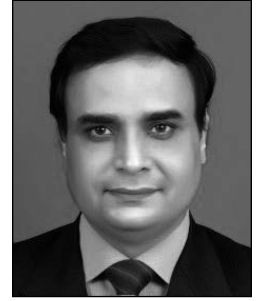


# TRNC's New International Dialogue



MEHMOOD-UL-HASSAN KHAN



Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu, Foreign Minister of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

According to Adam Smith, the famous economist, connectivity means productivity which translates dreams into realities. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) needs greater connectivity to put an end to isolation of 50

years. TRNC desires to be an active member of the international community and wants to brighten its future in terms of a "qualitative life", sustainable economic development, and socio-political recognition of globalization.

## TRNC's New International Dialogue

TRNC's new international dialogue is the need of the hour. New sets of regional negotiations and spells of international dialogue

may bring desired goals of better life, peace and harmony and socio-economic prosperity. New international dialogue would create a "window of opportunity" for the government and people of the TRNC at large.

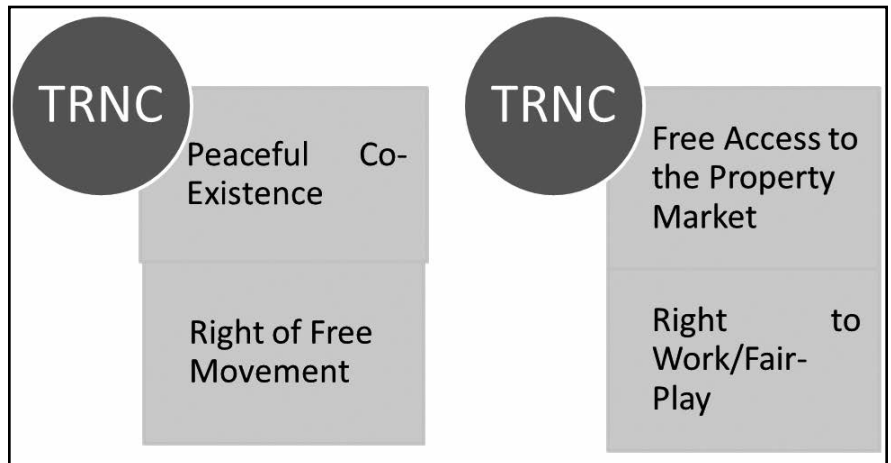
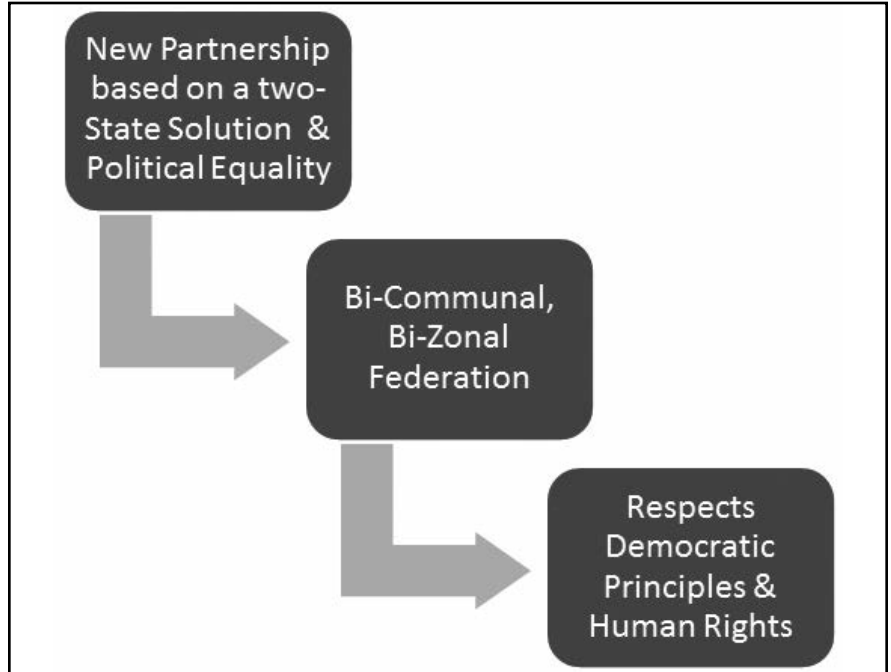
TRNC has had been initiating diversified but integrated efforts to reach a suitable settlement with South Cyprus. Suitable solution or "conflict resolution" seems to be still far away. Its international recognition, greater economic integration and political mainstreaming has not yet been achieved because of South Cyprus's negative attitude.

