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## Comfortable Conflict and (Il)liberal Peace in Cyprus

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Cypriots currently experience a peculiar conflict while negotiating different understandings of peace. The conflict today is starkly different to what they experienced in the 1960s and early 70s. The old enemies and the same rhetoric—and even some of the same politicians—are still around. But nowadays the Cypriot conflict is more symbolic and ‘civilized’, as a certain kind of peace is also in place: i.e. absence of violence combined with democracy, partial freedom of movement and enviable levels of prosperity both north and south of the Buffer Zone. Still, as this peace is based on forced division, ethnic cleansing and legal exceptionalism, most want, or say they want, another kind of peace: i.e. a normalization of relations and a form of reunification of the island, including a bi-communal sharing of power. In other words, they exhibit a desire—in public discourse at least—to move away from an illiberal peace to a liberal onesomething that can in effect hybridize peace pursuits as (il)liberal.

To this extent the desire for a liberal peace, though perfectly legitimate, is exaggerated in public debates. A frustrated Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on Cyprus recently criticized the empty rhetoric of struggling for settlement by suggesting, in reference to Cypriot politicians, that ‘any parrot’ can be taught to say that he wants a settlement of the Cyprus problem.<sup>1</sup> The mimetic is especially hypocritical, given that by international comparison the Cyprus conflict appears to be a most comfortable one. The joke at UN headquarters—where the termination of UN involvement on the island has been floated on numerous occasions—is that UNFICYP currently operates in a holiday zone than a conflict zone and that it engages more in beach-keeping than peace-keeping. Quite simply, as it appears to the main stakeholders (international as well as local) and as cynical and insensitive as this may sound, not a lot seems

to be at stake if the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement do not lead to an agreement. They have failed a number of times before and life went on for Cypriots who continued to socially and economically prosper. This increasingly leads to international fatigue and loss of interest about the Cyprus problem. It also leads to a disturbing conservative tendency among Cypriot politicians and people who pronounce the benefits of a settlement, but in reality feel easier with ‘the devil they know’ and consequently seem to handle better potential failure in negotiations than the ‘risk’ of success.

Conventional discussions on the Cyprus conflict concentrate on the standard and changing positions of the two sides, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the complex mediating efforts of the UN and EU, and the constructive or destructive role of the ‘motherlands’, the ‘internationals’, civil society, the media, high profile lawsuits, etc. What has been less examined so far is the extent to which the inability of settling the Cyprus problem for over 40 years epitomizes a more subtle (yet complex) problem, which we seek to examine in this paper. Simply put, the problem as we understand it revolves around the question of *how much comfort to sacrifice or risk in exchange for what kind of peace*. In other words, there exists, firstly a genuine, though also politically exploited, difficulty in determining how far the desired and long awaited ‘peace settlement’ in Cyprus can deliver anything very different in terms of rights and social development currently in place, that is, given the discussions on bi-zonality, guarantor powers, derogations and possible new exceptions. This is combined, secondly, with a suspicion—which can easily be securitized by either side—that a settlement may actually endanger the comfortable (il)liberal peace currently in place. We argue that in terms of everyday practice, the former breeds tension, contradictory discourses and unpredictable shifts in policy that complicate the settlement of the problem. The latter, we suggest, also breeds reaction and resistance to peacemaking interventions and ‘foreign’ plans. Note that this resistance may be justified or unjustified depending on one’s perspective and although judgment over this matter is politically important its detailed analysis falls beyond the scope of this article. Also beyond the scope of this article is an examination of the full tenets of liberalism and the liberal peace model.

### *The Conflict and its Historical Background*

The conflict in Cyprus is a protracted one, stemming at least from the 1950s. There are different understandings over what constitutes the ‘Cyprus problem’, what caused it and what would count

as a ‘final settlement’ to it. In the abundant literature on the subject, the problem is viewed as an identity or ethno-national conflict,<sup>ii</sup> as a conflict based on the incompatibility of subject positions,<sup>iii</sup> as the outcome of regional and superpower interests and interferences,<sup>iv</sup> or as a combination of any of the above. The ‘double minority’ environment<sup>v</sup> is also considered to be of particular importance not least because it makes Cyprus vulnerable to external influences,<sup>vi</sup> but also because it creates and sustains a threatening and securitized environment for both communities. Overall, and as Loizos argues, the Cyprus Problem should not be viewed as a single problem, but rather a multiple sets of problems produced by the policies of multiple actors and defined and interpreted in different ways at different times.<sup>vii</sup>

