

**BRITAIN AND THE 1960
CYPRUS ACCORDS: A STUDY IN
PRAGMATISM**

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GPoT'S FOREWORD

Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) is proud to bring this extraordinary book to the readers. As you will see in the introduction, it is not intended as a book that once again analyzes the decades-long Cyprus problem. It is rather intended to shed some light on one of the main factors that led to the present status quo on the island which tends to be forgotten most of the time.

The author – Michael Moran – a renowned expert on the Cyprus question and a respectable British political scientist used the British diplomatic exchange of letters and telegrams (released under the 30-year rule) that date from 1964 to 1969 as a source while writing this prestigious book. The reason for this was to explore the “timidity” on the part of Great Britain in the 1960s when confronted with the Greek Cypriot attempts for Hellenic redemption on the island. And indeed Moran takes a further step and tries to reflect on the historic attitudes towards a Cyprus settlement of the other external powers that have a direct interest in the problem.

Although Moran's views are rather critical with respect to the position of Great Britain that was formally committed to assuring the continuity of the power-sharing situation established by the 1960 Cyprus Accords, his respectful treatment of the questions and objective and a sincere approach to the answers, make this book a novelty among the numerous publications written worldwide on the Cyprus question.

It is perhaps also for this reason that a meticulous account on the history of the Cyprus problem is finely combined with an intellectually philosophical touch, accompanying vast technical knowledge about the 1960 Cyprus Accords and the role of guarantor states; Turkey, Greece and Great Britain.

We believe that this study will provide some extra thoughts to the long-overdue settlement of the Cyprus problem. At the same time, we believe it will reveal the history of the conflict and for that matter contribute to

a better understanding of the vast forces which have shaped the Cyprus problem in modern times.

Although this book is a publication of GPoT, it does not necessarily correspond with the political views and the preferences of both the staff and the advisors of the Center. However, considering GPoT's experience with the Cyprus problem both at institutional and individual level, publishing this exceptional book becomes even more crucial.

Besides the authors many people have spent time and energy on getting this study ready. The entire GPoT team – Sylvia Tiryaki, Esra Köse, Ceren Zeynep Ak and Can Yirik – has contributed to the realization of this project. For the design and formatting of the book we are thankful to MYRA. We owe a lot to the endless energy of Ayla Gürel.

Last but not the least, we would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Fahamettin Akingüç, Honorary Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Dr. Bahar Akingüç Günver, Chairman of the Board of the Trustees, Prof. Dr. Tamer Koçel, Former Rector of IKU; Rector Prof. Dr. Dursun Koçer and Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Çetin Bolcal and Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Bahri Öztürk not only for the publication of this book but also for the realization of the entire endeavor.

Mensur Akgün

Director

Global Political Trends Center (GPoT)

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Introduction: the object of the exercise

One of the main factors that led directly to the present status quo in Cyprus tends to be forgotten. This was the extraordinary display of timidity on the part of Great Britain in the 1960s when confronted with determined Greek Cypriot attempts to make Cyprus Greek. And, needless to say, the subsequent forceful division of the island by Turkey in 1974 should always be seen in this earlier context: not, that is, as some kind of unforeseeable interruption in the island's natural and peaceful progression towards its Hellenic 'redemption'; least of all as the result of a brutal and arbitrary interference in a sovereign state on the part of a 'foreign power,' both of which notions still circulate among many Greeks and their political sympathisers.

The Turkish intervention was actually the quite predictable, if somewhat belated, counter-measure to the attempted Greek assumption of total power in the island. While the rest of the world seemed relatively unperturbed by the prospect of Cyprus becoming politically part of Greece, Turkey alone acted decisively to prevent it. And this was only to be expected. After all, Turkey was a 'guarantor power' under the 1960 Accords that established the Cyprus Republic. She was acting well within her rights when she took action to prevent *enosis* in 1974. Whether Turkey's eventual division of the island into Turkish and Greek sectors can be seen as having anything like the same justification may be open to doubt. Yet the least that can be said in favour of the Turkish army's continued presence in Cyprus is that it has prevented any further armed conflict there. Perhaps the island's division could have been avoided if the Greek and Turkish sides had both grasped the virtues of compromise. Alas, they failed to do so. And with their recent

* An earlier version of this article appeared as my contribution to A.C. Gazioğlu and M. Moran, *Past Masters of Illegality* (CYREP, Nicosia, 2000)

firm rejection of the Annan Plan, it looks as if the Greek side at least has scarcely understood the need for compromise even now.

But my purpose here is to focus not on Turkey's role in Cyprus, nor on the current state of political play. It is guarantor Britain I shall be most concerned with.

I want to take a closer look at Britain's role in Cyprus, especially in the 1960s, and, in the light of this, to reflect more generally on the historic attitudes towards a Cyprus settlement of the other external powers who have a direct interest in this tiny country. This will mean traversing some well-trodden ground. I shall have briefly to remind the reader how the Greeks, in Cyprus and in Greece itself, sought to take over the island, partly by force of arms and partly by diplomatic manoeuvring; and how they very nearly succeeded in doing this – indeed how they *did* succeed to the extent of getting purely Greek Cypriot administrations internationally recognised as 'governments of Cyprus.'

My particular concern is to discover what exactly lay behind British 'timidity' when confronted with this Greek quest for hegemony. Furthermore, I believe a better understanding of British diplomacy, particularly in the 1960s, will tell us something important about the international community's approach to the Cyprus problem today. Cypriots especially still need, I think, to get a better grasp of the nature of the vast (and largely impersonal) forces which have determined Cyprus's destiny in modern times. For without such understanding, politicians, on both sides of the island, are unlikely to contribute to the growth of a new and happier state of affairs there.

As herself a guarantor, Britain was, of course, formally committed to assuring the continuity of the power-sharing situation established by the 1960 Cyprus Accords. British diplomats were always fully aware of this and have never tried to deny it. Interpretations of what all three guarantors had actually pledged themselves to in 1959–1960 have, however, varied. And it is at any rate arguable that Britain has been very half-hearted in fulfilling her duty in this respect, even on the laxest interpretation of what that duty entailed.

Why was this? Why did Britain, despite all the trouble she had experienced from Greek terrorism in Cyprus during the 1950s, appear to be supporting, and certainly condoning, a Greek take-over of the island in the 1960s? And, indeed, why is she (as some would claim) doing much the same thing even today, at least in the sense that Britain still never openly questions the legitimacy of wholly Greek Cypriot governments of the bicomunal Cyprus Republic?

In the year 2008 not only Britain but also the EU as a whole seems remarkably reluctant to offend Greek sensibilities, or to deviate far from Greek perceptions concerning the political realities in Cyprus.¹ This has helped to create a formidable barrier to any proposed settlement, as the recent Greek Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan has shown. After all, why would a perfectly proper, universally recognised, Greek Cypriot administration want (or think they need) to share power with its Turkish compatriots? For many Greek Cypriots this seems an eminently pertinent question. One can see why.

Yet we are bound to ask: if there is nothing wrong with the present Cyprus government, why has the UN been trying so hard for decades to change it into a very different bicomunal one, where Turkish Cypriot ministers would have something at least very close to equal power with their Greek Cypriot counterparts?

The need for a more dispassionate approach

Some observers would doubtless use stronger expressions than ‘timidity’ about Britain’s traditionally muted response to Greek attempts to dominate in Cyprus. They might suggest that the British, especially by their inaction in the 1960s, had actually ‘betrayed’ or ‘sold out’ the Turkish Cypriots; and that today, in the larger forum of the EU, we are experiencing merely the continuation of that lamentable bias.

¹ For Britain’s view about Cyprus in 2008 see Appendix 1.

Superficially a traceable continuity in British policy can be discerned. Any careful examination of the relevant diplomatic documents will show, however, that strong claims about British ‘treachery’ cannot be justified. As we shall see, international politics being what it is, in the situation prevailing in Cyprus in the 1960s Britain could hardly have been expected to do much more than she did, namely, to look after her own interests in what had become a scenario fraught with manifold difficulties and disturbing international implications. As we look at that situation now, I want to suggest, blame and praise – however sometimes irresistible and even justified – should preoccupy us less than a desire to understand. If Cypriots themselves could put aside much of the emotion – especially the nationalistic fervour issuing from both sides, though more especially from the Greeks – and manage to grasp why external powers behave as they do, there will be more chance of influencing those powers; and less reason to feel aggrieved.

Britain has never wanted to see the Turkish Cypriots marginalized, let alone eliminated from Cyprus altogether – aims which, at one time, Greek Cypriot administrations certainly did their best to put into effect. Britain simply found it too inconvenient to act as the champion of the Turks in Cyprus when most members of the international community were quite happy to see the island run by Greeks.

Nevertheless, the policy pursued by Britain did unfortunately contribute materially, if not to the original removal of the Turkish Cypriots from the government of Cyprus in December, 1963, at any rate to their being left for so long afterwards in a situation of political limbo. Britain therefore contributed, no doubt unintentionally, to the eventual establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. Moreover, Britain’s agreement with the other EU states to let a wholly Greek-run ‘Cyprus’ join the EU in 2004 – despite the Greek Cypriots’ firm rejection of the UN Annan Plan designed to create a United Cyprus Republic – made the ‘Cyprus problem’ that almost intractable phenomenon it has become today.

Of course, it would be absurd to blame Britain alone for the current impasse. Many other interests and events on the international stage have to

be considered. Perhaps, most of all, it is *ideas* that have always blocked an agreed resolution of the Cyprus imbroglio: uncritical pre-suppositions, not least among them the two sorts of nationalism that have always operated in Cyprus itself; outright prejudices based on historical misinformation that continue to hold sway internationally; insensitivity about what is possible and most desirable in international politics; the anarchic unconcern of big powers generally for anything outside their own interests – all these things have continued to play their part. Britain alone didn't create this vast scenario of often blind and conflicting forces. She simply found herself having to work, as best she could, within their fields of influence. Still, for a number of obvious reasons, Britain is unique in her relation to Cyprus. To understand her role in the island's recent chequered history provides an indispensable perspective for anyone concerned with the Cyprus issue today.

By tracing the genesis, in the 1960s, of the notion that Greek governments in Cyprus are perfectly in order, I want to underline how contingent that notion actually was, and still is: contingent in the sense of being dependent on a number of factors that could easily have been different (and some of which now *are* different), and on decisions made by powers outside Cyprus which neither the Cypriots nor Turkey nor Greece – nor, in the end, even Great Britain herself – could do much to resist. If this arbitrariness, as we might otherwise call it, of the recognition of Greek governments in Cyprus comes more widely to be seen for what it is – little more than an anachronistic fiction, a one-time diplomatic convenience, that then seemed to serve some useful purposes in the international arena, but which has also made a Cyprus settlement virtually impossible – then a way through the present impasse might be found.

Britain's peculiar difficulties in the 1960s

My primary sources in this study are just a few of the British diplomatic exchanges of letters and telegrams (released under the 30-year rule) that date from 1964 to 1969.

Needless to say, it would be pretty futile to draw any conclusions from these once 'secret' documents without bearing in mind the broader context of

events within which British diplomats were constrained to operate during the 1960s. And these must include Britain's own rapidly changing role in the world. The 1960s were the most exacting years experienced by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Offices since the Second World War. Cyprus was only one of a number of former colonies upon which Britain had to expend her now quite limited resources and overstretched diplomatic ingenuity. With indispensable American and Russian help, Britain had won World War II. But the very high price she paid for this included the loss of her Empire and of economic self-sufficiency.

Militarily Britain could no longer even begin to fulfil her former world role. From the time of the signing of the London and Zurich Agreements in 1959, and her assumption of the role of a Cyprus guarantor, Britain's history had been a story of accelerating decline and fall: a dramatic reduction in military capability (leaving aside her nuclear deterrent, which was of little use in world 'policing'), and what would have been even at the beginning of World War II an unimaginable diminution of international influence and prestige. As one historian put it:

In 1939 few people had any doubts that Britain was a great power... The British Empire amounted to nearly 25 per cent of the world's land surface and a similar proportion of its population... the Empire [was] a vast resource of material and manpower... Most Britons were proud of the Empire, seeing it as an efficient and benevolent system which brought peace, prosperity and happiness to less fortunate peoples... The Empire was sustained by (and helped sustain) Britain's economic strength... Twenty-five years later, Britain was no longer a superpower. By 1964 the vast majority of the 80 or so territories which had made up the British Empire in 1939 had gone. Britain had been eclipsed as an economic power, not just by the USA and the USSR, but by Germany, Japan [ironically, the 'losers' in World War II, of course!] and France. ... by 1964 she was heavily dependent upon the USA for her defence... 'Never surely, except under the impact of overwhelming military defeat... has a great country gone so rapidly from world power to extreme helplessness,' wrote George Kennan, an American diplomat and historian.²

² Alan Farmer, *Britain: Foreign and Imperial Affairs, 1939–1964* (London, 1994), p. 1.