### TRNC's Vision of Fair & Free Settlement

The government, successive leaders and people of TRNC have been advocating a "fair and free settlement" that respects democratic principles and human rights. The settlement may be based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality. The TRNC wants a new partnership based on a two-state solution and political equality. On the contrary, Greek Cypriots have been negating conflict resolution efforts by different means.

### Absent of Parity & Equality

Concept of dialogue on the "principle of parity and equality" has been absent and lacking from the political engagements of Greek Cypriots with Turkish Cypriots. It has been engaged in the process of peace negotiations with Turkish Cypriot on a "State vs. Minority" equation due to which more than 100 negotiations have been presented to Greek Cypriots to achieve an agreement but every time, South Cypriot refuses the deal.



### Modern Political Philosophy & Good Governance

It is now a well-defined lesson of modern political philosophy and good governance that the most important element of every federation is co-existence and its fundamental principles, such as the right of free movement, free access to the property market and the right to work in every corner of the constituency. All these principles have to be guaranteed in a defined way, controlled and coordinated by the

central government which has not been embodied in the attitude of the **Greek Cypriots**. Start of new international dialogue may be useful to achieve success in the larger context.

### Failure of Two Conferences

No peace deal has been finalized during the two international conferences in the presence of international power brokers, three guarantors, high officials of the UN, EU and presidents of both the

Cypriots. Nevertheless, all the political parties of Turkish Cypriot supported its President Mustafa Akinzi.

