

Turkey to Cyprus, 12-03-1964

The standoff between Greek and Turkish Cypriotic communities on Cyprus over the revision of the Cypriotic constitution escalated to violent clashes in December 1963. Greek and Turkish military intervention was only narrowly avoided and international negotiations took place in London under the auspices of the British Government from mid-January 1964 onwards. All parties agreed to an international peacekeeping mission under UN aegis as well as to the appointment of a mediator to help broker a political settlement on 4 March.¹ While the UN secretary-general was trying to bring together an international peacekeeping force, fighting escalated oncemore in Cyprus, despite the presence of British forces. The Greek and Turkish Cypriotic communities sought to establish control over territory before the UN peacekeeping mission would be in place. A Turkish Cypriotic attack to liberate hostages after a failed hostage exchange was countered by a fierce Greek Cypriotic counteroffensive. The battle in the village Ktmila caused fourteen Turkish deaths, eleven Greek deaths, sixty casualties and the physical destruction of significant parts of the village.² Hostilities were also reported in Paphos, Nicosia and Kyrenia. News of the fighting prompted protesters in Turkey to go out on the streets to demand that their government intervene. The next few days the Turkish government under the premiership of Prime Minister Inonu repeatedly called for a cease fire, while mobilising around 13,000 forces off the port of Iskenderun, some 200 km away from Cyprus.³ It also implored the United States and Great Britain to take action.⁴ On 12 March Inonu assembled his National Security Council and decided to issue the following threat to Makarios, the Cypriotic leader:

...It is noted that the Security Council resolution which requests the "Cyprus Government" to take all additional measures necessary to stop violence and bloodshed in Cyprus is being construed by the Greek Cypriotic leaders who are acting without the least sense of responsibility, as permitting them to take up further acts of violence against the Turks. These undertakings are evidences that an international crime against humanity is being committed, such as the total annihilation of the Turkish Community before the arrival of the United Nations Forces. In view of this situation the Government of the Turkish Republic requests that: all individual or collective assaults and acts committed against the Turkish Community in Cyprus such as murder, pillage, robbery, arson, rape, torture and the like be stopped forthwith; that an immediate cease-fire all over the island be established and all existing cease-fire agreements and the green-line agreement in Nicosia be observed completely and without exception; that all sieges around any Turkish locality be lifted forthwith anywhere; that liberties of complete movement, communication and correspondence are immediately restored and that the Turkish hostages and the bodies of those murdered be returned to the Turkish Community without delay. Otherwise the

¹ David Walter Wainhouse and Bernhard G. Bechhoefer, *International Peace Observation: A History and Forecast* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 449–50. Tozun Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Westview Press, 1990), 61–62. Robert Henry Stephens, *Cyprus: A Place of Arms* (Praeger, 1966), 182–90.

² Richard Arthur Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict, 1963-1971* (Dept. of Geography, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, 1976), chaps 3, (e) 5 March 1964 to 26 March 1964, <http://www.cyprus-conflict.net/Patrick-chp%203.html>. Stephens, *Cyprus*, 190.

³ Suha Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World: Turkish-American Relations and Cyprus* (University Press of America, 1988), 72–73. Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events, Cyprus, June, 1964*, vol. 10 (London: Keesing's Worldwide, LLC - All Rights Reserved, 2013), 20113.

⁴ James E. Miller and David S. Patterson, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Cyprus, Greece & Turkey, 1964-1968*, vol. 16 (State Dept., Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Public Communication, Government Printing Office, 2000), 49–51.

Government of the Turkish Republic declares that it will use the right to take unilateral action conferred upon it by the Treaty of Guarantee of 16 August 1960.⁵

Prior to delivery of the threat, the Turkish government called in the US Ambassador Hare and showed him the text on the night of 12 March. Hare asked for and received a twenty four-hour extension.⁶ The following day, on 13 March, the written text was sent to Makarios. US Secretary of State Rusk immediately started contacting representatives of the contributing nations Canada, Finland, Ireland and Sweden to coax them into speeding up the deployment. Later that day, on the night of 13 March, the American and British ambassadors in Ankara were called in oncemore and told that unless Greek Cypriots ceased harassing Turkish Cypriots, Turkey would invade Cyprus in 36 hours.⁷ The Cypriot government asserted that the Turkish communication was 'a further untenable interference in the internal affairs of Cyprus' rejecting the notion that Turkey had the right to do so. Cypriot President Makarios who was in Athens stated publicly that

the reasons which the Ankara Government are invoking to justify military intervention in Cyprus are entirely unfounded.... It is obvious that the Turkish Cypriots are trying to create a situation which will give the Turkish Government a pretext for intervention. We will fight back any unprovoked attack with all the means at our disposal.⁸

The UNSC convened in an emergency session and adopted a resolution calling on all participants to refrain from violence.⁹ Greece stated that it would aid Cyprus militarily and put its forces in a state of advanced alert. The Soviet Union confirmed its support for the Cypriot government. Hare reported back to Inonu reporting that the UN mission would start without any delay, and on 14 March, the first Canadian forces of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) mission landed on the island. The Turkish government then reported back to its parliament that its diplomatic pressure had been successful as it 'provided for a quick arrival of the U.N. peacekeeping force and precluded a massacre'.¹⁰ Levels of violence decreased in the weeks after UNFICYP became operational towards the end of March but would flare up later that spring and summer. (see Cyprus to Turkey, 09-08-1964 and Greece to Turkey, 09-08-1964)

⁵ Government of Turkey, 'Annex to 8/5596, Letter Dated 13 March 1964 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Secretary General', 13 March 1964, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N64/057/21/PDF/N6405721.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁶ Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 73.

⁷ Stephens, *Cyprus*, 191. Nasuh Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003* (Nova Publishers, 2003), 40.

⁸ Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events, Cyprus, June, 1964*, 10:20113.

⁹ Wainhouse and Bechhoefer, *International Peace Observation*, 448-49. Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events, Cyprus, June, 1964*, 10:20113. Patrick, *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict, 1963-1971*, 1976, chaps 3, (e) 5 March 1964 to 26 March 1964. Stephens, *Cyprus*, 191. Surprisingly enough, the Turkish representative at the UNSC denied that his country had issued an ultimatum stating 'this note of so-called warning, which has been described as an ultimatum, is not an ultimatum. It does not contain any urgent decision that has to be put into effect immediately. It only envisages certain conditions and asks that they be observed in the name of human rights and human consideration, which remain among the primary duties of any responsible government'. See Dimitri S. Bitsios, *Cyprus: The Vulnerable Republic* (Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975), 160.

¹⁰ Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 73.