


## A Missed Opportunity in the Cyprus Question? The Enosis Cum Dhekelia Base Formula and the Çağlayangil-Toumbas Talks (June-December 1966)



Kıbrıs Meselesi'nde Kaçırılmış Bir Fırsat Mı? Enosis'e Karşılık Dikelya Üssü ve Çağlayangil-Toumbas Görüşmeleri (Haziran-Aralık 1966)

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### Abstract

This study examines the 1966 Çağlayangil-Toumbas negotiations, a critical turning point in efforts to resolve the Cyprus Question, and the “compromise-based solution” approach adopted by both parties. The momentum behind this initiative stemmed from the 1965 UN resolution, which reinforced Cyprus’s “independent” status and enhanced Makarios’s international standing. As Turkey and Greece began to experience a decline in their political and strategic influence over the island, both countries responded by pursuing a comprehensive settlement aimed at preserving their influence, preventing the escalating risk of war, and restoring the Lausanne balance. The negotiations focused on a formula proposing Enosis in exchange for granting Turkey a military base in the Dhekelia area (“compensated Enosis” cum “restricted Taksim”). Although the parties came close to agreement and even signed a goodwill protocol, the process ultimately failed. The study explores why the talks collapsed and whether they represented a missed opportunity for compromise in Turkish-Greek relations. The central hypothesis is that the process was a “missed opportunity” for Greece and a “balance preserved” for Turkey. The collapse is attributed primarily to political instability in Greece, Makarios’s refusal to cooperate, and Turkey’s insistence on a sovereign base as a non-negotiable condition.


### Öz


Bu çalışma, Kıbrıs Meselesi’nin çözümüne yönelik girişimlerde kritik bir dönemeç oluşturan Çağlayangil-Toumbas görüşmelerini ve bu süreçte tarafların benimsediği “uzlaşmaya dayalı çözüm” arayışlarını ele almaktadır. Bu arayışın ivme kazanmasında belirleyici olan unsur, 1965 tarihli Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Kurulu kararıyla birlikte Kıbrıs’ın “bağımsız” statüsünün ve Makarios’un uluslararası konumunun güçlenmesi; buna paralel olarak Türkiye ile Yunanistan’ın adadaki geleneksel siyasi ve stratejik etkisinin zayıflamaya başlaması olmuştur. Her iki ülke, Kıbrıs üzerindeki nüfuzlarını sürdürmek ve bir türlü sonlandırılmayan savaş riskini bertaraf etmek amacıyla kapsamlı bir çözüm arayışına yönelmişti. Bu bağlamda yürütülen müzakereler, Enosis karşılığında Türkiye’ye Dikelya’da bir üs verilmesini öngören bir formül (“imtiyazlı Enosis”/ “daraltılmış Taksim”) çerçevesinde şekillenmişti. Anlaşmaya çok yaklaşılmış, hatta bir iyi niyet protokolü de imzalanmış olmasına rağmen, süreç başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmıştı. Çalışma, bu görüşmelerin neden fiyasko ile sonuçlandığını ve sürecin Türk-Yunan ilişkileri bağlamında Kıbrıs sorununa dair gerçekten kaçırılmış bir uzlaşma fırsatı olup olmadığını sorgulamaktadır. Temel hipotez, bu sürecin Yunanistan açısından “kaçırılmış bir fırsat”, Türkiye açısından ise “kurtarılmış bir denge” anlamına geldiği yönündedir. Çalışma ayrıca, sürecin tıkanmasındaki en önemli sebebin Yunanistan’daki siyasi istikrarsızlık olduğunu, buna ek olarak Makarios’un ikna edilememesi ve Türkiye’nin Dikelya’da egemen bir üs talebini “olmazsa olmaz” bir koşul olarak görmesinin de müzakereleri sekteye uğratan başlıca etkenler arasında yer aldığını ileri sürmektedir.



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## 1. Historical Background<sup>1</sup>

The diplomatic process that led to the Çağlayangil-Toumbas (or Toumbas-Çağlayangil) talks-aimed at revisiting Turkish-Greek relations with the objective of resolving the Cyprus issue in its entirety, thereby restoring the balance established by the Treaty of Lausanne and normalizing bilateral relations-was long and arduous. After the 1963-1964 crisis, the most decisive development that accelerated this process was the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution of 2077 on 18 December 1965. Leading up to the resolution, Turkey and Greece had repeatedly come to the brink of war over Cyprus.

The Cyprus Question, long a source of friction between two countries, became the defining axis of their bilateral relations during the 1950s. Despite being NATO allies, the two countries repeatedly faced the threat of armed conflict due to the island's unresolved political status. The Republic of Cyprus, established in 1960 under a power-sharing constitution and the joint guarantee of Turkey, Greece, and Britain (the London and Zurich Agreements), was designed as a bi-communal and sovereign entity. However, this framework quickly began to unravel, particularly after President Makarios's proposals to amend the constitution (the 13 points), which were perceived by Turkish Cypriots and Ankara as undermining the founding principles of the Republic. The resulting outbreak of intercommunal violence in December 1963 led to the *de facto* exclusion of Turkish Cypriots from state institutions and triggered a deepening cycle of mistrust and insecurity<sup>2</sup>.

In response to escalating violence and Makarios's efforts to isolate the Turkish Cypriots, the United Nations deployed a peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) in 1964<sup>3</sup>. However, the mission remained a temporary measure, aimed more at containing violence than providing a durable solution<sup>4</sup>. This dynamic ultimately strengthened Makarios's political position, while the UN's emphasis on an "independent Cyprus" implicitly rejected both Enosis and Taksim as viable outcomes-thereby pushing a permanent settlement even further out of reach<sup>5</sup>. The threat of Turkish military intervention-described by U.S. Under Secretary of State George Ball as a "diplomatic atom bomb"<sup>6</sup>-heightened the crisis in Cyprus. Although Turkey openly declared its

<sup>1</sup>Some of the information used in this study was presented in the oral paper titled "Greece's Foreign Policy in Cyprus and the Critical Turning Point in the 'Resolution' of the Cyprus Question: The Çağlayangil-Toumbas Talks (March-December 1966)", delivered at the *International Cyprus Symposium* held at Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, on 27-29 June 2024. Only the abstract of the aforementioned paper has been published in Turkish. This article revisits and expands upon the analysis of the Çağlayangil-Toumbas talks, approaching them within the framework of Turkish-Greek relations and through a comparative reading of archival documents.

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed account from the Turkish perspective, see Ulvi Keser, *Kıbrıs'ta Kanlı Noel 1963* (Ankara: Detay Publishing, 2010), 67-122; Ulvi Keser, *Kıbrıs Türk Direnişi 1963-1967* (Ankara: Detay Publishing, 2012), 45-103. For the Greek and Greek Cypriot perspectives, see Makarios Drousiotis, *The First Partition: Cyprus 1963-1964* (Nicosia: Alfadi Publishing, 2014); Polyvios G. Polyviou, "The First Partition of Cyprus: A Diplomatic History of the 1963 Crisis," *The Cyprus Review* 1-2(1989): 47-84; For further reference on Athens-Nicosia relations and the process leading to constitutional amendments following the London and Zurich Agreements, see also, Avangelos Averoff-Tossizza, *Lost Opportunities: The Cyprus Question, 1950-1963* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas Publisher, 1986), 362-388; P.N. Vanezis, *Cyprus: Crime Without Punishment*, (Hong Kong: Legal Printing, 1997), 60-70.

<sup>3</sup>Parker T. Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War: Cyprus, A Firsthand Account of Crisis Management, 1965-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 16.

<sup>4</sup>"U.N Troops Take Over Peace Task on Cyprus", *New York Times*, March 28, 1964.

<sup>5</sup>Perhaps even more concerning for the two allied nations under NATO's umbrella (Turkey and Greece) was the fact that the UN resolution also represented a significant political victory for the communist movement on the island. The left-leaning Cypriot newspaper *Haravgi* interpreted the complete elimination of the partition option through this resolution as "the final blow to NATO's hopes of establishing a permanent presence on the island". This perspective clearly reflected the profound distrust of Cypriot leftist circles towards the Western alliance and the intense ideological polarization of the Cold War era. (See, TNA: FO 371/185623, From Athens to Foreign Office, No. 92, 5 February 1966.)

<sup>6</sup>The text of this highly significant conversation is as follows: That," I said, "is the most brutal diplomatic note I have ever seen." Indeed, the Secretary, aided by Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland and his deputy, Joseph Sisco, had produced the diplomatic equivalent of an atomic bomb. "I think that may stop Inonu from invading," I said, "but I don't know how we'll ever get him down off the ceiling after that." The

readiness to go to war to prevent a unilateral Enosis unless its security concerns were addressed, it also exerted pressure on the Greek Orthodox community in Istanbul as a form of strategic leverage.

Amid these escalating tensions, the year 1964 marked a critical turning point: under American mediation, the Acheson Plan was introduced in an effort to reconcile the security concerns of both Turkey and Greece through a controversial formula later interpreted as “double Enosis” (or Enosis *cum* Taksim). While Greek Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou showed fleeting interest<sup>7</sup>, the plan was ultimately rejected, particularly by the Greek Cypriot leadership under Makarios<sup>8</sup>. The failure of the Acheson initiatives-coupled with the continued deterioration of security conditions on the island-reinforced Ankara's perception that the Turkish Cypriot community and Turkey's strategic interests were facing an existential threat.

The collapse of the Acheson Plan and subsequent failures of diplomatic initiatives led to a near-complete breakdown of trust between Athens and Ankara, further entrenching their opposing visions for the island. The resulting instability brought two countries once again to the brink of war, reigniting discussions over *Enosis* (Union with Greece) and *Taksim* (Partition of the island). Concerned about the destabilization of NATO's southeastern flank, the United States intensified its mediation efforts. Meanwhile, Turkey openly declared its readiness to intervene militarily if unilateral Enosis were attempted, while Greece increased its military presence on the island, exacerbating Ankara's fears<sup>9</sup>.

By 1965, the Cyprus issue had once again emerged as a central concern on the United Nations agenda. The adoption of the decision marked a decisive moment in the evolution of the Cyprus crisis<sup>10</sup>. The resolution drew upon earlier UN decisions-particularly Resolution 186 of 4 March 1964-as well as the findings of the Galo Plaza Report<sup>11</sup>, to underscore Cyprus's status as a fully independent state. By reaffirming the principle of an “independent Cyprus,” the resolution effectively invalidated both Greek and Turkish claims, and in doing so, enhanced Makarios's legitimacy as the head of a sovereign state<sup>12</sup>. It explicitly rejected all forms of foreign interference and called on member states to respect the island's sovereignty and unity. Notably, Turkey and Greece were mentioned by name and urged to refrain from any actions that could jeopardize the independence or territorial integrity of Cyprus. Therefore, the resolution fundamentally rejected both Greece's Enosis policy and Turkey's Taksim strategy. By emphasizing the preservation of Cyprus as a sovereign, independent, and territorially integral state, it left no room for unilateral annexation by Greece or territorial division by Turkey. In doing so, it not only delegitimized the competing national aspirations of both motherlands but also reaffirmed the international community's commitment to maintaining the political and territorial status quo on the island. This position inevitably placed Cyprus in a delicate and constrained diplomatic space, caught between the conflicting objectives of Athens and Ankara, while simultaneously reinforcing the primacy of international legal norms over nationalist claims. Additionally, the resolution

Secretary looked at me with a sweet smile. “That'll be your problem,” he said. See, George Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* (New York: Norton, 1982), 350.

<sup>7</sup>For details see Gurhan Yellice, “The American Intervention in the 1964 Cyprus Crisis and the Greek Political Reaction (February-August 1964),” *Journal Of Modern Turkish History Studies*, 17/36 (2017): 367-401.

<sup>8</sup>For more information about the plan see, Πέτρος Γαρουφαλιάς, *Ελλάς και Κύπρος, Τραγικά σφάλματα, Ευκαιρίες που χάθηκαν*, 19 Φεβρουαρίου 1964- 15 Ιουλίου 1965, Αθήνα 1982; Alexandris, Alexis, ed. *Oi Ellinotourhikes Scheseis, 1923-1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923-1987], (Athens: Ekdotis Gnosi, 1988), 225; For a general assessment of the 1964 crisis and its implications for Turkish-Greek relations, see also Barış Hasan, *Greek Foreign Policy Towards Turkey in the Cold War*, (Hungary: University of Pecs Publishing, 2023), 89-98.

