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## THE CYPRUS CRISIS : WEDLOCK OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FORCES

Cyprus is an ethnically segmented society. A small island country of 3,572 sq. miles, Cyprus has a population of 630,000 (1980) comprising of two major racial communities, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots representing roughly 76% and 18% of the total population respectively, with the Armenians and the Maronites being the best known among the remaining minorities.<sup>1</sup> The interrelation of ethnicity and religious faith is particularly significant in Cyprus. Greek Cypriots belong to the Greek Orthodox church, giving this religion a dominant status, while the Turkish Cypriots, predominantly Muslim, belong to the Sunni Sect. However, ethnic cum religious identities in Cyprus did not coincide fully with, but considerably spilled across existing state boundaries, which had far reaching implications for the internal conflicts of the country as well as its internationalisation. These ethnic links of the Cypriot population with external actors provided an obvious connection between domestic ethnic conflicts with the external power interests.

Cyprus proved in the course of two decades, to be a futile attempt at the intermixing of two distinctive ethnic, religious and cultural groups—Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, who were more interested in the union with mainland Greece and Turkey respectively, than in upholding the cause of an integrated Cyprus. The recurrent nature of the violent conflicts that had rocked the island Republic since independence in 1960 eventually resulted in the *de facto* partition of

1. Arthur S. Banks ed; *Political Handbook of the World*, 1979. McGraw Hill Book company, 1979, p. 129.

the island in 1975, with approximately 37% of the total area occupied by the Turkish Cypriots. This partition was formalised when the Turkish Cypriots went for an Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and proclaimed the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus in November 1983.

Except Turkey, no other country has accorded formal recognition to Northern Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot UDI has been internationally condemned and the government of Spyros Kyprianou continues to be recognised as the legitimate government of Cyprus. Any prospect of renewed intercommunal talks has collapsed with the Cyprus government stating flatly, that no discussion with the Turkish Cypriots are possible unless the declaration of independence is reversed. On their part, the Turkish Cypriots have made it plain, that the unilateral declaration would not be rescinded, until a federal agreement had been negotiated between the two communities on the island. These recent developments in Cyprus has further complicated the already complex issue. In this context, the paper attempts to delve into the genesis of the Cyprus deadlock and the depths of external involvements in it to dissect the process of fusion of external and internal factors in this age-old tangle.

### **Roots of the conflict**

The origin of the Cyprus problem dates back to the period of British colonial rule. In 1925 Cyprus became a British Crown colony. It emerged as a key strategic post in mid-50s when Britain established their new Middle East headquarters after its withdrawal from Palestine in 1948 and Suez in 1954. Although physioally a micro-state, the geo-strategic location of Cyprus, has made it extremely vital to international politics. It lies at the strategic cross-roads in the Eastern Medeterranean close to the Middle East and not far from the borders of Soviet Union.

The geo-strategic location coupled with ethnic composition has made Cyprus vulnareable to intervention by the two neighbouring

powers, mainland Greece and mainland Turkey. Cyprus is only 40 miles from Turkey's southern coast, but over 300 miles from the Greek mainland. The geographical proximity has always tempted Turkey to nurse some naval interest over the island which it had once ruled as part of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Greece has been continually recalcitrant and pushful over its demand for *enosis* (union of Cyprus with Greece). The ties of these powers with the two major Cypriot communities are close and multi-dimensional, and had been reinforced by the long-standing enmity and hostility between the two for mastery in the East Mediterranean.

