

could possibly muster.

The embargo imposed on TRNC supported by the UN is perhaps the longest embargo still in operation against

a peace loving state. In fact, the people of TRNC have been held hostage to their dream to live in peace as an independent entity. The world body has kept them in a cage. Freedom was allowed but only within the UN-imposed limits of that cage.

Turkey is the only country that has recognized the TRNC as an independent nation and has diplomatic relations with them. Pakistan has also allowed a Representative Mission to operate in Islamabad but has not yet granted full de jure recognition to TRNC. The other countries, particularly the rich Islamic countries, have not yet bothered to take up the issue even on humanitarian grounds.

The Arabs' reluctance is very much political as they feel little sympathy for the Turks because of the Turkey-Israel factor. But this proposition is questionable in case of those countries who played a vital role in the creation and expansion of Israel. The ground reality is that Southern Cyprus is enjoying the benefits of generous investment of petrodollars from the Arab oil-producing countries, whereas the other part of Cyprus is being treated as if it were non-existent.

The people of TRNC are friendly, humble and peace loving by nature; they are intelligent and sensible as well. They always demonstrated their great sense of responsibility and tolerance at every crucial occasion.

The Turkish intervention was vociferously supported by the masses, the people's verdict led to the declaration of independence through parliament, and the formation of successive governments was always through the will of the people. Irrespective of government policies and directives, the people of TRNC always expressed their will independently in the larger interest of peace and prosperity in the region. The latest example is the referendum on the Annan plan held on April 24, 2004.

Contrary to the President's will, Northern Cypriots gave their 'YES' vote to the UN's reunification plan, whereas a 'NO' vote was registered by a majority of the Greek Cypriots. By the result of this referendum, the world must be convinced that the people of Northern Cyprus want to live together peacefully, whereas the majority Greek Cypriots are still not willing to toler-

generations old embargo is now being realized fractionally by other countries.

strongly opposes these measures and even threatens recourse to European courts to prevent their realization. I call on the Greek Cypriot side to cease

these counter productive efforts in the interest of reconciliation on Cyprus, our common home, as I call on the international community, particularly the United States and EU, to redouble their efforts to end the undeserved isolation of my people".

"Clearly, integration of Turkish Cypriots with the international community does not, and should not, stop at economics. A host of other measures are needed from culture to sports participation in international organization events and instruments. No political argument (concerns about explicit or implicit recognition) can justify leaving the Turkish Cypriots outside the international system, particularly in an ever globalising era.

If the Turkish Cypriots cannot even play a sanctioned soccer match either with Turkey to the north or with our Greek Cypriots counterparts to the south, let alone any other country, the international community should reconsider its benign neglect treatment of the Turkish Cypriots case", he added.

Prime Minister Talat also emphasized, "towards these objectives, international transport, particularly direct flights, should be encouraged by governments and made possible for international air carriers.

This is the only way tourism can be developed to its potential and significantly boost the Turkish Cypriot economy. Free and direct trade between Northern Cyprus and particularly the EU, but also the United States and the world at large, would be in the interest of all".

The international community must take note of the Prime Minister's objective approach and persistent attitude of conciliation towards Greek Cypriots. A recent US direct assistance package of \$30.5 million and EU move to end the 30 year old isolation have paved the way for other countries to express their sovereignty by conferring sovereignty on TRNC.

Under the present scenario, Pakistan should also play its effective role. In the first instance, TRNC should be granted full de-jure recognition at ambassadorial level. Direct international flights, trade relationship, exchange of educational and cultural activities are the other sectors of bilateral interest. In addition, Pakistan's efforts are also required to convince OIC members for similar action. TRNC has been cruelly neglected for several decades. Now it deserves to be given a warm embrace.