

Background Briefing-Part II

A short history of the Cyprus issue

by Phocion

The U.S. Acheson Plan, which envisioned the union of Cyprus with Greece and the end of any British role in the area, was proposed in 1964, when George Papandreu was Greece's Prime Minister. The Acheson Plan and two of its variants were on the verge of being agreed to by Greece and Turkey throughout the 1964-68 period. This was prevented by the joint efforts of British and Soviet diplomacy, which deployed both Archbishop Makarios, then President of Cyprus, and Andreas Papandreu, then a parliamentary deputy.

The sequence of events

George Papandreu was elected prime minister on Nov. 8, 1963. The new government's defense minister, Petros Garoufalias, in cooperation with General Grivas, sent one full combat division to Cyprus, a force which was to become the instrument of Cyprus' unification with Greece. Great consternation followed both in London and Moscow, but only minor concern in Turkey. Greece and Turkey were discussing how to force the British military force out of the Dhekeleia base, and its transfer to Turkey.

At that point, a small group of officers of the Greek contingent in Cyprus constituted themselves a conspiracy committed to preventing the union of Cyprus with Greece, controlled from London by Sir Hugh Foot, later Lord Carrington. The political leader of the conspiracy was Parliamentary Deputy Andreas Papandreu, the son of the Greek prime minister. In July of 1965, Prime Minister George Papandreu fired Defense Minister Garoufalias to prevent an investigation and exposure of Andreas's role in the conspiracy. King Constantine, in turn, "accepted" the elder Papandreu's resignation (which had never been submitted), and proceeded to name a new government. From July 1965 to April 21, 1967, Greece was engulfed in growing political chaos, until the army decided to take power in its name.

During this period, the Greek-Turkish negotiations continued, both countries committed to unifying Cyprus with Greece, kicking out the British, and establishing a Turkish military base at Dhekeleia. The effort was frustrated as follows:

During the June 1966 ministerial meeting of NATO, Greek Foreign Minister Adm. John Toumbas met with his Turkish counterpart, and the two agreed on the outlines of the deal. Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios was already moving

to sabotage the agreement. Makarios had been acting as an agent of the British Foreign Office since 1957, as a result of a heavy-handed blackmail involving his family's good name.

On Aug. 20, 1966, Makarios secretly signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia, for a weapons shipment valued at 178,620 pounds sterling. The shipment was to be kept secret and was to be accompanied by Czech "advisers." It included rifles, light and heavy machine-guns, mortars, anti-tank missiles, tanks, etc., with ample ammunition.

The Greek-Turkish meeting to pin down the agreement between the two countries had been set for Dec. 17, 1966. The Czechoslovak arms arrived in Cyprus on Nov. 30, 1966, in total secrecy. Both the Turkish and Greek governments applied pressure on Makarios to not distribute the new weapons. Both governments drew the conclusion that Makarios was committed to both preserving the British-inspired status of Cyprus, and torpedoing—with help from the East bloc—improving Greek-Turkish relations. Yet, despite Makarios' and the Foreign Office's efforts, on Dec. 17, 1966, Greece and Turkey signed the Toumbas-Tsaglagiankil Protocol.

In the course of these negotiations, the Turkish foreign ministry informed the Greek government that they feared the agreement would not succeed because "Archbishop Makarios is opposed to union with Greece." Later, in an extraordinary Greek Crown Council meeting on Feb. 19, 1967, Makarios himself, for the first time, ended the deception and informed the Greek government: "I am against the dialogue with Turkey and it must be terminated." At the same time, Makarios entered a secret agreement with his purported arch-enemy, the leader of the Turkish Cypriot minority, Raouf Denktash, for the common objective of removing from Cyprus both General Grivas and the Greek division deployed there. Makarios succeeded in this objective with considerable help from Moscow and from Cyrus Vance in the following way:

On April 21, 1967, the Greek armed forces, under Col. George Papadopoulos, carried out a coup d'état and established a military government, to end two years of unmitigated chaos. The military government continued its predecessors' foreign policy and Cyprus policy. Greek-Turkish negotiations reached an apex in a Sept. 9-10, 1967 meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries. At the last minute, the Turkish government, without any explanation, reneged on all that had been previously agreed. The then Greek foreign minister gave the following explanation, as quoted by Ambassador Constantine P. Panagiotakos, then director of personnel at the foreign ministry: "Turkey reneged from earlier agreements at the last moment, as a result of intense Soviet representations at Ankara and London. This Soviet action was caused by Archbishop Makarios with the mediation of the Russian ambassador at Nicosia, of whom Makarios had demanded urgent intervention from Moscow for the purpose of preventing any solution which would threaten Cyprus' territorial integrity and would facilitate the establishment of a NATO base there. This is the explanation for

[Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman] Demirel's sudden reversal, shortly before his scheduled visit to the U.S.S.R."