<sup>9</sup>Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-1971*, (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 210-214; T. W. Adams, “The American Concern in Cyprus”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 401 (1972): 95-105.

<sup>10</sup>For details see <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/90480?ln=en&v=pdf>

<sup>11</sup>The Galo Plaza report fundamentally rejected Greece's Enosis proposal outright and dismissed Turkey's federation plan as a form of covert partition (TNA, FO 179996, “Brief for Mr. Thomson”, 7 April 1965; “Greeks will confer on report by Plaza”, *The New York Times*, 3 April 1965). For full text of Plaza's report see, Report of the United Nations Mediator on Cyprus to the Secretary-General, S/6253, 26 March 1965, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/573661?ln=en&v=pdf> (Accessed 12 February 2025)

<sup>12</sup>UN General Assembly Resolution 2077 (XX): Question of Cyprus, 1402nd plenary meeting, 18 December 1965.

emphasized the importance of continuing the UN mediation mission, thereby reaffirming the international community's commitment to a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the conflict. Of particular significance was the resolution's omission of any reference to the British military bases on the island-an absence widely interpreted as a favorable outcome for Britain<sup>13</sup>.

This "lamentable" decision represented a major disappointment for both Turkey and Greece. Although couched in neutral diplomatic language, the phrasing was seen as potentially restricting each side's strategic flexibility on the island. For Turkey, it cast doubt on the legitimacy of its security interests and historical ties to Cyprus; for Greece, it appeared to hinder efforts toward Enosis, particularly if such principles became codified in international law. By effectively sidelining both countries, the decision was perceived as diminishing their roles in a dispute they had long regarded as central to their regional security.

Nevertheless, the resolution also marked a definitive turning point for Turkey and Greece and revived long-standing concerns and compelled both sides to renegotiate. A tacit understanding began to take shape: the root of instability lay not only in the intercommunal conflict but increasingly in the figure of Archbishop Makarios, who was seen as a persistent source of disruption. In addition, the growing communist threat in the Eastern Mediterranean, Makarios's intransigent and sovereign stance<sup>14</sup>, and the broader risk of regional instability underscored the urgency of finding a negotiated solution. Faced with these common challenges, Turkey and Greece showed a renewed willingness to set aside their differences and explore a path toward convergence. In this context, the diplomatic process that eventually led to the Çağlayangil-Toumbas talks-a cautious effort to revisit Turkish Greek relations with the aim of resolving the Cyprus issue and restoring the balance established by the Treaty of Lausanne-began to take shape. While the UN's emphasis on an "independent Cyprus" implicitly marginalized both the Enosis and Taksim options, it also laid the groundwork for a renewed, albeit fragile, phase of Turkish Greek dialogue aimed at preventing further deterioration and achieving a negotiated solution.

### 1.1. Turkish and Greek Reaction to the UN Resolution

As noted earlier, the resolution had troubling implications for both Turkey and Greece. From Turkey's perspective, the UN resolution represented one of the most significant diplomatic setbacks in the history of the Cyprus issue. To put it more clearly, the decision was in fact a heavy defeat for Turkey. As anticipated, the resolution made no effort to preserve the delicate Turkish Greek balance that had underpinned the 1960 constitutional order of the Republic of Cyprus. On the contrary, it effectively reinforced the position of Makarios and the Greek Cypriot leadership, while further marginalizing Turkish concerns. By 1966, Makarios had not only consolidated his political authority but had also begun to take irreversible steps toward transforming the Republic of Cyprus into a unitary Greek Cypriot-controlled state. Makarios was most unlikely to accept any renewal of Turkish participation in the Government, as he increasingly viewed Turkish Cypriots as a political obstacle rather than as equal partners in governance<sup>15</sup>. In fact, during the course of 1966, vacant ministerial posts that had constitutionally been allocated to Turkish Cypriots were being filled unilaterally with Greek Cypriot appointees<sup>16</sup>. This occurred without meaningful objection or institutional oversight, highlighting the erosion of the 1960 power-sharing framework. Ankara viewed these developments not

<sup>13</sup>During the negotiations, it was emphasized that the total cost of the UNFICYP mission had reached \$55 million by 26 December 1965. The renewal of the forces was due on that date, but due to financial constraints, the United Nations was reluctant to proceed. See, The National Archives (TNA), FO 371/179991, United Kingdom Delegation to NATO to Foreign Office, No. 274, 17 November 1964, "Total Cost up to 26 December 1965".

<sup>14</sup>"Under normal circumstances", such a stance may be/or must be regarded as understandable when evaluated objectively in the context of Cyprus's internal dynamics.

<sup>15</sup>TNA, FO/CC103144/18, Report by Dodson to Foreign Office, 21 April 1966.

<sup>16</sup>TNA, FO/CC 103144/24, "Conversation with Turkish Ambassador", 18 May 1966.

merely as constitutional violations, but as a de facto shift toward Greek Cypriot domination-a process that the UN resolution had inadvertently legitimized. Thus, Turkish anxieties about being sidelined in both governance and international diplomacy grew significantly deeper in the aftermath of the resolution. The Republic of Cyprus, established in 1960 as a bi-communal state based on a power-sharing arrangement designed to reflect Turkish-Greek parity-though the extent to which this arrangement genuinely protected the rights of both communities remains contentious-was now facing an existential crisis. The erosion of this foundational balance not only undermined the legitimacy of the 1960 settlement and Turkish-Greek balance in Ankara's eyes but also had far-reaching implications for Turkey's national security perceptions and its broader foreign policy orientation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey's long-standing geopolitical security concerns, its demands for the protection of Turkish Cypriot rights, and its objections to the Makarios administration found little international support. The resolution was adopted with 47 votes in favor and only five against-including Turkey-while 54 members either abstained or did not participate in the vote<sup>17</sup>. Although the abstention of the Britain and the majority of NATO member states prevented the resolution from reaching the required two-thirds majority, the vote clearly demonstrated Turkey's increasing international isolation. Out of 117 UN member states at the time, Turkey managed to secure the support of only four<sup>18</sup>. The resolution also demonstrated that Turkey's diplomatic initiatives launched in late 1964 had failed to achieve their intended results. Turkey had sent Goodwill Missions to Asian, African, Latin American and Arab countries to explain the Cyprus issue in international forums and gain support. However, these efforts failed to secure sufficient diplomatic backing. The UN's 1965 resolution officially confirmed that these initiatives had not produced the desired impact<sup>19</sup>.

This diplomatic shock, if not a disaster, struck the Demirel government at a time when it was already grappling with an ongoing economic crisis. Struggling with high inflation, a growing external debt burden, and rising unemployment, Turkey now also faced a serious blow to its foreign policy stance. In the face of what appeared to be an increasingly uncontrollable and deteriorating situation, some politicians began advocating for a return to the populist policies of the Democrat Party era. For instance, immediately following the vote, Reşat Özarda, Justice Party MP from Aydın, called for an emergency session of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, proposed military intervention, and even suggested declaring war on Greece-revealing the extent to which the Cyprus issue had come to be perceived as a national cause (*milli dava*) in Turkish public opinion<sup>20</sup>.

On 19 December, the Demirel government issued an official statement, declaring that the resolution was "in violation of international law and existing treaties" and therefore not legally binding. However, its emphasis on the fact that the two-thirds majority had not been achieved, as well as efforts to calm public

<sup>17</sup>TNA, FO/179982 95, "Background Note", CC 1051/63, December 1965. The favourable votes, as Turkish Cypriot diplomat Özdemir A. Özgür noted, were cast mainly by the Afro-Asian States that in fact had no power to do anything about the matter. See, Özdemir A. Özgür, *Cyprus in My Life. Testimony of a Turkish Cypriot Diplomat*, (Mölnese: Bibliopolis, 2001), 55-56

<sup>18</sup>"Siyasi Komisyon Aleyhte Karar Aldı", *Milliyet*, 18 December 1965.

<sup>19</sup>It is noteworthy that almost no support came from Third World countries in favor of Turkey. As Zeki Kuneralp pointed out in his memoirs, Turkish thesis (*Taksim*) was generally received with disfavor among these states. According to him, the primary reason was that partition represented a potential threat to them as well. Having only recently gained their independence, many of these countries were struggling to maintain national unity, and any notion of territorial division was perceived as deeply unsettling. As a result, they tended to distance themselves from the idea of *Taksim*. See, Zeki Kuneralp, *Sadece Diplomat*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1981), 148. For details regarding the goodwill missions, see, Ersin Müezzinoğlu, "Kıbrıs Meselesi Bağlamında Bir Diplomasi Aracı Olarak İyi Niyet Heyetleri 1964-1965", *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları (TDA)*, 135/266 (2023), 65-92.

<sup>20</sup>Özarda justified his position as follows: "The resolution adopted by the United Nations Political Committee against the Turkish Cypriots and Turkish national interests has deeply disappointed the Turkish nation and wounded every Turk at heart. This resolution carries a gravity that is likely to demoralize the Turkish Cypriot fighters and the Turkish community in Cyprus, and may lead to serious incidents. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that the reaction within our country will be extremely harsh and severe. For the reasons explained above, it has become an unavoidable necessity for Turkey to re-evaluate both its stance on the Cyprus issue and its general foreign policy, and to reach new decisions accordingly. Whether Turkey will remain a member of the international community and whether it will be compelled to launch a military intervention must be thoroughly discussed, and the necessary decisions must be made.", *Milliyet*, 19 December 1965.



sentiment, failed to shield the government from growing criticism over its perceived inexperience<sup>21</sup> and lack of preparedness in foreign affairs. In the immediate aftermath of the resolution, heated debates in the Turkish Grand National Assembly saw the opposition accuse the government of incompetence and failure in diplomacy. On 19 December, opposition leader İsmet İnönü accused the government of “squandering the diplomatic gains established during his own tenure,” and called for a general parliamentary debate on foreign policy<sup>22</sup>. İnönü also described Turkey's isolation-by both the NATO bloc and the Soviet Union-as “a grave political misjudgment.”<sup>23</sup> The government, in turn, was broadly criticized for lacking a consistent and well-defined approach to resolving the Cyprus question<sup>24</sup>.

Under these circumstances, the Demirel government felt increasingly compelled to reconsider and subtly “redefine” Turkey's policy towards Cyprus. Although Demirel publicly maintained that Turkey's Cyprus policy had not changed<sup>25</sup>, his government increasingly recognized Turkey's weakening international position following the 1965 UN General Assembly resolution. Consequently, despite rhetorical commitments to a peaceful solution, Demirel gradually adopted a more assertive approach, keeping the threat of military intervention as a sine qua non of Turkish policy. This dual strategy-projecting conciliation domestically while signaling firmness internationally-reflected both diplomatic constraints and a growing resolve to achieve a decisive outcome.<sup>26</sup> The government's insistence on continuity was, in reality, accompanied by a growing awareness in Ankara that the existing approach was no longer tenable in the face of mounting international pressures and the strengthening position of the Greek Cypriot administration<sup>27</sup>.

In a speech delivered before the Grand National Assembly in January 1966, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel felt need to declare that the Cyprus issue could be resolved within the framework of existing international agreements and that Turkey's rights on the island had not been undermined by the recent UN

<sup>21</sup>One of the most significant indicators proving that the criticism of governmental inexperience was not entirely unfounded is the fact that the government underwent a radical shift in its Cyprus policy within just a year. While the Demirel government was flirting with the Enosis *cum* Dhekelia formula in 1966, during the 1967 Crisis it significantly distanced itself from this approach and adopted a policy that firmly rejected the prospect of Enosis.

<sup>22</sup>TNA: FO/179998, CC 2291/59, Ankara to FO, No.1321, 20 December 1965.

<sup>23</sup>“İnönü requested a general debate,” *Milliyet*, 20 December 1965. The decision, which signified a new diplomatic defeat in Turkey's Cyprus policy, sparked serious public despair. In newspapers and political circles, the question “Are we losing Cyprus?” resurfaced. In his article titled Have We Lost Cyprus? published in *Milliyet*, Abdi İpekçi described the inability to convince the countries that abstained in the political committee as a sign of diplomatic weakness. Abdi İpekçi, “Have we Lost Cyprus?”, *Milliyet*, 19 December 1965.

