

Turkey to Cyprus, 16-11-1967

Between August 1964 and November 1967 an 'uneasy truce' prevailed on Cyprus (see also ultimate Turkey to Cyprus, 12-03-1964, Cyprus to Turkey, 09-08-1964 and Greece to Turkey, 09-08-1964). Despite the presence of UN peacekeeping forces, violence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities continued.¹ The longstanding conflict escalated oncemore when Greek Cypriot forces entered the village Theodoros, which was administered by Turkish Cypriot forces on 15 November 1967 at around 2.00 p.m. The village was a strategic hub in the road that connected Nicosia and Limassol. The Greek Cypriot forces claimed that they came under fire in a firefight that caused two Greek and twenty-eight Turkish fatalities. By the end of the day, Theodoros was controlled by the Greek Cypriot forces. At practically the same time, Greek Cypriot forces also attacked and occupied Pophinou, a village four km down the road. This led the Turkish government to believe that these actions were planned in advance and formed part of a larger scheme.² The Turkish National Security Council convened around 9.30 p.m. at the occasion of which both the chiefs of the different armed services and the representatives of the ministry of foreign affairs pressed for military action. They agreed to issue an ultimatum to be sent to Greek Cypriot leader Makarios after midnight. The ultimatum demanded that Greek Cypriot forces vacate the two villages by 06:00 a.m. that morning or aerial strikes would follow. Even though the Turkish government discovered during the night that the Turkish armed forces were not in a full state of readiness – the preparation of a landing force was estimated to take a full week – Makarios, who was probably unaware of this fact, complied with the request and from 04:00 a.m. onwards Greek Cypriot forces started pulling away from the villages. The air strikes were then called off by Turkish Prime Minister Demirel.³ Demonstrators took to the Turkish streets the next day criticising Prime Minister Demirel for what was considered a meek response. The prime minister was also criticised by members of his own political party. On 17 November he dispatched a note – couched in unclear terms – demanding the withdrawal of Greek forces from Cyprus, but without specifying either a threat or a deadline.⁴ Turkish fighter jets flew over the island on a daily basis now suggesting Turkey's willingness to resort to military force. Nonetheless, Greece rejected the demands on 22 November. Although Turkish armed forces were not entirely ready for military action (as the Turkish civilian leadership was by now well aware of), the Turkish government seemed intent on pursuing a confrontational course. War was only averted through shuttle diplomacy of US Foreign Secretary Vance who brokered an agreement between Turkey and Greece on 30 November. Greece agreed to withdraw its forces and recall Greek General Grivas, the commander of the Greek Cypriot National Guard.⁵ Greek Cypriot leader Makarios agreed to all the demands except to the dismantling of the Greek Cypriot National Guard.⁶ On 3 December Greece and Turkey declared that they would comply with the U.N. Secretary-General's demand that all foreign forces whose presence was unauthorised were to be withdrawn and all irregular forces were to be demobilised.

¹ Richard Patrick A., *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict, 1963-1971*, n.d., 101.

² Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 134. Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003*, 98.

³ Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 135.

⁴ It is therefore not included in this dataset of ultimata. See Bolukbasi, 136. Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003*, 99.

⁵ Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003*, 100–103.

⁶ Bolukbasi, *The Superpowers and the Third World*, 138–41.