. First, the two sides fail to reach an agreement (either by the end of 2009, or soon after): the process eventually dying or fading. Second, an agreement is reached, but one or both of the two communities fails to approve the settlement in the subsequent referendum (remember: this is what happened last time). Third, reunification occurs, but, similar to 1963, the settlement fails subsequently.

Failure to reach an agreement (the first of these), is, I believe, the least likely to occur. Too much is at stake this time. Cyprus (post-2004) is being given a second chance, however its leaders realise that it is unlikely to be given a third. That is not the same, though, as saying that efforts would not continue to reunify the island, but, almost certainly, failure (this time) would lead to Cyprus being heavily downgraded in the pecking order of conflict settlement priorities and to an extreme reluctance (/ maybe even unwillingness), amongst leading members of the international community, to devote time, energy and resources toward any negotiated settlement. Besides, failure to reach an agreement would, fairly swiftly, convey to Greek and Turkish Cypriots a sense that efforts in pursuit of reunification had failed and that the partition of the island (in some form) would inevitably follow. Of course, as already indicated, there are forces, both locally and beyond, who would prefer no agreement. However, they will be sufficiently mute (anxious of the risk / harm to their own reputation, in presenting their true colours too early) *not* to scupper the conclusion of any text.

One or both of the two communities might, second, vote 'no'. There are significant minorities, on both sides of the divide, that prefer (even like) the *status quo*; despise or cannot forgive the other community; or are unwilling to share power with it in a reunified and federal Cyprus. These respective minorities have held sway in the past, however they have lost much of their power, the resoluteness of the international community in recent times having exhausted them and, although they would rear their heads during any referendum

campaign, their failure (this time) to present any serious alternative coupled with their shyness in advocating partition would, almost certainly, lead to their defeat.

The third possibility, reunification but subsequent failure is the most likely of the three alternatives. Those defeated minorities would respect the result, but their hearts would not be in the type of settlement that ensues. Most would go along with the consequences of reunification – politically, legally and socially – but they would be primed to attack upon the first and any later delay or failure to reach agreement within the organs of government. To varying extents marginalised or excluded from power, they would have no hesitation in publicising and individualising their demands and – having identified the enemy both within their own and the other community – play-up their principled position in the full glare of the public arena. The relevant leadership of each community would then find itself challenged on two fronts: first, in having to reach a satisfactory agreement with the other, and second in having to appease those against from within. Each dispute, large or small, would weaken the will, confidence and authority of the leadership. Inevitably, having struggled and largely failed to satisfy anyone, extreme positions would come to dominate, be co-opted (to the extent that gives them advantage) and elected. Such polarisation, between the two communities, would come to render even the most functional procedure/s into a state of unworkability. As a consequence, sooner or later, the new state would fail.

For any settlement like the one that would result in Cyprus to work, there has to exist a sufficient degree of will, as well as the desire and stamina to navigate through difficulties, find accommodations and make compromises. Coalition governments frequently fail: an election may be called which would, in most cases, settle any immediate disagreement. However, *de facto* coalition states cannot afford to fail, the inability of their organs of government to function infecting the entire society (often with dramatic consequences). In November 1989, there was never any doubt that Germany *would* re-unify, nor that that reunification would triumph. It was written all over those Berliners' faces on that evening of the 9th November. Of course, that is not to overlook the sacrifice (economic, social and political) that Germany has had to make these past two decades; but, when something matters more, any individual / personal suffering will be worth it. The difficulty lies, by contrast, in countries such as Cyprus. Agreement may be reached and be approved by the people, that would generate its own rush of excitement, but if it is made up largely of the excitement itself (and little else) it is unlikely to sustain. I have always maintained that (for Cyprus) the easy part will be securing reunification and the hard part holding on the 'day after'. Disagreements between the two communities, even in implementing the settlement, would soon emerge; elements within each community would be suspicious of (sometimes hostile towards) the other. The question would be the extent to which leaderships, of all extremes and centres, could see through those dark days, disassociate themselves from provocation and violence, and take-on the disaffected, *even if a majority*, within their own constituency. This is where leadership (or the lack of it) is demonstrated. Where societies either succeed or fail.