If British governments in the 1960s occasionally acted as if they were oblivious to these drastically changed circumstances, British diplomats, still spread throughout the globe in a variety of hotspots, were only too painfully aware of them. In particular, they were in no mood to take risks with British (or NATO's) interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The attitudes of the Cyprus 'guarantors'

British diplomats knew very well that the all-Greek Makarios administration in Cyprus was, from its take-over of the country by force of arms in December 1963, unconstitutional, and therefore illegal in so far as it made claims to be the *de jure* government of the Republic of Cyprus; yet they went out of their way to avoid challenging that administration directly and firmly. Neither in the diplomatic Notes they regularly found themselves having to send to Makarios protesting at his administration's enactment of legislation that infringed even the basic articles of the 1960 constitution, nor at the UN, where the Cyprus issue was regularly raised from 1964 onwards, did the British feel that they could sensibly take the bull by the horns and tell the Greek Cypriots that their attempted usurpation of power in Cyprus was contrary to the 1960 Cyprus Accords and would not be tolerated. As a guarantor power, within the framework of the Accords, Britain would have been acting well within her rights had she taken such a firm line with Makarios. She didn't do so; nor, in fact, for very different reasons of their own, did either of the other two guarantors.

Turkey, it is true, sometimes protested rather more vehemently to the Greek Cypriot administration about these issues; she also pressed the UK to support Turkey's own reminders at the UN debates that the Makarios administration was unconstitutional (to which pressure, however, the UK politely refused to succumb); and of course, on a number of occasions during the 1960s, when the Turkish Cypriots were being massacred by Greek Cypriots (reinforced by Greek soldiers surreptitiously imported from the mainland), Turkey used her war planes against the Greeks in Cyprus, sometimes it must be said not discriminating between military targets and innocent civilians (But then neither side showed much finesse in this respect).

Turkey was indeed frequently on the point of making a full-scale military intervention on the island (an action that would have been entirely justified, given her guarantor status). But, like Great Britain, Turkey was chiefly concerned, after the outbreak of violence in December 1963, not so much with the reestablishment of the arrangements envisaged in the 1960 Cyprus constitution, but with preserving her own interests in Cyprus: interests naturally including the protection of the Turkish Cypriots, but, as we shall see, not necessarily their reinstatement as co-partners with their Greek compatriots.

Greece also was primarily looking after herself. For the most part, while sympathetic towards Makarios's desire for *enosis* – and secretly aiding and abetting the Archbishop by providing him with weapons and perhaps as many as 20,000 military personnel – in the early 1960s Greece wished at first to be seen outwardly as showing respect for the 1960 Accords until the latter could be renegotiated by all the original signatories. Irrespective of which Greek administration was in power on the mainland, Greece's attitude towards Makarios was always somewhat ambivalent, a fact that ultimately led to the coup against him in 1974.

In the early 1960s, Makarios was seen by the Foreign Ministry in Athens as an overly ambitious hot-head who needed to be restrained from precipitous acts (such as his attempted unilateral abrogation of the Cyprus Treaty of Guarantee) which could bring Greece into serious conflict with Turkey and her other NATO allies. However, the Archbishop was viewed more positively by the mass of the population. Greeks everywhere were proud to acknowledge him as a living symbol of a resurgent nationalism. An impressive leader within the wider orbit of the Hellenic 'nation', a charismatic figure, not only in the eyes of most Greeks but also within the then increasingly influential Non-Aligned Movement, a priest, moreover, with a direct line to the Kremlin! – the President-Archbishop was something of a phenomenon on the world-stage.

Notwithstanding his humble origins, Makarios had created for himself a unique status in international politics. He needed to be handled, therefore, very carefully indeed. Consequently, after the mid-1960s, Greece, despite

her guarantor status, felt no need even to appear to be opposed to the now firmly established Greek Cypriot ascendancy in Cyprus. Makarios's methods may have sometimes appeared rather crude and incautious. But he was clearly working for the attainment of that 'Greater Greece' all true Hellenes desired; and, of course, as official Greek propaganda maintained (despite the existence of the 1960 Accords) Cyprus was a major Greek land in need of 'redemption.' With his flowing mediaeval robes, patriarchal beard, and supercilious expression, the Archbishop was not only a photogenic first for the international media; for many pious Greeks, under the spell of their own brand of nationalism (from which the articles of their religious faith were scarcely separable), Makarios was perhaps the next best thing to an actual reincarnation of the divine Redeemer Himself.³

The Greek Cypriot aim was, needless to say, to reduce the status of the Turkish Cypriots, their co-partners under the 1960 constitution, to that of a mere minority and to join Cyprus politically with Greece. They attempted to do this both by force of arms and through a variety of diplomatic and political means, including the enactment of a number of changes in the Cyprus constitution.

Hardly surprisingly, British diplomats had at least one thing in common with their Turkish and Greek counterparts: in facing up to the new problems Cyprus presented them with, they too were less concerned with ensuring that the 1960 constitution was adhered to than with the protection of their own interests in the island and the region. In a difficult situation pragmatism was, from the British point of view, the order of the day.

In fact, a close study of what diplomatic correspondence we can get access to between Britain, Greece and Turkey during the 1960s shows that none of these 'guarantors' really regarded the 1960 Accords as sacrosanct. The

³ Western diplomats were generally far less impressed by the Archbishop. In Appendix 2 the reader will find a brilliant vignette of Makarios by British High Commissioner Sir N. E. Costar. This was penned in April 1969 as part of Costar's 'valedictory despatch,' a final communication that many Ambassadors and High Commissioners sent to London when they were about to retire. Costar's grasp of the general situation in Cyprus at that time was extremely good, and I have included this document here more especially because of the High Commissioner's account of the 'Considerations affecting British policy on the Cyprus problem' (paras.8f).

world was in a state of bewildering flux, not least for Britain who was experiencing the discomfort of that 'wind of change' Macmillan had first spoken about in his celebrated speech in Pretoria in 1958.

The two antagonistic superpowers were now in a class of their own to which Britain could not hope to aspire. What Britain and the Cypriots' two 'mother countries' – all NATO members – knew was that, with the onset of intercommunal strife in Cyprus in December 1963, a new and peculiarly dangerous situation had arisen. The more pressing danger, as they saw it, was not so much the aggravated plight of the Turkish Cypriots (deplorable though Turkey and even Britain – judging by what was said in the British press and in parliament – saw that to be). The much more worrying danger was the scope these events, and Makarios's barely disguised ambitions, might well give to the Soviet Union to get up to serious mischief in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Moreover, none of the guarantors wanted to go to war with each other over Cyprus.

Like the UN, which had been brought in March 1964 to help curb the violence and hopefully resolve the serious impasse between the two Cypriot communities, the guarantors were evidently willing to consider a number of possible solutions in Cyprus, of which a return to the state of affairs established by the 1960 Cyprus Accords was only one. No one – except the Greek Cypriots – wished to pronounce the original Cyprus constitution and the three international treaties which together made up the Accords 'dead and buried'. In any case, this could only be done legally and effectively by a new international agreement.

But, at the same time, it is quite clear from the documents we now have that the UN and the guarantors were actively considering a number of what they saw as plausible alternative political arrangements in Cyprus: new arrangements which would hopefully prevent further conflict and, most importantly for the guarantors, would continue to serve the interests of Britain, Greece and Turkey as least as well as the arrangements they had made in 1959 had been intended to do. In other words, for Britain (inevitably in close collaboration by then with the United States) and the two regional

powers it was entirely natural to perceive the situation in Cyprus first and foremost from the point of view of how events and political arrangements there were likely to affect their own interests. This was nothing new. Their approach had been exactly the same at the time of Cyprus's becoming a supposedly independent state. Although the guarantors paid lip-service to ideas of Cypriot independence and sovereignty, in fact the aspirations of the two Cypriot communities themselves were always, for the guarantors, secondary considerations.

Many Cypriot writers, on both sides of the Green Line, have expressed dismay, even horror, at this attitude on the part of the guarantors. For example, Professor Salahi Sonyel, at a conference on Cyprus some years ago, deplored the fact that, as he put it, 'in 1965, the Ürgüplü government and its foreign minister Hasan Işık were secretly, with the prodding of the Americans, covering negotiations with Mr Goskopoulos, the Foreign Minister of Greece... for the union of Cyprus with Greece'. The British, he rightly notes, had already secretly accepted *enosis* as the most promising solution to the Cyprus problem (The virtue of this particular 'solution', the British and Americans had come by then to believe, was that, by joining Cyprus politically with NATO member Greece, Russian influence in the island would be curtailed; and Makarios, much reduced in status if not actually removed from power altogether, would cease to be a nuisance). If she agreed to *enosis*, Sonyel went on, the idea was that Turkey would be granted certain compensations: either a military base in Karpas or, the British government suggested, one of the British bases already in Cyprus, preferably Dhekelia, as well as some land in Western Thrace. Sonyel concluded: 'In view of these terrible revelations, I sometimes get nightmares about what Turkish politicians are up to.'⁴

Yes, Sonyel, having personally experienced (as well as closely studied) Cyprus's recent past, may well, simply as a Turkish Cypriot, suffer from such fears. But isn't it a little surprising to find Sonyel, the professional student of international relations, expressing such horror at these 'revelations' about Turkey? After all, it was almost inevitable that a NATO member with a

⁴ Doğramacı, Emel et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress on Cypriot Studies*, 20–23 November, 1996 (EMU Press, Famagusta, 1997), pp. 106–7.

special interest in and responsibility for Cyprus would, at that time, have seriously to consider the possibility of *enosis* as a solution to the Cyprus problem. Why? Because, as I just noted, with *enosis* effected and with Greece in charge of Cyprus, the hope was that any further Greek Cypriot dallying with the Soviet Union could be stopped. The granting of a base in Cyprus for Turkey's use might well have allayed her worries about having an extension of Greece so near her southern shores. The Turkish Cypriots themselves could hardly have favoured such a 'solution', of course. But who were they? Perhaps 120,000 people at most, living off the mainland and involving Turkey in all kinds of difficulties. No doubt the guarantors might have tried to persuade themselves that under *enosis* the Turkish Cypriots could be given some special status and protection.

So from the perspective of the guarantors, and indeed that of the Western Alliance as a whole, *enosis* seemed during the cold war to provide one of the very few ways – and doubtless the most obvious way – out of a seemingly intractable, and quite dangerous, mess. Partition of the island between Greece and Turkey was another conceivable alternative; but this met with firm opposition from Makarios and Greece and most UN member states. Given these facts, was it unreasonable for Turkish diplomats to consider *enosis* as a possible way of achieving a viable settlement? I hardly think so. And we must remember that a 'settlement', even a viable settlement, in the minds of non-Cypriots easily comes to mean any arrangement that suits the powers that be; not necessarily an arrangement that best suits the Cypriots.

As things turned out, interestingly enough, Turkey soon backed away from that particular solution. And it might be observed that had Turkey not taken over more than a third of the island after the attempted Greek coup and unilateral *enosis*-bid in 1974, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots would have had no 'compensations' at all for what had already become *de facto* Greek hegemony in Cyprus. From 1963–1974, the Turkish Cypriots had been reduced to something much less than a 'protected minority'. They had no representation in the government of their own country – the international community being apparently quite happy to accept wholly Greek Cypriot administrations as governments of Cyprus.

Quite naturally, the reason Cypriots themselves are often fiercely critical of positions adopted by their mother countries, as well as by Britain, since the breakdown (Sonyel elsewhere rightly calls it the ‘destruction’) of the original Cyprus Republic in 1963, is that, Cypriots have their own preferences about their own destiny. Today the two communities differ – on the face of it irreconcilably – about what new arrangements should be put in place to safeguard their future. But it is interesting to note how, since 1968, the UN-sponsored negotiations concerning Cyprus’s future have been ostensibly conducted between the leaders of the two communities alone. This doesn’t actually represent as big a change in the influence of those major forces behind the theoretical thrones – the guarantors, the United States, and now the EU – as it may seem to. As I see it, such negotiations often simply serve to obscure where the real power lies.

The Republic of Cyprus: a diplomatic fiction?

This apparent placing, since 1968, of the Cypriots’ destiny in their own hands is due to some of the changes in attitude, in the UN and more widely, that we will eventually come to. The need felt by the international community to go along with the fiction that there still exists an independent sovereign Cyprus Republic which must be allowed to solve its own problems is a hangover from the early 1960s, when the Wilsonian principle of ‘self-determination’ was revived as a catch-phrase within the Non-aligned Movement. As everybody knows, however, with the exception of Russia, the same regional and global powers who took it upon themselves to decide Cyprus’s fate in the 1950s and 1960s are still exerting what will surely be decisive pressures on the two Cypriot sides today. Can anyone seriously doubt that if an accommodation is found so that a new political arrangement can emerge – whether it be called federation, confederation, or what have you – this will have to be something minimally acceptable to Britain, Greece, Turkey, the United States, the UN, and, of course now, the EU? So to some extent I share Professor Sonyel’s fears, though not his surprise and indignation. With all these forceful decision-makers, together with the Greek Cypriots, seeking a ‘viable and just’ solution, the small Turkish Cypriot community

may, once more, be marginalized. Still, the continuing solidarity between the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey – a country now much stronger than ever before in its modern history – should, if it persists, prevent that.

Realism versus idealism in international relations

Given the realities of Cyprus's geopolitical importance, should one really find this lack of genuine Cypriot autonomy (Greek no less than Turkish) surprising? That large powers will subordinate small powers (and Cyprus, with a total population still less than 1m, is a very small power) is the most elementary fact of international relations. Small powers with valuable natural resources or strategic locations will be particularly susceptible to such manipulation. When, moreover, a small country consists of two very different communities with little common identity who have always felt centrifugal allegiances to other, much larger (and historically antagonistic) neighbouring states, developing some modicum of national autonomy becomes especially difficult.

