

## **A tale of two peace processes: Korea and Cyprus**

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### **Two frozen conflicts**

All peace processes are different, different peoples, histories, places, time lines and how they got in the mess they are in and how to get out of it. This is true of Cyprus and Korea but there are also some similarities and if we focus on those there may be some peace making lessons each side can learn from the other. Both Korea and Cyprus are ‘frozen conflicts’, Korea since the Armistice in 1953 and Cyprus since the Turkish invasion in 1974. Although not all conservatives are intransigent, in general, the conservative politicians in both Cyprus and Korea have made the process of peace negotiations far more difficult. Both Cyprus and Korea are separated North and South by the Green Line in Cyprus and DMZ in Korea. The South in both Cyprus and Korea is economically well developed while the North is less so and this results in the Southern populations in both Cyprus and Korea being very sceptical about the prospects of reunification as that process may create as many problems as it solves. Also, neither country can make peace all by themselves. Cyprus requires the agreement of their Guarantor States, the UK, Greece and Turkey while China and the US participated in the Armistice agreement for Korea and they, in turn, will have to play a crucial role in ending the Korean War. Finally, in this context, security is the most critical issue for both Cypriots and Koreans, both North and South, and this issue must be resolved to every parties’ satisfaction as part of a peace agreement and new political arrangements going forward.

A liberal Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades, who had supported the failed 2004 UN Annan Plan was elected in the South of Cyprus in 2013. In 2014 a UN Joint Declaration<sup>1</sup> for renewed peace negotiations was signed and a liberal Turkish Cypriot, Akinci, was elected President in the North in 2015. Similarly, liberal or progressive leaders took office in both Koreas: President Moon Jae-in in the South; and in the North, the Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un looks to be heading in quite a different direction to his father, Kim Jong-il, resulting in the signing of the Panmunjom Declaration on the 27th of April this year. But the agreement signed in Cyprus in 2013 has not resulted in a settlement of the Cyprus Problem. The conflict there remains frozen. However, Korea’s future prospects for peace took another step forward with the joint signing of an agreement at the US-Trump/NK-Kim summit on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June in Singapore. Hopefully that process will be more successful than the failed UN, Cyprus, UK, Greece and Turkey summit at Crans-Montana in Switzerland last year.

### **Confidence Building Measures**

Significantly, on this critical point of success and failure there are some very substantial differences between the two summits and the preparations made to help achieve a positive outcome. In Cyprus the leaders shunned a programme of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) while the Koreans have given their Cypriot counterparts a ‘Master Class’ in CBM, public diplomacy and personal statesmanship that has shifted South Korean public opinion in ways that Greek Cypriots can only dream of. Critically Clause 7 of the UN Joint Declaration signed by the Cypriots in 2014 only requires that: *‘The sides will seek to create a positive atmosphere to ensure the talks succeed. They commit to avoiding blame games or other negative public comments on the negotiations. They also commit to efforts to implement confidence building measures that will provide a dynamic impetus to the prospect for a*

*united Cyprus.*' No CBMs are specified here and no penalties for non-compliance included. It was only an aspiration of negotiation not a condition.

However, the Panmunjom Declaration signed by the Korean's listed a number of specific CBMs and publicly, at the signing, more CBMs were announced and have been, or are in the process of being implemented. Notably, Pyongyang's participation in the Winter Olympics under a unified flag and promise to shut down its nuclear test site and to suspend nuclear/missile tests before the summit. Seoul removed propaganda loudspeakers across the DMZ right after the summit. Then, Pyongyang shifted its clocks to align with the time in the South and dismantled its nuclear test site on May 24<sup>th</sup> as agreed. Following the 12 June Singapore summit the scheduled CBMs included: establishing a liaison office at the boarder town of Kaesong, military talks (June 16), talks between sports officials (June 18), Red cross talks regarding the separated families (June 22), and a DMZ Peace Train Music Festival (June 23/24). Most importantly, and it was this that so dramatically shifted South Korean public opinion, the day of pageantry, symbolism and expressions of public friendship and good will between the two leaders resulted in a shift of 50 per cent, from 14.7 before their first summit to 64.7 after the summit, believing denuclearization and peace was possible.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, this positive attitude remained firm at 66.5 per cent the day after President Trump temporarily cancelled his summit on May 24<sup>3</sup> and possibly rose further following Kim and Moon's impromptu second summit on May 26 to get the US/NK June 12 summit back on track.

The Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades may not be able to get quite such a dramatic result in the South of Cyprus but less than half the Korean shift in public opinion is all he needs to get a peace 'package' through a referendum. Both he and Akinci were given an opportunity to do this at the opening of the Greek Church, in the Turkish Cypriot occupied ancient city of Famagusta, on the Easter leading up to the failed summit in Crans-Montana. Again, this year the same opportunity was there but the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders did not take it to demonstrate that peace on their island was possible and their future would be better for it.

Peace processes are generally best known for the agreements, declarations and treaties signed and made. But this tale of two peace processes underlines the importance of CBMs both symbolic and substantial. With this point in mind, given the Cyprus experience, the authors developed a peace poll to test Korean CBMs in Korea<sup>4</sup> in the hope that some of them would be put into practice. Happily, events overtook these efforts with the Koreans implementing CBMs at a pace and with great effect that was not anticipated. This questionnaire was written to complement a similar programme of work undertaken in Cyprus<sup>5</sup>. Regrettably those suggestions remain undone and the Cyprus peace process remains frozen. The Greek Turkish Forum<sup>6</sup> has recommended the Cypriots implement these CBMs but they are painfully slow to do so and would do well to look to the Koreans for inspiration.

With all these points in mind perhaps the time has come for the UN Security Council and Guarantor States to require the Cypriots to implement a significant programme of CBMs before they sponsor another round of negotiations and summit? As for Korea they should keep doing what they are doing so well. Implementation of the agreement made in Singapore on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June will not be easy and CBMs will continue to have an important role to play in their peace process for months and years to come. Significantly at the June 12 summit

President Trump also undertook to suspend South Korea/US war games but only in so far as North Korea negotiates in good faith. This should be regarded as a substantial CBM as North Korea has always considered these joint military exercises as rehearsals for invasion. However, the war games can be reinstated at any time while the measure of removing sanctions imposed by America and her allies would require international coordination and cooperation to get them re-established.

### **Security North and South of the DMZ and Green Line**

But what about those negotiations at the US/North Korea summit that must resolve outstanding security issues and the failed Cyprus negotiations and summit, are there also some lessons to be learnt there? Security for Greek and Turkish Cypriots is the most important issue for the two communities going forward. Similarly security for all Koreans on the Korean peninsula is the most important issue for them. Neither Cypriots or Koreans want a return to the conflicts that divided their communities and in this context Koreans and Cypriots, both North and South, all want arrangements to be put in place that ensure their security the day an agreement is signed and for years and generations thereafter.

Two distinctly different proposals were suggested for doing this on the Korean peninsula. One was the 'Libya model' that requires North Korea to denuclearise completely before peace is made, and only then can they enjoy all the benefits promised by America with the lifting of sanctions that allow North Korea to develop economically with China and South Korea. The other is the 'Progressive model', which allows for complete denuclearisation by North Korea in return for security guarantees over a period of time. Inevitably 'the devil is in the detail' with such a model in terms of verification and how North Korea's security can be assured. Those details have to be worked out and might include a formal end to the Korean War and establishment of a credible East Asian security regime.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly there are two distinct models for peace and security on Cyprus. At the Crans-Montana summit Anastasiades for the Greek Cypriot community wanted "zero [Turkish] troops and zero [Turkish] guarantees" from day one of any new agreement that would establish a bi-communal, bi-zonal federal state as part of the European Union. However, Akinci for the Turkish Cypriot community advocated a phased reduction in the draw down of Turkish forces from the island in tandem with new arrangements with regional partners, a 'Treaty of Friendship' had been proposed in addition to the security benefits that would come with EU and NATO membership.

The 'Libya model' advocated by National Security Advisor, John Bolton, was rejected by North Korea as 'unilateral denuclearization' that, in their view, would threaten their security. Similarly Akinci could not accept Anastasiades proposals for "zero [Turkish] troops and zero [Turkish] guarantees" from day one of any new agreement and the Crans-Montana summit failed. If there is a lesson to be learnt here in this 'tale of two peace processes' then it is surely this: 'unilateral disarmament' be it nuclear or conventional is not going to lead to security, peace and the economic benefits that flow from security and peace. The US Administration saw the error of their ways and adopted a variant of the 'Progressive model' at the June 12 summit and hopefully too, the Cypriots will learn from that success and agree a 'Progressive model' that works for them.