### Diplomacy's Different Shades

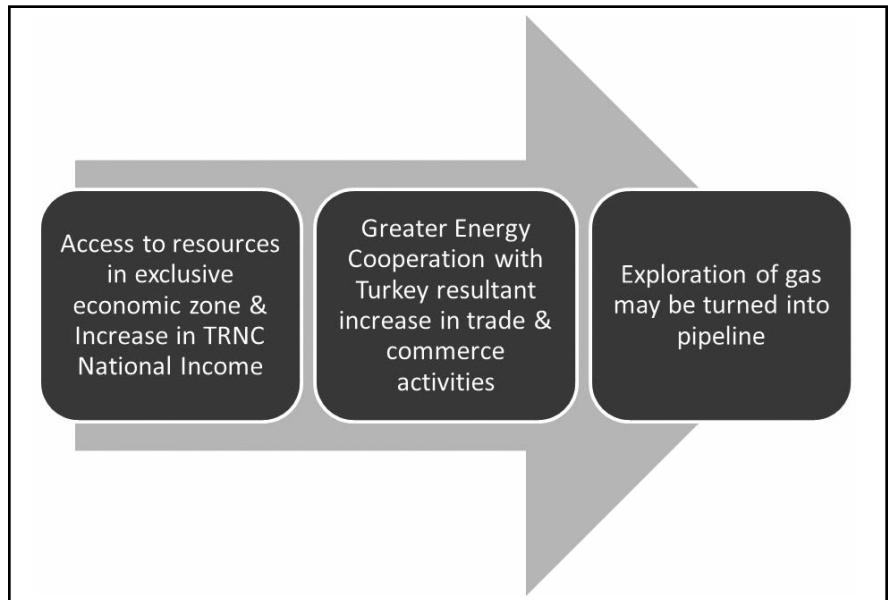
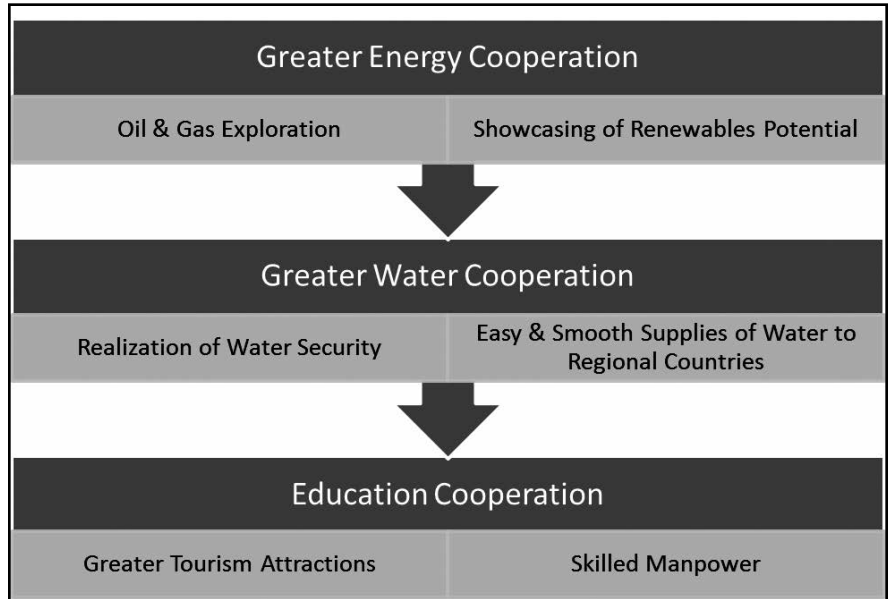
Unresolved TRNC shows domination of power politics over humanity, morality and ethics. Element of "Difference of Faith" has also been one of the main reasons of its socio-economic disintegration and geo-political unacceptability in the region and beyond. Poor performance of the UN and double standard of the EU have also been obstacles in its peace deal since long. Keeping in view all the serious issues, TRNC must start a new international dialogue to achieve its desired goals in the days to come.

### Re-approach Towards International Community

In pursuit of a peace deal one generation has been wasted due to uncompromising approach and superiority obsession of Greek Cypriot. Sustained socio-economic prosperity, greater political understanding and greater regional connectivity has remained hostage because of "triviality" of Greek Cypriot. There has been lack of political will from Greek Cypriot side to resolve the issue rather it has been misused by certain vested interests. TRNC must think out of the box in order to achieve a suitable settlement proposal and "Re-approach" towards the international community.

### Essentialities of Certain Guarantees & Presence Troops

Right from the beginning, TRNC has been promoting certain guarantees and presence of troops as an essential part of negotiations because "zero troops and zero



guarantees" cannot ensure sustainable development and peace in the region. As an expert on TRNC I personally believe a positive development in Cyprus would further strengthen the south-eastern Mediterranean energy collaboration, peace and stability in the wider Middle East area. The European Union (EU) also wants to see a solution that could foster security and stability in the wider region. Furthermore, it also wants to prove

that it is a peace-building force, granted with the solution of the Cyprus issue during a time of uncertainty. TRNC's resolve and strong political commitment to initiate a new international dialogue is the need of the hour. It would be "game changer" in the days to come.