<sup>24</sup>“Debate on the Cyprus Issue in the Republic Senate,” *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, [Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni], 16, January 6-8, 1966, 44.

<sup>25</sup>For example, in a statement made at the beginning of January, he emphasized that Turkey would “never consent to a resolution of the Cyprus issue imposed unilaterally or without its consent”; in this context, he declared that “those who believe Enosis could be achieved by such means are living in an illusion.” “Başbakan Süleyman Demirel'in Basın Toplantısı,” *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, [Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni], 16, 4 January, 1966, 39.

<sup>26</sup>Turkey's “national policy” on the Cyprus issue was, in fact, unequivocal; upon coming to power, Demirel largely maintained the rhetoric of his predecessors. At the core of this policy was a firm declaration that “If need be, Turkey will resort to force in order to obtain a just solution to the Cyprus question.” This uncompromising stance became one of the primary points of contention raised by both Greece and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus during their interventions at the United Nations. TNA: FO371/ CC1013144/12, UN Security Council, Letter dated 14 February 1966 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus addressed to the Secretary-General, 14 February 1966.

<sup>27</sup>The government's subtle maneuver toward a revised foreign policy did not go unnoticed by certain members of parliament. According to a report submitted to the Foreign Office on 11 January 1966, observers noted that the Republican Peasants' Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi) had gone so far as to propose the creation of a parliamentary commission tasked with reassessing the direction of Turkish foreign policy. This proposal reflected growing concern within the political establishment that the existing foreign policy framework was insufficient in responding to the shifting international context-particularly in light of the recent United Nations resolution on Cyprus. The same report indicated that Çağlayangil unequivocally rejected all accusations leveled against the government. He firmly denied that the UN decision constituted a significant diplomatic defeat for Turkey and argued that there was no need to reconsider or revise the guiding principles of the country's foreign policy. In the face of mounting parliamentary scrutiny, Çağlayangil was compelled to publicly reiterate that there had been no shift in the orientation of Turkish diplomacy. Nevertheless, this official insistence on continuity stood in sharp contrast to the evolving diplomatic realities on the ground. As noted earlier, the Demirel government-confronted with increasing international pressure, changing power dynamics on the island, and growing domestic criticism-found itself compelled to reconsider, and gradually begin to recalibrate, its policy on Cyprus. This recalibration was undertaken cautiously and without public acknowledgment, reflecting both the sensitivity of the issue and the political cost of openly admitting strategic adaptation. See the full report of the British ambassador, TNA, FO 371, CC103144/2, Ankara to Foreign Office, 11 January 1966.

resolution. Accordingly, on 28 January 1966, the government publicly outlined four core principles intended to clarify Turkey's vision for a settlement. These principles were primarily formulated to challenge Greece's rigid position that Enosis was the only viable solution, and to reaffirm that any resolution must be grounded in international law and reached through multilateral agreement. First, Cyprus could not be annexed by any other state. Second, neither of the two communities on the island could exercise sovereignty over the other. Third, the 1960 treaties and the Constitution of Cyprus could only be amended with the consent of all parties involved. Finally, the regional balance established by the Treaty of Lausanne had to be preserved. Taken together, these four principles signaled to both the international community and domestic audiences that Turkey supported a negotiated settlement. However, they also underscored that such a solution must rest on the basis of mutual equality and consent and could not be imposed unilaterally.

As for Greece's reaction, although the 1965 UN resolution was officially celebrated as a diplomatic victory<sup>28</sup>, it in fact generated significant strategic contradictions. Prime Minister Stephanopoulos presented the outcome as a "success of Greece's joint struggle with Cyprus,"<sup>29</sup> yet within political circles in Athens, the resolution was met with considerable unease. Its most significant consequence was the reinforcement of Makarios's international legitimacy-despite the resolution not being technically binding. This development largely undermined Greece's longstanding policy of "guiding Makarios", weakened Athens's mechanisms of influence over Cyprus, and rendered the goal of Enosis increasingly dependent on Makarios's personal will. At the same time, it began to expose the underlying tensions between Athens and Nicosia that had remained largely concealed until then.

Indeed, following the UN resolution, Makarios consolidated his authority in Nicosia more strongly than ever, while Greece's prestige in Cyprus visibly declined. As Makarios's influence steadily grew, Athens's hopes of achieving Enosis rapidly eroded, creating a palpable sense of panic within Greek political circles. In this context, for the first time, there emerged an attempt to develop a dual strategy: one that would acknowledge Makarios's political legitimacy, while still refusing to abandon the ideal of Enosis. Amid this growing uncertainty, rumors began to circulate within the Greek public sphere that Stephanopoulos and General Grivas were planning a coup against Makarios<sup>30</sup>. These allegations exposed the extent of the trust crisis between Athens and Nicosia and suggested that the relationship was nearing a complete breakdown. It was under these conditions that a concrete plan began to take shape in Athens: to realize Enosis on the basis of a reconciliation with Turkey, and, in parallel, to remove Makarios from the political arena<sup>31</sup>.

Accordingly, toward the end of 1965, the Stephanopoulos government took steps to reestablish diplomatic contact with Ankara and create a new framework for negotiations. These efforts were aimed at restoring Greece's influence over Cyprus while simultaneously limiting the powers of the presidency and

<sup>28</sup>TNA: DO 220/55, Athens to FO, No.968, 24 November 1965.

<sup>29</sup>"Premier of Greece Praises UN Resolution on Cyprus", *The New York Times*, 19 December 1965.

<sup>30</sup>Such significant rumors and allegations were firmly denied by the Greek government. For instance, Stephanopoulos publicly stated that Greece was prepared to engage in negotiations with Turkey within the framework of Enosis, reaffirmed his government's commitment to pursuing a peaceful resolution to the Cyprus issue, and dismissed allegations of a coup plot as completely unfounded. ("Greece, Turkey ready to seek Cyprus solution," *Sunday Times*, 14 (?) April 1966. Quoted from TNA, DO 220/50, 18 April 1966). However based on the prevailing assumption that Archbishop Makarios did not serve Greek national interests, the idea of removing him from Cyprus gained significant traction during the Papandreou government and remained a recurring theme in Greece's Cyprus policy thereafter. Greek author Kostas Hatzianthoniou, in his work *Cyprus 1954-1974: From Epic to Tragedy*, highlights that the Greek government explored several plans in this context. According to Hatzianthoniou, following the death of Patriarch Alexandros I in September, there were discussions about nominating Makarios as a candidate to succeed him as Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Alexandria, based in Egypt. The underlying objective was to remove Makarios from the political scene in Cyprus. During the same period, the visit of then-Prime Minister Panagiotis Kanellopoulos to the island was also seen as significant. It was interpreted either as a preliminary step toward a coup against Makarios or as an attempt to impose a NATO-backed solution upon him. Hatzianthoniou argues that these developments reveal Greece's intention to resolve the Cyprus issue by sidelining Makarios as a political actor (Κώστας Χατζηαντωνίου, *Κύπρος 1954-1974: Από το Έπος στην Τραγωδία* [Kostas Hatzianthoniou, *Cyprus 1954-1974: From Epic to Tragedy*], (Αθήνα: Ιωλκός, 2007), 165.

<sup>31</sup>"Greek Premier and Grivas Deny Plot to Oust Makarios", *The New York Times*, 26 March 1966.

eventually pushing Makarios out of political life. Evidently, like Turkey, Greece had grown weary of dealing with Makarios and, much like in the 1959 Zurich and London Agreements, had come to believe that a solution could only be achieved through direct Turkish-Greek cooperation. At this juncture, both parties decided to pursue a new settlement that could bring a lasting resolution to the crisis. This pursuit for a negotiated solution would come to be known in history as the “dual Enosis or Enosis *cum* Taksim” (*İkili Enosis/Enosis'e karşı Taksim*) formula and would represent a critical turning point in the trajectory of the Cyprus issue.

At this stage, Greece had reached-or rather had been compelled to reach-the point where the realization of Enosis became an immediate priority. In pursuit of this objective, the possibility of making certain concessions to Turkey began to be seriously considered in Athens. This approach was referred to in Greek diplomatic discourse as “μορφή Ενώσεως” (“a form of Enosis”). Turkey, for its part, aimed to secure a resolution that could, to some extent, be characterized as a version of Taksim (geographically based federation), and to close the Cyprus file definitively. Although both sides sought to preserve their respective national priorities, they appeared to have reached a level of diplomatic maturity that made compromise seem, for the first time, genuinely possible.

## 1.2. A Solution Without Makarios: “The Çağlayangil-Toumbas Talks”

It was under these circumstances that both Ankara and Athens came to recognize that the time had arrived to pursue a definitive settlement of the Cyprus issue, seeing the moment as a favorable season to reassess their bilateral relationship and initiate a new round of diplomatic negotiations. After all, the arrangement they had crafted in 1960-a framework intended to maintain balance and avoid direct conflict-had proven unworkable, and it was now clear that a bold intervention was needed to address its failures. In the eyes of both countries Makarios had emerged as an increasingly “uncontrollable” and autonomous political figure, while it had become evident that the Zurich and London Agreements were no longer functioning effectively. Turkish-Greek relations were drifting into a dangerous state of uncertainty. A decisive intervention was now deemed necessary-one capable of breaking the deadlock and constructing a new political framework for the future. As *The Times* aptly noted at the time, “The future of Cyprus is now once more under active discussions”<sup>32</sup>.

In line with this strategic recalibration, one of the first concrete foreign policy initiatives undertaken by the Stephanopoulos government in late 1965 was an attempt to reestablish a platform for rapprochement with Turkey. A significant preliminary meeting took place on 12 December 1965 in Paris between I. Sossidis, an advisor to Prime Minister Stephanopoulos, and Nihat Kürşat, Turkey's Minister of Tourism and Promotion<sup>33</sup>. This initial contact laid the groundwork for the renewal of bilateral dialogue and was soon followed by an exchange of “letters of goodwill” (*iyi niyet mektupları*) between Athens and Ankara-marking a diplomatic thaw after a long period of strained relations<sup>34</sup>.

The constructive atmosphere of this early phase was reinforced by the public statements made by officials on both sides. In a speech before the Grand National Assembly in January 1966, Turkish Foreign

<sup>32</sup>“Diplomats in London Talks on Cyprus”, *The Times*, 27 January 1966.

<sup>33</sup>Miltiadis Hristodoulou, *I Poreia Mias Epohis, H Ellada, H Kipriaki Igesia kai to Kipriako Problema*, (Athina: I faoros, 1987), 474.

<sup>34</sup>In fact, the initial attempt at dialogue between the two sides took place in May 1965 during the NATO meeting in London, where Greek Foreign Minister Stavros Kostopoulos and his counterpart Esat Işık engaged in preliminary discussions. However, this initiative failed to evolve into a sustained negotiation process. At the time, Archbishop Makarios's warnings that such talks could ultimately lead to the partition of the island cast a shadow over the prospects of continued dialogue, undermining trust and impeding diplomatic progress between the parties. In reality, the necessary conditions for meaningful negotiations had not yet matured. It was the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 18 December 1965 that rapidly catalyzed the political environment and emerged as the most decisive factor in creating the momentum for renewed diplomatic engagement between Turkey and Greece. See, Nasuh Uslu, *The Cyprus question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations (1959-2003)*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003), 92; For details see also, Andreas Papandreou, *Democracy at Gunpoint: The Greek Front*, (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1971), 108-110.



Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil once more emphasized that there had been no fundamental change in Turkey's foreign policy<sup>35</sup>. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the necessity of reassessing bilateral relations with Greece in light of recent developments. A similar sentiment was expressed by the Greek side. On 8 January 1966, Alexander Sgourdeos, the Greek Ambassador to Ankara, addressed Turkish journalists with a clear message of reconciliation: *"I see Ankara as rather heavily burdened. I will be making proposals to your government on behalf of mine. I believe the time has come to dispel the heavy atmosphere. I expect bilateral talks to continue and, this time, to yield positive results"*<sup>36</sup>.