## Lessons learnt

Perhaps there are also lessons in this ‘tale of two peace processes’ for other frozen conflicts? Firstly, the successful Northern Ireland peace process was supported by an extensive programme of peace polling and public diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> Korea appears to be doing the same but as they do not have to test their agreements at a referendum their programme of CBMs and public diplomacy is there as much for the international audience as it is for their domestic constituencies. If the two Koreas can be seen to be making peace then the international community should do everything they can to support them and they appear to be doing so. Israel and Palestine also regularly test a potential peace agreement against public opinion to demonstrate what ‘package’ and ‘incentives’ will win a referendum.<sup>9</sup> But like Cyprus they do not have in place a comprehensive programme of CBMs. On the contrary the movement of the US Embassy to Jerusalem has been characterised as a Confidence *Diminishing* Mechanism (‘CDMs’) with an accompanying loss of public support for US led negotiations in the Arab World.<sup>10</sup> The lines that separate symbolic CBMs from substantial CBMs, and substantial CBMs from substantial agreements and actions are a little arbitrary. Suffice it to say that Confidence *Diminishing* Mechanisms should be avoided and all CBMs should be welcomed, even the small ones that the Northern Ireland politician David Ervine famously characterised as ‘Baby steps’, because those baby steps led to an end of war and the Belfast Agreement.

Secondly, the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons was negotiated and implemented over time in Northern Ireland because the Irish Republican Army viewed unilateral decommissioning, before the Belfast Agreement, as an act of ‘surrender’, and that was unacceptable to them. So out of sight of any cameras their weapons were placed ‘beyond use’ under the watchful eye of international monitors. Security issues must be addressed with cold precision but so too must the sensitivities and respect of the parties involved in Northern Ireland, North Korea, Northern Cyprus and Palestine. Arguably such respect for the ‘other’ is the most important CBM of them all and in this regard the Americans appear to have given the North Koreans as much ‘space’ as they can to manage denuclearisation with their domestic audience. For the Americans ‘Complete Denuclearisation’ means ‘Complete Verifiable Irreversible Denuclearisation’ and possibly the North Koreans accept this interpretation privately but, for now, the Americans appear to have accepted a significant degree of ‘constructive ambiguity’ on this point to give the North Koreans an opportunity to do what is expected of them.

The ‘Progressive model’ may or may not work but it has been given every chance of success by establishing good will through public diplomacy and CBMs at the highest levels. At the 12 June summit the North Korean flag and Stars and Stripes, in equal size and measure provided a backdrop to the words of praise and expressions of gratitude shared by Kim and Trump. There are no guarantees for success but generals making war and politicians making peace must be opportunistic and be willing to risk their reputations for the prize of success. Following the Turkish Presidential elections on June 24th Anastasiades and Akinci have one more chance to make peace this year. Will they embrace it and take it?

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> UN Cyprus Talks (2014) *11 February 2014 Joint Declaration on Cyprus*. Available at: <http://www.uncyprustalks.org/11-february-2014-joint-declaration-on-cyprus/>
- <sup>2</sup> RealMeter (2018, April 30), ‘北 비핵화·평화 의지’ 국민인식 급변, 불신 78% → 신뢰 65% [A sudden turn of the South Korean perceptions of North Korea’s willingness to denuclearization and peace: Distrust 78% → Trust 65%]. Available at: <http://www.realmeter.net/>
- <sup>3</sup> RealMeter (2018, May 28), 비핵화·평화전망, 낙관 67% vs 비관 20% [Prospects for denuclearization and peace: Positive 67% vs Negative 20%]. Available at: <http://www.realmeter.net/>
- <sup>4</sup> Irwin, C. J. and Yoon, S. (2018, March 12) South Korea – Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). Available at: <https://peacepolls.etinu.net/peacepolls/documents/blog-000958-20180601233506.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Irwin, C. J. (2017) *Cyprus Peace Poll 2 – Confidence Building Measures – ‘Peace is not enough’*. Available at: <https://peacepolls.etinu.net/peacepolls/documents/007937.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> GTF Statement 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Available at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/03/09/statement-sent-two-leaders-greek-turkish-forum/>
- <sup>7</sup> JUN Bonggeun, June 12 U.S.-DPRK Summit: Preparations and Prospects, *Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, IFANS FOCUS*, IF2018-12E, May 21, 2018.
- <sup>8</sup> Irwin, C. J. (2002) *The People’s Peace Process in Northern Ireland*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke and New York.
- <sup>9</sup> PSR (2017a) *Palestinian-Israeli Pulse*, August 1, 2017. Available at: <http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/696>
- <sup>10</sup> Gallup International (2017) *Attitudes Towards the Recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli Capital, Gallup International Association opinion poll of 24 countries across the globe*, December. Available at: [http://www.gallup-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017\\_USA-Decision-on-Jerusalem.pdf](http://www.gallup-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017_USA-Decision-on-Jerusalem.pdf)