Well-intended, even admirable, paragraphs in the UN Charter, for instance, condemning colonialism and neo-colonialism – and by 1967, we may recall, the UN had voted colonialism to be 'a crime against humanity' – and insisting on the 'unfettered independence' and political equality of all states, will not alone bring into being such model conditions. A programmatic manifesto of ideals, though very worthwhile in itself, will not prevent the strongest nations or groupings of nations (the US, the EU, NATO, even on occasion OPEC, for instance) using and abusing their considerable coercive ability to refashion other parts of the world in accordance with their own self-images, or to serve their own far from disinterested goals.⁵ Like Britain, and the other European colonial states in the past, and to a considerable extent like the United States today, 'major powers' and 'super powers' are susceptible to their own illusions. They are frequently prone to one illusion in particular: the belief that such naked dominance as they can exercise is

⁵ There are, of course, more positive ways of looking at the role of major powers which it would be a serious mistake to ignore. For example, consider the following point made by a former British Ambassador: (*vide p. 15*)

actually for the good of the less powerful states themselves, and indeed for mankind as a whole! As we know, throughout history, evangelising of this kind has frequently acted as an unconscious cover for the use of brute force or economic and other sanctions against weaker nations, the real purpose of which is to reaffirm the supremacy of some imperial power. Today we can surely detect more than a little of this in the attitude of some EU member states towards the Turkish Cypriots, and of course towards Turkey.

British policy on Cyprus: today and yesterday

Britain's policy on Cyprus is not of course at the present time exactly what it was during the period of the cold war. Yet, for the most part, just as in the 1960s, when they were loath to upset Makarios with really firm demands that he should adhere to the Cyprus constitution, and generally respect the 1960 Accords, so today British diplomats – like most of their colleagues in the EU – are most reluctant to question the legitimacy of Cyprus's now long-accepted all-Greek government .

That direct result of their own original 'timidity', Britain now argues, is an irreversible *fait accompli*. (Though with evident inconsistency, she still maintains, for reasons of her own, that the 1960 Accords are valid agreements!). We shall look at this inconsistency and Britain's reasons for indulging in it shortly.

'Our understanding of hegemonial authority requires us not merely to perceive the major part which it plays, but also to recognize that at present there is no other significant motive force in favour of the aims of peace and order, material well-being, or protection of human rights and the environment... What would happen if the strongest hegemonial powers repudiated their hegemonial responsibilities? Let us suppose that some colossal upsurge of donor fatigue and moral indifference somehow removed all hegemonial pressures, inducements and aid from the international scene. Few if any will doubt that as one result economic prosperity, human rights, the protection of the environment and even military security would decline in the world... Life would become less homogenized, more varied and more experimental, but as Hobbes warned, nastier and shorter.

'We need not worry. In the present phase of international society the hegemonial authority of the great powers is not decreasing, but growing stronger and more pervasive. Even so the risk is not that they will do too much, but that they will do too little! Adam Watson, *The Limits of Independence: Relations between States in the Modern World* (London, 1997), p. 128.

The main difference between Britain's current concerns in the Eastern Mediterranean region, as compared with the 1960s, is that, with the demise of the Soviet Union, Western security has become more broadly focused. British concerns today may perhaps be summarised as follows:

- (a) The desire to keep NATO, with its now somewhat wider mission, in one piece, with Greece and Turkey cooperating rather than quarrelling. This is, of course, a position Britain shares with the United States (and happily, since the remarkable rapprochement between Greece and Turkey which began in the autumn of 1999, this first objective still seems to be getting nearer fulfilment than at any time in recent decades).
- (b) The need to retain at least one of the British Base Areas in Cyprus to serve Western interests in one of the world's most volatile (and oil-rich) regions – where, moreover, Britain and the US have few entirely reliable friends and a number of very disturbing enemies and potential enemies. These now include a variety of Islamic terrorist groups and at least one remaining 'rogue state', Iran, which appears to be determined to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them.
- (c) More recently, the desire for a united, stable, prosperous, Western-oriented Cyprus that would form the South-Eastern edge of what we now call the European Union. This, Britain, the US, the EU, and indeed the UN, believed would be best achieved by a settlement involving a bizonal federal arrangement between the two Cypriot communities possessing a 'single political personality', with something approaching equal power-sharing in the federal government. Alas, this kind of arrangement, at least as elaborated in detail in the 2004 Annan Plan, has been firmly rejected by the Greek Cypriots, while the Turkish Cypriots, encouraged by Turkey, overwhelmingly accepted it. As I mentioned, by nevertheless allowing a still divided and unreconciled and wholly Greek-run 'Cyprus' into the EU, the international community has unfortunately further exacerbated an already extremely difficult problem.

The first two of these requirements, (a) and (b), have remained a fairly constant part of Britain's agenda for 40 years; the third one, now rendered harder to achieve, is a natural outgrowth of the other two. And, as I have

argued, it is these concerns, rather than any imperative about formal adherence to Britain's duties as a 'guarantor power', that have been uppermost in the minds of British diplomats from the 1960s to the present day. Unfortunately, as we also noted, this has meant that Britain – no doubt without specifically intending it – has consistently played a leading role in helping the Greek Cypriots and Greece to marginalize the Turkish Cypriots. As the one EU member who knew everything about the Cyprus problem, and hence about the seriously misleading nature of Greek Cypriot propaganda, it seems a great pity that Britain decided not to oppose the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU while the island was still known to be governed, unconstitutionally, by a wholly Greek Cypriot administration. To understand this British reluctance we need to take a more detailed look at the history of Cyprus in the 1960s.

Greek Cypriot illegal legislation in the 1960s

Equality of status between the two Cypriot communities was certainly not something that was being assured after UN Security Council resolution 186 of 4th March 1964. Once Makarios, with the aid of that resolution, had got his purely Greek administration at first simply *called* – and then, as time went on, actually *recognised* as – 'the government of Cyprus', the Turkish Cypriots knew that their real ordeal had only just begun.

One can't help being struck by the very determined and systematic way Makarios went about his ruthless business. His achievements were considerable. His was a provincial regime, partly made up of ex-EOKA 'heroes' who had had to be rewarded with ministerial portfolios for their role in getting Britain out of Cyprus. Dependent in its complex dealings with the international community largely on the skills of British-trained lawyers (themselves not especially noted for their general culture or diplomatic experience), this somewhat rustic Greek Cypriot administration very nearly succeeded in holding much larger, and incomparably more sophisticated, powers at bay and in turning Cyprus into a Greek island.

Having taken over all the organs of the state, the Greek Cypriots proceeded, with the international community's apparent connivance, to consolidate

their position as the recognised government of the Republic. One of their main means of achieving this status was by the comprehensive enactment of illegal legislation. These measures were illegal because they were taken in the absence of the Turkish members of the House of Representatives and despite the exercise of his veto by the Turkish Vice-President, Dr Küçük.

Great Britain, both in Parliament and at the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, showed at least some serious concern about these activities. But HMG took no effective steps to stop the legislation, much of which actually contravened some of the 'basic' (and unchangeable) articles of the Cyprus constitution. This was a constitution all three guarantors had, needless to say, agreed to protect from precisely any such attempted amendments.

In April, 1968, Robin Edmonds, Head of the Mediterranean Department at the British Commonwealth Office, wrote to John Phillips, Deputy High Commissioner in Cyprus, asking for a list of HMG's protests to the Cyprus Government about these dubious pieces of legislation. Phillips's reply was rather late in coming:

British High Commission, Nicosia
31 May, 1968

Dear Robin,

I am sorry not to have replied earlier to your letter of 22 April about our protests to the Cyprus Government about legislation etc. which we consider is contrary to the 1960 Constitution: the research involved has taken longer than I expected.

I enclose copies of the five protests we have made since 1964. These concern:—

- (a) the setting up of the Supreme Court in 1964;
- (b) the formation of the National Guard;
- (c) the dissolution of the Greek Communal Chamber and the appointment of a Minister of Education;
- (d) the Public Service Commission Law;
- (e) the appointment of two Greek Cypriot Ministers in 1966.

There are two other flagrantly unconstitutional Laws which have been passed since 1964 about which, as far as I am able to trace, we did not protest. These are the Law unifying the Police and the Gendarmerie... and the Municipalities Law... The Turkish Government protested vigorously about the passage of this Law.

Yours ever,
John⁶

This was not a complete list of Greek Cypriot illegal enactments in the 1960s.⁷ Shortly we will be concerned not so much with the details of these illegalities, which have been amply discussed elsewhere, but with the thinking behind the British decision not to seriously oppose them; not to oppose them, that is, with anything like the firmness one might have expected a guarantor to summon up under such highly intimidating circumstances.

As we shall see, British diplomats decided, for reasons of British self-interest, not to 'upset the boat', as one of them put it. It will be most instructive to follow their thought-processes at the time quite closely.

The background of events in Cyprus, 1967–68

First we must briefly recall some of the more immediately relevant local events that took place in Cyprus and elsewhere during 1967–68. For although the British documents we shall be concerned with only mention these events occasionally and *en passant*, British diplomats were very much aware of them at the time. And this awareness explains some of the exceedingly cautious positions taken up in their deliberations about how to respond to what the 'Cyprus government' was doing.

Since at least May, 1966, discussions had been going on between Greece and Turkey with a view to solving the Cyprus problem. These discussions broke down without agreement in September, 1967, largely because Greece was

⁶ The reference number for this, and the other FO documents I quote from, is FCO 27/70, unless otherwise stated.

⁷ For a fuller account of these enactments, see Ahmet Gazioğlu's contribution to our joint booklet already mentioned on p. 1 of this article, together with Appendix 1 in that volume.

insisting on *enosis* which eventually proved to be unacceptable to Turkey (though, as we noted earlier, Turkey did consider the suggestion seriously). As part of certain concessions Makarios was forced to make because of the Kophinou incident (which we shall describe in a moment), in June 1968 the first round of intercommunal talks took place between Clerides and Denктаş. These were concerned with a possible revision of the Cyprus constitution and it is these talks that are obliquely being referred to in some of the British documents we will look at.

In April, 1967, the military junta had taken over in Greece, and on June 27 the Greek Cypriot deputies passed a celebrated, and highly provocative, resolution declaring that the struggle for *enosis* would continue 'despite any adverse circumstances'. As if to prove their point, the Greek Cypriots launched a devastating assault on the Turkish Cypriot village of Kophinou (Gecitkale) and on the Turkish inhabitants of a nearby village, both in the Larnaca District. This was in mid-November, 1967. The attack was led by the Greek General (formerly Colonel) Grivas, already well-known to the British through his EOKA terrorist campaign against them in the late 1950s.

The Kophinou incident created a major international crisis. Greece and Turkey were saved from war only by American intervention and intense shuttle diplomacy by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Makarios was made to agree to cease hostilities and, at Turkey's insistence, to return to Greece both Grivas and a large contingent of Greek officers and men (about 10,000). These were personnel the Archbishop had, since 1964 (at about the time his 'national guard' was formed), clandestinely smuggled into Cyprus. It was later revealed that in April, 1964, Makarios had made a secret pact with the then Greek Premier, George Papandreou, to receive into Cyprus about 20,000 Greek mainland soldiers and large quantities of weapons and ammunition. In this way, Makarios had apparently believed, it would be possible to prevent any intervention by Turkey while he continued to massacre Turkish Cypriots, thus consolidating his aim of making Cyprus Greek. (Precisely as the Turkish Cypriots had feared, after the passing of UN Security Council resolution 186).

Although they appeared to be at first unaware of the extent of Makarios's importation of Greek men and arms, British diplomats knew very well that his enactments concerning the formation of the national guard, for instance – in which it was later made 'legal' for Greek mainland military personnel to participate – was an extremely nefarious development. In any case, if any reminder was needed this was unambiguously supplied by Dr Küçük in a letter dated 24 July, 1967, addressed to the then Secretary–General of the UN, U Thant – a letter that is included among the recently released FCO papers. This is what Küçük told the Secretary–General:

His Excellency U Thant
Secretary–General of the United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Nicosia, 24 July 1967

Excellency,

Your Excellency has, no doubt, already been informed that Greek members of the House of Representatives have approved on 11 July 1967 a so-called "law" amending the already unconstitutional "national guard laws 1964 to 1966" by the addition thereto of a new section empowering the Council of ministers to authorize the "national guard commander" who is a Greek general from Greece to appoint to the force officers and men who are not citizens of the Republic.

Needless to say, both the principal law and all the amendments thereto are null and void "ab initio" not only because they are repugnant to and inconsistent with certain mandatory provisions of the Constitution of the Republic but also because they are subject to the veto of the Vice–President of the Republic which has, in fact, been exercised against the principal law.

It is evident that the intention of the Greek leadership is to provide a cloak of "legality" to the status of the Greek officers and men – approximately 10,000 in number – secretly imported into the island, by integrating them into the so-called "national guard", the declared aim of which is to destroy the independent status of Cyprus and unite its territory with Greece.