Despite these mutually positive statements, it took some time for official contacts to commence between the two sides<sup>37</sup>. The first direct preliminary talks took place in March 1966 between Çağlayangil and Greek Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis<sup>38</sup>. Thus, after a prolonged period of stagnation, Turkish-Greek dialogue was revived, and the search for a diplomatic solution to the Cyprus issue began to take shape within a more tangible framework. During these contacts, Turkey approached the negotiations with caution yet made it clear that it was open to seeking a resolution. Çağlayangil presented three key demands as the basis for Turkey's position in the talks: a return to the constitutional order of the Republic of Cyprus (independence) the safeguarding of the political rights of Turkish Cypriots, and the withdrawal of Greek troops deployed to the island in 1964. From Ankara's perspective, the presence of these Greek forces was seen as a preparatory step toward the de facto realization of Enosis and constituted a direct threat to Turkey's security.

In discussions aimed at initiating a settlement process, Turkey's key alternatives and preconditions were structured around the following principles: preservation of the independent status of the Republic of Cyprus; recognition of the validity of existing international agreements-particularly the 1960 Zurich and London Agreements; acknowledgment of the political and legal existence of the two communities on the island (Turkish and Greek Cypriots); categorical exclusion of any unilateral attempt at Enosis; re-establishment of the Turkish-Greek balance achieved at Lausanne, 1923; and the resolution of these issues through open and direct negotiations between the parties<sup>39</sup>. Greece, on the other hand, was fundamentally and almost exclusively focused on the objective of Enosis. Athens had developed a strategic approach based on the premise that Makarios constituted the principal obstacle to this goal and that his neutralization-or complete removal-was a prerequisite for progress. In other words, the Greek vision for a solution was firmly rooted in the pursuit of Cyprus's annexation to Greece, and within this framework, sidelining internal political actors on the island was considered a viable option if necessary.

Konstantinos Mitsotakis, who led the negotiations on behalf of Greece, on the other hand proposed a framework based on Enosis, in return for the recognition of certain political and cultural rights for the Turkish Cypriots. Turkey, rather than categorically rejecting the idea of Enosis, stated that such a union could only be considered acceptable under specific conditions. Chief among these conditions was the establishment of a

<sup>35</sup>TNA, Foreign Office (FO), CC103144/2, Ankara to FO, 11 January 1966. The Demirel government, in its public statements, repeatedly emphasized that a solution based on Enosis was unattainable. "Those who expect Enosis are living in an illusion", *Milliyet*, January 5, 1966.

<sup>36</sup>Melek Fırat, *1960-1971 Arası Türk Dış Politikası ve Kıbrıs Sorunu*, (Ankara: Siyasal Publishing, 1997), 213.

<sup>37</sup>One indication that a true climate for negotiations had yet to develop was the fact that the statements made by the Greek Ambassador in Ankara, Spourdeos, did not fully resonate with official sentiment in Athens. According to *The Times*, Ambassador Spourdeos had declared to the press: "Sooner or later we shall reach agreement on the Cyprus Question. I shall resume efforts to arrange bilateral talks. My first contact will be with the Turkish Foreign Minister. The Greek people are fed up with the prolonged tension in the Greek-Turkish relations, and wish that the Cyprus question should be settled in a friendly atmosphere". His remarks caused considerable astonishment within diplomatic circles in Athens. Following these statements, Spourdeos was recalled to Athens and subsequently assigned to another diplomatic post. "Greece recalls Envoy", *The Times*, 14 January 1966.

<sup>38</sup>Although Demirel publicly emphasized that the negotiations would not be conducted on the basis of Enosis, diplomatic circles indicated that Greece had firmly adopted the view that the talks would, in fact, be structured around this fundamental objective. "Those who expect Enosis are living in an illusion", *Milliyet*, January 5, 1966; TNA, DO 220/55, Minute by Davit Hunt, Nicosia, 18 January 1966.

<sup>39</sup>TNA, DO 220/50, "Cyprus: The Aims of the Parties", 19 April 1966. This approach was later formalized as the "four principles", and throughout the negotiations, Turkey consistently maintained this position.

sovereign military base on the island under Turkish control. Ankara made it clear that it could only consent to Enosis in exchange for concrete and permanent security guarantees grounded in territorial sovereignty. In response, the Greek side began to focus on the area of Dhekelia, one of the sovereign base zones retained by the Britain on the island, as a potential solution<sup>40</sup>. Within this framework, proposals were seriously discussed that involved either the transfer of Dhekelia to Turkey or the opening of the area to a Turkish presence under a joint administration model. From the summer of 1966 onward, the most prominent formula in Turkish-Greek negotiations became the so-called Enosis *cum* Dhekelia proposal. According to this plan, the entire island would be united with Greece, while in return, Turkey would be granted a military base in Dhekelia to address its security concerns, and the fundamental rights of the Turkish Cypriots would be guaranteed under international supervision. Through this formula, Greece would be able to neutralize Makarios's pro-independence stance and implement Enosis under its own control, while Turkey would obtain tangible military and political assurances, thereby consenting to a negotiated settlement. Although the exact legal and political status of the proposed Turkish base remained unresolved, this formula remained on the table until the end of 1966, when the negotiations ultimately collapsed<sup>41</sup>.

The contacts between the two countries progressed more rapidly than anticipated. Following initial consultations and mutual exchanges of views, on 18 May 1966 the two sides issued a joint communiqué, publicly declaring their sincere commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the Cyprus question<sup>42</sup>. They also announced their decision to engage in regular exchanges aimed at improving bilateral relations. In an interview with *Milliyet* correspondent Abdi İpekçi in Athens, Stefanopoulos stated: "*The best way to resolve issues is through dialogue. Otherwise, war becomes the only remaining option-surely not a course to be desired*"<sup>43</sup>. This statement was widely seen as an indication of Greece's seriousness regarding a negotiated settlement.

The joint communiqué (*ortak bildiri*) also announced that Çağlayangil and Admiral Ioannis Toumbas would hold bilateral talks in Brussels at the end of June, on the sidelines of the upcoming NATO summit. In diplomatic circles, this meeting was interpreted not merely as an intra-alliance coordination effort, but as the threshold of a potentially decisive phase in the Cyprus negotiations. According to *The Times*, both parties appeared genuinely willing to reach a final settlement on Cyprus. There was growing awareness that prolonging the crisis would not only destabilize the island but also pose a threat to NATO's internal cohesion. The newspaper noted that fears of a possible military conflict-and the risk that such a conflict could push one or both countries to consider withdrawal from NATO-had made the pursuit of a solution even more

<sup>40</sup>Dhekelia was one of the two British bases on the island, along with Akrotiri. Under the 1960 Agreements, both were granted to the Britain with sovereign status. Of these two, only Akrotiri functioned as an active base. As President Makarios occasionally stated, while Dhekelia had become nearly inoperative, aircraft capable of carrying nuclear bombs were stationed at Akrotiri. "Makarios's Statement on the British Bases in Cyprus," *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, No. 16, Ankara, August 12, 1966.

<sup>41</sup>Miltiadis, *op. cit.*, p. 474-475.

<sup>42</sup>Hatzianthoniou, *op. cit.*, p.165.

<sup>43</sup>"Stefanopoulos: If There are No Talks, There Will Be War," *Milliyet*, 21 May 1966. During this period, Greek Prime Minister Stefanopoulos sought to strengthen public support for the negotiations by actively engaging in public diplomacy, particularly through the Turkish press. This was because the Greek media largely maintained a critical distance from the ongoing talks, frequently accusing the government of compromising on the goal of Enosis. In contrast, Stefanopoulos aimed to appeal directly to Turkish public opinion in an effort to sustain the grounds for dialogue. Indeed, the interview he gave to the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* on the very day the Toumbas-Çağlayangil talks commenced included remarks that were particularly striking within the geopolitical context of the time. The Prime Minister stressed that the Turkish-Greek dialogue was not only essential for bilateral relations but also constituted a strategic necessity within the NATO framework. In his statement, he noted: "*The Cyprus problem has created numerous complications for thirty million people in Turkey and eight million in Greece. Turkey and Greece share major and vital common issues, both in terms of economic and security policies. We must compensate for the vacuum created in NATO by France. Turkish-Greek cooperation should strengthen the alliance, which has been weakened by France's change of course. This is because both Turkish and Greek foreign policies are dependent on NATO*". TNA: DO 220/55, Minute by R.E. Parsons, British Embassy, Ankara, 28 June 1966. Stefanopoulos's remarks demonstrated that the rapprochement between Turkey and Greece was not shaped solely by the Cyprus issue; rather, it reflected a broader strategic search for partnership aimed at reinforcing NATO's stability in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Cold War. This underscored that the Cyprus problem was not merely an ethnic conflict between two communities, but also a geopolitical issue of critical importance within the power dynamics of the Western alliance.

urgent<sup>44</sup>. The fact that these negotiations were to be conducted at the ministerial level was regarded as a strong sign of mutual seriousness and intent to compromise. In this sense, the process was reminiscent of the Zurich and London talks of 1959, during which Foreign Ministers Zorlu and Averoff had engaged in direct negotiations. These high-level contacts were thus seen as a reflection of genuine efforts to achieve a lasting resolution.

In line with the joint declaration issued on 18 May, Toumbas and Çağlayangil held their first bilateral meeting following the NATO sessions held in Brussels on 5 and 9 June 1966. During these talks, the two ministers exchanged general assessments regarding the Cyprus issue<sup>45</sup>. On 11 June, in an interview with the Greek newspaper *Eleftheria*, Çağlayangil emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral ties. He stated that the ties of friendship, fraternity, and sincerity that had existed between Turkey and Greece for forty years were being further developed. He described Turkish-Greek relations as a "brilliant edifice" built by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Eleftherios Venizelos. Stressing that these relations were founded on realistic principles, he argued that they had yielded positive results and reiterated that the revitalization of this long-standing friendship was in the mutual interest of both nations<sup>46</sup>.

Taking advantage of this favorable climate, the first round of secret negotiations, conducted from 25 June to 17 August 1966, was initiated with cautious optimism<sup>47</sup>. However, in the initial stages of the talks, both sides deliberately sought to convey the impression that they were unwilling to make any concessions from their respective national positions. This stance was aimed at reinforcing their negotiating posture and gaining psychological leverage during the dialogue. During the talks, the Greek side presented the annexation of Cyprus to Greece as the ultimate solution and offered a series of concessions to make this proposal more acceptable to Turkey<sup>48</sup>. These included the transfer of the Dhekelia base to NATO control and the deployment of Turkish forces there. In addition, it was proposed that Turkish Cypriots would be granted extensive minority rights<sup>49</sup>.

But these proposals fell short of meeting Turkey's expectations. As had been clearly stated in earlier discussions, Turkey was not categorically opposed to Enosis in principle, but it insisted on several essential conditions. Chief among these were the full transfer of the Dhekelia base to Turkey under conditions of sovereignty, the stationing of a sufficient number of Turkish troops on the island<sup>50</sup>, and the recognition of Turkish Cypriots not merely as a minority, but with a degree of autonomous status. Failing the satisfaction of these conditions, Turkey proposed either the continuation of an independent Cypriot state or the establishment of a Turkish-Greek condominium<sup>51</sup>. Ankara was particularly insistent that the territory it would

<sup>44</sup>"Cyprus Settlement Sought: Greek-Turkish Talks to Resume", *The Times*, 15 May 1966.

<sup>45</sup>"Çağlayangil-Toumbas Talks," *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 16, 5-9 June 1966.

<sup>46</sup>"Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to *Eleftheria* Newspaper," *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 16, 11 June 1966.

<sup>47</sup>During this period, bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece followed a notably positive course. The longstanding mutual grievances—namely Greece's treatment of the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace and Turkey's policies toward the Greek Orthodox population residing in Turkey (TNA, DO 220/167 From the United Kingdom Permanent Delegation to NATO Paris to FO, Cyprus and Greek-Turkish Relations, 30 September 1965)—generally showed signs of easing. Furthermore, both countries reached a mutual understanding not to expel Greek and Turkish nationals residing in each other's territories. "Turkey and Greece stop expulsions" *Guardian*, 7 August 1966. However, in the subsequent stages, mutual grievances between the parties resurfaced depending on the course of the negotiations.