Regardless of how one identifies the problem, an important area of contention (with spillover effects over different aspects of the problem) has been the issue of sovereignty.<sup>viii</sup> Specifically, this can be played out with respect to which local regime of power has sovereignty over what, whether such sovereignty is full or constricted, single or divided, *de facto* or *de jure*.<sup>ix</sup> The Greek Cypriot side – i.e. the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus (RoC) – uses the legitimacy it enjoys to point to its right to exercise sovereignty over the whole island, including areas north of the UN Buffer Zone not controlled by the Republic. It characterises the problem as primarily one of ‘invasion and occupation’, given that the territorial integrity of an independent state has been violated in 1974.<sup>x</sup> As a result, a just solution for Greek Cypriots appears to be one that would effectively cancel the consequences of the invasion and occupation. The Turkish Cypriot side, on the other hand, claims sovereignty through secession over the northern part of the island and sees the conflict as primarily a domestic problem of persistent ‘ethnic persecution’.<sup>xi</sup> Consequently, a just solution for Turkish Cypriots appears to be one that would recognize the ‘realities’ of the post-1974 division.

The current problems between Greek and Turkish Cypriots date back to 1955<sup>xii</sup> when (the Greek Cypriot) EOKA<sup>xiii</sup> commenced its struggle against the British colonial rule with an ultimate goal of uniting the island with Greece (*enosis*). In 1958, the Turkish Cypriots formed their own organisation, TMT,<sup>xiv</sup> to prevent EOKA from achieving *enosis*, and as an alternative supported the partition of the island (*taksim*). The Greek and Turkish ‘motherlands’ were also involved in these struggles, as was Britain, which exploited the incompatibility of positions to frustrate the right of self-determination and extend the exercise of colonial rule. The struggles for

*enosis* and *taksim* ended, albeit only in theory, with the 1960 Cypriot independence, which made their pursuit unconstitutional (Article 185).

The attempts to keep ‘the balance’ between the two main communities on the island were based on a newly established and by some accounts unique and complex ‘received constitution’, which created a nominally independent and partially sovereign state. Under this new state of affairs, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom became guarantors and were given the constitutional right to militarily intervene unilaterally in the newly established state should the need arise.

Within three years from the birth of the Republic the first problems emerged, intensified after Makarios’ proposals to amend the 1960 Constitution and the advent of intercommunal violence. Turkish Cypriots fled into enclaves, creating at the same time their own administration units, as well as the first form of ‘solid’ separation between the two communities. The 1963-8 period was volatile with inter-communal violence, Turkish air strikes and the arrival of the UN force (UNFICYP), which has remained on the island ever since. The finale of this tragic period came in 1974 with the Greek Junta’s coup - that aimed to overthrow President Makarios – and the Turkish invasion, which led to the de facto division of the island and the displacement of thousands of Greek Cypriots from the northern part and Turkish Cypriots from the southern.

By 1983 the de facto division was further solidified when the Turkish Cypriots self-declared the area north of the Buffer Zone as an independent state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). As a self-proclaimed state, however, TRNC has been declared invalid by SC Resolution 541 (1983) and does not enjoy international recognition with the sole exception of Turkey. The latter is also the only country that does not recognise the RoC.

Since 1977, resolution efforts under the aegis of the UN have been based on the creation of a bi-communal bi-zonal federation, which, however, is understood and defined differently by the two sides, the international actors and even by the elite and public within each community. The only time that the two sides came close to reaching an agreement was in 2004 when a UN-sponsored plan, known as the ‘Annan Plan’, was put to simultaneous referenda on both communities. The majority of Turkish Cypriots (including settlers) accepted the plan (65%), but Greek Cypriots with an overwhelming 76% rejected it.

Unlike many other protracted conflict cases, Cyprus has not experienced any violence since 1974 with the exception of rare shootings across the Buffer Zone in the 1970s and 80s and the killings of two Greek Cypriot protesters in 1996. With this in mind, the term conflict, for the case of Cyprus, does not necessarily (or no longer) entail acts of physical violence, but rather the incompatibility of subject positions between the two communities. What is more, the prospects of re-emergence of violence appear to be rather slim to both local and international actors. Said otherwise, what we currently have in Cyprus is a post-violent conflict or a ‘cold peace’ (with hostility, but no violence).

To that extent, the traditional or Cold War view of peacebuilding which focused on the prevention or stopping of violence may not be appropriate to comprehend international interventions in the Cyprus conflict. Instead, a post-Cold War view seems more appropriate for Cyprus. If we are to follow, Newman, Paris and Richmond, the post-Cold War peacebuilding approach reflects ‘a liberal project: not just managing instability between states but seeking to build peace within and between states on the basis of liberal democracy and market economics’.<sup>xv</sup> But, as we argue below, even the post-Cold War view may not be suitable for the case of Cyprus either, as many of the liberal variables that liberal peacebuilding interventions aim to promote are already present in the island.