This action is viewed by the Turkish Community and its leaders with utmost concern, in that it constitutes a grave threat to the security

and well-being of the Turkish Cypriot Community. As a matter of fact the complaint made in paragraph 14 of Your Excellency's last report on Cyprus to the Security Council (S/7969) that the national guard addressed "intemperately-worded communications" to UNFICYP "amounting virtually to ultimata" and threatening the use of force against Turkish Cypriots in the event of non-compliance by UNFICYP with the national guard's wishes, shows how justified the Turkish Cypriots are in their anxiety over this matter. It is feared that the officers and men secretly imported into Cyprus from Greece will be merged into the national guard and through this devious method the Greek side will be able to increase immensely its military strength and intensify their warlike preparations.

This in itself amounts to a complete disregard by the Greek Government as well as the Greek Cypriot leaders of the continuous call made by the Security Council in its resolutions of Cyprus to all parties to "refrain from any action or threat of action which is likely to worsen the situation in Cyprus". A close analysis of the situation in Cyprus will reveal that the presence of these foreign troops in Cyprus and their integration into the local forces is worse than helping mercenaries in the Congo, which has unanimously been condemned by the Security Council on 10 July 1967.

I earnestly hope that the Security Council will not condone this and other actions of the Greek leaders which are taken with the object of destroying the independence of Cyprus and terrorizing and dominating the Turkish Community, but will move to take steps to check them in time.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Fazıl Küçük
Vice President of the Republic of Cyprus⁸

The role of the Non-aligned Movement in Cyprus's affairs

As I have tried to show elsewhere,⁹ U Thant himself was a devout supporter of the Non-aligned Movement. Because of this affiliation, it is

⁸ UN document S/8099; FCO 27/152

⁹ See, for example, mine *Sovereignty Divided: Essays on the International Dimensions of the Cyprus Problem* (3rd enlarged impression, Nicosia, 1999), pp. 29–30 and 60f.

not surprising that the Secretary-General was predisposed to believe the trouble in Cyprus was in large part due, not so much to the hegemonic aspirations of Makarios, but to the wider machinations of NATO. Britain, Greece, and Turkey, he thought, were responsible for saddling the 1960 Cyprus Republic (whose population was 80% Greek) with a constitution unduly favouring the Turkish 'minority', a circumstance originating in an attempt by the guarantors to balance, and indeed perpetuate, their own interests in the island. This, he considered, would inevitably have pitted the two Cypriot communities against each other. The same supposedly rather unscrupulous and self-serving Western powers had, moreover, in Thant's eyes, firmly bound the newly-emerged Cyprus Republic – itself a notable founder-member of the Non-aligned Movement – to themselves by dubious international instruments (notably by the Treaty of Guarantee) which limited Cyprus's political independence.

As Thant saw him, Makarios was, moreover, a figure generally to be admired. He had known the Archbishop from at least the time of the first Non-aligned conference held in Belgrade in 1961, where Thant had represented his own country, Burma. Even then Thant had come to believe that Cyprus was a tiny emerging nation in need of protection from the presumptuous intrigues of the former colonial power and its NATO allies. Consequently, later, as Secretary-General – while condemning Makarios's military attacks on the Turkish Cypriots, attacks which he naively found surprising as well as disgraceful – Thant did little to stand in the way of the Archbishop's assumption of power in Cyprus. A Greek Cypriot government seemed to Thant to be quite justified on majoritarian grounds; though, of course, he realised there were good ways as well as bad ways of trying to establish it.

So, despite Küçük's frequent and impassioned letters to the Secretary-General, complaining persuasively about Greek Cypriot atrocities, the importation of foreign military personnel and arms, the passing of illegal enactments in the now wholly Greek House of Representatives, and other matters, Thant rarely responded sympathetically to anything but the physical atrocities and the economic blockade against the Turks. Makarios's overriding goal, of making Cyprus Greek, didn't strike the Secretary-General as something to worry about.

It's interesting to note, too – as a sign of what I have often referred to as the logical inconsistency in the international community's handling of the Cyprus problem, from this time onwards – that Küçük still signed himself 'Vice-President of the Republic of Cyprus' when engaging in correspondence at the highest diplomatic levels. He continued to do this right until the end of the 1960s; and no one (apart from the Greek Cypriots, of course) questioned his right to use that title. Nor was there any legal ground upon which they *could* question it. Nevertheless, the UN Secretary-General, two of the guarantors, and the international community at large, simultaneously saw Makarios's all-Greek administration as at first the *de facto* Cyprus government, and gradually, after only a few years, as the *de jure* Cyprus government. They did nothing at all effective to prevent the Greek Cypriots consolidate that manifestly unconstitutional status. Moreover, in assuming this one-sided stance, the international community at that time – apparently very like the EU today, which was prepared to accept 'Cyprus' as a member even after the Greek Cypriots had rejected the Annan Plan – sincerely thought they were helping to solve the Cyprus problem!

Britain's gradual recognition of the Makarios regime

At first, British protests at the illegal Greek Cypriot legislation were reasonably firm and expressed in terms that one might have expected from the former colonial, and now guarantor, power. Thus in 1964, not long after the passing of resolution 186 and the appointment of a mediator to try to resolve the Cyprus dispute, HMG instructed their High Commissioner to send the following request to the Greek Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Compulsory Military Service

The British High Commissioner in the Republic of Cyprus presents his compliments to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and has the honour to inform the Minister that the British Government have been concerned at reports that the Government of Cyprus intend to introduce a Bill in the Cyprus House of Representatives to provide for the introduction of compulsory military service.

Article 129 of the Cyprus Constitution requires that compulsory military service shall not be instituted except by common agreement of the President and Vice-President of the Republic. Article 129 is a

basic article in the terms of Article 182, and by Article II of the Treaty of Guarantee the British Government, as a Guarantor Power, recognise and guarantee the state of affairs established by the basic articles of the Constitution.

The British Government would welcome an assurance from the Government of Cyprus that these reports are without foundation. In their view the introduction of compulsory military service without the agreement of the Vice-President would be in breach of a basic article of the Constitution, and in addition would not be in conformity with paragraph 1 of the Resolution adopted in the Security Council of the United Nations of 4th March, 1964.

The British High Commissioner takes this opportunity to renew to the Minister of Foreign Affairs the assurances of his highest consideration.

British High Commission,

Nicosia.

27th May 1964

This was not a formal protest, of course, because the proposed enactment had not yet taken place. It was, nevertheless, an unmistakable reminder of British concern that the Cyprus constitution, and – most importantly, the rights of the Turkish Cypriots under that constitution – should be complied with. Two months later, the High Commissioner sent another Note, this time a full formal protest at further illegal legislation which had actually been passed by the Greeks in the House of Representatives. Once more, the British government did not hesitate to remind the Greek Cypriots that this legislation blatantly contravened the Constitution. And, once again, Britain showed no nervousness about describing herself as ‘a guarantor power’. British concern about the absence of Turkish Cypriot members in the House was also explicit:

The British Government have noted that the Cyprus House of Representatives sitting without the Turkish members, passed into law on 9th July an Act setting up a new Supreme Court in place of the High Court and Constitutional Court, reconstituting the Supreme Council of Judicature, and making other changes in respect of the administration of justice in Cyprus.

As one of the Guarantor Powers, the British Government further notes that this action has been taken in breach of numerous articles of the

Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, particularly in Parts IX and X including some of the Basic Articles of the Constitution specially protected by Article II of the Treaty of Guarantee.

The British Government protest at this unconstitutional action which is also contrary to the provisions of the first operative clause of the Security Council Resolution of 4th March, 1964. They understand that the measures are of a temporary nature and that it is the intention to review them in the light of recommendations for a political settlement to be made by the United Nations Mediator. The British Government would be grateful for confirmation that this is the case.

London,

20th July 1964

Unsurprisingly, the British government never received satisfactory replies to Notes of this kind. The typical response on the part of the Makarios administration was to claim that these issues were 'internal' matters that had nothing to do with the British government. And this tactic seemed to work. Even less than a year later one can detect a distinctly more cautious, less self-confident, tone in the British Notes. References to the excluded Turkish Cypriots are now rare.

For example, in April 1965 in response to the Greek Cypriots' abolition of their Communal Chamber (an institution no longer meaningful in a wholly Greek regime), and their appointment of a Minister of Education (unnecessary under the 1960 constitution, which gave the Greek and Turkish Communal Chambers responsibility for education), the British Note merely 'regretted' this *fait accompli*. And there is now no mention of Britain's status as a guarantor:

The British High Commission presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the honour to refer to recent reports that on 23 March the Greek Communal Chamber declared itself dissolved, that subsequently, on 30 March, the House of Representatives passed a Bill establishing a Ministry of Education and that on the following day His Beatitude, Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic appointed Dr. Costas Spyridou Spyridakis to be Minister of Education.

The British Government have noted these developments which appear to involve breaches of basic articles of the Constitution establishing the

Communal Chambers and conferring certain functions exclusively on them. The British Government regret that these developments should have occurred in view of the repeated calls by the Security Council on the two communities and their leaders to act with restraint, and of our own appeal to all parties concerned to avoid actions likely to make the process of mediation more difficult.

The British High Commission avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assurances of their highest consideration.

3 April, 1965

Why were Britain's objections to these illegal activities becoming more subdued? And why was Britain referring so often to the Greeks' duties in relation to the UN's appeal for cooperation with the UN peace initiative (laid down in resolution 186), rather than to their surely more fundamental obligations under the 1960 Accords? An important part of the answer is that the Makarios administration was gaining credibility both in the eyes of the UN Secretary-General and in international fora.

Makarios's manoeuvres on the international stage

The Cyprus UN mediator's final deliberations (the Plaza Report), which U Thant received on 26 March, 1965, had advocated that the Turkish Cypriots should be seen in future as a minority in a Greek-dominated Cyprus. This was very much in line with Thant's own thinking. And, although – for different reasons – the Report was rejected by both Cypriot sides, forcing Plaza to resign, its overall perspective proved to be influential. Much of what Plaza advocated, as a solution to the Cyprus problem, had been first voiced and approved at the Non-aligned conference held in Cairo in October, 1964. Particularly disturbing for the British had been that conference's recommendation about the 'elimination of the foreign bases in Cyprus.' Plaza himself had not suggested, in so many words, that the British Base Areas be given to the Cypriots. But he was convinced that the 1960 constitution was 'odd' and unworkable and that the Accords as a whole had no place in a country that should enjoy 'self-determination.'

When Makarios raised the Cyprus question at the UN General Assembly in December, 1965, he managed to obtain a resolution that strongly re-affirmed his assumption of power in Cyprus. The future of the Bases was not mentioned in the final draft, doubtless because the British were now seen by the Archbishop to be rather more acquiescent as regards his illegal enactments. (Also the Bases were of great economic value to the Greek Cypriots who were largely responsible for servicing them; with the rise of tourism, however, that factor was losing significance). But operative paragraph 1 stated, quite unequivocally, that the Assembly took 'cognisance of the fact that the Republic of Cyprus as an equal member of the United Nations, is, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, entitled to enjoy, and should enjoy, full sovereignty and complete independence without any foreign intervention or interference.' (Resolution 2077 of 18 December, 1965). There can be no doubt that by 'the Republic of Cyprus' here the Assembly meant the country now actually – and, in the Assembly's view properly – ruled by the Greek Cypriots.

It was not mandatory for any state to obey a resolution of the General Assembly. And it can't be said that this resolution led the British government to give up its belief that the 1960 Accords were still valid. Still, by the end of 1965, what this *did* mean was that the larger part of international opinion was on the side of Makarios. Unlike in times of past imperial glory, HMG could not afford to ignore this. The British, for whom the retention and proper functioning of their Bases was of paramount importance, felt they had now little option but to step warily in their dealings with the Greek Cypriots.

Britain, once all-powerful in Cyprus, now bows to Makarios.

In fact, by the middle of 1968 Britain had given up all pretence of effectively asserting her rights (or doing her duty, if you like) as a guarantor in Cyprus.

Discussions about Makarios's illegal enactments continued in the early part of the year. On 5 February, 1968, Robin Edmonds of the Commonwealth Office wrote to Sir James Petrie, a senior legal adviser, about 'Protests to the Cyprus government against legislation that we regard as contrary to the

terms of the 1960 Treaties'. (One should note the cautious phrasing: 'that we regard', not 'which are'). Edmonds's area of concern was this: should HMG actually continue to make representations to the Makarios regime – for instance about the current Greek Cypriot national guard legislation – since all this seemed to do was to aggravate relations between Britain and 'Cyprus'? Or should Britain protest, at any rate mildly and as a legal formality, just in case silence on these relatively minor matters were later construed as British acquiescence in any violations of the 1960 Accords at all – including possible future violations of those parts of the Accords that really mattered to Britain, namely the Treaties of Establishment and of Guarantee?

Sir James McPetrie

Protests to the Cyprus Government Against Legislation That We Regard as Contrary to the Terms of the 1960 Treaties

You will remember that we discussed this the other day with Sir N. Costar [British High Commissioner in Cyprus, 1967–69]. The High Commissioner argued that so much water had now passed under the bridge that protests coming from the British Government alone were no longer credible and served only as an irritant to our relations with the Cyprus Government. I think you took the view that it would be difficult to decide here and now that we should stop all protests, since this might have a bearing on our rights under the Treaty of Establishment later on, if these were called in question by the Cyprus Government. On the other hand, you were inclined to agree that in present circumstances it would be politically unwise to put in a protest about National Guard legislation to the Cyprus Government.

