

**THE PROSPECTIVE (CON)-FEDERAL PARTNER OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS:
TURKISH CYPRIOTS, 'TRNC' OR ANKARA?**

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Since the beginning of inter-communal talks between the 76.6% Greek majority and the 18.06% Turkish minority, in June 1968, on the principle of a unitary independent state, the Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish objective has always been *Turkish-Cypriot autonomy and separatism* – rather than bi-communal coexistence – which was politically disguised under the supposedly endangered minority rights and alleged constitutional power sharing. A thoughtful analysis of Turkish-Cypriot strategy in the last 60 years, until today, points to the raw fact that, despite the theoretical political declarations for the contrary, *the harmonious coexistence of the Turkish minority with the Greek majority under unfettered independence, had never been a principal Turkish-Cypriot objective.*

The oblivion of the entangled past has led to the dis-remembrance of the adamant long-term objective of the Turkish minority, for its *de facto segregation from the Greek majority* in 1958 and 1963-64 and the *forceful establishment of an autonomous self-administrative identity* in 1964. Which eventually developed, after the Turkish invasion and through the last four decades, into an unrecognised illegal statelet, that claims today, through the dissolve of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC), the equal status of a *constituent* rather than a *component* state, under *the fallacious misconception of alleged unification*, complemented by extraordinary Turkish-Cypriot territorial, constitutional and political over-privileges; where the Greek-Cypriot majority is reduced to a simple community that is unequal to the Turkish-Cypriot minority, the territorial, constitutional and strategic demands of which greatly exceed its real 18% proportion.

The separatist foundations behind the Turkish strategic conception were laid at the end of 1956 when Professor Nihat Erim, between the dilemma of Enosis and the return of the island to Turkey adopted the concept of *partition*, which envisaged the overturn of the 'temporal [Greek-Cypriot] majority' through the demographic distortion of the population, by the flow of mainland Turks to the island, as well as the military presence of Turkey in 'strategically important locations of the island', including the Greek-controlled part of Cyprus. Remarkably, the idea of a *referendum*, prescribed by the incomplete and entangled United Nations *Annan V Plan* for the solution of the Cyprus Problem in 2004, was also proposed in the Erim reports 48 years earlier.

The political objective of the minority for segregation dates back to 1957, when the resignation of the Turkish-Cypriots from the joint municipal councils signalled the beginning of a long Turkish/Turkish-Cypriot strategy for its *forceful territorial separation* that would consequently create conditions on the ground for *geographical partition*. Its cornerstone was established in 1964, with the *pre-planned formation of Turkish-Cypriot armed enclaves* and of a Turkish-Cypriot self-administrative structure under a *General Committee*, only *days* (not weeks) *after* the beginning of inter-communal strife on 21 December 1963 and the abandonment of the Republic. The desperate effort for Turkish-Cypriot autonomy, which would consequently create conditions on the ground for uncompromised political positions and exaggerated constitutional demands, continued insistently in the following years. After the Kophinou crisis of November 1967, the minority announced on 28 December 1967 the self-declaration of a *Provisional Cypriot Turk Administration* (1967-1971), which by 1971 was renamed *Cypriot Turk Administration* (1971-1974). The Turkish invasion of 1974 and the de facto military partition of the island, led to the *Autonomous Cypriot Turk Administration* that was followed, on 13 February 1975, by the unilateral declaration of *Kıbrıs Türk Federeli Devleti* (KTFD) [Turkish Federated State of Cyprus].

Today, the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus – under the alleged name of *Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti* (KKTC) [‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ (‘TRNC’)], declared on 15 November 1983 – is not *just an unrecognized illegal state*. Since behind the facade of Turkish-Cypriot governance, lie the *deep influence and control of Ankara*, which, through the years, has undertaken the burden of sustaining the financial and political existence of the ‘TRNC’ alive, gradually transforming it into a Turkish province, and lately, under the AKP rule, into an Islamic territory, despite pale Turkish-Cypriot opposition.

Turkey has been financing all major development projects (roads, schools, ports, airports, etc.) and their construction is assigned almost exclusively to Turkish, rather than Turkish-Cypriot, companies. A private Turkish organization already controls the illegal Ercan airport at Tymbou and, after the closure of the Turkish-Cypriot airline KTHY in 2010, Turkish companies carry out all flights to Turkey. Lately, after the *removal* of the *annoying* Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi (CTP) party from the previous coalition ‘government’, extreme pressure was exerted by Ankara on the Turkish-Cypriot parties for the signing of the 2016-18 financial protocol, that provides for the privatization of all Turkish-Cypriot utilities (electricity, water, telecommunications, ports, etc.); expectedly, the private companies that will acquire the Turkish-Cypriot facilities, in uncompetitive prices, will be Turkish. Similarly, Turks are imposed as directors and general managers of local Turkish-Cypriot institutions, such as the Bayrak TV station and other public agencies, while the Turkish Embassy in occupied Nicosia plays the role of a shadow government in Turkish-Cypriot affairs.

The recent transfer of Turkish water to the occupied area, through an underwater pipeline (the so called project of the century), turned into a fiasco; when Turkey not only refused the distribution and administration of this life commodity by a Turkish-Cypriot company, but also imposed its future administration by a Turkish company at a selling price that is high and unaffordable. Turkish companies are investing large amounts of financial resources in local projects without Turkish-Cypriot participation, while the laundering of mainland black money in the local Turkish casinos have transformed, according to the Turkish-Cypriot daily *Afrika*, the 'TRNC' to the large intestine (rectum) of Turkey.

Furthermore, the latest building of tens of new Anatolia-style mosques was financed by the Turkish Embassy, while the massive transfer of Turkish imams to the island, the establishment of religious schools and theological colleges, and the imposition of Islamic culture to the liberal Turkish-Cypriot educational system, put religious pressure to the Turkish minority which is considered among the most secular in the world.

While the Turkish-Cypriots had joyfully accepted their Republic of Cyprus privileges, after its entrance to the European Union in 2004, at the same time they consider the ROC as a *defunct state* and the Government of Cyprus as the *Greek-Cypriot Administration in the South*. Today most of them, even of the progressive opposition, have silently surrendered their political will and submitted to the financial and political domination of Turkey, which pays the tens of thousands of monthly checks of Turkish-Cypriot civil servants and pensioners. Similarly, they conveniently surrendered to the transformation of the occupied northern part of the island, as well as 'TRNC', into a political environment dominated by *Turkism rather than Turkish-Cypriotism*. Turkish flags and public statues, busts and photographs of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the father of the modern *Türk Cumhuriyeti*) are found in all schools, villages and cities, public squares, and all 'government' institutions. Despite their claimed Cypriot identity and their alleged willingness for a peaceful unification of the island and the coexistence of the two communities, the political semiotics of Turkish-Cypriot behaviour indicate exactly the opposite; an adherence to foreign – Turkish – domination rather than local Cypriot customs and ideals. According to Sener Levent 'Cyprus exists in the south and Turkey in the north'.

Taking into consideration that the Turkish-Cypriots are already a minority, among Turkish settlers and nationals, and their political-cultural-religious existence in the 'TRNC' is continually diminishing, a well-intentioned critic may logically ask: Who will be the actual partner of the Republic of Cyprus in the alleged federal solution?