The absence of violence in Cyprus, coupled with the high standard of living on both sides of the divide (and especially for Greek Cypriots), the democratic and economically liberal environment and the EU accession, raise the question of whether there already is a form of ‘liberal peace’ in Cyprus even without a formal peace settlement. If this is indeed the case, do peacebuilding interventions then simply address a sense of injustice and lack of reconciliation? Aside from the reunification of the island, what do the liberal peacebuilding ‘interveners’ wish to achieve over and above what is already in place, i.e. in a political space where the liberal democracy and the market economics are solid and functional (indeed to be part of the EU they must be, and the northern part where the *acquis* has been suspended seeks to harmonize as much as possible)? Furthermore, if there is indeed local resistance to liberal peacebuilding interventions, why is this the case? Do resistance attempts really aim to spoil the promotion of internationally induced liberal peacebuilding? Or do they aim to spoil or prevent the spoiling of the de facto (il)liberal cold peace that is in place and seems to keep the locals relatively secure if

not totally satisfied? To adequately respond to these questions we need to first scrutinize the terms liberal and peace as used for the Cyprus problem.

On the one hand, it should be realized that liberalism as applied in divided Cyprus is combined with large doses of legal exceptionalism both north and south of the Buffer Zone.<sup>xvi</sup> Liberal values and principles are being publicly pronounced but taken exception of given the ‘emergency situation’ after 1963 or the de facto ‘realities’ after 1974. Basic articles of the RoC Constitution have been suspended or modified under the doctrine of necessity in the south; a new ‘liberal’ constitution has come into being in the north that treats Greek Cypriots as ‘aliens’ and gives extra-legal power to the Turkish army. In addition, the regime in the Sovereign British Base Areas (99 square miles of the island) is treated as a *corpus separatum*, that is, as an external territory of the UK. Yet it is only a caricature of a British ‘liberal space’ as it is really a space where the British army can legally take lots of liberties. Note that it is an area that has been kept outside the EU and under the direct rule of the UK Ministry of Defense.<sup>xvii</sup> In short, the status quo after 1974 has brought about only a semblance of liberal peace for it often displays illiberal forms and human rights discounts on a range of issues.

On the other hand, the aforementioned factors (EU accession, high standard of living, democratic institutions and free market economy) have created a kind of comfortable conflict that can easily pass off as peace, both to locals and outsider visitors. Peace is an obscure concept, that is of course open to interpretation, with violence being the only variable that is perhaps common in all views or definitions of peace (i.e. that there cannot be peace if there is violence). While there is broad agreement among Greek Cypriots that for ‘true’ peace to exist there needs to be a withdrawal of Turkish troops and the abandonment or revision of the Treaty of Guarantee, there is significant divergence in the public view on political and societal issues. Such issues include the governance structure, the number of settlers remaining following settlement and the ‘strictness’ or ‘looseness’ of bi-zonality. There are also disagreements on whether more or less integration of the two communities would lead to more or less peace than the status quo offers.

Perhaps the most important question of the Cypriot peace-liberty nexus is whether the status quo is better or worse than a proposed solution to the problem. The fact that the status quo offers Cypriots a form of (il)liberal peace creates a dilemma for both communities. Put differently, the status quo becomes a BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement), i.e.

preferable if the ‘ideal solution’ for each side cannot be agreed upon by the other. As a result, and depending on one’s view on what will enhance or endanger ‘peace’, some perceive the international peace settlement interventions to be peace-promoting, while others perceive them as peace-suppressing.

### *Forms of Liberal Intervention*

There are essentially four main actors involved in the peacebuilding operations in Cyprus: the United Nations, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. Out of the four, the US intervenes the least.<sup>xviii</sup> The latter’s direct peacebuilding interventions are limited to funding bi-communal programs (mainly through UNDP) that promote cooperation, sustainable development, social cohesion and research. The UK on the other hand has had a more active role, not least because of its colonial past and its status as one of the three guarantor powers. But its peacebuilding interventions are in the last decade or so increasingly channeled through the EU. The UN has always been the primary actor in all peacebuilding interventions in Cyprus. Indeed, the bi-communal negotiations are always under the auspices of the UN. Lastly, the EU’s direct and indirect interventions intensified as the relations between the EU on one hand and Cyprus and Turkey on the other, deepened.

Unlike other cases, all interventions that took place in the post-cold war period in Cyprus did not aim to prevent violence (as there was none), or to promote stability through democracy and liberal market economies. Instead they aimed at developing an environment (in Cyprus and abroad) where a resolution to the conflict could be facilitated and become more possible. However, what they achieved, perhaps inadvertently, was to solidify the illiberal form of peace that exists in Cyprus by supporting a number of issues that the ‘interveners’ consider too difficult to negotiate. Issues such as the continuation of the Treaty of Guarantee or the need for a guarantor power (e.g. to ensure the implementation of a solution), or certain aspects for the displacement and property issues (that not all displaced will be allowed to return and/or not necessarily regain all their property) are just indicative examples of illiberal features that are part of liberal peacebuilding interventions.