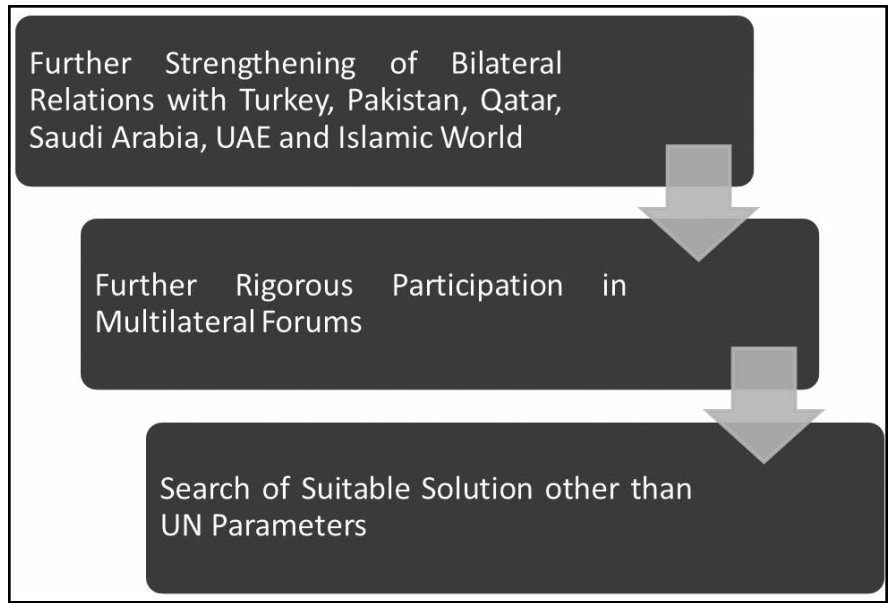
Inclusion of both sides i.e. Greek Cypriots with Turkish Cypriots to "European Court of Justice" may a good starting point of "convergence" in the days to come where

sense of collective security and justice may also be enacted. Creation of “**trilingual federal schools**”, working along with Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot schools may bring desired levels of tolerance and interfaith harmony.

It is also necessary because distorted version of history with elements of prejudice, hatred and bigotry towards Turkish Cypriot have been imprinted among the students of Greek Cypriot in the primary and secondary schools. Cooperation and a goal-oriented approach are fundamental features of politics, away from populism, hatred, and division to reach a doable peace agreement. Having said that, TRNC’s international engagements and series of serious dialogue would be a “**way forward**”.

### Foreign Minister Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu’s Active Role for International Dialogue

Foreign Minister Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu is an articulate personality who has been vocal to “**think beyond negotiations**” i.e. “**Alternative Options/Plans**” for the TRNC. He has been proactive to highlight the potentials of his country on different regional and international conferences and forums like Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Organization of Economic Cooperation (ECO), and the US Congress. During his different detailed meetings and interviews with television channel, PBS and Slate Magazine he expressed that it is not possible to revive the failed process. He was of the view that new processes should be discussed in Cyprus and moreover, the UN should open a new page for state to state relations on the basis of equality in Cyprus.



Ertuğruloğlu said that the TRNC will undertake closer relationships with the international community during the new process, and asked for support for lifting the unjustified embargoes against the Turkish Cypriot people. He also stressed that the UN should review its policies in Cyprus for the new process. He said, “Every formula has been tried in the Cyprus negotiations over the last 50 years, yet no success has been achieved, because the Greek Cypriot side does not need to solve it in the current process. He shared that the process in Crans-Montana failed owing to the stance of the Greek Cypriot side. Their aim was not finding a solution, but to keep us living under embargoes during an open-ended process. But now the old process is over. Only a solution with two separate states can continue in Cyprus from now on, as it is now. Federation talks are over”, he further added.

Most recently, Foreign Minister Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu stated that reviving the previous negotiation process which had concluded in Crans-Montana last July was out of question. Ertuğruloğlu also empha-

sized that a new process can only begin on an equal footing and state-to-state basis. He noted that the donations sent by the Greek Cypriot Administration via UN convoy to Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the TRNC were a deliberate move which had certain socio-political vested interest. On its part, TRNC has declared to all parties that the implementation of this policy is upholding the status quo and should be ended in particular, stating that the UN itself is also implicated in continuing the status quo. Ertuğruloğlu reiterated that the TRNC will always support the individuals who have lived within its borders during their time of need.