The basic differences between the two parts of the Cypriot population is deepened by historical, ethnic, religious and linguistic dissimilarities that keep these two groups apart. If we closely examine the history of Cyprus we find that the Greek Cypriots identify with the Hellenistic past, while the Turks are the direct descendents

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of the Ottoman conquerers. Religious animosities stem from the fact that the Greeks adhere to the Greek orthodox church, while the Muslims follow sunni Islam. The current struggle between the two groups echoes the historical struggle between Islam and Christianity in the Mediterranean and is intensified by nationalistic sentiments<sup>2</sup>. The Greek Cypriots speak a local Greek dialect while the Turks speak Turkish. Each side considers themselves superior than the other. These divergences in Cyprus between two distinct ethnic groups sowed the seeds of disintegration. Thus the element of nationalism or Cypriotism which might hold the entire Cyprus population under

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2. Raphael Israeli, "Muslim Minorities under Non-Islamic Rule"; *Current History*; April 1980, p. 163.

a single entity, was missing. The two communities rather involved themselves in continued feuding resulting from deep-rooted antipathy against each other. In the eyes of the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots have been the life long enemies of christianity, while the Turks in Cyprus from the very beginning opposed the Greek Cypriots' demand for *enosis*.

The Greek Cypriot population even under British rule demanded *enosis* which was strongly resisted by the British. The extreme advocates of *enosis*, were grouped together in EOKA (National Organisation of the struggle for the Freedom of Cyprus) who in the mid-50s indulged in recurrent terrorism and guerrilla campaigns against the colonial power. In order to counter the EOKA threat, Britain embarked on a policy aimed at fomenting trouble between Greece and Turkey. The British encouraged the Turkish version of self-determination, *taksim* or partition.<sup>3</sup>

The tide of violence ran high in Cyprus during the first half of 1958. EOKA carried out intensive campaigns of sabotage and terrorism against the British rule and at the same time strife between the Greeks and Turks were becoming more frequent and severe. There was increased tension too, between the governments at Athens and Ankara. In this situation, Britain, Greece and Turkish governments interacted to bring about an imposed solution of the Cyprus question. In February 1959, Britain, Greece and Turkey reached an agreement at Zurich, to establish the Republic of Cyprus. The republic came into being with the granting of independence on 16 August 1960.

### A Constitutional Crisis

The very segmented and ethnically divergent character of the Cypriot society was reflected in the constitution of Cyprus. The constitution provided among other things that the state of Cyprus is an independent and sovereign republic with a presidential regime.

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3. John Zorocostas, "Cyprus" in *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World* ed. by Mohamed Ayoob. Croom Helm, London. 1980, p. 108.

The President being Greek, the vice-President would be a Turk elected by the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus respectively. They were to have a council of Ministers composed of seven Greek ministers and three Turkish ministers. The legislative power of the Republic were to be exercised by the House of Representatives. Out of the total number of representation, 70% were to be elected by the Greek community and 30% by the Turkish community.<sup>4</sup> The constitution further propounded that the Greek Cypriot communities were each to have council (communal chamber) of their own to exercise authority in such matters as religion, education, cooperative societies and other questions. The civil service was to be composed of 70% Greek Cypriot and 30% Turkish Cypriot personnel, with this proportional distribution applying as far as possible at every grade of the hierarchy. This structure of rigid quotas and specification of the number of posts and offices to each of the two communal groups in Cyprus was apparently meant to hinder Greek Cypriots demand for *enosis* and to safeguard the interest of Turkish Cypriots as a minority community, Although the constitution attempted to minimise areas of inter-competition and conflict, the implementation of the constitution proved much more difficult than framing it. This segregation at all levels between the Greeks and Turkish communities in the form of 70:30 ratio made the constitution virtually unworkable.

It should be stressed here that the plans and proposals which these governments offered regarding Cyprus, were drafted in a way that assured primarily the British and secondarily the Turkish and Greek governments a maximum of manoeuvrability in the affairs of Cyprus. Britain, Greece and Turkey guaranteed the independence, territorial integrity and the constitution of Cyprus. The Treaty of Guarantee, gave the guarantor powers, the constitutional right to act as "Philosopher Kings" in the constitutional developments of the Republic. Any development in Cyprus interpreted as detrimental to the interests

4. W.B. Fisher, "Cyprus", in *The Middle East and North Africa, 1982-83* Twenty-Ninth Edition, Europa Publications Limited, London, p. 300.

of any of the three guarantors could lead to collective or unilateral action, directed towards reestablishing the state of affairs created by the treaty.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the Treaty of Alliance, a defence treaty between Cyprus, Greece and Turkey made provision for permanent stationing of Greek and Turkish troops in Cyprus. Greece received the right to station a force of 950 men and the Turkish Republic, a force of 650 men. Britain retained under her direct sovereignty, two base areas in Cyprus at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.<sup>6</sup> With the British base facilities endorsed by the Treaty of Guarantee and the treaty itself entrenched in the constitution, British influence in Cyprus was made secure.