The international peacebuilding, or conflict transformation interventions in Cyprus have been both direct and indirect targeting the elite and the society alike. The direct and elite-targeting interventions are what Diez et. al. call compulsory impact and works with the logic of



‘carrot’ and ‘stick’.<sup>xxix</sup> The idea is that the intervention would have a direct impact on the conflict by transforming the governing structures, the economy and the civil society of the candidate countries by granting or withholding a reward,<sup>xxx</sup> changing thus the actors’ incentive structure for a resolution. In the pre-accession period this form of intervention was particularly useful as it ‘forced’ the RoC to adjust to certain western style liberal standards that it was found lacking (e.g. protection of civil and minority rights, more liberalization of the economy etc). In the post-accession period, however, these forms of direct interventions rely more on the ‘stick’ to influence the RoC (e.g. threat of direct trade with TRNC) as the ‘carrot’ (i.e. accession) is no longer available.

Diachronically, there have also been direct interventions that aimed, however, at influencing the society. These take place primarily through financial support for common activities between conflict parties. Diez et al.<sup>xxxi</sup> term this form of interventions ‘connective pathway’ and it has been utilized in Cyprus for bi-communal, multi-communal or even mono-communal peacebuilding activities with funds from a number of international organizations such as the EU, UNDP, EEA grants, Norwegian funds, etc. The aim of these activities is to help participants from rival sides to get to know the ‘other’ better, to engender toleration and acceptance and to build constructive relationships.

Interventions could also be manifested in more indirect ways. One such way is the ‘enabling pathway’ and takes place when the EU (or the UN) provide the elite with reference points to legitimize conflict-diminishing policies<sup>xxxii</sup> without (the elite) having significant (domestic) political costs. These reference points allow actors from both sides ‘to link their political agenda with the EU and through reference to integration, justify desecuritizing moves that may otherwise have not been considered legitimate’,<sup>xxxiii</sup> or according to Hill, ‘governments [will be] able to resist their own nationalists by constraints of EU membership’<sup>xxxiv</sup> or UN Security Council Resolutions. Thus, the intervening actors (e.g. the EU and UN) do not actively do something. It is rather left up to the local elite to use the association of their country with the international agent as an excuse for change. From this perspective, this form of intervention is very passive, but if used properly very effective.

Since 1974 the international actors have been using all of the abovementioned forms of intervention, usually at the same time. But their effectiveness depends primarily on the locals’

responsiveness to the interventions (i.e. success or failure does not depend solely on the ‘interveners’ actions) meaning that unavoidably there will also be resistance.

As we argue below the degree of potential or actual resistance is subject to a number of variables including the comfort level of the conflict, the illiberal state of peace and the profoundness of the daily political and social routines that may lead, perhaps inadvertently, to the perpetuation of the conflict. Furthermore, the locals do not just resist the (direct or indirect) interventions, but also use them in a way that they have a ‘boomerang effect’ on the conflict.

More specifically, the elite could and do incorporate direct interventions (i.e. compulsory impact) into their daily political routines and power struggle games to ‘hurt’ their political opponents. Resistance in this case is manifested through fear of political cost. In the case of the enabling impact (i.e. use of reference points), things are even direr, as there is no guarantee that this pathway will only be used in a positive way (i.e. to desecuritize the environment). Indeed, it could also be used in a negative way as some reference points enable elites to use the EU and other international organizations as ‘weapons’ to toughen their position and securitize further the already deeply securitized environment. Interventions that involve the public directly (i.e. connective impact) have less chances of success in cases where the conflict is deeply internalized and the historic animosities are still vivid in the people’s social memory. Resistance in these cases could be against the funding organizations, but also against the locals who participate in such activities. Said otherwise, resistance efforts are not always aimed towards the ‘intervener’ but also towards the ‘recipient’ who may be branded as a collaborator of foreign powers deviously trying to change local perceptions and impose unacceptable ‘foreign’ plans.

Besides the potential resistance, there is also an important question in regards to the aim of such liberal peacebuilding interventions. In cases like Cyprus where democracy, liberal economies and absence of violence are already present, what kind of norms and reference points would the EU or the UN promote? One potential answer would be norms that would facilitate closer cooperation among conflict parties, or, in other words, norms that create identities that value cooperation more than conflict. But for such a constructive impact<sup>xxv</sup> or social learning<sup>xxvi</sup> to take place there must be a change in the underlying identities of the parties, and for such transformation to take place and have an effect, any new altered identity (e.g. a cosmopolitan, or European or a common Cypriot one) must be able to out-compete the existing national identities.<sup>xxvii</sup> Whether such externally induced identities could be successful in conflict or post-

conflict environments is, however, debatable. Indeed, any threat to the existing identities could bring forward more reaction and resistance that support the conflict-perpetuating routines, which, as mentioned below, maintain the populations' ontological security, but also the conflict.