2. I should be grateful if you could now have a look at the attached papers regarding the National Guard legislation ... Sir N. Costar recommended that we should either postpone presentation of our proposed note of protest or persuade other governments to take parallel action in Athens as well, as part of a general effort to secure the disbandment of the National Guard. (As you know, this latter question is the only one outstanding from the Greco–Turkish Agreement negotiated by Mr. Vance last year)... Personally, I am inclined to agree with the view... that if we were to deliver a note of the kind proposed at present, it would be impossible to persuade the Cyprus Government that this was not part of

a political manoeuvre in support of the Turkish position. On the other hand, if we are going to present a protest one day, I am not sure how long we can decently postpone it.

3. I should be grateful for your views.

R.H.G. Edmonds

(Middle East, Western and United Nations Department)¹⁰

McPetrie's reply was a little long-winded and showed the usual international lawyers' penchant for Ciceronian cadences. It is well-worth reading, however, not only because of its rather careful and charming mode of argumentation (the result of centuries of British mental discipline in law and diplomacy), but more especially because it makes perfectly clear the fact that Britain's only real concern about the Greek Cypriots' unconstitutional behaviour was, by now, the extent to which that behaviour might, under certain circumstances, affect Britain's own interests in Cyprus.

Mr. Edmonds

Protests to Cyprus Government against violations of 1960 Treaties

Please refer to your minute to me of 5 February. A violation of the Constitution by the Government of the Republic constitutes a breach of Article I of the Treaty of Guarantee. Moreover, where it is one of the Basic Articles of the Constitution that is violated, the violation constitutes an interference with that "state of affairs" that was expressly guaranteed by the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey under Article II of the Treaty.

2. The purpose of recording a protest against such a breach of the Treaty is to demonstrate that we, as a party to the Treaty, do not acquiesce in the breach in question; and we ought in principle to demonstrate our non-acquiescence in this way because, if our conduct was such that it could reasonably be inferred that we had acquiesced in a breach or series of breaches of the Treaty, it might be held, or at any rate maintained, that we had abandoned particular rights conferred on us by the Treaty or, more generally, that we regarded the Treaty as a dead letter and could no longer invoke it against another party. (There does not seem to be any clear authority on the consequences in international law of failure to protest against a breach of a treaty and the foregoing is based on the

¹⁰FCO 27/152, 5 February 1968

analogy of the consequences that may flow from the failure of a State to protest against the violation of rights arising otherwise that under a treaty.)

3. I suppose that on general grounds we would wish to maintain the position that the Treaty of Guarantee is still in force. But we also have particular grounds for maintaining that this is so, since under Article III the other signatories (i) undertake to respect the integrity of the Sovereign Base Areas and (ii) guarantee the defence rights and facilities within the territory of the Republic accorded to us by the Treaty of Establishment. Neither the Crown's title to the Sovereign Base Areas nor our rights and facilities in the Republic are, of course, dependent upon Article III but that Article, for what it is worth, affords some insurance against attempts to interfere with British sovereignty over the Areas or with our rights and facilities in the Republic.

4. Some further deferment of our proposed protest in respect of the 1967 amendment of the National Guard legislation will not, in my opinion, prejudice our position that the Treaty of Guarantee is still in force. We have, after all, as a guaranteeing power protested on a number of occasions at other violations of the Constitution. We also protested at the National Guard legislation itself when the principal law was enacted in 1964, though we mistakenly took our stand on one particular point (failure to obtain the agreement of the Vice-President contrary to Article 129) instead of objecting to the legislation as being generally in violation of Part VIII of the Constitution. It is impossible for me to say how long we can continue to defer a protest against the National Guard legislation in general or the 1967 amendment in particular if the protest is to be efficacious for the purpose of rebutting any contention that we acquiesced in the breach of the Treaty which was caused by this unconstitutional legislation. Strictly such a protest ought to be delivered within a reasonable period after we become aware of the breach of the Treaty. The question of the National Guard is, I understand, currently the subject of other diplomatic activity directed towards a general settlement of the Cyprus problem. If it is thought that in the circumstances a protest against the National Guard legislation by us at this particular juncture might prejudice the chances of achieving such a settlement, then I think it would be reasonable to delay the delivery of our protest and if we wished to proceed with the protest at a later stage we could insert in it a passage explaining why delivery had been deferred. Though one cannot speak with any certainty, I should have thought that a protest prefaced by such an explanation would probably be good enough to rebut any inference

that our earlier silence had indicated acquiescence – at any rate if we got our explanation in before the Cyprus Government sought to make that inference. In short, if there are good political reasons for not delivering the protest at this juncture we could without much risk hold our hand and see how things develop. Even if we were held to have acquiesced in the National Guard legislation generally or in some particular amendment of it, it does not follow that we must therefore be regarded as having abandoned the Treaty of Guarantee, since we have protested on previous occasions about other breaches of the Constitution.

5. The particular importance of the National Guard legislation in this context seems to be that it is the latest example of a violation of the Constitution contrary to the Treaty. Even if there are special reasons for not protesting against this particular violation, there may be other violations in the future where this is not the case. However embarrassing it may be for us that our High Commissioner should be the front runner in delivering these protests, I do not think that we can at this time decide that such embarrassment is in itself a sufficient reason for making no further protests except when we can persuade other Governments to take parallel action. The United Kingdom is in this respect in a special position as one of the signatories to the Treaty of Guarantee and this could give silence on our part in face of unconstitutional action that amounted to a breach of the Treaty a significance that would not attach to silence on the part of a State that was not a signatory to the Treaty. In view of what Sir N. Costar said to us when last he was home, you may think that we ought to give some consideration to our general attitude in the matter of such protests. If you wish we can do this; but it seems to me that the conclusion that is likely to emerge from a general consideration of the matter would be a negative one, viz. that the possibility of future protests cannot be ruled out.

6. You mention in your minute the point which I made at our meeting with Sir N. Costar that the question whether as a party to the Treaty of Guarantee we should continue to protest against unconstitutional action by the Government of the Republic does have some importance in relation to the Treaty of Establishment.

This is, of course, true but I would emphasise that the connection is not a direct one. What I meant was this – if by continued silence in the face of breaches of the Treaty of Guarantee we put ourselves in a position where we cannot convincingly maintain that we regard the Treaty of Guarantee as still in force, this might encourage others to raise the question whether the Treaty of Establishment should still be regarded as in force

on the ground that the two Treaties and the Constitution formed, as it were, a package deal. There would, of course, be no reason in logic why we should accept such a contention, for the Treaty of Establishment is capable of standing on its own feet irrespective of whether the Treaty of Guarantee is still operative.

J.C. McPetrie

18 March, 1968

After this exchange of letters, and a few other discussions, the Commonwealth Office wrote to the High Commissioner in Cyprus enclosing a draft protest note to the 'Cyprus government' together with the following instructions:

To: Sir N. Costar, K.C.M.G.
British High Commission,
Nicosia

You will remember that while you were here in February you and Robin Edmonds discussed with Hamish McPetrie the question of our protests to the Cyprus Government about legislation which we regard as contrary to the 1960 Treaties.

2. We have now looked at this question further, with the help of the Legal Advisers of both Offices [i.e., both the Foreign and the Commonwealth Offices which, at that time, were separate]. Their conclusion, which I know you will find unwelcome, is that as a Guarantor of the 1960 Constitution under the Treaty of Guarantee, we must continue to protest where we regard Cyprus legislation (or other action) as infringing Basic Articles of the Constitution. In the case of infringements of other Articles of the Constitution, which equally involve the breach of the Treaty of Guarantee (Article I), the question of protesting should in each case be considered in the light of all the circumstances (we shall wish to avoid unduly aggravating our relations with the Cyprus Government). But in any event we should not allow a series of infringements of non-Basic Articles to go unprotested in view of the need to leave the Cyprus Government in no doubt that we regard the Treaty as being alive and as giving us concern with all the provisions of the Constitution, not merely the Basic Articles.

3. Unless you see objection, therefore, would you please have the enclosed note delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In delivering this it should be pointed out that this protest indicates no change in our

general policy regarding the Cyprus dispute. If asked about our attitude to the Treaties, you should say that our view continues to be that they remain in force until otherwise agreed by all the parties concerned.

4. You will see that the last paragraph of the Note generally reserves our position for the future. This will at least make it possible for us not to protest on every instance of an unconstitutional action, although it will be necessary to instruct you from time to time to deliver a protest covering all unconstitutional acts since the last protest was delivered.

DRAFT NOTE

To: Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The British High Commission presents its compliments to the Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the honour to refer to the Public Service Law 1967. As one of the parties to the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, the British Government must point out to the Cyprus Government that certain provisions of that Law are inconsistent with, and indeed are clearly intended to override, Articles 124 and 125 of the Constitution and that accordingly their enactment is contrary to Article 179 of the Constitution. The British Government must accordingly protest to the Government of the Republic at the enactment of the provisions in question and must ask the Government of the Republic to take all necessary steps to bring their legislation on this matter again into conformity with the Constitution.

2. The British High Commission would at the same time like to draw the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the National Guard (Amendment) Law 1967, which makes certain further amendments to the National Guard Law 1964 ("the principal law"). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will recollect that in their Note to the Ministry of the 27th of May, 1964 the British High Commission communicated to the Ministry the view of the British Government, as a Guarantor Power under the Treaty of Guarantee signed at Nicosia on the 16th of August, 1960, that the enactment of the principal Law (which had not then taken place) would be in breach of a Basic Article of the Constitution of the Republic as well as being open to objection on other grounds. The British Government are obliged to point out that the Law under reference, in so far as it purports to authorise the recruitment into the forces of the Republic of persons who are neither Greeks nor Turks, as those terms are defined for the purposes of the Constitution by Article 186 thereof,

creates yet a further ground upon which the principal Law is open to objection as being contrary to the Constitution. The British Government must accordingly protest to the Government of the Republic at the enactment of the Law under reference and must ask the Government of the Republic to take all necessary steps to bring its legislation again into conformity with the Constitution, Part VIII of which does not permit the establishment of a force other than the Army and Security Forces (as defined in Article 130(1)).

The British Government believe that in relation to the enactment of other laws and in other respects, including the appointment of Ministers, the provisions of the Constitution are not always complied with by the Government of the Republic. They must reserve their position generally in regard to actions of this nature.

The High Commissioner, however, had serious misgivings about the tone and phrasing of the proposed Note to the Greek Cypriot administration. Costar was a rather distinguished diplomat who had held posts at a number of other British colonies and former colonies. These included Trinidad and Tobago where he had been High Commissioner during 1962–66, the difficult period immediately following those islands' independence from Britain. He understood only too well the resentment newly-emerged nations are apt to feel when a former colonial power seeks to question their right to independent action. He was also, as the man on the spot, aware – apparently more aware than his superiors in Whitehall – that the Makarios regime, backed by the Non-aligned Movement, by Russia, and by the UN General Assembly, were by now supremely confident about the 'justice' of their assumption of power in Cyprus. Under these circumstances, to send them an actual protest, with more than a touch of old-fashioned British distain, would, Costar thought, make his job in Cyprus even more difficult than it already was.

Costar's telegram to London in reply, and HMG's subsequent reformulation of their original Note, are quite revealing as to changed British attitudes.

Telegram No, 524

To Commonwealth Office, 27 June 1968

Cyprus – Unconstitutional Legislation Actions.

As you know, I think it is contrary to our interests in Cyprus to make any protest about Cyprus legislation which infringes the basic articles of the constitution. If nevertheless it is decided that some protest must be made, I hope further consideration can be given to the content and timing of the protest now proposed.

2. Protests by us will not be effective in securing change in past legislation or actions. They will not affect future action unless they are part of strong and concerted pressure (e.g. parallel Turkish Government protests and US and UN interest). Our protests will inevitably annoy the Cyprus Government (cf. their very dusty answer to our last protest in 1966 ...) and may adversely affect British interests particularly in the Bases. These considerations suggest that, when routine protests are necessary they should be as uncontroversially worded as is consistent with our need to preserve our position over the Cyprus treaties and guard against a further erosion of them which might directly affect our interests and that they should be very carefully timed.

3. Unlike the Public Service Commission Law about which we protested in 1965, the Public Service Law 1967 is not apparently contrary to the provisions of any basic article of the constitution. Articles 124, 125 and 179 are not basic. So far as I am aware the Turkish Government have made no protest and have not asked us to do so. At least until they do, I see little reason for differentiating between this law and other laws and actions which infringe non–basic articles of the constitution. From my point of view the best course would be to establish official relations with the new ministers and delay our protest. If the present talks [between Clerides and Denктаş] make real progress, it might be permanently shelved. If they do not, a less unfavourable time for it is likely to occur.

4. On the National Guard (Amendment) Law 1967, which has recently been slightly amended... The Turkish Government have not to my knowledge protested or asked us to protest. Need we be more Royalist than the King? Logically, too, since Greek officers have been recruited, ought we not to protest to the Greek Government too.

5. On timing generally, the advantage in acting now would be to counter–balance our action in entering into normal relations with new

unconstitutionally appointed ministers. Against this, a protest might now seem particularly clumsy and annoy the Cyprus Government unduly. The existence of the National Guard remains a key issue, which together with the whole constitutional set up is the subject of talks which have just begun. The Turkish Cypriots have admitted that much of the constitution needs changing. The Turkish Government would doubtless welcome any dig at the Greek Cypriots but the latter would almost certainly interpret our protest as encouragement to the Turks to maintain the line that negotiation of a settlement must start with acceptance by all that the 1960 Agreements remain valid and ought to be implemented. This might be particularly resented at a time when the Turks are showing signs of adopting a less legalistic approach than hitherto. And in consultations (e.g., during your recent visit here) we have been taking the line that a pragmatic step by step approach is necessary.