### Prime Minister Hüseyin Özgürgün & Paradigm Shift

There is a paradigm shift in the survival thinking of the TRNC as a political entity, country, and community. Prime Minister Hüseyin Özgürgün has said that it is no longer possible for Turkish Cypriots to be considered equal partners with Greek Cypriots, given that official Greek Cypriot documents have

recently categorized Turkish Cypriots as an ethnic minority. He asserted that Turkish Cypriots will continue to confer citizenship to the people who live on the island and have invested in it over many years. Turkish Cypriots will not determine their fate by looking at the results of elections in the South; we do not have the luxury of waiting to see what will happen after February he further added.

Prime Minister Hüseyin Özgürgün said that UN Officials should make it clear that a solution cannot be reached within the framework of the UN Parameters, or otherwise uncertainty will continue.

Speaking at an activity, Özgürgün said that the argument that says that nothing can happen if there is no agreement is not true, and that there are many things that can be done even if there is no agreement. Özgürgün added that the outcome of the Cyprus Conference is due to events from the past.

Indicating that the Turkish Cypriots demand a solution within the framework of the UN parameters which are bi-communality, political equality of the two people and the equal status of two constituent states, Özgürgün said that the Greek Cypriot side has been rejecting these parameters for 48 years.

The Prime Minister stressed that the Turkish Cypriot people's only wish is equality, and that they deserve a decent life just like the Greek Cypriots. He also added that the Turkish Cypriots have never proposed to unite the island with Turkey unlike Greek Cypriots who advocate for unification with Greece.

### Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Even Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan claimed to have a "Plan B & C" for TRNC which may be pursued in the future. Turkey will

continue its efforts to find a solution to the problem within different parameters. "We expect the same attitude from all related parties otherwise we will assess plans B and C" he added. He emphasized that the TRNC government will work to strengthen the economy and improve the welfare of the Turkish Cypriot people. TRNC will continue on its path with strong democracy and consulting with Turkey on serious decisions regarding the future.

### Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım

Most recently, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım reconfirmed Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot sincere efforts to find a solution. Both made a huge effort to have a con-

and guarantees' is our sine qua none and there cannot be any concessions on this because we don't want the terrible events of the past to be repeated.

Greece, South Cypriot and the EU have been supporting "Zero Guarantee & Role" of Turkey since long which has been one of the main reasons of its stalemate. Both Turkey and Turkish Cypriots have already rejected a substantial EU role.

### Strategic Importance of Look towards Motherland

Failure of peace negotiations has forced the TRNC to "Look Towards Motherland", Turkey and momentum of high officials recipro-

**Most recently, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım reconfirmed Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot sincere efforts to find a solution. Both made a huge effort to have a constructive attitude from the beginning. Turkey has always said that they really wanted a solution, he added. However, the unilateral EU membership of the Greek Cypriot side after the referendum in 2004, has prepared the ground for what happened in the 1st and 2nd conferences. The Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus did not have a constructive attitude, which was easy for them because they already are an EU member, he pinpointed.**

structive attitude from the beginning. Turkey has always said that they really wanted a solution, he added. However, the unilateral EU membership of the Greek Cypriot side after the referendum in 2004, has prepared the ground for what happened in the 1st and 2nd conferences. The Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus did not have a constructive attitude, which was easy for them because they already are an EU member, he pinpointed. The issue of security

cal visits in recent times confirm a distinctive change in the national and foreign policy of the TRNC. It is not the issue of "Property" rather it has been issue of "People" in the stalemated peace negotiations because the EU has already made a very important decision regarding the property issue, and said that the rights of current users of the property are equal with the owners of the properties. That means that the current users have the same rights with the entitled/registered owners.

