

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND THE SEARCH FOR A CYPRUS SOLUTION

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The momentum for a solution to the protracted Cyprus problem has given rise to hopes that a settlement of the conflict may at long last be at hand. The president of the Republic, Nicos Anastasiades, has engaged in UN-brokered mediation process that is reportedly progressing well. Together with the new and pro-settlement leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mustafa Akinci, Anastasiades is hoping for what has eluded his predecessors.

Party politics, being what it is, will inevitably play the major role in any final decision-making. Should the left-wing AKEL join forces with the ruling conservative DISY in supporting the settlement it is more than likely Greek Cypriots will vote favourably in the referendum. Of course it is still too early to speculate on party lines with any degree of certainty.

However there are those, who strongly disagree with the suggested terms of a deal that in their view may not be widely different from the Annan Plan of 2004, rejected by the majority of Greek Cypriots. Some of them claim the economics of the likely settlement cannot be sustainable. They cite various talked-about bi-communal schemes for health care and social insurance and conclude that the financial cost may be overbearing for the Greek Cypriots. Others point to a host of social and cultural issues that will have to be resolved before a solution. Amongst them is the question of mainland settlers from Turkey, whose number is staggeringly high and by all counts a great number of them will reportedly be allowed to remain on the island. Though ethnically the same, the settlers are not fully integrated into the indigenous Turkish Cypriot community.

Still others argue that absent the full restoration of all human rights on the island no solution can or should be considered. For them the kind of solution under negotiation is an aberration to democracy and majority rule. It is this group, whom I believe are stating their views plainly without fear of having to be 'politically correct'. That gives rise to the question whether or not any Greek Cypriots are in any shape or form disguising their views for the benefit of 'political correctness'. Is economy their main concern or are they hiding their deep-rooted political objections behind an economic mask? If, for instance, billions of dollars were given to reward a solution and meet all financial costs, would that satisfy those whose apparent concern is mainly economic?

It is important that in a free society all different political views are aired without discrimination. However, one has to have a clear idea of one's own objectives and motives. Every Cypriot is well within his/her right to

openly state their views on the future of their country. But for greater influence in the public opinion, if not for one's own clarity of purpose, it is imperative to be aware of the context in which one forms a particular opinion or holds certain views.