### *Routine, Reaction and Resistance*

As outlined above, what sets the environment for resistance to various international interventions in Cyprus is the lack of violence and the comfortable conflict or state of cold peace. This peace, though illiberal, is experienced as liberal by those who benefit from it, or are not adversely affected by the legal exceptionalism established north or south of, or in, the UN Buffer Zone. Given the high degree of comfort in the status quo, there are reactions or resistance to any potential intervention (direct or indirect) that could jeopardize it. It is worth noting that the comfort and security is not only measured in economic terms, but also in societal, as the current status quo safeguards the way of living as well as the continuation of the identities of the two communities. This sense of ontological security<sup>xxviii</sup> is perpetuated through highly internalized social and political routines.

Such routines reduce anxiety and create a sense of security, but they are not necessarily contributing towards conflict resolution.<sup>xxix</sup> Indeed they could actually perpetuate the conflict. Critical IR scholars explain that in the process of identity formation there is a need for the existence of the enemy 'other' in order to define who 'we' are.<sup>xxx</sup> Thus, certain conflict-perpetuating routines may be maintained despite the fact that they hinder conflict resolution (or a peace settlement), precisely because they provide security for the 'self', that is, ontological security.<sup>xxxi</sup> As a result, the public and the elite consciously or unconsciously tend to resist any interventions that would disrupt these routines. This is especially the case if the conflict is not hurtful enough for the opposing sides, and in Cyprus the stalemate is not, which makes the perpetuation of such routines both possible and likely. Moreover, because in Cyprus these routines are deeply imbedded in the society, they include, inter alia, the way the conflict is talked about and commemorated, the perceptions of what constitutes a (societal, economic and political) threat for 'our' community, the way the problem should be negotiated, what the settlement must or must not entail, and so on and so forth.

While reaction and resistance may 'spike' in frequency and intensity during periods of significant international interventions (e.g. during the Annan Plan period), most of the local

reactions and resistance acts are continuous and are part of the daily routines. Since any Cyprus problem developments constantly occupy a top spot in the local media, the political elite has the opportunity (often framed as a duty) to deal with the issue and show their commitment to specific positions on a daily basis. Regardless of who is in power, the ruling party(ies) need to constantly present their positions on how their efforts have an effect on any positive development or how they have dealt as efficiently and correctly as possible with any negative developments. From this perspective any peacebuilding interventions could qualify as either positive or negative developments, and as such will occupy a top spot on the elite's agenda. Similarly, the domestic opposition needs to securitize, or, in other words, argue how the government's handling of the problem has been insufficient or even catastrophic. As a result, the political elites engage in daily power game routines and discourses, which charge and mobilize the population sometimes in support but more often in the resistance of peacebuilding interventions.

What is worth noting is that it is often not clear whether a development/intervention is positive or negative as each political party has different interpretations. This means that even an 'obviously' positive development (for the international agents) could be turned into (or be perceived as) something negative and become the basis for resistance. An indicative example is the UN Secretary General's most recent position that 'a convergence of views [between the two sides] is taking shape [and that] we should seize this critical moment'.<sup>xxxii</sup> While the local elite could take advantage of this mild intervention (i.e. the SG's positive assessment of the situation) and use it as a 'reference point' to intensify the efforts for a resolution, what happened instead was that almost all Greek Cypriot political parties used it to 'attack' the government on the pretext that the SG's view connotes that there is a hidden plan soon to be presented as a fait accompli to the Cypriot people.

These kinds of daily routines raise the question of what constitutes spoiling or resistance act and what constitutes normal political behavior in Cyprus. The unaltered commitment to specific positions (e.g. repossession or exchange of property and the issue of security guarantees) could be seen as spoiling, as it does not allow for the implementation of agreed positions such as bi-zonality.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Such positions are, according to Tocci, spoiling acts rather than normal and legitimate positions because they 'deny the mutual fulfilment of the principal parties' basic needs'. Domestically, however, such positions have been legitimized in a way that they are not seen as spoiling acts.<sup>xxxiv</sup> While this assessment may be valid to a degree, the adoption of such a

generalized view of spoiling raises other questions. Specifically, if any commitment to a specific position (e.g. security) or any disagreement with the international definition of an issue (e.g. bi-zonality) is considered a spoiling act, then there is spoiling or resistance on every single issue – and there are a lot of issues in conflict cases such as Cyprus. This creates the risk of diluting the meaning of spoiling or resistance to a degree that it becomes useless as an analytical tool. What should be examined, we believe, is how interventions become part of the daily political discourse that begets claims about spoiling or claims about resistance. Also how the commitment to specific positions (e.g. security or settlers) or the ‘definitional’ disagreements can be viewed positively or negatively in the way they may or may not jeopardize the dubious outcome of an international intervention.