## UK's New Idea of Peace Settlement

Britain being one of the guarantors has floated a new idea of peace settlement. Britain's former Foreign Minister Jack Straw believes the only viable alternative is a two-state solution. "Only a partitioned island will bring the dispute between Turkish and Greek Cypriots to an end" he added. He stressed that a negotiated solution to the Cyprus problem through the creation of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation is impossible due to Greek Cypriot intransigence so the only viable alternative is a two-state solution. He also admitted a strategic mistake by supporting the EU membership only to South Cypriots and pointed that the last international conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana failed because of the stance of the Greek Cypriot side. He said that earlier this summer the 11th international effort to strike a deal between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots was rejected by the Greek-Cypriot government as every previous one has been.

"It is time to end the charade that a negotiated agreement to unite the island with a 'bi-zonal, bi-communal' government will even be possible," Straw wrote. "The solution is to partition the island and give international recognition to the Turkish Cypriot state in the north."

## TRNC's Portables

(a) Rigorous persuasion of socio-economic, geo-political and geo-strategic dividends by "amalgamation" with the "Mother-Land Turkey". There must be enhanced trade and commerce activities between the TRNC and Turkey.

(b) Rigorous foreign policy to win political support within OIC where Turkey Presidency and role would be vital. Seeking full membership in the regional Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), of which it has been an observer member since October 2012 would be an effort to

break the embargo and isolation it has been made to suffer for years.

(c) Thinking of holding referendum in terms of Kurdistan and Catalonia may be viable solution for self-dependency.

(d) Taiwan Model of greater socio-economic and political integration

## TRNC's Future Strategy

Leadership of TRNC and its people should think beyond the failure of 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Cyprus in Crans Montana, Switzerland and follow a "holistic approach" for the further integration with the outer world.

TRNC has been pursuing oil and natural gas exploration activities in the Mediterranean since 2011 and now substantial reserves of natural gas in the TRNC have been confirmed. It may be used for greater energy integration in the region and beyond. TRNC's Economy and Energy Minister stated that a new drilling platform may lead to the building of a pipeline in the region allowing the TRNC to become a key player in the regional energy sector in the Mediterranean. Extraction of gas in deeper seas will start in 2018.

The Ministry of Economy and Energy has developed a roadmap about energy.

## TRNC's Energy Road Map

TRNC's economy & energy minister briefed about his country "energy road map" which is explained in the

diagram below. It indicates TRNC economic persuasion for greater regional integration and a "giant leap" towards its international recognition. It is a blue print for the development of energy resources in the country. It is hoped that this energy road map will enable the TRNC to become an influencer in the regional energy sector."

## TRNC's International Dialogue

TRNC's government must take concrete steps for "New International Dialogue" which may be useful for its pursuits of greater interactional acceptability and integration.

Most recently, TRNC President Mustafa Akıncı said that if a solution is reached with the Greek Cypriot side, the TRNC will take its place as an equal founding state otherwise it will continue on its own way. He stressed that the negotiation method will need to be changed in order to reach a settlement, Akıncı shared that it is not possible to continue 50 years of negotiations with open-ended approach and stated that the Greek Cypriot side must change its mentality in order to achieve a result-oriented, solution-based settlement in Cyprus, "If they do not change their mentality, the result will be deadlock again." President Akıncı also rejected UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' Cyprus report, stating that the Turkish Cypriot side had been portrayed unfairly in the report. ♦

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mehmood-Ul-Hassan Khan holds the degrees of MPA (Management & Marketing) and Journalism( Development & Public Relations) from the University of the Punjab., Lahore. He is research scholar. Did various courses relating to banking, law and HRM. Contributed articles on Banking, Economics (Pakistan & International), Geo-Strategic issues (regional & global) with especial reference to South East Asia, Middle East and Central Asia, Current affairs, Comparative international power politics and diplomacy in various local and foreign newspapers, journals and departments like, BBC Asia Network, MMN, USA, Journal of World Affairs and New Technology, USA and AIDS AND BEHAVIOR USA.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.