<sup>48</sup>During this renewed phase of negotiations, the Greek Government was consistently pressuring Makarios to de-escalate tensions in Cyprus. See, TNA: DO 220/55, Record of Conversation between the Foreign Secretary and the Greek Foreign Minister held at the Foreign Office on Friday, 3 June 1966; Also see FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc. 237. (Available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d237> (accessed March 13, 2025))

<sup>49</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc. 240. (Available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d240>)

<sup>50</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc. 242. (Available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d242> (accessed March 13, 2025), "Progress over Cyprus Talks", *The Times*, 25 October 1966.

<sup>51</sup>Glafkos Clerides, *My Deposition*, II, (Nicosia: Alitheia Publications, 1988), 195-196.

receive be placed under the direct control of Turkey and fly the Turkish flag. This insistence was driven by a strategic objective: to secure a reliable zone of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>52</sup>.

The most significant disagreement during the negotiations arose over the status of the Dhekelia base. The Greek proposal of a NATO-controlled base was incompatible with Turkey's demand for full sovereignty. Another major point of contention concerned the status of the Turkish Cypriots. Turkey's demands for autonomy were perceived by Greece as a threat to the integrity of Enosis. The core deadlock of the talks lay in the deep divide between Turkey's insistence on full sovereignty over Dhekelia and Greece's offer of a NATO-administered base. It appeared that neither side was yet prepared to accept a solution that could be interpreted, respectively, as a form of partition by Greece or as outright union by Turkey. As a result, this first round of negotiations ended without success. Since no definitive agreement could be reached on the Enosis *cum* Dhekelia formula, the dialogue between the two sides was suspended on 17 August.

However, the intention and pursuit of compromise did not come to an end. At that point in the process, Greece believed it had gained a significant diplomatic opportunity to advance the goal of Enosis. It sought to maintain the dialogue with Turkey and to identify the specific concessions that might persuade Ankara to accept a settlement. During the hiatus in negotiations, Athens focused notably on clarifying the content and scope of a potential concession that would satisfy Turkish concerns. The key conclusion drawn from the Turkish-Greek negotiations was that Enosis could only be realized if Turkey were granted a strategically meaningful concession-such as the transfer of the Dhekelia base. Consequently, the Greek side began to concentrate its efforts on developing a solution model that would alleviate Ankara's security concerns.

In this context, the invitation extended to Makarios to visit Athens<sup>53</sup> in September 1966 not only served to support the ongoing negotiations between Greece and Turkey but also signaled an intention to gradually integrate the Greek Cypriot side into the settlement process. Makarios's support was considered indispensable for the realization of Enosis; however, his pro-independence stance continued to pose a major obstacle. At this stage, the renewed and more direct involvement of the United States in the process created significant diplomatic leverage for Greece and helped Athens adopt a more flexible position in its dealings with Ankara. According to American observers closely monitoring the talks, this time Greece appeared genuinely willing to concede a sovereign base to Turkey<sup>54</sup>.

Indeed, although its involvement did not reach the assertiveness of the Acheson Plan era, the United States remained diplomatically engaged and provided support in reestablishing dialogue between Turkey and Greece. The UN resolution was not only unacceptable to Greece and Turkey but also raised concerns for the United States. In his report dated 15 September, U.S. Ambassador to Athens, Phillips Talbot articulated how a policy of "full independence" (*tam bağımsızlık*) for Cyprus could become a broader strategic threat. He stated: "*Nor am I sanguine about peaceful prospects of solution of 'unfettered' independence. In that event, Cyprus would seem likely immediately to become cockpit of international struggle. Soviets and non-aligneds*

<sup>52</sup>According to the statement delivered by Çağlayangil in Parliament at the end of December, Turkey had based the framework of the negotiations on four fundamental principles: 1- The Cyprus Agreements could not be unilaterally altered and could only be amended with the mutual consent of all parties; 2- Neither of the two communities in Cyprus should dominate the other, both should be able to live in security, and both must participate equally in the governance of the state; 3- Cyprus must not be annexed to any single state under any circumstances; 4- Any solution must not disturb the balance between Turkey and Greece as established by the Treaty of Lausanne. [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/MM\\_/d02/c011/mm\\_02011028.pdf](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/MM_/d02/c011/mm_02011028.pdf)

<sup>53</sup>"Makarios Sees Greek King", *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 September 1966.

<sup>54</sup>One year later, when a "new"/and "last" round of talks began between the two countries, Washington issued the following caution to its ambassador in Athens regarding the previous year's Toumbas-Çağlayangil talks: "*We had felt earlier Toumbas-Caglayangil conversations were leading in direction of 'compensated Enosis' and had believed GOG willingness to offer GOT sovereign base area on Cyprus would be main ingredient in Turkish acceptance of Enosis.*" FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc. 302. (Available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus/1964-68v16/d240>)

would develop sudden vested interest in preserving Cyprus as uncommitted country outside NATO area"<sup>55</sup>.

According to Talbott, a fully independent Cyprus-lacking any form of strategic oversight-could quickly become the focal point of international rivalry. The Soviet Union and non-aligned states would have strong incentives to ensure that Cyprus remained outside the NATO framework as an uncommitted and neutral actor. Talbot-who offered policy recommendations to the U.S. administration involved in efforts to bridge Turkish-Greek differences-argued that the Dhekelia issue could only be resolved within the framework of an Acheson-style Greek-Turkish defense board<sup>56</sup>.

In Turkey the U.S. Ambassador to Ankara Raymond A. Hart engaged in a series of meetings with Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil during the months of September and October, aiming both to better understand Turkey's strategic position and to help alleviate the deep mistrust toward Greece within Turkish public opinion. According to Hart's observations, the principal factor hindering progress in the negotiations was the ongoing political instability in Greece and the internal fragility of its government. While the Greek leadership continued to insist on Enosis as the sole and final solution, Turkey consistently maintained that it could not accept "pure Enosis" under any circumstances. In the reports Hart sent to Washington, he noted that although Turkey remained open to a negotiated settlement, it was also cautious about any hasty moves. As Çağlayangil explained, the Turkish government did not feel under pressure to reach an immediate resolution, but it also could not ignore the growing discontent within Turkish public opinion regarding the status quo on the island. Hart quoted Çağlayangil as saying: "At present, Greece cannot openly speak of partition, nor can Turkey openly speak of Enosis. The talks may continue for another year or two. If the situation on the island improves, a temporary settlement (*modus vivendi*) may also be possible"<sup>57</sup>. At one point, seeking to clarify Turkey's position further, Hart asked: "Would a sign of improvement in the situation in Cyprus provide you with a justification for prolonging the dialogue?" To this, Çağlayangil gave clear and affirmative approval<sup>58</sup>.

This dialogue clearly reaffirmed Turkey's position that it could give implicit approval to Enosis under certain conditions but would never accept it in an absolute and unconditional form. At the same time, it highlighted that the United States was not merely an observer in the process but had become a guiding and mediating actor. Washington's primary objective was to prevent a deeper rupture between two NATO allies-Turkey and Greece-and to manage the crisis within the framework of the alliance by preserving cohesion in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this context, the idea of a NATO base-first proposed in the 1964 Acheson Plan-was reintroduced into the discussion. The focus shifted toward a model of settlement in which issues such as sovereignty or leasing would be considered secondary. From the American perspective, Makarios could only be neutralized through a Turkish Greek agreement, and such a consensus could be achieved by offering Turkey a security guarantee under the NATO umbrella in exchange for Enosis. This approach aligned closely with the strategic U.S. objective of "NATO-izing" (*NATOϊκή λύση, NATO-type solution*) Cyprus, effectively bringing the island under the control and protection of the alliance. During this period, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil also visited the United States to hold consultations regarding the resolution of the Cyprus issue. In a statement to the press on 26 September, he declared that Turkey was committed to finding a solution within the framework of the "four principles" initially put forward, and that it remained open to various alternatives<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>55</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d237>

<sup>56</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d237>

<sup>57</sup> GOT understood that "right now" Greece could not talk about partition and "right now" Turkey could not talk about enosis. As far as Turkey was concerned conversations could go on for another year or two years, or a *modus vivendi* worked out if situation on island could be made to improve, but this situation had had profound repercussions on Turkish public opinion.

<sup>58</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc. 242. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d242>

<sup>59</sup>TNA, FO, CC103144/32, Ankara to Foreign Office, 27 September 1966.



Parallel diplomatic efforts were also carried out in Athens. In this context, the meeting held on 2 November 1966 between King Constantine and Talbot, is particularly significant for understanding why Turkish-Greek negotiations had reached an impasse-especially when examined through the lens of internal Greek political dynamics. During the meeting, King Constantine identified the core deadlock as the disagreement over the status of a potential Turkish base in Dhekelia. While Turkey demanded the base be granted under conditions of full sovereignty, Greece proposed a more limited and symbolic model-such as a leasing arrangement. The King conveyed to Talbot the message he had given his government: *“Progress achieved up to 95 percent must not be derailed because of the remaining 5 percent”*. He expressed cautious optimism that Turkey could be persuaded to accept the leasing model and noted that he would raise the sensitivity of this issue during his upcoming visit to London<sup>60</sup>.

However, according to Constantine, the far greater obstacle lay in persuading Makarios. He stated that Makarios would categorically reject the establishment of a Turkish military base on the island and that the political burden of such a concession could not be borne solely by the Greek government. Therefore, he argued that any viable solution would require the support not only of the executive branch but also of all key political actors in Greece-especially opposition leaders such as George Papandreou. Constantine suggested that, if the negotiation process were brought into the public domain, those opposing compromise might be politically exposed, though he admitted this would not be easy. At the conclusion of the meeting, the King indicated that he would be willing to pay an official visit to the United States should a settlement be reached. He also emphasized that, according to the 1970-71 projections for the Greek military, the armed forces were facing serious shortfalls, and that a settlement with Turkey would be crucial not only for political stability, but also for facilitating military assistance from the United States. *“A settlement with Turkey,”* he noted, *“would make it easier to secure American military aid through Congress”*<sup>61</sup>.

At this critical juncture, another major step taken by Greece was to involve the Britain directly in the issue concerning the Dhekelia base. Although the parties were engaged in negotiations over the Enosis cum Dhekelia formula, the British position on the matter had not yet been clearly articulated. The very fact that such negotiations were taking place suggested that there was no radical objection from the British side; nevertheless, before committing to a final decision, Greece needed to be fully assured of London's stance. On 9 November 1966, King Constantine sent an official telegram to British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, informing him that a general agreement had been reached with Turkey regarding Enosis and the Dhekelia base, and formally requested that Britain relinquish its sovereignty over the area. This initiative demonstrated that the matter had moved beyond the scope of bilateral negotiations and had now entered the realm of international diplomacy. Prime Minister Wilson's response was interpreted optimistically in Athens. The British government appeared willing-or at least not strongly opposed-to relinquishing Dhekelia at this stage, giving the impression that it would not pose a major obstacle. Thus, a second major hurdle on the path to a potential settlement seemed to have been overcome. As King Constantine reportedly remarked, the next challenge was to persuade *“the Priest”*-Makarios. Stephanopoulos extended an invitation to Makarios to discuss the matter in person. Returning from a tour of Latin America, Makarios arrived in Athens on 7 November 1966<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>60</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d247>

<sup>61</sup>This document reveals that, by the autumn of 1966, the Cyprus negotiations had stalled over the issue of the status of the Dhekelia base, and that despite U.S. mediation efforts, the internal political dynamics among Makarios, Papandreou, and the King made a resolution increasingly difficult. The King's intransigence on the matter of a *“sovereign base”*- encapsulated in his warning *“do not risk the 95% for the sake of the remaining 5%”*- foreshadowed both the 1967 military coup and, ultimately, the crisis of 1974.