6. If a protest in the terms of the enclosure to the first letter under reference is leaked, as it almost certainly would be, it would cause public as well as Governmental resentment here and lend support to the Russian line, which is that the British Government do not want a Cyprus settlement. Unless the ground was carefully prepared, I wonder whether even the UN and friendly governments would sympathise with the reasons for our action...

8. But, if you decide that a protest must be made now, I recommend that it should be done in a way which is likely to minimise the possible adverse consequences, even at the expense of delaying action to refocus our original protest over the National Guard legislation... I should accordingly be grateful if the redraft of the note... could be considered.

Sir N. Costar

After considerable further discussion within the two London Offices, and an explanation to the relevant Minister of State seeking his consent to a dramatically changed Note to the Greek Cypriots (a Note that did not now actually amount to a formal protest at all), the Commonwealth Office sent Costar the following telegram:

Telegram No. 745

To Nicosia 3 July 1968

Your telegram no. 524

Confidential

Unconstitutional Legislative Action.

In the light of your arguments we have been into whole question again. We have decided that we must at this stage give some indication of our views to the Cyprus Government, but have redrafted the Note... to make it as unprovocative as possible, consistent with safeguarding our position. You should have this delivered before making your formal calls on the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of Finance. Please let us know by telegram when your call on the Minister of Finance has been made.

2. You have discretion to use the phrase "two Ministers" or "certain Ministers" in the Note, instead of spelling out the titles of the Ministers, if you think this might soften the blow.

3. No publicity will be given to this Note. H.M. Embassy Ankara should take no initiative to inform the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but may do so in general terms if the Turks themselves ask what action we have taken in respect of the specific Cyprus Government acts mentioned in this Note.

The following is the text of the Note.

The British High Commission presents its compliments to the Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, on instructions, has the honour to inform them that the British Government wish to do nothing which might aggravate the difficulties inherent in the present situation in Cyprus and, in particular, are anxious to avoid any action which might prejudice the outcome of the recent United Nations initiative over Cyprus or the prospects of success in the talks now taking place between representatives of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. The British Government have accordingly refrained from protesting at certain legislation, namely the National Guard (Amendment) Law 1967 and the Public Service Law 1967, and at the recent appointments of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce and Industry, although in the opinion of the British Government the legislation was enacted and the appointments were made in contravention of the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus.

The British Government wish, however, to point out that their attitude to the constitutional position in Cyprus has not changed and that they reserve their position generally in regard to any actions which in their view are contrary to the provisions of the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus.

The British High Commission avails etc.

Rightly or wrongly, Costar had got his way. His eventual reply to London about how this almost humiliatingly watered-down Note was received by the Greek Cypriots speaks for itself. Evidently Britain had at this point given up all pretence of asserting herself as a guarantor and, in the face of Makarios's apparently successful campaign to establish Greek hegemony on the island, British diplomats had retreated to a position of minimal interference. Their own interests were, they felt, the only things left for them to defend. The 1960 Accords as a whole – though still regarded as valid by Britain – were, in practice, in tatters.

1 August 1968

CONFIDENTIAL

Unconstitutional Legislative Action

On 30 July the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed to the Deputy High Commissioner the Ministry's reply, dated 22 July, to our Note.

2. The following is the text of the Ministry's Note:

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the British High Commission and with reference to the latter's Note of 4th July, has the honour to invite the High Commissioner's attention to the Ministry's Note of the 27th July, 1965, concerning the views of the Government of Cyprus on the constitutional position [This was, in effect, that the 'Cyprus government' could now do what it liked].

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to stress again that the appointment of Ministers and the enactment of legislation are domestic matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, a Sovereign and Independent State.

The Government of Cyprus regret, therefore, that they have no choice than to consider the contents of the said Note of the British High Commission as unacceptable.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the British High Commission the assurances of its highest consideration.”

3. In handing over the Note Benjamin stressed that the Cyprus Government wished to keep the tone of the exchange as uncontroversial as possible. Just as HMG had felt bound to state their position, so had the Cyprus Government felt bound to state theirs in reply. Benjamin hoped that we would note that the Ministry did not reject our Note but “had no choice but to consider its contents as unacceptable”.

4. There has been no publicity here for our Note or the Ministry’s reply. It is now unlikely that there will be any.

5. I hope that we can now consider the matter closed. We have succeeded in getting our position on record without damaging our relations with the Cyprus Government.

Sir N. Costar

Was this really British treachery towards the Turkish Cypriots? If not exactly that, wasn’t it then at least a more abstract and unnecessary ‘abnegation of responsibility’, as I once called it elsewhere? On reflection, I think I have now to say no to both of these questions. The British did what they felt, after much consultation, they had to do.

In conclusion, a few more concrete details about Britain’s no longer especially enviable place in the world by the 1960s may help the reader to share this more sympathetic view about Britain’s record in Cyprus. I will end with some brief reflections on the current prospects for the island, as I see them.

Britain’s predicament spelt out

From 1945 to 1967 British soldiers were in action not only in Cyprus but in a remarkable number of other places as well: Palestine, Malaya, and Kenya being perhaps the most memorable. Britain was unable to act against rebel Rhodesia (declared independent by Ian Smith in 1965). She retained her bases in Cyprus but lost them in Hong Kong (1959), Aden (1967), and Singapore (1968). By the late 1960s Britain had relinquished practically all

her former colonies (in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean), had twice been excluded from the EEC (by French President De Gaulle), and had had her 'special relationship' with the US put on hold because of necessary British defence cuts and her opposition to US policy in Vietnam.

Although Britain was one of the very few states with nuclear weapons, she had ceased to be a major world power – a situation not without its deeply-felt humiliations. Thus by the time of the Non-proliferation Treaty (1968) and the opening of the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) (1969) Britain was no longer on the top table.

There was also something else that affected British diplomacy, something that the standard works on the impact of international politics on Cyprus rarely mention.

At home Britain was experiencing what some scholars have called a 'cultural revolution'. This involved, especially on the part of the young, a profound erosion of confidence in traditional authorities and 'conventional wisdom'. Ambivalent – if not positively hostile – feelings towards Britain's recent 'glorious' past became common. For the generation of Britons born after 1945 national pride mixed uneasily with guilt and embarrassment. The celebration of various forms of 'liberation' and egalitarianism was widespread, not least in the universities.

The 1960s were, of course, the decade when large segments of the populations of Western Europe and the United States (with some important differences between the two) embraced new perspectives towards such things as work, leisure, sexual morality, religion, social class and conformity. For the general public 'authoritarianism' and 'colonialism' became emotive terms with strongly negative overtones.

Even earlier, the rise of 'affluence' for the masses had led to a marked decline in the influence of the once tiny ruling elites who had, rightly or wrongly, created the imperial Great Britain which first acquired Cyprus in 1878. As I noted at the beginning of this essay, at that time the British Empire was not only the most powerful military and economic force on earth, but by far the largest and richest suzerainty in history. At that earlier period of Britain's

interest in Cyprus, Victorian attitudes encouraging work, enterprise, and self-help prevailed. Christianity was widely believed in; and the vast majority of the British population – as distinct from males in the middle and upper classes who were ‘householders’ – had practically no influence on the decisions taken in Parliament. Full democracy and its commercial accompaniment ‘mass society’ had not come into being. This was a Britain run by a very few people whose administrators were often quite able, frequently arrogant, chauvinistic, and rarely prone to self-doubt. There was no irony in their self-proclaimed ‘effortless superiority’ in relation to the rest of humanity. By the late 1960s these attitudes and this society had all but vanished.

The change of outlook in Britain seemed very rapid to those of us who are old enough to have actually experienced it, at least in its final stages. Even at the very end of British rule in Cyprus, when Britain, Greece and Turkey framed the 1960 Accords which supposedly gave Cyprus independence, Britain, under Macmillan, was still a relatively conservative and class-ridden society, gradually disposing of her former ‘possessions’ overseas to be sure, and reluctantly facing the fact that she was by no means the force in the international arena she had been only a few decades earlier. But still, by and large – through the effect of a kind of psychological inertia, a time-lag, in which ideas, emotions and social attitudes don’t immediately reflect changed social and economic circumstances – Britain was a country where traditional values just about prevailed. British diplomacy naturally reflected those values and Britain still had considerable influence in international fora (even though that had been somewhat diminished by the disastrous Suez debacle of 1956).

During the 1960s all this altered with bewildering speed. From one point of view, changes in Britain were only a significant facet of what can be seen as a more general decline: a decline, if not in real Western power – for the United States, despite her ignominious defeat in Vietnam, maintained a clear supremacy within the Western world and outside it, both economically and militarily – then at least a comparative diminution in Western prestige and influence. History, for instance, ceased to be conceived largely as the history of Europe, the British Empire, and North America. The West as a

whole was confronted not just with the USSR and China but now also with the increasing influence of Third World countries, most of them former European colonies. All these new voices clamoured to be heard. In the UN, for example, there were originally 51 founder-members in 1945 and the Organisation was still, like the League of Nations before it, little more than a Anglo-European club. By 1980 the UN had 170 members, a majority of them actually hostile towards the West. Today there are 191 members and, as we know, it is likely that soon the five permanent members of the Security Council will have to be increased, notably by the addition, perhaps, of India and some South American country.

I mentioned the pressures emanating from the Non-aligned Movement that were partly responsible for Western acquiescence in UN Security Council resolution 186 (1964). Another reason for the acceptance of that resolution, and indeed for its subsequent pro-Greek interpretation, was the fear of a Soviet veto on any more balanced resolution and the distinct possibility of a greater Soviet influence in Cyprus if Makarios was not, to some degree, placated by the West. Given the alarming support Russia was already giving the Greek Cypriots, Western powers didn't wish to push them into further dependence upon Moscow by alienating them at the Security Council.

British and American diplomats always had this latter danger in mind. For it was also during the 1960s, one should remember, that Russian influence spread widely. Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Afganistan, Aden, and Ethiopia became communist countries, often supporting 'international terrorism' directed at the West. Gaddafi came to power in Libya in 1968; and left-wing regimes appeared in Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Surinam and elsewhere. Russia was thus no longer 'contained'. During the 1960s some European countries sought to improve relations with Russia; but, in 1968, the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the announcement of the 'Brezhnev doctrine' – reasserting firm Soviet control over its satellites in Eastern Europe – demonstrated that the Soviets had no intention of relinquishing their hold in Europe.

These are among the most important factors that need to be recalled when one tries to understand the relations between Western countries and Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots during the cold war. It is these factors

that account for the severity of the celebrated letter US President Johnson sent to Turkish Prime Minister İnönü in June, 1964, warning Turkey not to militarily intervene in Cyprus (as it was entitled to do under the Treaty of Guarantee). The tone of the letter was certainly ill-considered. But Johnson's uncouth irritability resulted from a well-founded nervousness. There were pressing American concerns that, given the larger arena in which US interests seemed to be being threatened by what Johnson perceived as the now omnipresent 'evil' of communism, the last thing he wanted was an unnecessary war between NATO allies Greece and Turkey; especially if, as seemed likely, the Russians decided to get involved.

Such broader considerations must surely be acknowledged in any assessment of Britain's admittedly not especially heroic role in Cyprus in the 1960s, and indeed since. Given her much reduced economic circumstances, her by now very limited military resources, given also the prevailing international display of horror at any lingering sense of colonialism, and bearing in mind the radical shift in values among the British electorate (what I referred to earlier as the 'cultural revolution') – perhaps one shouldn't be too hard on British diplomats who were only doing what they were being paid to do: looking after their country's interests as the governments of the day saw them. To stay in power those British governments had to be responsive, not only to the imperatives issuing from American foreign policy, but also to popular sentiments that were unknown in 1878 and still not yet widespread in 1960.

Conclusion

Coming then to the present, shouldn't we apply the same kind of analysis in trying to assess the motives, and probable future actions, of all the external actors in the current stage of the Cyprus drama? The United States, the EU, and perhaps to some extent even today's much reduced Russia, together with Britain, Greece and Turkey, will certainly between them decide Cyprus's fate. The two Cypriot sides will continue to fight their own (in my view ultimately rather quixotic) battle, under the aegis of the UN, only for as long as they are permitted to. For international opinion now seems to be that a Cyprus settlement must be found – and, as always, for reasons that reach far beyond Cyprus itself.

Notwithstanding some earlier remarks of mine that may have seemed pessimistic, I am actually rather hopeful about Cyprus's immediate future. I think we may now reasonably expect that, despite some remarkable lingering ineptitude on the part of the EU, most external powers will have understood that any viable settlement on the island must now take Turkish interests very seriously.

