

**LORD MAGINNIS OF DRUMGLASS SPEECH
AS PART OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS
CYPRUS DEBATE, 5 JULY**

Cyprus: Annan Plan

Lord Maginnis of Drumglass rose to ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the Annan plan referendum, they have met their obligation towards the restoration of full international human rights to the citizens of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The noble Lord said: My Lords, on 6 and 14 November 2002 I spoke in your Lordships' House on the issue of northern Cyprus and the injustice that Turkish Cypriots have endured since 1963. I spoke of the Greek Cypriot persecution of Turkish Cypriots before Turkey rescued them in 1974; of perverse and ongoing propaganda that turned aggressors into victims; and of the United Kingdom's shameful dereliction of its duty as guarantor under the 1960 treaty. I had hoped that we would have moved on.

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The House will know that in April 2004 two referendums were held in Cyprus, one in the Turkish-Cypriot north and the other in Greek-Cypriot south. In those referendums, the two peoples of Cyprus exercised their separate rights of self-determination. The plan was a compromise that, like all compromises, did not give either side everything that it wanted. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations Secretary-General endorsed it as a fair and reasonable basis for settlement. It was accepted by the Turkish Cypriots but rejected by the Greek Cypriots. I do not find their reasons for rejecting it convincing.

The plan would have reduced, in phases, the number of Turkish and Greek troops to 650 and 950 respectively. Turkey could not have halted those reductions without wrecking its bid for membership of the European Union. The plan would have allowed a large number of Greek Cypriots to return to their homes in northern Cyprus and would have compensated the rest. There is, of course, a large number of Turkish Cypriot properties in the south that are still occupied by Greek Cypriots, but nobody seems to care about them.

I have known Cyprus for many years. I am in no doubt about why the Greek Cypriot leaders campaigned against the United Nations plan. They simply do not wish to share power with the Turkish Cypriots, and they think that their unjustified status as the government of Cyprus gives them the power to do as they please. Their objective is to use the new influence that they have acquired in the European Union to get Turkish troops removed from Cyprus and to bring Turkish Cypriots once again under the Greek Cypriot domination from which they have already suffered so much. Put bluntly, they do not want Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus, except perhaps as cheap labour.

The world is beginning to see the truth about the Greek Cypriots. Last week, the Islamic states welcomed the Foreign Minister of the Turkish Cypriot state to their conference in Yemen. They passed a resolution to open direct trade, transport and tourism links with northern Cyprus. Azerbaijan has taken the first step by declaring direct flights permissible and recognising passports issued by the Turkish Cypriot state.

It is wrong that the Greek Cypriot regime was ever accepted as the government of Cyprus. They threw the Turkish Cypriots out of the government in 1963, and they have been well rewarded for their audacity. Their reliance on a so-called doctrine of necessity was ridiculous, as they created the necessity themselves. It has no substance after the referendum, if it ever had.

The Greek Cypriot leadership says that it wants reconciliation with the Turkish Cypriots, but is there even a shred of evidence that it does? On the contrary, ever since 1963, the Greek Cypriots have held the Turkish Cypriots under economic embargo, in an attempt to force them to accept a settlement on Greek Cypriot terms. After the referendums last year, the international community made it clear that there was no justification for the embargo, but it continues. Indeed, it has got worse.

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In another place, the Foreign Affairs Committee concluded that there was little evidence that Greek Cypriots had taken it on board that membership of the European Union involved obligations as well as privileges. Using their new-found privileges in the European Union, the Greek Cypriots have started to bring legal actions against people, including British citizens, who relied on laws in force in the north of Cyprus and who, in good faith, bought property there. I have a house in northern Cyprus, but I am not affected; mine has pre-1974 British title.

I remind the House that the English courts decided as long ago as 1978 in the case of *Hesperides Hotels v Muftizade* that,

"There is an effective administration in Northern Cyprus which has made laws governing the day to day lives of the people. According to these laws the people who have occupied these [properties] are not trespassers. They are not occupying them unlawfully and their conduct cannot be made the subject of a suit in England".

These new legal claims are portrayed as actions brought by Greek Cypriot individuals, but it is in fact a co-ordinated campaign by the government in the south to cause damage to the Turkish Cypriot economy. Her Majesty's Government should tell the Greek Cypriot Government in unequivocal terms that their conduct is unacceptable and should stop. The property issue must be resolved by an overall political settlement.

Similarly, the Greek Cypriots, in pursuit of the same political campaign, have persuaded Transport for London to deny the Turkish Cypriot tourist office the right to advertise. They have failed to lift this ban even though the Advertising Standards Authority ruled on 22 April that there is no justification for it.

The ASA said:

"The fact that some people were offended that North Cyprus was being advertised as a holiday destination does not provide sufficient grounds for objecting to a marketing communication for it. The ASA Council considers that the advertisements were unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence, or undue distress, and were unlikely to materially mislead".

When this issue first arose, I wrote to Mayor Livingstone but, so far, have received no substantive reply. I pointed out that many Turkish Cypriots are offended by adverts for holidays in the south, but they are not banned.

This advertising ban also contravenes UK Government policy. On 3 May the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wrote to Transport for London indicating that international non-recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus does not mean that the UK Government refrain from dealing with Turkish Cypriots. It stated:

"On the contrary we believe that helping the Turkish Cypriots to come out of isolation, and to raise their standards towards EU norms, will make a future settlement in Cyprus more likely".

But how can Turkish Cypriots do that if Transport for London, a British public authority, is helping the Greek Cypriots to wreck the Turkish Cypriot tourist industry?

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To make matters worse, Transport for London is spending thousands of pounds of public money defending a court action to have the ban removed. I think that we would all like to know how much Transport for London has spent on the case.

The Foreign Affairs Committee in another place said that undertakings given to the Turkish Cypriots must be honoured, and that the UK Government must do more to turn their words into action by working to remove obstacles to direct trade with and travel to northern Cyprus. They called on the Government to clarify whether they have the power to authorise direct flights between the UK and northern Cyprus.

I have myself asked for clarification but have received only vague and generalised replies from Ministers. From this I conclude that Her Majesty's Government have the power, but not the courage, to meet that obligation.

I hope that I have demonstrated the utter injustice of Turkish Cypriots continuing to face an embargo after they accepted the United Nations plan, while the rejectionist Mr Papadopoulos, a former terrorist, and his Greek Cypriot Government, get all the benefits. Of course the Greek Cypriots can reject the United Nations plan, but they should not expect us to help them persecute the Turkish Cypriots a moment longer.

In conclusion, while we deplore regimes like Mugabe's which Her Majesty's Government are powerless to call to account, it is surely a national disgrace that, when Her Majesty's Government could do the right thing by the people of the peaceful, democratic Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, all they can do is prevaricate.

Turkish Cypriots still do not have basic international human rights to trade, to travel and to have the same access to educational opportunity here and within the rest of the European Union as Greek Cypriots.

I call on Her Majesty's Government to stop their shameful procrastination and immediately put those matters right. Greek Cypriots do not have a veto on British foreign policy.