<sup>62</sup>On November 7, upon his return from Latin America, Makarios stopped in Athens and held talks on the Cyprus issue. *“Makarios Holds Vital Talks,” Daily Telegraph, 7 November 1966.*

In a private meeting, Stephanopoulos informed him that talks with Ankara had been temporarily suspended, that Britain appeared receptive to the idea of relinquishing control of Dhekelia, and asked what position Makarios would take under these new circumstances. Remaining consistent with his cautious and pro-independence stance, Makarios's response was once again negative. He asserted that Cypriots did not fear the British, as they had no intention of annexing the island. However, he argued that they did fear the Turks, whom they suspected of harboring such intentions. Therefore, he maintained that if Britain were to relinquish its sovereignty over Dhekelia, the territory should be transferred to the Republic of Cyprus-not to Turkey. He reacted strongly to this position, replying during the meeting: *"If Cyprus can accept two bases in the name of independence, it should be willing to concede one base in the name of Enosis."*<sup>63</sup>.

**Figure 1**

*"The Greek Foreign Minister Mr. Toumbas (on the left) with his Turkish counterpart Mr. Çağlayangil, during their recent meeting in Paris" (Ελευθερία, 18 Δεκεμβρίου 1966)*



### 1.3. The Çağlayangil-Toumbas Protocol of 17 December 1966

Indeed, from Greece's perspective, this formula appeared far more advantageous than the "double Enosis" proposal introduced with the Acheson Plan in 1964. As these discussions suggest, Makarios's unwavering insistence on full Enosis-if that was truly his intention-once again emerged as the key factor driving Greece's negotiations with Turkey into a deadlock. In fact, Makarios was firmly determined to bring an end to the dialogue between Turkey and Greece, and he did not hesitate to take bold and provocative steps in that direction. In this context, the Czechoslovak arms crisis, which erupted in 1966, stood out as a strategic move not only aimed at disrupting the status quo on the island but also at deliberately undermining Turkish-Greek diplomatic engagement.

<sup>63</sup>Makarios's shrewd response is highly significant in revealing the prevailing perception of Turkey in Cyprus. While it is clear that Turkey had no policy aimed at taking control of the entire island, Makarios skillfully exploited the perception generated by Turkey's threat of intervention. In doing so, he effectively used this as a pretext to justify his refusal to accept Enosis. TNA, PREM 13/1372, No. 35, "Sir David Hunt's talk with Archbishop Makarios, Note for the Record".

At a time when bilateral negotiations were beginning to regain momentum, Makarios's clandestine acquisition of arms from Czechoslovakia sparked a serious crisis that threatened to undermine the entire diplomatic process<sup>64</sup>. Ankara interpreted the shipment as a direct threat to its strategic interests and to the security of the Turkish Cypriot community, suspecting coordination between Athens and Nicosia<sup>65</sup>. The Greek government, however, considered the arms transfer to be a unilateral initiative taken by Makarios without prior consultation, and thus perceived itself as excluded from the decision-making process. In this regard, Toumbas' allegations against Makarios in his memoirs are quite harsh and accusatory. According to him, Makarios' policies in Cyprus were aimed at deliberately sabotaging the Turkish-Greek dialogue. What is even more striking is the claim that Makarios' attitude was not only limited to the Cyprus issue but also aimed to intervene in Greece's domestic politics and overthrow the government. As he recalls in his memoirs: *"I had then formed the firm conviction that this was a case of subversive act, inspired by the Cypriot side, aimed at the overthrow of the Government, in order to derail the dialogue. In other words, to sabotage the final effort to achieve Enosis"*<sup>66</sup>. Although this development temporarily disrupted mutual trust and slowed the pace of negotiations, it did not extinguish the will for a diplomatic settlement. Czechoslovakia announced that it suspended the shipment in response to Turkey's reaction<sup>67</sup>. Both Ankara and Athens remained committed to dialogue. By the end of 1965, the Toumbas-Çağlayangil talks had resumed, this time within a more structured and results-oriented framework than in previous efforts.

The renewed contacts helped foster an unprecedented atmosphere of mutual trust. Çağlayangil remarked that Toumbas had inspired in him "a sense of honesty and sincerity," emphasizing that both sides were genuinely committed to reaching an agreement. The quality of their dialogue was even described by some diplomats as one of "exceptional closeness."<sup>68</sup>. Greek King also lent his support to the process, stating that "what is most encouraging is the genuine and urgent will of both countries to reach a solution"<sup>69</sup>. This positive atmosphere was further reinforced when Athens extended a new invitation to Makarios. This move was no coincidence; it was a strategic attempt to reengage Nicosia in the process and to clarify Makarios's stance so that he would not pose an obstacle to a potential agreement. In hindsight, it appears that the arms crisis was not merely a moment of confrontation-it was also a turning point that reshuffled the political deck and redefined the path toward a possible resolution.

At the center of the revived negotiations lay the sovereignty dispute surrounding the "Enosis cum Dhekelia" formula. Although the two sides had, in principle, agreed on granting Turkey a base in Dhekelia in exchange for its consent to Enosis, the precise legal and political status of this base remained the key sticking point. While the Greek side struggled to adopt a firm and coherent position on the issue, the Turkish delegation made its stance unequivocally clear: Enosis could only be accepted if Turkey were granted full

<sup>64</sup>In a letter to Stefanopoulos dated November 11, Grivas asserted that Makarios's ability to carry out such an action stemmed primarily from Greece's indecisive policies toward the island and the absence of an effective intelligence apparatus. See, Clerides, *op. cit.*, 188.

<sup>65</sup>Spyros Papageorgiou, *Τα Κρίσιμα Ντοκουμέντα του Κυπριακού, 1959-1967, Τόμος Γ'* (Nicosia: Ekdoseis K. Epiphaniou Ltd., 2000), 293-296.

<sup>66</sup>I.N. Toumba, *Apo to Imerologion enos Ypourgou*, (Athina: Oi Ekdosis ton Filon, 1986), 156. Toumbas's candid and accusatory remarks clearly reveal that the rift between Athens and Nicosia had escalated beyond a mere diplomatic disagreement and had evolved into a direct power struggle. The divergence that first emerged during the 1963-1964 crises had, by 1966, fostered a deep atmosphere of mistrust between the two sides. According to Toumbas, Makarios was no longer merely the leader of Cyprus and the main obstacle to Enosis, but had become a political actor seeking to influence Greece's internal affairs-perhaps even to undermine its legitimate government. This illustrated how Makarios's efforts to reconcile his independent stance with the pursuit of Enosis had generated a serious rupture in Athens. In a bitter twist of history, it would be Athens that, years later, attempted to intervene in Cyprus by orchestrating a coup in 1974. In this context, the relationship between Athens and Nicosia-especially the latter's stance on the Cyprus Question-became a critical factor, directly shaping the course of Greek-Turkish relations.

<sup>67</sup>"Μετά την διαμαρτυρία της 'Αγκύρας η Τσεχοσλοβακία διέκοψε την αποστολήν των όπλων, Μακεδονία, Δεκέμβριος 1966", Μακεδονία, 16 Δεκέμβριος 1966.

<sup>68</sup>TNA, FCO 9/77, "Conversation with the Greek ambassador", minute by A.E. Davidson, CC4/3.

<sup>69</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.243 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d243>

and exclusive sovereignty over the Dhekelia base<sup>70</sup>. Turkey consistently emphasized that, in exchange for Enosis, a sovereign military base was a *sine qua non* - an indispensable condition - for its position; for any concession on sovereignty would make it impossible to permanently resolve its security concerns regarding Cyprus and would ensure that these concerns remained perpetually on the agenda. Therefore, the model proposed by Greece-granting Turkey only a leased base (*kiralık üs*)-was completely unacceptable to Ankara<sup>71</sup>. This deadlock highlighted the fundamental divergence in how both countries approached the Cyprus question: Greece sought to limit Turkey's presence on the island to a symbolic and temporary role, while Turkey insisted on a permanent, sovereign military foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Two critical meetings between Toumbas and Çağlayangil took place in Paris on 13 and 17 December 1966<sup>72</sup>. The following day, during his meeting with British Foreign Secretary George Brown, Çağlayangil stated that there was a genuine atmosphere of goodwill on both sides; however, he also pointed out that, despite this positive climate, there were significant political difficulties in Greece. Çağlayangil önemli bir uyarıda da bulunmuştu:

*"In the discussion neither side should seek a diplomatic victory. At the time it was not fair to expect Turkey to make special concessions beyond the merits of the case in order to cater Makarios being a difficult character, the communist threat in Cyprus, the Greek Government's small majority, etc. The solution must be acceptable to both sides"*<sup>73</sup>.

The second meeting held on 17 December, represented the clearest expression of both sides' will to bring the Cyprus issue to a final resolution<sup>74</sup>. Despite the persistent deadlock, there was a shared belief that a compromise within the framework of the "Enosis cum Dhekelia" formula was still attainable. Both sides appeared willing to work toward a solution that, while "not ideal," could be deemed acceptable. Although the core disagreement between Çağlayangil's insistence on full sovereignty and Toumbas's proposal of a leased base remained unresolved, the diplomatic atmosphere during this round of talks was notably more constructive. The personal rapport and trust that had developed between the two ministers introduced a tone of optimism that had been absent in previous negotiations. This approach underscored a genuine desire not only to resolve the Cyprus question but also to normalize bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece. The Paris meeting effectively marked the beginning of what would become the final phase of diplomacy before the 1967 crisis.

Indeed, the meeting held on 17 December had the potential to serve as a true turning point for resolving the Cyprus issue within the framework of Turkish-Greek dynamics. According to Toumbas, both parties were fully aware of the historical significance of the encounter. This marathon session, which lasted for 15 hours

<sup>70</sup>Klerides, *op. cit.*, p.195.

<sup>71</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.243 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d243>

<sup>72</sup>"Kıbrıs Olayları", *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni*, Sayı 16. Memoirs, when written with sincerity and care, can offer valuable insights that serve as primary testimony in the reconstruction of historical events. Firsthand accounts by individuals who directly witnessed such events often shed light on background developments and diplomatic processes that are not documented in official records. However, despite their potential value, some critical episodes are either completely omitted from these narratives or are mentioned only in a superficial manner. Indeed, although the Toumbas-Çağlayangil negotiations of 1966 represented one of the most concrete attempts at resolving the Cyprus question between Turkey and Greece, the three key members of the Turkish delegation who participated directly in the process-Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, senior diplomat Zeki Kuneralp, and Ambassador Bayülken-do not offer any substantive assessment of these talks in their published memoirs. Notably, in the published recollections of Foreign Minister Çağlayangil, there is no explicit reference to this critical phase or to the negotiations in question.

<sup>73</sup>TNA, DO 220/167, "Record of Conversation between Foreign Secretary, Mr. George Brown and the Turkish Foreign Minister Çağlayangil", NATO Building, 14 December 1966

<sup>74</sup>Christos Damonis, *Akros Aporrison: To Protokollo tis 17s Dekembriou 1966* [Top Secret: The Protocol of 17 December 1966], (Athens: Historical Encyclopedia of Cyprus, 1973), 50-52 quoted from Vangelis Koufoudakis, "Türk-Yunan diyalogu, Toplumlararası diyalog ve Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti'nin Destabilizasyonu", in Alexandris, Alexis, ed. *Oi Ellinoturkikes Scheseis, 1923-1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923-1987]. Athens: Ekdisis Gnosi, 1988, p.228; Papageorgiou, *op. cit.*, 297-306.

and concluded in the early hours of the following day, took place in an atmosphere reminiscent of the spirit of the 1959 Averoff-Zorlu negotiations. The talks were conducted with exceptional seriousness and in an atmosphere of mutual trust. As Toumbas emphasized, both sides demonstrated a sincere commitment to reaching a definitive decision concerning the future of Cyprus<sup>75</sup>. This phase of intense diplomacy would go down in history as one of the most comprehensive and detailed rounds of bilateral engagement between Turkey and Greece. The memorandum drafted as a result of the talks laid out a comprehensive framework for settlement, built upon five core principles:

1. The Greek minister gave assurance that, should an agreement be reached between Turkey and Greece, Turkey would acquire the right to use the Dhekelia base.
2. Both ministers agreed that the Dhekelia base would serve to meet Turkey's strategic security needs. The Turkish Foreign Minister made known that the only acceptable solution for Turkey would be full sovereignty. The Greek Foreign Minister stated that he did not have the authority to make a binding commitment on the matter, but that he would present the issue to his government. The Greek Foreign Minister committed to delivering his response on the matter within the shortest possible time.
3. Turkish Cypriots shall have the right to participate in the governance of the island. Moreover, in the regions where they constitute the majority of the population, they shall benefit from a special status of local administration. The details of this status shall be determined by experts from both governments.
4. The issue of restoring peace to the island and ensuring its effective demilitarization shall, in the event of an agreement, be a matter to be discussed between experts from both sides.
5. In the event of an agreement, both countries are prepared to negotiate a treaty of alliance as well as cooperation agreements in the fields of economy, trade, tourism, and fisheries. The objective of these agreements is to enhance and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries<sup>76</sup>.

