

CYPRUS

Greek, Turkish quakes ease ties

Isle seen ruining temblor good will

By Andrew Borowiec
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NICOSIA, Cyprus — The so-called "earthquake diplomacy," which brought about an unprecedented dialogue between Greece and Turkey, is likely to founder over the future of Cyprus, diplomats say.

While senior Greek and Turkish officials continue to stress the positive aspects of their contacts, leaders of the two Cypriot communities have once again reaffirmed their views that in effect preclude progress.

There are all indications that President Glafkos Clerides of the Greek Cypriots and Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, are unlikely to change their minds. Both are, once again, seeking support for their positions in the United States.

And both have coordinated their strategy with their respective "motherlands," Mr. Clerides with Greece, Mr. Denktash with Turkey.

Mr. Denktash insists that his "runaway" Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) be recognized as a state. Mr. Clerides demands that various U.N. resolutions calling for a Cyprus federation of two zones be applied.

Turkey, which backs the TRNC, is unwilling to withdraw its army from northern Cyprus to take into consideration Greek demands for the return of displaced Greek Cypriots to their homes in the north of the east Mediterranean island.

The recent Greece-Turkish rapprochement followed earthquakes in Turkey and Athens, with each country rushing to help the other. The mutual expressions of sympathy and comfort led to several meetings on a ministerial level and Greece's decision not to oppose Turkey's candidacy for the European Union.

However, this "earthquake diplomacy" has so far carefully avoided such divisive issues as the Turkish military presence in Cyprus and the conflicting claims to some Aegean Sea islands.

Foreign-born percentage nears high rate of 1850

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Nearly one U.S. resident in 10 is foreign born as the nation nears the end of the 20th century — a proportion similar to that recorded 150 years ago.

During the 1990s, the nation's foreign-born population increased nearly four times faster than that of the native-born population, the Census Bureau says in a report being released today.

Overall, there were 25,208,000 foreign-born U.S. residents as of July 1, 1998 — 9.3 percent of the nation's population. That was up from 19,840,000 in the 1990 census, when they were 8 percent of the population.

The current share of foreign-born residents is close to the 9.7 percent recorded in 1850, the first year the Census Bureau asked people their place of birth.

But the new arrivals now come from south and further east than in the closing years of the 19th century when Europeans flooded to America's shores.

"Right now the biggest immigration groups are Hispanics and Asian-Pacific islanders," said census demographer Robert Perkins.

The number of foreign-born Hispanics grew 34 percent from

mid-1990 through mid-1998, from 8 million to 10.7 million.

And among Asians and Pacific islanders, the increase was from 4.6 million to 6.4 million in the same period. Indeed, foreign-born Asians outnumber native-born Asian-Americans, 6.4 million to 4.1 million.

During that time span, the foreign-born population grew by 27.1 percent, nearly four times the 7.1 percent increase in the native population, which increased from 228.9 million to 245.1 million.

The foreign-born share has been steadily increasing since its low point of 4.7 percent of the population in 1970. However, it remains well below the peak of 14.8 percent in 1890 during the massive European migrations here.

The biggest percentage increase of the foreign-born population in the 1990s was blacks, whose numbers grew by more than 40 percent, from 1.7 million to 2.4 million.

"The increase in the foreign-born population since 1990 underscores the need to make census 2000 the most complete and accurate census in history," said Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt.

According to Greek political commentator Costas Iordanis, "the two peoples, because of their proximity, are at the mercy of the same natural phenomenon."

But, he concluded in the Athens daily Kathimerini: "A major leap in political behavior is beyond the capabilities of the Greek and Turkish governments."

After recent statements by the Cypriot protagonists, a number of diplomats and other observers in the area speculated whether the "earthquake diplomacy" could survive the intractable Cyprus problem.

In meetings with Alfred Moses, President Clinton's new "special envoy" on Cyprus, and Thomas West, the State Department's Cyprus "coordinator," Mr. Denktash reaffirmed his key condition: "recognition of our sovereign existence."

Following talks in Athens with Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis, Mr. Clerides said if the reported new U.S. initiative fails "it will be exclusively the fault of the Turkish side's intransigence."

Diplomats point out that during the past two years the Turkish stance has not swerved.

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