Three months later, Cyrus Vance, then Deputy Secretary of Defense under Lyndon Johnson, went to Greece and Cyprus and told the Greek foreign minister in no uncertain terms that "NATO would not protect Greece's northern borders from possible Bulgarian attack" unless Greece withdrew its combat division from Cyprus. Greece was forced to withdraw from Cyprus during December 1967.

Ending the colonels' government

During the years of the military government in Greece, Makarios, reigning unchecked over a divided Cyprus, earned the reputation of the "Castro of the Mediterranean." During 1974, Makarios played a pivotal role in helping Henry Kissinger to topple the Greek military government, as follows:

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agreed to a Turkish military invasion of Cyprus in order to cause a political crisis that would topple the Greek military government. Makarios launched an international campaign asking for help against the hypothetical threat of an imminent Greek invasion. On July 19, 1974, Makarios, in a speech at the United Nations in New York, virtually asked for Turkish military intervention against the "imminent threat from Greece."

On July 20, 1974, a Turkish military invasion of Cyprus began, code-named *Attila I*, with air bombardments and amphibious landings under the protection of the British aircraft carrier *Hermes* (of 1982 Malvinas fame), then deployed in the waters between Cyprus and Turkey. The invasion had the full support of the Soviet Union, which placed its regional forces on alert as a warning to Greece. Kissinger ordered NATO to carry out electronic counter-measures against the Greek armed forces' communications network. The Greek colonels, with all possibilities of military response cut off, were instantly convulsed in a crisis and resigned. Caramanlis was asked to return and assume the responsibility of government. A few weeks later, Turkey launched *Attila II*, which

partitioned Cyprus into a northern, Turkish-controlled half, and a southern, Makarios-controlled half.

From 1974 to 1981, the years during which Caramanlis was successively prime minister and President of Greece, Turkey, taking advantage of the fact that the premier Greek political leader had conspired with the Turkish military against his own nation, and was thus hopelessly compromised, pressed on with numerous further demands involving maritime rights in the Aegean, jurisdictional issues of the air space over the Aegean, the status of Greece's Aegean islands, etc. The Greek leadership, progressively sinking into degeneracy and disintegration, failed to develop any constructive responses.

When Andreas Papandreou came to power in 1981, with encouragement from the State Department, he began reversing Greece's military alliances. He announced that U.S. military bases in Greece will be closed down by 1988. He transformed the country's defense doctrine to declare that the "potential military threat" is no longer the neighboring Warsaw Pact, but NATO-member Turkey. He concluded secret military agreements envisaging joint Greek-Bulgarian-Syrian military action against Turkey, under guidance from officials of the Soviet Navy.

Papandreou's government has refused any negotiations with Turkey, preferring theatrics and confrontation. He argues that Greek-Turkish negotiations will be possible only after Turkey evacuates northern Cyprus.

Cyprus herself remains divided and occupied. In the northern half, Turkish Cypriots have proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a state recognized only by Turkey. In the southern half, President Kyprianou governs at the sufferance of the powerful Cypriot Communist Party, the AKEL. The Soviet Union, for the first time this year, is throwing its diplomatic support squarely on the side of the Greek Cypriots and denouncing the Turkish military presence on the island—the same military presence they helped establish in 1974. The only fragile thread of negotiations is the "Waldheim Plan," which was authored in Vienna, submitted to Moscow for approval, approved in 1984, and then handed over to U.N. General Secretary Xavier Pérez de Cuéllar for follow-up.

This plan envisages nothing more than a rehashed compromise constitution along the lines of the 1959 British-authored constitution which collapsed within two years. It appears that the only difference between the 1959 settlement and now is that while the former was supervised by Britain, the latter is to be supervised by the Soviet Union.

Current U.S. policy respecting the Cyprus issue, unless changed drastically, will only guarantee a transfer to Moscow of all the levers by which Turkey may be manipulated by Russian policy. We are at the threshold of a change of guard from British to Russian control over the Greek-Turkish-Cypriot tangle.

An alternative exists, however, which would be concordant with American interests and Western interests in general. We shall outline it in our next installment.

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