The constitution of Cyprus was unique in the sense that it was drafted by Greek and Turkish governments and not by the Cypriots themselves. The incorporation of British, Greek and Turkish interests in the structure of the constitution and the rigidity of the constitution itself, led to a two-way aggravation of the crisis. On the one hand, the external involvement in the problem received a constitutional nature and on the other hand, the communal segregation of the Cypriot community became institutionalised.

Interpretation and working of the constitution proved increasingly difficult in the post-independence years. Traditionally, the Greeks considered the Turks as a minority in a Greek dominated island and this idea remained unchanged even after the independence of Cyprus.

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*The reflection of British, Greek and Turkish interests in the constitution and the rigidity of the constitution itself gave external involvement in the crisis a perpetual nature on the one hand and institutionalised communal segregation of the Cypriot community on the other.*

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Thus the working of a constitution which tried to balance the participation of both Greeks and Turks proved hazardous. Fights soon broke out over a number of critical issues that included allocation

5. *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World*, op. cit, p. 130.

6. *The Middle East and North Africa*; 1982-83 op. cit. p. 300.

of civil service jobs, creation of an independent army, separation of municipalities, taxation law, the communal chambers and the use of veto on central government taxation. Difficulties soon arose over the implementation of the 70:30 ratio in the public services in every grade of the hierarchy. The Greek Cypriots felt that this system would hold back some of their senior cadres from promotion in order to satisfy some less qualified Turkish Cypriots, while the Turks felt this earmarking of quotas was essential to correct injustices.

There was divergence of opinion between them also over the the formation of a national army as laid down in Zurich agreement of 1959 (2,000 men : 60% Greek, 40% Turkish). The development of this ethnically mixed army was held up due to lack of consensus on its organization. Instead, both communities went their separate ways to recruit, train and equip their own private armies. This was how the Greek Cypriot National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Fighting Force came into being.<sup>7</sup>

The year 1962 witnessed the growth of a serious crisis over the system of separate Greek and Turkish municipalities in the five main towns of Cyprus—Nicosia, Famagusta, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos. When Turkish communal chamber offered to establish similar municipality in Lefka, Archbishop Makarios, the then President issued a decree stating that Government appointed bodies would control municipal organisations throughout the island—a decree, which the Turkish Cypriots denounced as an infringement of the constitution.<sup>8</sup> For the Turkish minority these separate municipalities were a necessary safeguard to prevent Greek majority domination and they were not prepared to give up their rights. The rejection of this unilateral revision led to intercommunal violence.

Makarios believed that in the interest of good and efficient government, the whole constitution had to be reviewed to remove the

7. J. Bayo Adekson, *Political Ethnicity and Military Disintegration: The Comparative Cases of Contemporary Cyprus (1960-1974) and Lebanon (1943-1975)* IDSA Journal, VOL XIII no. 2 p. 259.

8. *The Middle East and North Africa*, op. cit. p. 30.

inherent defects which paralyzed the machinery of government. In line with this idea, Markarios submitted proposals that in effect would have abolished many of the separate communal institutions and replaced them by a more integrated unitary administration with only limited guarantees for the Turkish communities. These proposals, made public in December, 1964, appeared suspect to the minority community whose leaders believed them to harbour the danger of further majority domination. This inflamed the sentiments of the feuding parties, which in turn led to civil war and gave rise to friction between Athens and Ankara.

#### **Fusion of internal and external forces**

Although the crisis was essentially domestic in character, the existence of the Treaty of Guarantee and the fact that each community was supported by one of the guarantor powers Greece and Turkey, provided international overtones to crisis. As the conflict intensified, arms in considerable quantities were brought secretly into Cyprus for both sides thus exacerbating the traditional antagonisms between Greece and Turkey.

