Cyprus's Atlantic Identity and its Relations with Turkey

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Should Cyprus maintain its foreign policy orientation only with the EU or should it also establish a constructive cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation through participation in the Partnership for Peace (PfP)?

It is expected that the creation of an Atlantic identity for Cyprus would increase its ability in policy implementation. As such, Cyprus will also reintegrate and re-orientate its foreign and security relations based on its national interest needs, while keeping its balance with the EU. Within this broader framework issues with Turkey may be addressed effectively.

Politically, militarily and operationally, while NATO is seeking a new Strategic Concept that is to be decided at the next Portugal Summit in 2010, European members will be asked to establish and re-establish relations with NATO. A new form of EU-NATO cooperation from all member states (including Cyprus) in a pure security form, should supplement the efforts made by NATO at this time but also the EU, post-Lisbon Treaty. At the same time, national interests of member states shall be restructured for the recreation of the Euro-Atlantic balance. This entails the effective implementation of the Lisbon Treaty at the level of the CFSP and NATO's new Strategic Concept to be ratified. The creation of a robust new *European Strategic Dogma*, shall draw the lines on where each Organization would be involved and under which circumstances; this arrangement will also take into consideration the expected New Strategic Concept of NATO. As such, what the US and NATO had sought shall be agreed upon: to avoid 'a duplication of operations and efforts'. A new European *dogma* will supplement efforts of NATO and will also increase practically the future fields of operations of the "Foreign Minister of the EU" but also the role of European forces that come second to NATO's forces under Petersberg tasks and the Berlin Plus Agreements. NATO shall come first, as the future may include the military right to the *rules of engagement,* under UN Security Council decisions**.**

Needless to say, no concrete co-operation as agreed on the NATO-EU chapter about their relations can be viable, if any of the involved parties decide to withdraw from future joint co-operations. Existing EU-NATO relations can only be sustained, increased or altered, in terms of their objectives and liabilities of their operations. Therefore, it would seem as only natural, that the formation of a new NATO strategic concept can actually be interpreted as a "road map" for the creation of a new European Strategic Dogma. It will supplement existing efforts made on the level of EU-NATO co-operation objectives.

For both organizations to be successful in implementing their objectives in the Euro-Atlantic sphere, understanding should be exhibited to all countries that are not part of both organizations. Cyprus**,** a member state of the European

Union, does not yet have an Atlantic identity. This however, does not necessarily mean that Cyprus is not willing or does not fulfil all conditions that are to be met, in order to have an Atlantic identity; whether there are agreements based on the Berlin Plus process of NATO-EU relations, or otherwise to the requirements of the Partnership for Peace.

Cyprus seems to already fulfil the operational and military conditions that need to be met as well as the political requirements necessary to join the PfP. Practically what is needed, is:
1) political will and the national consensus first to negotiate an Atlantic future for Cyprus;
2) the ability of Cyprus to address effectively the Cyprus question and to simultaneously create a foreign and defense relations road map that will raise the country's status into the geo-strategic chessboard, just like the Helsinki decisions of 1999.

The fact that Cyprus is near the Middle East geographically, is of importance as it can address supranational security needs. The involvement of Great Britain strengthens the geo-strategic importance of the land. Most EU countries except Cyprus are already members of NATO and therefore can support a proposal for Cyprus' integration to the PfP based on the global needs. Turkey cannot therefore go against global security needs that it too has been sharing since its accession to NATO in 1952.

The possibility of Turkey vetoing Cyprus' application is very real, yet this would conflict with Turkey's efforts to portray itself as a true European country. At the same time it does not hold the moral excuses and legal reasoning to go against Cyprus integration to the PfP given the need for closer global co-operation. PfP membership entails the introduction to a political and military forum of negotiations and co-operation based on the Atlantic values. In such a case the Cyprus issue is integrated on the Euro-Atlantic forum for even closer negotiations with Turkey; which makes the subject a *win-win situation for both*.

Cyprus can join the PfP at the level that its national government so requires and at the level of the acknowledged interests of its foreign policy agenda. At the same time, Cyprus's application could also provide the positive outcome that it wishes to advance a win-win situation for all concerned: global security co-operation under the auspices of the EU, NATO and in the context of a UN settlement to the Cyprus problem.