

Remarks by Jean Siotis on Udo Steinbach's Report
on Cyprus

Conference in Rome, 24-26 April 1975, organized
by the Istituto Affari Internazionali

1. I have been asked to respond to Dr. Steinbach's report but in fact I would rather comment on it to the extent that there is little to criticize in his text and there much with which I agree. My comments will therefore aim at filling in some gaps rather than criticizing Dr. Steinbach's views.
2. The major lacuna~~s~~ in his paper is that neither Cyprus nor its people occupy ^{the} a place that they should. The whole issue is presented as a Greek-Turkish problem forgetting that the people of Cyprus, be they Greeks or Turks in ethnic origin, ^{are} ~~and~~ those particularly concerned. Although there is no doubt that there is an Ankara-Athens dimension of the problem, it is not, in our view, the most important one. I do not believe that Dr. Steinbach has fallen victim of the tendency to forget the Cypriot people which is so prevalent in many government circles but his paper, as it stands, may give this impression. I would therefore like to put forward the following propositions concerning Cyprus, its people and its leaders.

a) No matter what anyone thinks about Makarios, he is the unquestioned leader of the Greek Cypriot people and the President of the Republic of Cyprus. To that extent, he is the only real 'interlocuteur' in any negotiations concerning the future of the Republic. Mr. Clerides is a very able and intelligent man, but his political constituency in Cyprus does not go very far. He can be a useful negotiator both because of his talents ~~in~~ constitutional ^{matters} ~~problems~~, but his value as a negotiator goes as far as the support given to him by President Makarios. Relations between the two men are indeed very complex but it would be sheer illusion to found any prospects for the future on the assumption that Mr. Clerides can ever replace Makarios as a spokesman for the Greek Cypriots.

b) This ~~interest~~ in the future of peace in the Eastern Mediterranean should by no means underestimate the rate at which the Greek Cypriots are becoming radicalized in the face of the continued Turkish military presence. The practical forms of action that this radicalization is likely to take in the future is difficult to forecast but guerrilla warfare is not an unlikely possibility. The parallel between the fate of the Palestinians and that of the Greek Cypriot refugees is very much present in the latter's mind.

c) The U.N. is not at all irrelevant in relation to Cyprus and some attention should be paid both to its present and potential future action. Any solution to the ^{present} crisis will have to be formalized at the U.N. level. It ~~will~~ be a serious mistake to try to bypass the negotiating framework established by the Security Council

Resolution in March 1975.

3) As far as Turkey is concerned, I think that Dr. Steinbach has over-stated the tendency towards islamization. At least the major political party, the People's Republican Party, and its leader, Mr. Ecevit, are firmly committed to the process of ~~the~~ Europeanization of Turkey. I believe that this must be recognized as an important factor in Turkish politics and we should not over-estimate the reactionary trends crystallized around the National Salvation Party and some sectors of the Justice Party. The real problem in Turkey is not so much islamization but the weakness of civilian control over the military. In spite of statements to the contrary by Turkish political leaders, no serious observer can deny that much of what has happened since last summer ~~is~~ the result of ^{the} weighty presence of the military in the higher echelons of government.

4) As far as Greece is concerned, I would say the following:-

a) The situation may be qualified as fluid but certainly not as unstable. Dr. Steinbach's statement concerning instability is ~~highly~~ exaggerated. ~~The~~ Recent elections, between September 1974, and March 1975, have shown that more than 80% of the electorate supports the political forces which are basically moderate, on either side of the Centre. Even Mr. Papandreu's recent evolution indicates that he is responding as a responsible parliamentary leader to the demands of the Greek people for stability and orderly development towards a full-fledged democratic system. However, all of this may change if the present situation

continues. The feelings of frustration and exasperation in the face of Turkish policies and Western apathy are increasing and no matter what official statements may say, the situation may evolve in the direction of a rapidly stepped-up radicalization.

b) With the exception of very few individuals, and I stress the word 'individuals', no ^{individual and no} organized group in Greece believes that Greece should make any ^{further} concessions. Three major concessions have already been made since last October. These are:- Cyprus and Greece ^{did not} insist on a troop withdrawal before negotiating on the future constitutional status of the Republic; Cyprus and Greece ^{did} accept the resumption of inter-communal talks without a single refugee returning to his home, and the principle of geographic federation was accepted in the Greek Cypriot proposals submitted early in February. These are perceived as major concessions for which nothing was obtained in return.

c) The determination to re-evaluate our relations with the U.S. is very real indeed. It may have taken some time for the governments to formulate a real policy in this field but the Prime Minister seems determined to move rapidly in this direction.

d) On the above points as well as on Greece's commitment to Europe, the Government has the support of the major opposition party, the Centre Union ^{for}. There are certainly differences as to the implementation of these policies but the basic assumptions on which they rest are shared by the great majority of Greece's political leaders.

5) In this framework, Europe's chances are very real indeed, especially if present forecasts concerning Turkish elections and the ^{possible} victory of the People's Republic Party prove to be correct. The fact that most European countries do not have a policy vis-à-vis Cyprus is not an obstacle; it should ^{rather} be considered as an opportunity for Europe as a whole to formulate such a policy. If the Nine each had divergent views it would have been impossible to elaborate a common policy. This not being the case, Europe has a unique chance to pursue its efforts undertaken last August.

6) Finally, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to react to the comments just made by our colleague, Mr. Ipekci:

a) I am particularly happy to note (page 3 of his comments) that Mr. Ipekci does not exclude any particular form of geographic federation in Cyprus and he does not consider that the acceptance of a bizonal solution is a conditio sine qua non of any negotiations concerning the future of Cyprus. This is indeed a serious difference in regard to ^{the} official Turkish Government position which seems to reject any idea of ^a cantonal solution. Mr. Ipekci's formulation on page 3 could be accepted by me without much hesitation.

b) I would also like to draw his attention to the fact that "great Greek ideology" has been receding for a long time and particularly following the adventures of last summer no Greek in ^{the} proper sense would still claim the union of Cyprus with Greece. However, if the present situation of total insecurity for the Greek Cypriot

population continues, I definitely see the revival of the "enosis" ideology as the only possible solution for protecting physically the Greek Cypriots. That is why I believe that a bizonal federation will lead to partition within six months at the most.

c) I would also like to explain why the Greek Cypriots and Greece are pressing so hard for an internationalization of the Cyprus issue. The weaker a party in a conflict is the more it looks to the U.N. and other international fora for "protection" and legitimization of its claims. This is definitely the case for the Greek side in the conflict. Any bilateral 'tête-à-tête' with Turkey can only prove to be disastrous for the Greeks, at least for the time being because of the overwhelming multilateral strength of the Turkish side. Greece is rearming and a 'tête-à-tête' may be possible when some form of equilibrium is established between the two parties.

d) My hope is that some kind of solution will be found before we reach the stage of massive rearmament on both sides and this can only be done within the multilateral framework of the U.N.

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INTERNAZIONALI - ROMA

n° Inv. 10277

09 MAG. 1991

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