As the intercommunal clashes spread over Cyprus, the US President Lyndon Johnson sent General Lemnitzer, the NATO Commander in Europe to Athens and Ankara. This opened a new stage in the Cyprus crisis, with American diplomacy introduced to the crisis, formally for the first time. As a result of Lemnitzer's trip, a NATO peace plan was drawn up for Cyprus<sup>9</sup>. The American undertaking, however also opened the way for Soviet involvement in the Cyprus crisis. On February 7, 1964, Khrushchev warned that "The Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the situation which is developing in the area."<sup>10</sup> The intercommunal violence of 1964

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9. Under the proposed plan a NATO recruited peacekeeping force of 10,000 men under British command with political guidance from a North Atlantic non-NATO country. P. Windsor, "NATO and the Cyprus Crisis", *Adelphi papers*, No. 14 (Nov. 1962) p. 13, 14.

10. *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World. op. cit.* p. 109.



left Cyprus even more divided than before. Neither the intervention of UN peace-keeping force nor the series of so called intercommunal talks that followed could prevent the trend towards increased polarisation of the Cyprus politics.

A new dimension in Cyprus politics became exposed during this time, a split among the Greek Cypriots. Cleavage soon surfaced between Makarios governments, intent on preserving the island's independence, and former EOKA supporters (soon to emerge as EOKA-B) who were again advocating for *enosis*. Between 1969 and 1974, the split increased in bitterness and violence as EOKA won backing from the Athens junta and Makarios set up contact with the Soviet bloc<sup>11</sup>. Makarios' softer attitude towards the eastern bloc and association with Greek Cypriot left the EOKA infuriated and provoked its supporters to increasingly associate themselves with the Athens military regime then in power in mainland Greece. The new regime which seized power in Athens on April 1967 was isolated at home and abroad at that time. So they desperately sought a resolution of the Cyprus problem in order to raise its own prestige. The military regime used the clandestine importation into Cyprus of 10,000 light arms from Czechoslovakia on 21 January 1972 as a pretext for intervention in Cypriot issue.<sup>12</sup> In July 1974, at the instigation of Greek military junta, the Cyprus National Guard and EOKA-B staged a bloody coup ousting President Makarios and installing Nicos Sampson, a figurehead President selected by Athens. The Greek military junta probably felt that the time was appropriate to push through the Greek's long sought goal of *enosis*. Not unexpectedly, the Turkish Cypriots reacted and revolted, which plunged the island into civil war. Furthermore, it rendered the pretext for Turkish forces to invade and occupy 37% of the island in two sperate offensives which began on 20 July and 14 August, 1974 respectively.

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11. Andrew Wilson, The "Aegean Dispute", *Adelphi Papers*. No. 155, p. 18.

12. *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World*; *op. cit.* p. 112-113.

The move led Greece and Turkey to the brink of war, and induced a renewed arms race between them, thus giving rise to a new intramural crisis within NATO. Moreover, in protest over the failure of Washington to halt the Turkish invasion, Greece withdrew from the military structure of NATO. Prior to Greek withdrawal from NATO military wing, the NATO structure in the Eastern Mediterranean had provided for NATO headquarters in Izmir the land forces south-east Europe and the Sixth Allied Tactical air force, each under an American General with Greek and Turkish Deputies.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence of Greek withdrawal the two Commands became "Turkish NATO" headquarters leaving preponderance of Turkish land and air forces under the Command of NATO headquarters at Izmir, Turkey.

The crisis within NATO was further aggravated as Turkey closed American bases on its territory and threatened to pull its forces out of NATO also. "The intramural crisis was probably seminal in the collapse of America's Mediterranean policy after nearly thirty years of undisputed supremacy."<sup>14</sup> Although Cyprus itself is not a member of NATO, its three guarantor powers Greece, Turkey and Britain are the members of the alliance. Moreover, USA, NATO's senior partner had from the very beginning an eye on the island as a potential strategic base. It is only natural that any Greco-Turkish friction over Cyprus or any other issue in the region would have an adverse effect on the maintenance of a solid southern flank for NATO.