The most controversial and unresolved issue in the memorandum was, without a doubt, the status under which the Dhekelia base would be granted to Turkey. From the outset, the "Enosis *cum* Dhekelia" formula had been the central point of contention between the two sides, and it remained a critical deadlock. Turkey demanded full sovereignty over the base, whereas Greece proposed two alternative models: either leasing the base to Turkey for a fixed period or transforming it into a NATO facility jointly operated by Turkey, Greece, Britain, and other NATO allies. The latter option, in particular, was repeatedly emphasized due to concerns related to the Makarios factor. Turkey had categorically rejected both proposals from the beginning. Nevertheless, Greece's persistent negotiation strategy suggested a deliberate effort to steer Ankara toward a more flexible stance-ultimately aiming to prolong the process until Turkey might be persuaded to accept a sovereign base arrangement as a compromise. In this regard, Greek Foreign Minister Toumbas's remarks that "the issue could be resolved at a later stage"<sup>77</sup> indicated that the search for a settlement was still actively being pursued.

Another indication that the light at the end of the tunnel had begun to appear was the meeting held on 21 December 1966 in Athens between the British Ambassador and Theodoropoulos. Following his return from the talks in Paris, Theodoropoulos held a debriefing meeting with the British Ambassador in Athens. This meeting contained important insights into the deadlocks encountered by the Greek side during the negotiations. According to Theodoropoulos, the discussions in Paris had been highly productive, and a sincere

<sup>75</sup>I.N. Toumbas, *From the Diary of a Minister*, (Athens: Filon Publications, 1986), 131.

<sup>76</sup>"Μνημόνιο (17.12.1966) της συναντήσεως των Υπουργών Εξωτερικών της Ελλάδος και τής Τουρκίας στο Παρίσι", Παπαγεωργίου, *op. cit.*, p.298; Toumbas, *op. cit.*, 146.

<sup>77</sup>TNA, DO 220/5282, Athens to FO, 28 December 1966, No.538; FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.246 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus/1964-68v16/d246>



negotiating atmosphere had been established. Although the differences between the two sides had not been completely resolved, significant progress had been made. The Ambassador reported his understanding of Theodoropoulos's remarks as follows: *"He did not wish to imply that the gap had not yet been bridged, but at least it was possible to measure accurately what the width of the gap now was."* According to the Ambassador, the most decisive factor for the viability of the Toumbas-Çağlayangil Protocol was the domestic political situation in Greece. In Theodoropoulos's view, although the parties were approaching a stage where the differences were about to be closed, it was extremely difficult to predict how the ongoing government crisis in Greece would affect the process. On this matter, Theodoropoulos remarked: *"He had been wondering how Admiral Toumbas would be able to carry the dialogue much further in the face of Papandreou's opposition to the Stephanopoulos government."*<sup>78</sup>.

Interestingly Stephanopoulos also viewed Turkey's demand for a sovereign base favorably. Taken together, these developments reveal that despite Turkey's official rhetoric of categorical opposition to Enosis, it had in practice come to adopt a position closely aligned with the framework of the Acheson Plan. In fact, Turkey appeared ready, at least in principle, to consent to Enosis on the condition that full sovereignty over the Dhekelia base would be granted. This marked the first time since 1964 that both parties had come so close to a concrete and advanced level of agreement on Cyprus, indicating that the prospect of a negotiated settlement was more viable than ever before<sup>79</sup>.

Indeed, the atmosphere surrounding the negotiations was markedly positive. Although the core dispute-whether the base would be transferred under a sovereignty arrangement or a lease-had yet to be resolved, the overall tone of the talks was constructive, and both parties demonstrated a notable degree of goodwill. Upon returning to Greece following his extended discussions with Çağlayangil in Paris, Foreign Minister Toumbas presented the most optimistic outlook he had yet shared with the public. Emphasizing that the talks had been frank, constructive, and conducted in a spirit of friendship, Toumbas expressed his belief that, if the process was handled with diplomatic care, a Greek-Turkish agreement was within reach. According to U.S. Ambassador to Athens, Phillips Talbot, Toumbas conveyed his optimism in the following terms: *"I returned to Greece with the impression that, if the issue of the base could be resolved, the Turks were definitely ready to conclude an agreement on the basis of Enosis."*<sup>80</sup> This assessment signaled that both sides had begun to articulate their willingness to seek a settlement more clearly, and that, for the first time, a genuine foundation for agreement on the Cyprus issue appeared to be emerging. These developments also demonstrated that the process was not confined to technical negotiations alone; rather, it reflected the gradual strengthening of mutual trust and political will on both sides<sup>81</sup>.

One of the clearest indications that a viable solution was finally within reach came from the assessments Toumbas made following his meetings in Paris. Upon his return to Athens, he immediately briefed Stephanopoulos, stating that an agreement with Turkey was now a realistic prospect. However, Toumbas emphasized that for the process to succeed, Makarios should only be brought into the negotiations after a definitive agreement had been reached between Athens and Ankara. This warning was not merely a diplomatic tactic; it reflected a political foresight shaped by prior experience. The notion that Makarios's

<sup>78</sup>TNA, DO 220/167, Athens to FO, No.1121, Athens, 21 December 1966.

<sup>79</sup>As previously noted, at the stage of a final settlement, the United Kingdom had indicated that it might be willing to accept this possibility. Moreover, by that point, the Dhekelia base had become almost entirely non-operational. In a statement to *La Gauche* on August 13, Makarios claimed that the United Kingdom would soon abandon this largely inactive base and transfer it to the legal authority of the Cypriot government. See, TNA, WO 386/4, *Joint Intelligence Group (Cyprus)*, *General Intelligence Report*, No. 32/66, 16 August 1966.

<sup>80</sup>Toumbas said he had returned to Greece with the impression that Turks would definitely be prepared to make a deal on basis of enosis once base question resolved. He described mood of conversation as forthright and friendly throughout.

<sup>81</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.246 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d246>

early involvement could once again jeopardize a potential settlement, as had occurred in the past, served as a stark reminder of how close a resolution to the Cyprus issue had actually become.

At the same time, Toumbas recognized that the Paris meetings had been portrayed in parts of the Greek press as a failure. In an effort to correct this misperception-without disclosing sensitive details-he held a press conference, aiming to reassure the public that the Greek-Turkish dialogue was proceeding in a serious and constructive manner. This move was not only a diplomatic gesture, but also a carefully calibrated strategy to shape domestic opinion<sup>82</sup>. According to Greek *Eleftheria*, both sides had agreed to meet again in January, potentially to finalize the framework that had already been outlined<sup>83</sup>. The prospect of achieving a “lasting solution” to the Cyprus question, ending the increasingly volatile tensions in Turkish-Greek relations that carried a genuine risk of military confrontation, and restoring the balance established by the Treaty of Lausanne appeared, perhaps for the first time, both tangible and within reach.

#### 1.4. Why Negotiations Failed?

Despite all expectations, the highly anticipated negotiations between Çağlayangil and Toumbas-and consequently the proposed “Enosis cum Dhekelia” formula-ultimately failed to produce a final agreement. In other words, negotiations that had ripened to near completion could not be concluded with a definitive settlement. The principal reason for the failure of the negotiations was the persistent political instability in Greece, which fostered an atmosphere of chronic uncertainty<sup>84</sup> and hindered decisive policymaking. The dysfunctionality of Greek institutions, combined with their reluctance to endorse any concrete settlement framework, kept the diplomatic process in a state of stagnation. This absence of strategic clarity and institutional resolve ultimately eroded the credibility of the negotiations and prevented meaningful progress.

Merely four days after the pivotal meeting on 17 December 1966, Prime Minister Stefanos Stephanopoulos was forced to resign on 21 December, following the withdrawal of support from the ERE party, bringing the entire process to a sudden halt<sup>85</sup>. Thus, the greatest fear expressed from the beginning had materialized: political instability in Athens once again derailed the Cyprus issue at its most critical juncture. This development resulted in the loss of what could have been a historic opportunity for a comprehensive resolution to the Cyprus question. Notably, Stephanopoulos was reportedly sympathetic to Turkey's demand for sovereign control over the Dhekelia base. However, following his resignation, the matter remained unresolved. The new government failed to clarify its position, and according to a statement by Prime Minister Paraskevopoulos to U.S. Ambassador Phillips Talbot on 16 February 1967, Turkey never received an official response to its expectations regarding Dhekelia<sup>86</sup>. As Glafkos Cleridis later recalled, Ankara's inquiries in the post-resignation period were met with silence. Underlying this silence was likely the resurgence in Athens of the idea that

<sup>82</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.246 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d246>

<sup>83</sup>“Συνεχίζονται συνομιλίες μεταξύ Ελλάδος-Τουρκίας” *Ελευθερία*, 20 Δεκεμβρίου 1966. Indeed, within just a few days, remarkable progress had been made in narrowing the differences of opinion between the parties. Yet, the same newspaper had emphasized only a few days earlier that no convergence of views had been achieved regarding the Cyprus issue. Greek columnist R. Someritis, in a column published in the same newspaper, wrote that although it might be premature to declare the negotiations a failure, no convergence of views had been achieved on the core issues of the Cyprus problem and Greek-Turkish relations. He noted that the long-standing dialogue between the ambassadors and the extended negotiations between the two foreign ministers had not yet created a basis for agreement. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the fact that Toumbas and Çağlayangil had managed to meet and jointly acknowledge the difficulties of the process was a development of meaningful significance for the future of the negotiations. See “Ουδεμία προσέγγισης απόψεων επί του Κυπριακού εσημειώθη”, *Ελευθερία*, 18 Δεκεμβρίου 1966.

<sup>84</sup>Two underlying psychopolitical dynamics may have played a role in shaping this hesitation. The first of these can be argued to be the entrenched maximalist stance and Enosis obsession within Greek political thinking. Particularly in the context of the Cyprus issue, this tendency may have evolved into an ideological rigidity that obstructed rational assessments and made realistic compromise formulas difficult to pursue. The second dynamic may have been the deep-rooted mistrust toward Turkey, which appears to have persisted among the Greek political elite even after the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. This mistrust could have laid the groundwork for Athens to adopt a more rigid negotiation strategy based on an “all or nothing” approach in response to Turkey's growing military and diplomatic capacity.

<sup>85</sup>“Η κυβέρνηση αινετράπη-Υπάρχει μυστική συμφωνία Παπανδρέου-Κανελλοπούλου”, *Ελευθερία*, 21 Δεκεμβρίου 1966.

<sup>86</sup>FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.257 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d257>

Enosis could be achieved without granting Turkey a sovereign military base. In Cleridis's words, this silence marked "the point at which the matter ended."

Had there not been a government crisis in Greece, it would have been possible to resolve the Cyprus issue within a month at the latest. This assessment is not merely a historical assumption; it is also supported by the diplomatic records of the time. Indeed, the statements made during a meeting held on 21 December - the very day the Greek government collapsed-between the British Ambassador in Athens and Theodoropoulos provide clear evidence supporting this view. In a "top secret" report sent to London, the Ambassador wrote:

*"Asked about timing of any further Greek/Turkish talks Theodoropoulos said that the Turks had been pressing for a further round within a week. This would clearly have been impossible but Mr. Theodoropoulos thought that if the government had not fallen some resumption would have been taken place within a month. It would now be necessary to see what emerges from the present crisis."*<sup>87</sup>.

These statements clearly reveal the significant progress achieved in the rapprochement between the two sides at that time. More importantly, they demonstrate Turkey's genuine willingness and strong appetite for bringing the process to successful completion. At the same time, however, they reveal how political instability obstructed diplomatic efforts. A historic opportunity for resolving the Cyprus issue was, to a large extent, lost due to the fragility of Greece's domestic political landscape<sup>88</sup>.

