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TURKEY AS A CYPRUS "GHOSTBUSTER"

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The July 20th 1974 attack by NATO power Turkey, against Cyprus, succeeded in its military objective: the conquest of Cypriot territory -36.2% of its northern territories which include 57% of its coastline. But the Turkish aggression failed in its political- Clausewitzian – one. It failed to destroy the Cypriot state.

Successive Turkish regimes have been trying ever since to achieve this strategic goal through the subterfuge of negotiations and a combination of fait accomplis in the conquered territories, including ethnic cleansing, colonisation, islamisation, constant military threats and blackmail. But to no avail. The legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus is unassailable, so much so that the Cypriot state has even joined, in 2004, one of the most successful intergovernmental organizations, namely the European Union.

In pursuing its political objective of "disappearing" the Cypriot state from the international system, the Ankara regime has been increasingly resorting to tactics used by the Germans in occupied Europe and, characteristically, in Austria and Czechoslovakia, where the two states were "disappeared" from the map of Europe, through *Anschluss* and conquest, albeit temporarily, as the Nazis found out in 1945.

Besides insisting that the Cypriot state "does not exist" politically, the Ankara regime has been, as of late, weirdly saying that Cyprus does not exist geographically either. In organizations like NATO, where Ankara holds sway and blackmails its supine members at will, the Turkish representatives have been, as of late, insisting that Cyprus - not a member- be referred to in NATO documents as some sort of an unnamed "ghost", yet still a real one judging from the obsession of the Turks to act as a Cyprus "ghostbuster" in NATO and other international fora.

Based on this turkey logic, the Ankara regime has also for long been pestering Israel and Egypt (and Lebanon) to abrogate international agreements signed with Nicosia on the delimitation of their respective Exclusive Economic Zones. And in the pursuit of yet another of their numerous obsessions about "Buyuk" ("Great")Turkey- in this case its ala-China "blue homeland" expansionist vision-

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the islamists of Ankara insist that besides Cyprus, Greek islands in the Mediterranean do not exist either.

The Cypriot state is surely no ghost. It is a bona fide subject and an equal member of good standing in the international system, independent and sovereign. As such its primary obligation is to provide and ensure its security and that of its citizens. But how can weak states defend themselves against aggressive neighbours? How can Cyprus defend against its aggressive neighbour and NATO member Turkey, that explicitly threatens its very existence?

Weak states cannot resort to self help to defend themselves, when they must. They count on deterring potential aggressors - limiting and neutralizing their military options- by a) joining intergovernmental organizations b) by forging international and regional alignments with like minded and, preferably, democratic states, and c) by constantly holding the high moral ground against potential aggressors.

Holding the high moral ground is critical for weak states. It is in fact their most important deterrent against potential aggressors. They can never yield it. Under the UN Charter war and the threat of use of force, are proscribed. They are illegal. States resorting to wars of choice are stigmatized.

Unless weak states can combine all or some of the above and thus establish restraining anti-hegemonic cooperative regional and international structures, they will fall victims to aggressive neighbours or, at best, turned into their satrapies.

The predicament of Cyprus is that it is victimized not by any power but by a NATO power. This is unprecedented given NATO's constitution and its constant proclamations about a pro peace, pro stability and a pro defense organisation. The truth is that NATO has been acting as Turkey's enabler in Cyprus and, characteristically, not only just in Cyprus. Turkey's horrid actions in its neighbourhood and against poor people in Africa- through its cheap drone sales - enjoy total NATO immunity. Its NATO equipped army has been occupying swathes of Iraqi and Syrian territory - ethnically cleansing and colonizing them, just like it has been doing in Cyprus. The Turkish regime has also been enabling jihadists globally, warring with its non Sunni citizens and critics- killing, jailing and terrorizing them for decades now. From NATO and its voluble Secretary General, the Honourable Jens Stoltenberg, there has been deafening silence.

In pursuing and building regional and international cooperative structures, Cyprus can have no illusions or delusions about the nature of power politics. But calibrated strategies can yield results. States are cynical. But not all lack ethos. Calibrated strategies can provide Cyprus with strategic intelligence and timely warnings of the kind that can preempt aggressors. Aggressors do not like to be found out. They instead like to project themselves as paragons of virtue. They like to hold and advertise the high moral ground. This should be denied to them. They should be exposed for the warmongers they are.