Sometimes unions *do* fail. One always felt that the Union of Serbia and Montenegro was the final stage in the downward trajectory towards separation and independence (for both). In Kosovo, the western world had, fairly early on, resolved that the Kosovar Albanians had no

constitutional future within Serbia – by the time Milosevic was out of the way, it was too late for Belgrade, irrespective of its stance, to avert the inevitable. Federations, it must be acknowledged, have, these past two decades, acquired a semblance of vulnerability: not only the Yugoslav variant, but arising from events in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia also. The temptation, therefore, within certain sections of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, will be to view reunification as merely a brief stopover in the journey towards either a Greek or Turkish Cyprus, whether covering all of the island or not. Such designs should be anticipated from the beginning, rejected and their protagonists estranged from the privileges of both European and international participation. Following any Cyprus reunification, the island being, at that point, on an upward trajectory, that achievement will impact not only locally, but is likely, also, to help significantly in the securing of settlements in other countries. In respect of statehood, the domino effect does not only have to be played out via dissolution, but in state reconstruction also. The ‘Cyprus effect’ could, therefore, translate far beyond the eastern Mediterranean.

Every conflict is different, a successful and internationally preferred resolution in one has, within itself, no bearing on any other. However, the international mood and current trends can matter almost as much as the subtleties, nuances and individual complexities of any dispute. The Minsk Group’s work on Nagorno-Karabakh is at an important stage. The constitutional condition of Iraq, particularly regionally, is far from settled. Even if the Sri Lankan army are successful in their offensive, internal accommodations will have to be reached for the benefit of the Tamil minority, including former (Tamil Tiger) rebels. All need not be lost in Georgia, regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia; nor (even) in Moldova regarding Transdnistria. Even where war has not occurred, including in many western European societies, it is vital to demonstrate that conflict (even of a non-military type) does not have to result in separation and/or divorce. This is the boon that Cyprus can provide to the international community. That ethnic and religious differences need not matter, that painful recent and earlier histories can be reasoned over rather than sloganised, and that, in the end, whilst identity *does* matter it should never be presumed and remain always perhaps that most sovereign element within any individual.

Nation states continue to outlive most other things. Communication, ease of travel, notions of identity may cause them, in the future, to fade away or assume slightly different forms, but, in the meantime, and however personally frustrating sometimes (whether when one is applying for a visa or being excluded from certain occupations where one resides on grounds of nationality), this is all we have. Therefore, in Cyprus and elsewhere it is the integrity of statehood that we are seeking to maintain, restore complete and/or the condition that we endeavour, in any talks, always to return back to.

For those beyond with a role to play in the successful reunification of Cyprus, a heavy burden of responsibility the ‘day after’ would devolve upon them also. The former colonial power, Britain, will retain its two Sovereign Base Areas (at Akrotiri and Dhekelia) on the southern coast of the island. As it has very successfully been doing in recent years, it should continue to play a low key, private and highly supportive role in its correspondence with and between the two communities. Naturally, each community desires to be defended and supported above

the other, frequently placing London, whatever its own view, in an uncomfortable position. However, attitudes have changed somewhat – Cyprus' EU membership having helped in this regard – contributing to the UK's relationship with the island today at perhaps its best level since independence in 1960. This can and must continue. Turkey desires to be a major and positive force in the world. Its ability to be so will be tested, following reunification, in Cyprus more than anywhere else. Ankara should not view the coming years as an opportunity to get the 'Cyprus problem' off its back, bring its EU accession back on track, whilst, merely, biding its time on the island until the next crisis comes along. Cyprus will be a commitment for Turkey, for the benefit of the Greek Cypriots also. This will not be evident to the latter yet, but a vast new market awaits, which the Greek Cypriots will have earlier, easier and more productive access to. The significance of certain Treaties (Guarantee and Alliance) need to fade; security to be discussed much less; and the eastern Mediterranean as a commercial hub seeking to rival the one in the Gulf, for the benefit of countries to Cyprus' immediate east and south, to be emphasised. If Ankara can / is willing to change its frame of mind, it can achieve so much (for its own benefit, also). Greece, the third guarantor power, will be relieved. Its effective foreign policy, these past fifteen years, under successive governments of different political colours, would be liberated to devote more attention to normalisation of its own ties with Ankara over the coming years. Agreement on a range of matters (particularly over the Aegean) will not (perhaps *should not*) be immediate; friends of both Greece and Turkey should not allow Ankara to exercise its new-found self-confidence to the detriment of Athens; but a stable Cyprus, requiring a further slice of ongoing and constructive correspondence between them, ought to help Greece and Turkey reach better understandings and, one day, more general agreement.