Despite their disagreements, the ruling local elites on both sides of the Buffer Zone cannot easily and openly oppose or criticize the intentions of the international peacebuilding interventions, as such acts are judged to be politically costly for their community. Consequently, they are always particularly careful with the phrasing of any potential disagreements with the international players. Similarly, they are also very careful to what degree they accept and adopt each intervention, as that could also have political cost domestically; albeit in such cases it is the individual elite or the political party that will incur the cost and not the entire community.

Political parties in Cyprus have a significant impact on the public’s perceptions about political developments, including the international interventions, which means that the elite-level resistance spills over to the society relatively easily. Cypriots are relatively loyal to their parties, due to patronage, and often like to exhibit their strong views about political issues. Having said that, and even though the parties’ opinions certainly matter, bottom-level resistance could also be more direct, bypassing and many times preceding the official positions. This is especially true for cases where the public view — formed and informed by the local mass media — a priori perceives the international actors to be biased.

This kind of public reaction or a priori resistance, even if not voiced explicitly, is at the center of the international intervention problematic in Cyprus because it is a major obstacle for both the international ‘interveners’ and for any local elite that would like to cooperate with them. For example, the Greek Cypriot public/mass media will almost immediately criticize any British proposed initiative (given the colonial experience) or a proposal by specific individuals such as the UN special envoy, Alexander Downer. The Turkish-Cypriot public/mass media, on the other

hand tend to see the EU as being biased, not least because both the RoC and Greece are members, while Turkey is not. To that extent, provisions that underscore the European *acqui communitaire* tend to be viewed negatively if they do not entail permanent or temporary derogations that take into account the Cypriot *acqui*, i.e. the post-1974 ‘realities’, including the effective implementation of the principle of bizonality.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Interestingly there are no serious attempts by the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot elites to eliminate or mitigate these deeply internalized perceptions about foreign (peacebuilding) interventions since, as mentioned above, such attempts could be perceived as being tantamount to a political suicide. Most international efforts are therefore held hostage to the internalized negative perceptions about specific actors and to the inability of the elite to break the routines that sustain these perceptions. Indeed it is more likely for the elite to sustain these routines as part of the local power games, but also because the society seems to accept or existentially ‘need’ the perpetuation of the conflict.

Not even the EU escapes this obstacle. Quite the opposite, it becomes part of the problem. Matters pertaining to the European intervention are increasingly becoming more complex. European values are progressively used to resist peacebuilding interventions either from the EU itself or from the UN. This has, in effect, the ‘reverse’ enabling impact, as the elite instead of using the EU to desecuritize the environment, they use it to securitize it further. Both sides include the EU in their conflict perpetuating routines, by using it as a rationale to argue why a specific intervention is not suitable or legitimate enough, making it thus even harder for any local or foreign actor to break them. Indicatively, Greek Cypriots tend to use the EU to argue against the strict bizonality and in favor of more freedom of movement and residence. Moreover, they use the EU *acqui* not only to become more ‘inflexible’ but also to reject certain unsatisfactory UN positions.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Typically certain politicians and media suggested (sometimes in a rather derogatory, even racist fashion) that the Annan Plan was only fit for Africans not for an EU-member-state-elect that deserved a ‘European solution’. The Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, have also begun to realize the importance of a ‘European solution’. More specifically following the recent European Court of Human Rights’ decision regarding the issue of property, which apparently recognized that occupants—not just owners—have rights which increase with the passage of time, they use the adherence to European values and principles in order to promote their positions on the property issue.

Reaction and resistance to international interventions does not always revolve around specific issues (e.g. governance, settlers, security, etc) but also, as mentioned, around specific people (e.g. Lord Hanney, Annan, De Soto, etc). In both cases public reaction solidified into resistance could be directed against the actors who try to intervene, as well as against locals who accept or do not oppose sufficiently the international interventions. Local personal attacks are not limited to the elite but also to individuals who, through their institutions (e.g. NGOs, universities, etc) organize, or under their personal capacity participate, in bi-communal events. Evidently, the social pressure is publicly articulated as a form of reaction-resistance towards peacebuilding interventions that demand the involvement of the local population. To that extent, the chances of successful intervention are minimized if the population self-censors its behavior or becomes suspicious about the aims or skeptical about the value of such interventions.

This form of reaction and resistance is rather autonomous in the sense that the societal pressure does not derive only from organized groups/platforms, but also from individuals who apply pressure to family members, peers, classmates, etc. As a result, many times it is fiercer against the locals than the international actors and this is done in order to eliminate or decrease substantially the possible target groups of such interventions. Said otherwise, the reaction and resistance aim, many times, to destroy any fertile environment that may exist for successful intercommunal cooperation or international interventions, especially those done through the ‘connective pathway’ (i.e. with international funding).