Turkey is comparatively more important than Greece in Western geo-strategic thinking. Apart from its direct borders with Soviet Union, Turkey controls the Dardanelles and holds a grip on the Kurdish ethnic group which lies astride the most direct route between the Soviet Union and the Middle East. All this gives a notion that Turkey is a more valuable ally and more committed to the defence of the West than Greece. This has served to make the Greeks feel

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13. Andrew Wilson, *op. cit.* p. 21.

14. *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World, op. cit.* p. 115.

very uncomfortable. Their discomfort reflected upon its relations with Turkey and the multifaceted quarrel between them that surfaced and intensified over the years. Greek and Turkish forces are presently mobilised more against each other than on behalf of a common defence of NATO territory. US Admiral Herald E. Shear, C-in-C of the Allied Forces in Southern Europe, asserts that this quarrel represents "the most important problem in the NATO."<sup>15</sup>

This vulnerability of NATO's Southern flank seems tailor-made for the Russians to assert its influence over this strategically situated region. Soviet Union has two objectives in Cyprus. Firstly to exploit the dissensions connected with the Cyprus situation as a way of intensifying divisions within the NATO military alliance. The Kremlin's aim is to loosen the already strained ties of these capitals with the West. The USSR has seized virtually every opportunity to use the Greek, Turkish and Cypriot Communists for its own purposes. AKEL (the Progressive Party of the Working People) has established links with Turkish Cypriot leftists and with the Greek Communist Party, to provide Moscow with a potentially formidable new instrument of political influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The leader of AKEL, Mr. Ezekias Papaioannou and the members of his politburo regularly visit Moscow to receive instructions.<sup>16</sup> However an actual conflict or war in Cyprus would lead to fighting in direct proximity to the Soviet Union and would probably close the straits to Soviet naval vessels. So Moscow favours a persistent unstable situation in Cyprus rather than direct war or a Greco-Turkish rapprochement. Along with the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of their Mediterranean squadron the Russians have proclaimed that their superpower status and their close proximity to the Eastern Mediterranean entitle them to a major voice in the settlement of regional disputes.<sup>17</sup> Here their active interest over the Cyprus

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15. Marian Kirsch Leighton, "Greco-Turkish Friction; Changing Balance in the Eastern Mediterranean" *Conflict Studies*, No. 109, July 1979; p. 19.

16. *Ibid*, p. 18.

17. *Ibid*, p. 17.

imbroglio is particularly notable. The second objective of Soviet Union in Cyprus is to work for an independent and non-aligned Cyprus that would be free of British military presence and NATO influence. With this objective in view they want the closure of British bases at Akrotiri/Episcopi in the south west and Dhekelia in the south east of Cyprus, the dismantling of Britain's radar stations on Mt. Troodas and of the Anglo-American monitoring station and the withdrawal of Britain's 400 troops from the island<sup>18</sup> Both Akel and EDEK (Greek Cypriot Socialist Party) campaign for the closure of the British Sovereign bases.

All these factors superimposed on the Cyprus conflict impeded the process of national integration. The multifarious interests and aims of external actors took precedence over the interests of Cyprus and made roads for a perpetual disintegration of the Republic. The first sign of this was evident in the unilateral proclamation by Turkish Cypriots of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus in February 1975

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*The multifarious interests and aims of external actors took precedence over the interests of Cypriot nationhood—a process in which initial interest of two regional powers resulted in wider external involments including the Superpowers.*

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on the part of the island under Turkish occupation. This partition of the island was the outcome of the Turkish invasion and occupation of 37% of the island's territory in the immediate aftermath of 1974 coup. The new state was not proclaimed as an independent Republic but as restructuring of the Autonomous Turkish Cypriot Administration—a body established after the invasion, on the basis of a secular and federated state until such time as the 1960 constitution of the Republic is amended in a similar manner to become the constitution of the Federal Republic of Cyprus.<sup>19</sup> Rauf Denktash was appointed the President of the new state. Greece denounced this move as a

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18. *Ibid.* p. 18.

