

Cyprus to Turkey, 09-08-1964

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Disagreements over the revision of the constitution between the Greek and Turkish Cypriotic communities spilled over into civil strife in December 1963. Turkey and Greece both threatened to intervene. In order to prevent further bloodshed between the communities, the UN launched the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) mission which became operational towards the end of March.¹ When civil unrest continued, and the harassment of Turkish minorities carried on unabated, the Turkish government – which was under considerable domestic pressure – threatened to invade Cyprus in March and in June 1964. Each time, however, it did not carry out its threat following pressure from the international community – notably from the US.² In April, Greece complied with a request by the official (Greek-) Cypriotic government and secretly sent 12,000 Greek forces to the island. The Greek General Grivas took charge of the Greek Cypriotic National Guard.³ In the summer of 1964, communal tensions escalated once again when fighting erupted between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The National Guard attempted to gain control over a littoral stretch of territory. When UNFICYP forces withdrew from the area of hostilities, Turkey acted in support of the Turkish Cypriots.⁴ On 8 and 9 August, sixty-four Turkish aircraft flew a series of bombing sorties destroying infrastructure and causing ‘hundreds’ of casualties – according to the Cypriotic government, 33 deaths and 230 wounded in total.⁵ The Cypriotic government requested UNFICYP for assistance in treating the wounded and burying the dead. The Cypriotic president requested military assistance from the Soviet Union. On 9 August the leader of the Soviet Union Khrushchev responded by calling on Turkey to cease its attacks pointing to ‘the responsibility which Turkey is assuming in carrying out an armed attack on the Republic of Cyprus.’⁶ On that same day, the Cypriot President Makarios warned Turkey that he would order an attack on all Turkish Cypriot villages if Turkey did not halt its attacks by 5 p.m.⁷ The United States government frantically attempted to broker a deal urging the governments of Cyprus, Turkey and Greece, to exercise ‘the greatest possible restraint’ and end the hostilities.⁸ Bitsios, the Greek representative in the UNSC, declared around noon, that Greece would ‘lend its assistance to Cyprus through her Air Force and any other military means at her disposal’ by 3 p.m. New York time unless Turkey would end its aerial bombardment.⁹ That same afternoon the Greek government sent in fighter aircraft to conduct a show of force over Nicosia. The Turkish government countered that it had not targeted any civilians, but had sought to prevent a ‘massacre’ and would continue its raids until attacks had ceased and the president had provided guarantees for the security and safety of Turkish Cypriots; at 2 p.m. the Turkish prime minister, going against the advice of his military commanders,¹⁰ gave the order to halt the air raids and promised that they were not to be resumed as long as the Turkish

¹ Wainhouse and Bechhoefer, *International Peace Observation*, 449–50. Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*, 61–62.

² Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*, 62–64. Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 74–79.

³ Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*, 64, 68.

⁴ Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003*, 63–64.

⁵ Keesing’s, *Keesing’s Record of World Events, Cyprus, September, 1964*, vol. 10 (London: Keesing’s Worldwide, LLC - All Rights Reserved, 2013), 20265. Francis Henn, *A Business of Some Heat: The United Nations Force in Cyprus Before and During the 1974 Turkish Invasion* (Casemate Publishers, 2004), 22.

⁶ Keesing’s, *Keesing’s Record of World Events, Cyprus, September, 1964*, 10:20265.

⁷ Keesing’s, 10:20265.

⁸ H. W. Brands Jr., ‘America Enters the Cyprus Tangle, 1964’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 3 (1 July 1987): 356–57. Miller and Patterson, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 16:233–45. Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 83–85.

⁹ Keesing’s, *Keesing’s Record of World Events, Cyprus, September, 1964*, 10:20265. Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cornell University Press, 2003), 116. Bitsios, *Cyprus*, 173, 171–76.

¹⁰ Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 84.

Cypriots were safe.¹¹ Khrushchev told Makarios that in agreeing to a cease-fire he would make an 'important contribution' to peace.¹² The next day the governments of Cyprus and Turkey agreed to the cease fire resolution adopted in the UNSC.¹³ In subsequent weeks and months negotiations over the status of the constitution dragged on and the island continued to be the source of conflict for Turkey and Greece in later years.

¹¹ Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events, Cyprus, September, 1964*, 10:20265. Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*, 69–70. Miller and Patterson, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 16:237–38, 231–34.

¹² Edward Weintal and Charles Bartlett, *Facing the Brink: A Study of Crisis Diplomacy* (Hutchinson, 1967), 34.

¹³ Bitsios, *Cyprus*, 175.