For the reasons I have all too briefly alluded to here, the 1960s were the years when it suited the international community to support Greek hegemony in Cyprus. Since 1974 it has been obvious that this cannot work. Since 1983 there has been a *de facto* Turkish Cypriot state in Cyprus, admittedly highly dependent, both economically and militarily, on Turkey but nevertheless quite separate from the Greek state in the South. Since 1991 there has been no Russian threat. In a number of respects Turkey is now more important to the West than Greece is. Greece may seem to have greater international 'clout' because of her apparent ability to manipulate the EU for her own ends. But these are hardly tactics the EU will tolerate indefinitely.¹¹ Moreover, the EU knows, or should know, that despite the grave doubts expressed by some member states about the advisability of Turkey's eventual admission to the European Club, the West cannot afford to ignore, let alone to alienate, Turkey. To the surprise of many, Turkey has recently made extraordinary strides in adapting to EU norms. Following the United States' lead in this matter, the EU can hardly fail to recognise Turkey as, among other things, potentially a great stabilising force in the Eastern Mediterranean, a counterweight to various regional 'rogue states', a challenge to locally based terrorist groups (from which Turkey herself has suffered), and a buffer to any possible resurgent Russian expansionism. A leader article in the *Economist* put the point about as well as it can be put a few years ago:

Were Turkish membership to be rejected, the EU's existential problems would not disappear. Indeed they might get worse. For a start, rejection would cause a crisis in Turkey... After September 11th [2001], taking

¹¹ Greece's tactics include her repeated threats to veto the EU's expansion eastward if Cyprus – with or without a settlement – was denied accession to the EU. See Nathalie Tocci, *EU Accession Dynamics and Conflict Resolution* (Aldershot, UK 2004), pp. 97–98.

Turkey into the club is no longer just a question of helping a big and strategically important country to modernise. It is a test of whether the EU, and the West as a whole, has any role in encouraging moderate and democratic Islam. To precipitate a crisis in the nearest big Muslim country, and one that is both democratic and secular, would be a colossal blunder... [Without Turkey] Europe would end up neither wider nor deeper; merely static, and with its south-eastern border in turmoil.¹²

Since the destiny of the Turkish Cypriots is intimately linked with the destiny of Turkey, there is surely little chance for a solution in Cyprus if Europe alienates Turkey.

One major stumbling block still remains. I have mentioned it before and, in conclusion, I would like to return to it. This is the international community's – and of course Britain's – surely incoherent policy of, on the one hand, pretending there is nothing wrong with the present all-Greek government of Cyprus while, on the other, earnestly seeking to change that government by reinstating an appropriate number of Turkish Cypriot members within it. For isn't that precisely what any notion of a 'unified' Cyprus would involve? And isn't it true that re-establishing a *joint* Cypriot government has been a central aim of the decades-long UN negotiation process? The form this persistent aspiration might once again take is indeed what the two new Cypriot leaders are supposed to be discussing at the present time. But if there is nothing wrong with the present all-Greek government – if it is so uncontroversially legitimate that it could be allowed to represent the whole of Cyprus and actually negotiate successfully for EU membership! – what can be the point in trying so hard to change it?

There is a way out of this disabling incoherence. If the current discussions on the island once more prove fruitless, as I believe they almost inevitably will, all the parties actually involved with Cyprus – the Cypriots, the three guarantors, the UN, the EU, America, and perhaps even the Russians (who still have significant financial interests there) – should get together and consider the alternative to a single unified Cypriot state. For the latter obsession has surely become an unhelpful *idée fixe*, routinely leading from

¹² *Economist*, 17th September 2005, p. 48.

one set of failed negotiations to another. Due largely to the relentless efforts of Greek Cypriot nationalists, the virtues of having not simply one, inevitably problematic, recognised state in Cyprus but *two* recognised states, have never been fully explored. Now would be a good time to look at this neglected alternative seriously. I would like to believe that Britain, after consultations with all the other external powers, might take the lead in suggesting to the Greek side realistic parameters for consideration in this direction.

In suggesting this Britain should not be made to fear for her Bases. As the Treaty of Establishment makes abundantly clear, the British Bases are situated neither in the Cyprus Republic nor in the TRNC.¹³ And since the Greek part of Cyprus is now so firmly aligned to the West, and the Bases are part of NATO's defence system, traditional Greek Cypriot opposition to the existence of the Bases must now seem even more churlish and parochial than ever.

The recognition of two separate states – with of course some return of land to the Greeks, and other sorts of compensation to both sides – would involve far less general upheaval than the provisions of the Annan Plan. The Green Line could be opened even more; obstruction to Turkish Cypriot international trade, flights, etc., could be removed. Particular thought would need to be given to Cyprus's EU membership. The Northern state – whatever it was now called – might have to wait for full membership until Turkey joins. Consultation between the two Cypriot governments on a wide range of internal issues – water and electricity supplies, tourism, the environment, crime – would obviously be essential. And so on. I believe better relations between the two communities would be more likely to

¹³ As Appendix 1 explains, the Greek Cypriot leader is supposed to have reaffirmed that the 1960 Accords are still valid and that he will be as helpful as possible 'on all issues emanating from the Treaty of Establishment.' On the other hand, this Memorandum makes it perfectly clear that at the moment the British government hasn't the slightest intention of deviating from its policy of not recognising the TRNC or anything like it. One can only keep making the point that 'reunification' – upon which 40 years of UN time, money, and ingenuity has already been spent without real progress – is not the only conceivable solution in Cyprus. Nor is it at all obviously the best, even if – suddenly and miraculously – it could be obtained.

emerge, in time, with these arrangements in place than with any others. The international community would then wonder why they had never seriously considered this obvious solution long before. And Britain would have exonerated herself from any charge of continuing her unhelpful display of ambivalence towards her former colony.

Michael Moran, October 2008

APPENDIX I

Memorandum of understanding between the Republic of Cyprus and the United Kingdom

5 June 2008

The President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom hereby establish a framework for developing a stronger relationship between the UK and the Republic of Cyprus.

A reunited Cyprus will bring an end to conflict in the island and lead to greater prosperity for the people of Cyprus. A united Cyprus will be able to contribute further to the stability of the region and strengthen the EU's ability to respond to global challenges.

Therefore the UK commends the leaders of the two communities on the process agreed on 21st March and 23rd May.

The Republic of Cyprus and the United Kingdom will cooperate in the following areas:

- Both countries commit themselves to working together to reunify the island. The aim is a comprehensive and durable settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and political equality, as defined by the relevant UN resolutions and the principles upon which the EU is founded. This settlement must be based on a single sovereignty, international personality and a single citizenship.
- Both countries support the on-going process under the Good Offices of the Secretary-General, including the move to full negotiations on a date agreed by the two leaders.
- The UK and the Republic of Cyprus will work with the UN, with relevant support from the EU, to ensure a successful conclusion to the on-going process and the achievement of an agreed, negotiated solution, between the two communities, as soon as possible.

- The two countries reiterate their commitment to their respective obligations under the Treaties signed in 1960.
- The UK reiterates its commitment to its obligations as a Guarantor Power. The UK will continue fully to respect existing UN resolutions on Cyprus, including UNSCRs 541 and 550. Therefore the UK will not support any moves towards the partition of the island or the recognition or up-grading of any separate political entity on the island.
- In addition, the two countries will continue to work together in a constructive manner on all issues emanating from the Treaty of Establishment.
- The UK and the Republic of Cyprus reaffirm their support for measures aimed at the economic integration of the island in accordance with the 26 of April 2004 EU Council Conclusions and helping to prepare the Turkish Cypriot community for reunification and the full application of the *acquis communautaire* on the basis of Protocol 10 of the Treaty of Accession.
- The UK commends the measures taken and proposed by the Republic of Cyprus for the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot community. The UK will work with the Republic of Cyprus to help promote further contact between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in order to support the reunification of the island.
- The UK recognises the positive proposal made by the Republic of Cyprus towards the establishment of an accreditation process for enabling the Turkish Cypriot higher education institutions to participate in international co-operation programmes.
- The UK undertakes to continue to inform its citizens on the legal situation prevailing in Cyprus regarding the properties issue and relevant ECHR judgments.
- The Republic of Cyprus and the UK will establish a programme of bilateral co-operation on a range of priority issues. It will identify

common interests between the two countries, based on the common legal framework, administrative structures, economic complementarity, people-to-people ties and shared strategic interests.

- This co-operation will be developed through exchange of best practice and direct co-operation in specific areas. The sectors to be covered will be identified, developed and adjusted by the diplomatic representatives in London and Nicosia. Initial priorities include:
 - Education and Health: schools, higher education, technical, vocational education and training;
 - Police and security issues: organised crime, counter-terrorism, illegal immigration, road safety and football hooliganism;
 - Economic and commercial issues: competitiveness, research and development, financial services, energy and environment.
- The Millennium Development Goals: The Republic of Cyprus has today joined the Call to Action. The UK and the Republic of Cyprus strongly support the need for an EU action plan to be agreed at the June Council;
- The Olympics: we will work together to identify areas for co-operation as the UK prepares for the 2012 London Olympics.
- The Republic of Cyprus and the UK will establish closer dialogue in Brussels, London and Nicosia on EU issues where they have shared interests (e.g. to promote a more effective social dimension and co-operation on issues such as Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), taxation, budget reform, climate change).
- As the Republic of Cyprus prepares for its EU Presidency in 2012, the UK will offer to share its experience, including through inward secondments.
- The two countries will also hold a regular dialogue on EU/Turkey, where they share the objective of full membership once full conditions

have been met. Both countries agree on the need for Turkey to fulfil its outstanding obligations towards all member states in accordance with the Negotiating Framework and the 21st September 2005 EU Declaration. The two countries will pursue dialogue by discussing issues relating to the negotiations at an early stage to clarify and resolve outstanding difficulties.

- This programme of action will be delivered through six-monthly reviews at Ministerial level in Nicosia or London and regular discussions between High Commissions and Governments in capitals. It will also be delivered through contact between Representations in Brussels and New York. The UK and Cyprus will also aim to hold an annual Cyprus/UK Forum to address specific issues of mutual interest.

Gordon Brown

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Demetris Christofias

President of the Republic of Cyprus

APPENDIX II

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CYPRUS: VALEDICTORY DESPATCH

*British High Commissioner in Cyprus to the Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs*

SUMMARY

There is no Cypriot nation and Cyprus is divided between two hostile Administrations. (Paragraphs 1–2.)

2. The improvement during the last year in the atmosphere in the island has not however gone so far as to make a constitutional compromise between the parties likely without a change of leadership on both sides. (Paragraphs 3–4.)

3. Archbishop Makarios is still unwilling to make sufficient concessions to the Turks to secure a settlement. (Paragraph 5.)

4. Ultimate control of the Turkish Cypriots lies in Ankara. The Greek Government can force the hand of Archbishop Makarios only by strong overt pressure which they have not been willing to exert so far in the constitutional discussions. (Paragraphs 6–7.)

5. In the High Commissioner's view prospects for gradual progress in the field of normalisation are better than for an early constitutional compromise. A settlement imposed from outside by the Greek and Turkish Governments in agreement might not stick. (Paragraphs 8–9.)

6. Intervention by the British Government is not recommended and can be damaging to our interests. The key to the continuation of the benign stalemate probably lies more in Ankara than in Athens or Nicosia. (Paragraphs 10–11.)
7. Cyprus prospers economically on its troubles. (Paragraph 12.)
8. Cyprus as the navel of the universe. (Paragraph 13.)

Nicosia. 26 March. 1969.

Sir,

On 11 April I leave Cyprus after two and a quarter years as British High Commissioner. This island State is characterised by attractive and varied scenery and a sunny climate, and possesses a fascinating archaeology extending from the neolithic to the mediaeval. These, together with the British Government's limitations on foreign exchange for overseas travel, have aided the recent expansion of tourism in this Sterling Area country. Indeed, during my time here, about half the members of the British Cabinet have come to Cyprus on business or pleasure or a combination of both. The people of Cyprus are charming, intelligent and hospitable. But they are too narrowly concerned with their own political problem whose solution is not made easier by their love of hard bargaining for its own sake and their tendency to reach firmly held convictions on inadequate and unverified premises often emotional in genesis.

The two Cypruses

2. The first fact that needs to be grasped about Cyprus is that although there is a Cyprus State and a Government of Cyprus which is a member of the–United Nations and of the Commonwealth, there is no Cypriot nation and there are in fact two Cypriot Administrations. Each of these regards the other as illegal and with both of them the British Government has to deal. General de Gaulle, in a typically Delphic utterance about Cyprus, said that in his view Greeks should be Greeks and Turks should be Turks. As an

expression of what is desirable the General's view may be deplored. But it accurately describes the situation in the island as it is. In practice Cyprus is partitioned in the most haphazard and intricate way between intermingled areas controlled by the Greek Government of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot Administration respectively, making the communal map of Cyprus look like the latter day Holy Roman Empire. As if this were not enough, yet other still more fragmentary areas exist under various gradations of intermediate control between the Greeks and Turks. It is the constant endeavour of both Greeks and Turks to enlarge the area or degree of their control, and the primary function of UNFICYP to prevent a recurrence of fighting by preserving the *status quo* left after the troubles of 1963–64. The division between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus is historical, religious, linguistic but not racial. To the outside observer it is difficult on sight to tell a Greek from a Turk. The division is unhappily becoming also geographical and economic. The *de facto* partition of Cyprus now in its sixth year means that there is a danger of perpetuating the segregation of Turkish Cypriots into urban ghettos and rural slums as second-class citizens politically and economically, with the minimum of intermixing. This in turn means that the younger generation of Greeks and Turks are educated separately and brought up to regard one another as enemies waiting to commit genocide.