The European Union will be supportive, success in Cyprus giving *it* a greater self-confidence on the foreign stage and in respect of its role (internationally) in conflict settlement. China will be supportive, viewing reunification in Cyprus as another small prong in its efforts to bring Taiwan, in some mutually agreed form, back into the fold. Russia, its nationals having invested heavily (during the past decade), usually, despite the headlines, not always for the wrong reasons, will see an opportunity to use the Turkish Cypriot north of the island as a platform for new and broader expansion into the Turkish market. Last, but certainly by no means least, the United States, having supported and helped guide the process, will be able to cite Cyprus reunification not only as an early success for the Obama administration, but give it the authority to turn up the heat, ever so slightly, on recalcitrant, sometimes neighbouring, disputants elsewhere.

Good will and encouragement from outside will help, but it cannot determine, ultimately, success or failure. It would be better for Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders, from the outset, to acknowledge certain disadvantages. First, they do not share the same mother tongue. Greek and Turkish, of course, are not mutually comprehensible. The English language is already used in correspondence, whether official or private, but not everyone knows the language and some might regard such reliance, merely, as a legitimisation of a recent (and rejected) colonial past. There are no immediate solutions to this problem; irrespective, English is likely to continue to predominate. What though, in addition, is required is a willingness, within both

communities, to learn and use the other's language. It doesn't matter if not very well; mistakes can generate a lot of fun and help to lower remaining barriers to communication and friendship. Greek Cypriots, in particular, must resist the (obvious) temptation to rely on their compatriots learning and speaking to them in Greek, as before. Second, they do not share the same religion. There is no harm in regarding one's own faith as best, even superior, when compared with another or others. What *does* matter, though, is a willingness to acknowledge and respect those others in the way that one would want their adherents to acknowledge and respect that most personal possession of one's own. Christians and Moslems may come to different conclusions, but, if only they would pause and listen to the other awhile, they would discover the vast array of principles and beliefs that they share. Mankind can divide over as much as he can think of, the past decade has been a difficult one for both faiths, but tolerance is the minimum that is asked for, and with that, in Cyprus as much as anywhere else, insult, hatred and division does not have to follow. Finally, third, for a long time, Greek and Turkish Cypriots will have to face-up to their different interpretation of history. What is done cannot be undone. Events may have been just as they were, but they can be explained, defended and justified in different ways and from different perspectives. Both communities should resist attempts to (simply) 'paper over cracks', even avoid issues, after reunification. Taking those hard questions head-on will adjust or reinforce any opinion to the extent that the addressee / discussant is ready / desires. A person's never ending journey towards the truth is likely to ebb and flow, settling, at any moment, at any point; but, however much, at any time, it may be corrected, it can never do anyone any harm.

Any society, whether coming out of recent conflict or not, however good its constitution and its laws, if it is determined to, can *will to fail*. Such failure need not always be the fault (certainly alone) of the society's politicians. After all, our political leaders are only what we make them or allow them to be. A reunified Cyprus would re-commence its international life with the odds, somewhat, stacked against it. However, failure would return us to the same. The international community has had 45 years to partition the island, if it had wanted to. Any reiterated constitutional limitation on alienation apart, failure would lead not to the recognition of two separate states, but to a resumption of efforts to repair and thus restore that which had been broken. Besides, as with many others in a state of unresolved conflict, Greek and Turkish Cypriots cannot be separated from each other. Yet, regrettably, in my recent article for *Europe's World*, I conclude that reunification *will* fail: the two communities having lived apart too long, got used to determining their own affairs, sharing little (if anything) in common and never really wanting such type of settlement anyway. To avoid this occurring, both communities, the 'day after', will need to appreciate that they are building something – a new future together – and that this goes far beyond what is prescribed on paper. Most important of all, they should reconcile themselves to the fact that any settlement will take time. Fortunately, with their permission, that is what they will be given, with the luxury of knowing that everyone, including myself, wishes them well.

Dr Tim Potier
May 2009