19. *The Middle East and North Africa. op. cit.* p, 306.

threat to peace and carried the issue to the UN Security Council where a resolution was passed on March 13, 1975, regretting the unilateral declaration to set up a Federated Turkish state.

### **Failure of the Peace Initiatives and the UDI**

A series of intercommunal talks followed in the aftermath of the 1975 development and continued throughout the late seventies but were unproductive each side being unwilling to compromise on the major areas of dispute. The inter-communal talks continued throughout 1980 and 1981 but little progress was made. The constitutional issue remained the main problem. The Greek Cypriots want a federation with a strong central government and freedom of movement throughout the island. The Turkish Cypriots favour something more like a partition within a confederation, with equal status for the two communities, and equal representation in the government. The Greek Cypriots, although agree to the principle of an alternating presidency, object to disproportionate representation of the Turkish community, who form less than 25% of the population. Turkish Cypriots have insisted that the island's intercommunal problem cannot be solved on an international basis, but must be settled at home and on the basis of federation.

When the Socialist government of Mr. Papandreou came to power in Athens tension further increased. His grand design was to bring into the orbit of Cyprus diplomacy, not merely western countries but also Soviet bloc and the non-aligned camp who might put pressure on the withdrawal of Turkish troops and make concessions to Greece. Papandreou even turned to the UN to gain more leverage on the issue. A resolution to this effect was even passed by the General Assembly in May, 1983 branding the Turks as aggressors and urging them to withdraw their troops from Northern Cyprus.

By summer 1983, UN Secretary General Mr. Perez De Cuellar shouldered the responsibility of diffusing the Cyprus crisis. However, Mr. Kyprianou remained reluctant to accept his proposals as a basis

for resumed negotiations. And Mr. Denktash at the end of September, suddenly proposed summit meeting between himself and Mr. Kyprianou. The Greek Cypriot leader retorted by proposing a summit with President Evren, not with Denktash. These manoeuvres served only to create the impression that neither Mr. Kyprianou, nor Mr. Denktash had the political will to reach an early settlement. Neither side had been willing to compromise.

On November 15, 1983, the Turkish Cypriot's Community Assembly proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The sudden announcement formalised the *de facto* partition of the island by Turkish troops nearly ten years ago. The declaration exacerbated already cracking tensions between Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies, threatening further disruption on the alliance's southern flank at the very moment that NATO faces the volatile issue of deploying US nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

Claiming to be surprised by the declaration, the Turkish government, which maintains 20,000 soldiers in Cyprus promptly recognised the new Republic. In the immediate aftermath of recognition Greek Cypriots maintained that Denktash's move had been carefully orchestrated by Turkey itself. Although Athens lobbied desperately for support from the West in its efforts to pressure Turkey into reversing the decision of Turkish Cypriots, the response

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*The UDI exacerbated the already cracking tensions between Greece and Turkey leading to further deepening of intramural crisis in NATO at the very moment that the Alliance unity is jeopardised by other volatile issues.*

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was not encouraging. No one was eager to alienate Turkey, which remains a very vital member in good standing of NATO. As a result, NATO leaders were cautious in their reactions. Characterizing the Cyprus dispute as one of "bilateral differences" between Greece and Turkey, General Bernard Rogers, the Supreme Commander

der of Allied Forces in Europe said : "There is no way we can resolve those differences within NATO".<sup>20</sup>

Though a few Muslim nations backed the state, the US, the Soviet Union and nearly everyone denounced the independence move. The Greek lobby in the US including some influential senators and Congressmen called on the Reagan administration not only to denounce the declaration but also to withdraw aid—both economic and military from Turkey if the later does not pressure the newly founded state to rescind its existence.<sup>21</sup> The Security Council restricted itself to a cool condemnation of the UDI, and appealed to member states not to recognise the break-away regime and requested the Secretary General to continue his attempts to find some solution.