The political problem

3. Nevertheless during my two years here certain decisions about the Cyprus problem have in practice emerged. The Greek Cypriots finally realised as a result of the reaction to the attack by General Grivas on the Turkish villages of Ayios Theodoros and Kophinou in November 1967, that the Government of Turkey will not permit the reduction of the Turkish Cypriots by force. Archbishop Makarios also recognised in March 1968, that the four-year effort which he had made to reduce the Turkish Cypriots by economic blockade had also failed, largely as a result of a flourishing smuggling trade in which Greeks and Turks had co-operated. The Archbishop therefore removed the economic restrictions on goods entering the Turkish enclaves and permitted Turks freedom of movement in Greek areas, though not quite of resettlement in the Greek-controlled areas from which many

Turks had fled. These improvements and the departure of most of the Greek mainland troops from Cyprus early in 1968 followed by the opening of direct talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in June of that year, have meant that the island has enjoyed 16 months, almost but not quite, free of inter-communal incidents. The atmosphere is much improved. The Archbishop has not however yet accepted that he cannot persuade the Turks to abandon or modify the *de facto* partition of the island which they have achieved by armed resistance, without giving them *de jure* a measure of self-government which will at any rate at first approximate to what they have enjoyed since 1963. Equally the Turkish Cypriots on their side have not yet accepted that they cannot live in peace, security and prosperity in Cyprus until they reintegrate themselves economically and, subject to the enjoyment of a high degree of local self-government, politically in a reunified Cyprus.

4. The basic cause of the failure of the two sides to make more rapid progress towards coming together, despite a general weariness of the long struggle and despite the resumption of direct discussions, is mutual distrust between the leaders on the two sides. The Turkish Cypriots do not believe that the Archbishop has abandoned his ultimate design of reducing them to political impotence in Cyprus whether through enosis or otherwise. They therefore require ironclad guarantees of any agreement. The Archbishop does not believe the Turkish Cypriots have given up their aim of partition under another name. He therefore wishes to retain freedom to counteract that design by restricting the degree of Turkish local self-government and by retaining ultimate constitutional authority to change any agreed arrangement in the hands of the Cyprus Government (which would be Greek dominated). In my view this mutual distrust is unlikely to change rapidly. I agree with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Cyprus, Mr. Osorio-Tafall, that there may well be no solution of the Cyprus problem until the leaders have been changed on both sides. This could be achieved at any moment on the Turkish Cypriot side, where Dr. Kutchuk has become little more than a figurehead. There is however no sign that this is likely to happen on the Greek Cypriot side, where Archbishop Makarios is still the undisputed leader who alone can rally the support of all sections of Greek Cypriot opinion from extreme

Right to extreme Left in matters affecting any proposed settlement with the Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, even if the Archbishop could be induced to give up the Presidency of Cyprus, of which there is no sign, he could as Archbishop wreck any policy he disliked by deploying the Byzantine tactics of which he is a masterly practitioner.

Archbishop Makarios

5. The character of the Archbishop is indeed one of the main factors in the Cyprus situation. He has one guiding principle: to ensure a Greek Cyprus in which the Turks, if they survive at all, shall be reduced to the position of a politically powerless minority. He will concede them autonomy in religious, cultural and educational matters only. On this basic principle he is inflexible and intransigent. But his tactics and methods of pursuing this objective have the flexibility of ancient Byzantium. British visitors meeting the Archbishop for the first time are impressed by his distinguished presence, his great personal charm and his apparent frankness. He creates a most favourable impression. Most people also think of the Archbishop as a man who knows what he is after and is positive in pursuing it. This is a misreading of his character. In fact he finds it difficult to make up his mind to take definite decisions. He is unwilling to take any risk with a new policy. His deserved reputation for brinkmanship is based on his negative reluctance to accept anything new and in particular to make any concessions. He likes it to be publicly apparent that his hand is being forced by others (of course in the direction he wishes) so that he can if necessary subsequently claim to be absolved of responsibility. Much of his effort is devoted to getting others to serve his purposes, usually in undermining the efforts of those who urge him to undertake or accept any new initiative involving concessions to or compromises with the Turkish Cypriots. Nor is he above maintaining a balance between West and East in the external field and Right and Left on the home front to promote his cherished objective of a Greek-run Cyprus. Hesitant in policy matters, the Archbishop has supreme self-confidence in his ability to play off political factions and even the Great Powers to serve his own tactical interest. I do not need the Communists, he thinks, they need me.

Elements in the Greek–Turkish struggle in Cyprus

6. But though the Archbishop bestrides the Cypriot scene like a colossus, looked at more closely the parties to the Cyprus dispute are seen to be very far from monolithic. Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are divided between hawks and doves, between civilians and the military (the latter controlled from mainland Greece and Turkey), by the personal ambitions of rival politicians and, more particularly on the Greek side, between Right and Left. (The Cyprus Communist Party is thought to have the support of one–third of the Greek Cypriots.) Undoubtedly the ablest and most dovelike leaders to emerge are Glafcos Clerides on the Greek side and Rauf Denktaş on the Turkish side. If the negotiations were left to these two men it is probable that an early solution or at any rate an agreed *modus vivendi* could be reached. But Mr. Clerides in particular on the Greek side does not have the charisma of the Archbishop and could not seize control from him.

7. Another element in the local scene is the problem of outside interference. In the last resort the authorities in Ankara undoubtedly run the Turkish Cypriot Administration in both its civilian and military aspects (though these may not always pull the same way). The Turkish Government underpins the Turkish Cypriot Administration by supplying armed forces and subsidies of about £7 million a year. Without the standing threat of invasion if the Greek Cypriots push their pressure too far, the Turkish cause would collapse. The Government of Greece also has considerable influence on the Greek Cypriots, though it is less unimpeded than that of the Government of Turkey on the other side. The Archbishop sometimes tries to operate a policy independently of the wishes of the Greek Government but he cannot in practice afford to appear in public to be at loggerheads with them. There have been two occasions when the Greek Government has used the threat of public dissociation from the Archbishop's policy, and in both cases the Archbishop came to heel. The last was over the enforced resignation of Mr. Georghadjis as Minister of the Interior in 1968. But the Greek Government appears to be unwilling to use this threat except on occasions when it regards its own interests as being at stake. It has not so far used it to compel the Archbishop to make sufficient concessions to the Turkish Cypriots to

produce a settlement of the problem of the degree of local autonomy to be given to the latter. On the contrary the Greek Government has recently intervened in the internal politics of Cyprus in ways that strengthen the Archbishop's position against Mr. Clerides and others who have been trying to get him to show more flexibility. Though one accepts that the Greek Government, like the Turkish Government, wants to see a settlement of the Cyprus problem, there must in the case of the Greek Government be some element of doubt about how strongly they want it on any terms on which it might be possible and whether there is not still some *arrière-pensée* about keeping the door open for future enosis.

Considerations affecting British policy on the Cyprus problem

8. In the light of these considerations I fear that we are unlikely to see an early agreed settlement of the Cyprus problem. I may be wrong and I hope I am. But I think we should frame our policy on the assumption that a solution of the Cyprus problem will be a long-term undertaking. Efforts to persuade (as distinct from compel) the parties into reaching an agreed settlement based on a constitutional compromise are I fear doomed to failure. If we wish to play a part in the Cyprus problem we should do better to concentrate on ensuring that the *de facto stalemate*, which none of us, not even the two main parties to the dispute, can change (except perhaps by force: this is discussed below), should be as benign as possible and should become progressively more benign as a result of agreements and relaxations on practical matters by both sides. These may be small in themselves but they can cumulatively make [a difference?] in the longer term. To some extent therefore the constitutional talks which have been going on between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots since June 1968 may in themselves have been a blind alley. It may prove that their main value has lain in the measures of normalisation which have emerged from them more or less incidentally.

9. The threat of the current constitutional talks to drift into the sands has caused those concerned with the Cyprus problem to wonder whether it may not be necessary once again to impose a settlement on the two sides, as was done in 1959–60. This can of course only be done by the Governments of

Greece and Turkey acting in understanding. It would mean the Government of Greece going much beyond the public expression of disapproval of the Archbishop's inflexibility which was touched on in paragraph 7 above. This is what the Archbishop probably fears the Greek Government may do. There would be much to be said for such action if the difference between the two sides was marginal, not fundamental, so that a proposed settlement might this time stick. But at the moment this is not the position and any imposed settlement is likely to incur the same disadvantages as that of 1959–60. That is to say, neither side will really try to work it. The Archbishop in particular will set about undermining it and the whole dismal cycle of breakdown and renewal of strife may be resumed.

10. But while against this background it may be that, as I have suggested, British Government policy should in co-operation with others concentrate on encouraging normalisation as a step towards the ultimate goal of a settlement, we should be chary of any positive intervention even in this field.

11. Intervention always annoys one side or the other, often both, to the detriment of our interests in Cyprus as well as in Greece and Turkey. We have important interests in retaining the Bases, whose successful operation in peace or war is dependent upon the good will of the Cyprus authorities, in trade and generally in keeping Cyprus in the Western orbit. Since Cyprus is and always will be run in effect by the Greek Cypriots, any move by us to promote a settlement of the Cyprus problem tends to involve urging the Greek Cypriots to make concessions. Such action can and does work against our other interests in the island. The Russians, often more logical than ourselves, think that our concern for our interests here must mean that we want to keep Cyprus divided, since a settlement of the Cyprus problem could and probably would lead to the development of Left-wing pressure on us over the bases. We are in fact perhaps less logical and certainly more altruistic than the Russians give us credit for. We regard the importance of good Graeco-Turkish relations as of more importance to the defence of Europe through NATO than our interests in Cyprus. But it may be that the Russian thinking is right to the extent that it would be a wiser policy for us to be less active than we have been at various times in the past about promoting a settlement. We could leave the latter to Greece and Turkey who

now appear to want a settlement and whose pressure alone has any chance of being effective locally. But of course, whether such a passive policy turns out to be wise or not, depends ultimately on whether the existing uneasy quiet in Cyprus can be maintained indefinitely. The answer to that lies more in Ankara than Nicosia. If I am right in thinking that the Greek Cypriots will be careful in future not deliberately to provoke incidents in Cyprus, it is the Turkish Government which holds the key to restraining Turkish Cypriot reactions to the accidental incidents which the continuation of the division of Cyprus makes a daily risk. Six months ago I would have said the risk was too great to make it safe for us to let things run their own course. Now despite two recent incidents I have rather more confidence that the risk is a fair one. But again I may be proved wrong by events, and there is always the risk that a political change in Greece or in Turkey may upset the assumptions on which this forecast is precariously based.

Economic situation

12. Cyprus is the only country I know which has flourished economically on a civil war. In every year since 1960 it has enjoyed a favourable balance of payments and now has overseas balances equivalent to about 12 months' imports. How happy should we be in Britain did we have similar balances. This sound position has resulted from the orthodox financial policy pursued by the Cyprus Government since independence. One might almost say that Cyprus has put all its nonsense into politics and kept it out of economics. Nevertheless there are two potential clouds on the Cyprus economic horizon. The first is that after virtually stationary prices and wages from 1960–68 and an absence of labour disputes, the devaluation of the pound led to a spate of astronomical wage demands accompanied by strikes and threats of strikes from all sources. These have to some extent been resisted but they have also been conceded to a degree which must lead to increased imports and so to a reduction or possibly elimination of recent annual balance of payments surpluses. There is the usual problem whether the wages–prices spiral can be contained. The second cloud on the Cyprus economic horizon is that about one–third of her import bill is financed by military expenditure in Cyprus by overseas Governments (British, Greek, Turkish) and by the United Nations. If and as this military expenditure

diminishes the gap may well be covered by rapidly developing tourism. This industry however needs capital for hotel building, and also is particularly sensitive to any suggestion of internal commotion. Nevertheless, taking into account also the rapidly expanding market in Britain and elsewhere for her early vegetables, fruit, wine and other agricultural products, on balance the Cyprus authorities can feel reasonably content with their economic position and prospects.

13. The post of British High Commissioner in Cyprus is, as will be seen, not good for delicate nerves. Nevertheless it is both interesting and enjoyable. Cyprus may not in fact be the navel of the universe, but it is interesting to be posted in a country where most of the inhabitants think that it is. It is a useful exercise for any British Head of Mission here to remind himself frequently that he should not attach too much importance to the complicated politics of a country the size of a large English county and with the population of a small one. With this in mind we have managed during my time here, to reduce the size of the Mission by 15 per cent without suffering any loss of efficiency. It may be that there is room still for some further reduction, assuming that we do not decide upon conducting a forward policy in Cyprus. It will be plain from this despatch that in my view we should be unwise to embark on such a policy and that indeed a little deflation of the Cypriots' idea of their own importance in the world would be salutary.

14. I cannot finish my last despatch, not only from this post but of my official career, without paying a tribute to the hard work, the conscientiousness and the imagination displayed by members of my staff, past and present. Perhaps the most regrettable feature from the personal point of view of retirement from the Diplomatic Service is that one's day-to-day contacts with one's erstwhile colleagues will come to an end.

I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Ankara, Athens and Washington, to the British High Commissioner at Ottawa, to the United Kingdom Permanent Representative at the United Nations and on the North Atlantic Council and to the Commander, British Forces Near East.

I have, &c.

N. E. COSTAR.

