

Comment and Discussion

Several participants supported the idea of mediation efforts during the discussion. There are other elements that bring people together besides the rule of law. "Rule of law only gives us security." **Others supported the claim that the legalistic approach is not sufficient to resolve the Cyprus problem.** Education plays a large part in the negative way the two communities perceive each other. Teaching history in each community is especially instructive, with different historical events celebrated by each side, with very different interpretations. We should find ways to share common themes. Indeed, the presentation by Giorgos Kentas and comments of other young people around the table indicate how well they are versed solely in the discourse of the "Greek Cypriot side."

There are common links in Cyprus. One common cultural heritage stems from "being island dwellers," another from the food people eat. Sharing a rich, ancient history may also bring people together. There is a global culture emerging that may be unifying. For young people, swapping music on Napster may be a way to come together outside of the context of the bi-communal hostilities.

A point was made that in Cyprus, symbols are used for two main reasons: first, to strengthen one's identity and second, to be politically correct. **Both communities in Cyprus are insecure about their identities.** For example, just a few years ago, the Greek Cypriots stopped referring to Turkish coffee as Turkish, even though they have called it that for hundreds of years. Patriotism, through discourse and symbols, has also been a norm. Expressions and actions outside of the "politically correct" boundaries may be misunderstood as unpatriotic.

A reminder was made that the two communities were characterised as Greek and Muslim until only quite recently, replacing identification by religious affiliation: Christians and Muslims. Only late in 19th and the beginning of 20th century, national identities emerged on Cyprus. Similarly to Canada, Cyprus has attempted to change or create its national symbols, including creating a new flag to reflect unity of the island.

A point was raised that both the analysis and prescriptions for the Cyprus problem have been presented during this roundtable as primarily external. In this vein a comparison was made between the Berlin Wall and the Green Line separating the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It was suggested that perhaps a better analogy would be the British partition of Ireland, with the consent of people in Northern Ireland. Some Northern Irish have always argued that the partition was external until they recognised that a community in Northern Ireland identified with Britain and not with the Irish. Perhaps, the same recognition should occur in the Greek community in Cyprus.

Others said that the Cyprus problem is a function of both, internal and external forces. While there was a foreign intervention, problems within the two communities existed before. There were extremes within each community: nationalistic forces for ENOSIS (Union of Cyprus with Greece) within the Greek community and separatist forces within the Turkish community.