In effect of all these, although the UDI has drawn sympathy from a few Muslim states, none except Turkey has extended recognition to the new state. Recognition was not to come for there are several considerations which the international community cannot be indifferent to. Primarily the independence move was contrary to UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus. The agreements made in 1977 and 1979 between the President of Cyprus and Rauf Denktash aimed at setting guidelines for settling the problems of the divided island. Secondly, recognising Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus would encourage the secessionist tendencies in other parts of the world. Thirdly, recognition would certainly be looked upon as an act of betrayal and hostility by the Greeks which the West and not least the Soviet bloc can afford.

The Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence was sudden and stunning, but it is not irreversible. It has been claimed by the Turkish Cypriots themselves that the creation of a Turkish Cypriot state would provide the weight necessary for successful negotiations with the Greek community. "We are looking for a bizonal, bicomunal federal republic", said the Turkish Cypriot Foreign Minister Kenan Atakol. He further claimed "In our declaration we said

20. *Newsweek*, Nov. 28, 1983. p. 14.

21. *Arabia; The Islamic World Review*, January 1984, p. 12.

that we extended a peaceful hand to the Greek Cypriots, if they refuse to negotiate with us, the declaration will show the whole world that we believe we have as much right to self determination as the Greek Cypriots have".<sup>22</sup> What Denktash really had in mind was perhaps to call the world's attention to Turkish Cypriot demands for a federated Cyprus. Denktash announced that his declaration would not "hinder but facilitate the establishment of a federation".<sup>23</sup> Thus it appears that he sought to gain immediate international attention, impatient as he was over the stalemate in negotiations with Greeks.

Now that things have gone far, the Greek Cypriots should weigh the pros and cons and look for a way out of this deadlock. They should realize that they outnumber Turks by four to one, and would never be in a position of political or economic disadvantage. On the otherhand, the Turkish Cypriots are eager for a federal solution. They repeatedly insisted that the federation option remains open and there is no barrier to talks about a Cyprus settlement despite the proclamation of the Republic, which was only to increase their bargaining power *vis a vis* the Greek Cypriots.

Perhaps the best chance of a breakthrough at this stage is for both the parties to accept the "De Cuellar Plan" as a basis for negotiations. UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar in mid-summer 1983 proposed a peace initiative which called for a two province federation with a Greek President and Turkish vice-President. Spyros Kyprianou refused to fully accept the plan when it was announced. Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash also had reservations about certain aspects of the plan.

### Concluding Remarks

For over two decades the Cyprus crisis has been looming high on the international scenario. The age old dispute, has had long term adverse effect on the national integration of the country. Ravaged by the recurrent intercommunal discords in early sixties the coup and

22. *Time*, Nov. 29, 1983, p. 14.

23. *Newsweek*, Nov. 28.



*defacto* partition of the island in the seventies, and the ultimate division of the island in 1983, Cyprus has become one of the longest and most complicated tangles in contemporary international politics.

Communal discords were, no doubt, the roots of the crisis. But the interests of external actors emphasised almost every aspect of Cyprus question which left open the door towards disintegration. And when the divergences came up between the two distinct communities in Cyprus, the outside powers were very prompt in taking

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advantage of that dissension with a view to nurturing their own national interests. Not only Greece and Turkey—the two regional powers—became involved in Cyprus, the entire NATO alliance specially the US and Britain had their stakes in the island's politics which automatically brought in Soviet Union into the scene.

Cyprus is a specific case where both internal and external factors interacted to bring about a threat of ultimate partition of a country. If we analyze the interacting factors around the problem in the two decades we find that the divergences and dissimilarities between the Greeks and Turks were irreconcilable which were taken advantage of by the external powers mainly Greece and Turkey. Again Greeko-Turkish friction is very much a concern of NATO and its Southern flank which has made the situation too complex. In such a situation all that is needed is the political will for a negotiated settlement by not only the two feuding Cypriot communities but also, by all the parties involved in the tangle. That political will is nothing abstract but a genuine desire of all for leaving the settlement of the problem to the process of negotiation between the two communities designed to work out a formula for a federated state of two provinces agreeable to mutual give-and-take.