Part of the underlying reasons behind this autonomous form of reaction and resistance is the people’s personal experiences and internalized beliefs of what is best for ‘us’. The major protagonist, however, is the local media that help create and perpetuate public reaction, or as the pro-reconciliation groups argue, they act as spoilers to peace-making initiatives. Both the mainstream printed and the television/radio media are part of the political culture with clear preferences and views on specific issues and people.<sup>xxxvii</sup> The media impact in this form of resistance is not found primarily on the analyses and opinions on specific issues, but rather on the public accusations of political parties and organizations as well as character assassination concerning individuals.

While such acts of pressure are observed on a daily basis, they are intensified during periods of foreign interventions. Indicatively, the accusations against the pro-reconciliation civil society in the south intensified during the Annan Plan campaign (and for a period after the

referendum) to the extent that the House of Representatives through high profile meetings investigated the funding of such groups. Even though the investigation remained inconclusive, such actions led to the vilification of people and organizations. The vilification of civil society was also quite intense during the reign of Rauf Denktash in the north, though things changed during Mehmet Ali Talat's period in office (2005-2010).

### *From Pax Turca to Pax Europaea*

Claims about liberal peace in Cyprus oscillate between accomplishment and aspiration. There have been, as shown above, rival understandings on what kind of peace (on the liberal scale) has really been achieved since the last outbreak of violence in 1974 as well as on the kind of peace that is being aimed at with a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. But we have argued in this paper that local and international actors cannot escape and therefore need to negotiate the liberal character of peace as well as the paradox of accomplished vs. aspired peace. We can call the accomplished peace *Pax Turca* and the aspired one *Pax Europaea*.

The *Pax Turca* has pacified Cyprus, forcefully and tragically, through the de facto division of the island and displacement of populations. It has enhanced or made possible the creation of democratic yet ethnocratic polities: one internationally recognized and in principle, but not in practice, bi-communal; the other internationally unrecognized and in both principle and practice mono-communal. Both polities work and legitimate themselves on the basis of western liberal norms and values, yet both polities apply versions of legal exceptionalism to deny the rights of the 'other' community (though, clearly, the exceptionalism in the north is harder than in the south). To that extent, there is a liberal peace that works for some but not for others; specifically it does not work for those who experience the illiberal side of ethnocentrism and the 'doctrine of necessity'.

The *Pax Europaea* continues to be a distant liberal aspiration though the accession of the RoC into the EU has brought it closer and has intensified calls (especially among the Greek Cypriots) that the European *acquis* should work to make the illiberal peace more liberal. This follows on an idealization of the EU and its liberal values that may not hold up to scrutiny. For example, it is certain that whatever peace settlement is agreed upon, the Greek-Cypriot side will want to restrict not only the size of the Turkish settlers (which officially includes also people born in Cyprus) but also the right of residence of Turkish nationals in the island if Turkey joins



the EU, i.e. an exception to the *acquis*. When it comes to the Turkish-Cypriot community, suspicions and discounts from the *acquis* are stronger: the *Pax Europaea* would be welcome only to the extent there are even more derogations and exceptions than for the south. In short, the aspired liberal peace of the EU comes for each side with an illiberal string and milder versions of exceptionalism (to what we have now in Cyprus). In any case and to a certain extent this exceptionalism is not something absent within territories of the EU. It is nonetheless a cause of distress to one Cypriot side when the other side's exception is being propagated as necessary or just and as a discount to the aspired liberal peace, something that in effect (deliberately or inadvertently) leads to the solidification of the *Pax Turca*.

It is also possible that the continued stalemate in negotiations and the absence of a comprehensive peace settlement to 'the problem' in the near future will lead to the progressive merging of the *Pax Turca* and the *Pax Europaea*. To an extent this has already happened in the way issues like direct flights to the north and direct trade with the Turkish-Cypriot community are being discussed within the EU institutions, in lieu of formal recognition of the TRNC, yet against the wishes and protestations of the RoC. It is still too early to fully visualize this new hybrid peace but if it comes about it will certainly renew claims, discussions and contestations as to the implications of its liberal/illiberal character.

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<sup>i</sup><http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/tcpr/2010/10-06-17.tcpr.html#01>

<sup>ii</sup>Yiannis Papadakis, Nicos Peristianis and Gizela Welz, eds. 2006. *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

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<sup>iii</sup>Thomas Diez, 2002. “Introduction: Cyprus and the European Union as a political and theoretical problem” in Thomas Diez eds. *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict, Postmodern Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1-14.

<sup>iv</sup>Christopher Hitchens, 1984. *Cyprus*. London: Quartet Books

<sup>v</sup>Turkish Cypriots are a minority in Cyprus, but the Greek Cypriots are also a minority if the two motherlands, Turkey and Greece, are brought into the picture.

<sup>vi</sup>Oliver P Richmond, 2002. “The multiple dimensions of international peacemaking: UN and EU involvement in the Cyprus conflict” in Thomas Diez eds., *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.122

<sup>vii</sup>Peter Loizos, 1995. *Κατανοώντας το 1974, κατανοώντας το 1994* [Understanding 1974, Understanding 1994] in Nicos Peristianis and Giorgos Tsangaris eds., *Ανατομία Μιας Μεταμόρφωσης: Η Κύπρος μετά το 1974* [The Anatomy of a Metamorphosis: Cyprus after 1974]. Nicosia: Intercollege Press, p.105.

<sup>viii</sup> Cf. Diez, 2002.

Christopher Brewin, 2000. *The European Union and Cyprus*. Huntington: The Eothen Press.

Nathalie Tocci, 2004. *EU Accession Dynamics and Conflict Resolution: Catalysing Peace or Consolidating Partition in Cyprus?*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

<sup>ix</sup>Costas M. Constantinou, 2008. “On the Cypriot States of Exception”. *International Political Sociology* Vol 2, No. 2, pp. 145–164.

Costas, M. Constantinou, 2010. “Cypriot In-dependence and the Problem of Sovereignty”. *The Cyprus Review* Vol. 22, No. 2.

<sup>x</sup>Zenon Stavrinides, 1999. “Greek Cypriot Perceptions” in Dodd Clement *Cyprus: The Need for New Perspectives* eds., Huntington: Eothen Press, pp. 54-96

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Costas M. Constantinou and Yiannis Papadakis, 2001. "The Cypriot state(s) *in situ*: Cross-ethnic contact and the discourse of recognition". *Global Society* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 125-148.

<sup>xi</sup> Cf. Constantinou and Papadakis, 2001.

<sup>xii</sup> We exclude the periods of, and prior to, the British colonial rule.

<sup>xiii</sup> National Organization of Cypriot Fighters.

<sup>xiv</sup> Turkish Resistance Organization.

<sup>xv</sup> Edward Newman, Ronald Paris and Oliver P. Richmond, eds. 2009. *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

<sup>xvi</sup> Cf. Constantinou, 2008

Nicos Trimikliniotis, 2010. *The Dialectics of the Nation-State and the State of Exception (in Greek)*. Athens: Savallas.

<sup>xvii</sup> Costas M. Constantinou and Oliver P. Richmond, 2005. "The Long Mile of Empire: Power, Legitimation and the U.K. Bases in Cyprus". *Mediterranean Politics* Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 65-84.

<sup>xviii</sup> It is important to note that the focus is not on whether the US has a role in the development of the conflict (e.g. by supporting Turkey's positions), but rather on whether it engages in liberal peacebuilding interventions.

<sup>xix</sup> Thomas Diez, Stephan Stetter and Mathias Albert, 2006. "The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Transformative Power of Integration". *International Organization* Vol. 60, Summer, pp. 563-593.

Thomas Diez, Stephan Stetter and Mathias Albert eds., 2008. *The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Power of Integration and Association*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>xx</sup> Nathalie Tocci, 2007. *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard*.

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London: Routledge, pp. 10-12.

xxi Cf. Diez et al., 2006  
Cf. Diez et al., 2008

xxii Cf. Diez et al., 2006  
Cf. Diez et al., 2008

xxiii Cf. Diez et al., 2006, p.573

xxiv Christopher Hill, 2001. "The EU's Capacity for Conflict Prevention". *European Foreign Affairs Review* Vol. 6, pp.315-333, p.315

xxv Cf. Diez et al., 2006  
Cf. Diez et al., 2008

xxvi Cf. Tocci, 2007

xxvii Ole Wæver, 2000. "The EU as a security actor: Reflections from a pessimistic constructivist on post-sovereign security orders" in Michael C. Williams and Morten Kelstrup eds., *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security and Community*. London: Routledge, pp.255-6.

xxviii Ontological security refers not to the security of the body, but to the security of the self and to the subjective sense of who one is (Wendt 1999: ch. 3, see also Mitzen 2006: 344)

xxix Jennifer Mitzen, 2006. "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma". *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 341-370.

xxx Alexander Wendt, 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.274

xxxi Cf. Mitzen, 2006

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xxxii UN: SG/SM/12905, May 21 2010

xxxiii Nathalie Tocci, 2006. "Spoiling peace in Cyprus" in Edward Newman, Ronald Paris and Oliver P. Richmond eds., *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

xxxiv Cf. Tocci, 2006, p.270

xxxv On the problematic imperial parameters of efforts to settle to Cyprus Problem, see Vassilis Fouskas and Alex O. Tackie, 2009. *Cyprus: The Post-Imperial Constitution*. London: Pluto Press.

xxxvi Cf. Tocci, 2006, p.276

xxxvii Christophoros Christophorou, Sahin Sanem and Cynthia Pavlou, 2010. *Media Narratives, Politics and the Cyprus Problem*. Oslo: PRIO Report.