As pointed out before, the failure of the negotiations was largely rooted in the internal political dynamics of Greece. On the Turkish side, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel led a strong and stable government, having been elected with nearly 53 percent of the vote. This political stability allowed Ankara to take clearer and bolder decisions in foreign policy, particularly on sensitive issues such as Cyprus. In contrast, Greece was beset by political instability: coalition crises, leadership changes, and inter-party conflicts prevented the formation of an effective and resolute government.

At a time when the parties had come closer to a settlement than ever before, the fundamental reason for the quiet collapse of the negotiations was Athens's domestic fragility and institutional instability. Beyond Makarios's resistance to the process, the staunch opposition led by former Prime Minister George Papandreou-referred to by American diplomats as the "Old Man"<sup>89</sup>-and his Center Union (CU) party also seriously disrupted the talks. Within CU circles, the dominant "sacrificing Greek interests" rhetoric framed any attempt at compromise-especially concessions such as granting Turkey a base at Dhekelia or agreeing to Enosis with conditions-as a form of political suicide<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>87</sup>TNA, DO 220/167, Athens to FO, No.1121, Athens, 21 December 1966.

<sup>88</sup>At this point, it is necessary to clarify an important aspect of the core argument of this study. This article approaches the Cyprus issue primarily from the perspective of Turkish-Greek relations and seeks to analyze the dynamics between the two countries through the lens of what is described as a "missed opportunity." The use of the term "missed opportunity" (or statements like "missing a historic opportunity") in this context is not intended to glorify, legitimize, or advocate either Enosis/Taksim or Turkey and Greece-centered solutions. Rather, the primary aim of this study is to examine Turkey's and Greece's bilateral efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue within a historical and diplomatic framework. Questions concerning Cypriot sovereignty, intercommunal disputes, the fairness or unfairness of Makarios's governance, or the political strategies of Turkish Cypriots in relation to Taksim fall outside the analytical scope of this article and are therefore not directly addressed. Such issues, given their complexity and multilayered historical background, require separate and more extensive studies. Accordingly, this article deliberately confines its analysis to the diplomatic processes and the official positions of the parties involved in 1966, with an explicit intention to avoid normative judgments or political endorsements.

<sup>89</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d243>

<sup>90</sup>Papandreou had, in fact, gone through a similar dilemma in 1964. His government found itself at the threshold of a difficult decision: on one hand, a political opportunity that brought Greece closer than ever to achieving Enosis; on the other, the reality that any concession to Turkey would likely be interpreted as de facto acceptance of partition (Taksim). This fundamental tension explains why Papandreou ultimately rejected Turkey's offer. Moreover, due to the domestic political instability in Greece at the time, Papandreou had little room to make meaningful concessions. He was also facing growing tensions with Makarios and other Greek Cypriot leaders. See, FRUS, 1964-1968, vol. XVI, doc.131; During Papandreou's time in office, Makarios had effectively become a *persona non grata*. In fact, on August 20, Greek Minister of Defense Kostopoulos referred to Makarios as "perfidious" during a meeting with the British Ambassador and stated that Makarios had accepted "instant Enosis." See, TNA: PREM 11/4712, Athens to FO, Telegram No. 1260, 20 August 1964.

One of the most significant obstacles during this period was undoubtedly the “Papandreou factor,” which played a decisive role in shaping the political climate in Greece. Georgios Papandreou’s opposition throughout 1966 constituted a serious political barrier to efforts toward resolving the Cyprus issue. His strong nationalist rhetoric and populist discourse made it difficult to pursue compromise-based initiatives. The temporary and fragile coalition governments in place at the time lacked both political courage and institutional authority to withstand Papandreou’s influence over public opinion. As the only political figure capable of mobilizing broad popular support, Papandreou repeatedly challenged the legitimacy of the sitting government without assuming any direct political responsibility, thereby weakening the foundations of ongoing diplomatic engagement.

Ironically, the core elements of the debates unfolding in 1966 had already been on the table during Papandreou’s own tenure as prime minister. The proposal to grant Turkey a military base on the island had been seriously discussed during the Acheson Plan negotiations in 1964. However, the process collapsed largely due to the intransigence of Makarios and Papandreou’s unwillingness-or inability-to exert decisive pressure on him. Papandreou was fully aware of how difficult it was to overcome Makarios’s resistance. Indeed, in a private reflection following the failure of the Acheson talks, he told British Minister Duncan Sandys that Dean Acheson had described Makarios as “a man of low cunning but not of the highest intelligence, of willpower and nerve but not of great vision,” and added that Makarios “was not at present negotiable on the subject of a Turkish base on the island”<sup>91</sup>.

The fragmented and fragile nature of Greek politics during this period meant that the government’s decision-making capacity was severely limited, particularly in matters of strategic importance. Governments were short-lived, internally divided, and lacked the strength to manage sensitive negotiations. As a result, Papandreou’s critical stance not only weakened the government’s hand but also undermined the continuity of Greek-Turkish dialogue. A more constructive opposition approach could have helped foster a balanced national consensus and potentially opened a path toward a viable settlement of the Cyprus problem.

Indeed, it was in such a climate that a newly formed caretaker government came to power in Greece—one whose primary mission was to manage the country until the next elections. The fall of the Stephanopoulos Government and its replacement by a weak administration tasked mainly with overseeing the electoral process had a direct and detrimental effect on the ongoing diplomatic negotiations. It was virtually impossible for such a limited and temporary cabinet to formulate an independent and resolute foreign policy, especially on an issue as sensitive, multilayered, and nationally symbolic as Cyprus.

As clearly stated in Ambassador Talbot’s report dated 18 January 1967, the primary obstacle on the Greek side was the potential opposition from George Papandreou and the CU, who were expected to resist any agreement that could be perceived as “sacrificing Greek interests”. According to Talbot, since any potential agreement would inevitably include some form of Greek concession, such “sacrifices” would be easily identified by the public. This assessment highlighted not only the influence of public opinion but also the way in which deep domestic political polarization directly shaped the diplomatic process. Even if a genuine opportunity for compromise emerged, the Greek government remained hesitant to move forward without first securing internal political consensus. King Constantine’s strategy of “public explanation” and his now well-known statement that “95 percent of the agreement was achieved, but it fell apart on the remaining 5 percent,” was also insufficient to overcome these domestic political obstacles<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>91</sup>TNA, FO 371/174754, “Cyprus” Minute, 2 September 1964.

<sup>92</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d247> At the time when the Acheson Plans were being discussed (1964), the Papandreou Government faced a similar dilemma. During the internal political debates of the period, Prime Minister Papandreou believed that Acheson’s proposals were the best achievable solution. He would express this view in a meeting with Kranidiotis with the following striking statement: “They are offering us a whole apartment building in exchange for sacrificing one of our apartments.” For a detailed analysis of this

The Enosis *cum* Dhekelia formula also implied that Greece was then prepared to accept a modified and softened version of the Acheson Plan, which it had firmly rejected in 1964. In the renewed diplomatic process of 1966, the United States introduced two separate proposals aimed at mediating a solution. These plans sought to establish a balance that would both fulfill the objective of Enosis and address Turkey's security concerns. However, the political discord between Athens and Nicosia-particularly Makarios's cautious and at times defiant stance-prevented these American initiatives from yielding concrete results. Moreover, the fragility of the Greek domestic political landscape, coupled with opposition accusations that the government was deviating from the "national cause," further complicated the decision-making process. In the end, although there emerged a potential framework for compromise based on a revised version of the plan rejected in 1964, it failed to evolve into a lasting solution due to mutual distrust and internal political obstacles<sup>93</sup>.

At this point, the prescience of U.S. Ambassador to Ankara, Parker T. Hart, became unmistakably clear. In a telegram sent to Washington on 15 September 1966, Hart had explicitly warned of the critical importance of maintaining political stability in Greece for the success of the negotiations. His message was not merely an observation but a strategic warning that anticipated the fragility of the process:

It seems agreed among us (Athens, Nicosia and Dept) that present Turk-Greek dialogue offers best hope for permanent settlement of Cyprus issue for some time to come. We also recognize that sincerity of both sides and secrecy of talks are good omen. Our fear lest dialogue fail if Greek Government should fall encourages me to believe that USG should use available time to make concerted effort to contribute to success of present negotiations.<sup>94</sup>

Hart emphasized that the ongoing Turkish-Greek dialogue was, under the existing conditions, the most promising path toward a lasting resolution of the Cyprus issue. He also pointed to the constructive role that mutual sincerity and the confidentiality of the negotiations were playing. At the same time, however, he openly expressed his concern that a potential collapse of the Greek government could derail the entire process. The developments that followed shortly thereafter proved Hart's assessment to be accurate<sup>95</sup>.

Whatever the reason behind the failure of the talks may have been, one of the most striking indications that this process represented a "missed opportunity" for Greece emerged during the Kollias-Demirel talks held a year later<sup>96</sup>. During these meetings, Prime Minister Kollias once again brought forward a proposal to grant Turkey a military base, limited within the NATO framework, in exchange for Enosis. But this proposal, which Greece regarded as perhaps the only viable formula to persuade Makarios, was met with an unex-

process, see Gürhan Yellice, *Enosis mi Tam Bağımsızlık mı? Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti'nin Kurulmasından "İlk Bölünmeye" Atina-Lefkoşa İlişkileri*, *Tarihin Peşinde*, 19, 2018, 344-345.

<sup>93</sup>At this juncture, within the analytical framework of this study, a fundamental question emerges that requires thorough examination: Why is it that while Britain's maintenance of two sovereign military bases on the island - despite having minimal demographic presence relative to the population is readily accepted to serve its strategic interests, Turkey's efforts to preserve its guarantor rights recognized by the Zurich and London Agreements, or its demand for a comparable security arrangement should these agreements be violated, were met with categorical rejection by Greece and Makarios-led Cyprus? The answer to this question, at the same time, would prove instrumental in understanding Cyprus's "history of failed reconciliation efforts"- a chronicle replete with diplomatic fiascos and missed opportunities.

<sup>94</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d238>

<sup>95</sup>In a short article titled "*The Toumbas-Çağlayangil 'Agreement'*", (Η «Συμφωνία» Τούμπα-Τσαγλαγιανγκιλ) published in 2017 in the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, Antonis Klapsis provides a general overview of the negotiation process and argues that the likelihood of reaching a concrete outcome was low from the very beginning. To Klapsis, the protocol signed on 17 December was not binding, and the failure to achieve a final agreement stemmed primarily from three factors: Athens' overly optimistic expectations, Ankara's demand for broader concessions, and Makarios's uncompromising stance. Klapsis further contends that the proposed settlement formula lacked a solid foundation, that political instability in Greece entirely obstructed the process, and that Makarios never granted his approval to the proposed terms. Compare with the information provided here, <https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/903356/i-symfonia-toympa-tsaglagiangkil/> (Accessed 10 June 2024 and 3 March 2025)

<sup>96</sup>TNA, FCO 27/85, Ankara to Foreign Office, No.1251, 11 September 1967; "Συναντώνται σήμερα οι κ. κ. Κόλλιας-Ντεμιρέλ", *Εμπρός*, 9 Σεπτεμβρίου 1967.



pectedly harsh reaction from Ankara. Prime Minister Demirel firmly stated that any solution based on Enosis could not be subject to negotiation, and his pointed remark- “*Who said we were willing to discuss Enosis?*”- revealed a notable shift in the Turkish position<sup>97</sup>. At this point, it was debatable whether what truly angered Turkey was the technical issue of whether the proposed base would possess sovereign status, or rather the fact that the idea of Enosis was being reintroduced in a forceful and insistent manner. Nevertheless, Demirel’s unequivocal response must have caused considerable astonishment on the Greek side. Indeed, the Greek government, referring to the earlier dialogue process-particularly the Toumbas-Çağlayangil meeting held in Paris on 17 December 1966-reiterated its claim that an implicit understanding had been reached, based on the exchange of certain concessions for Enosis. Demirel, however, responded to these claims with equal clarity, asking pointedly, “*Do you have any document to prove that?*”<sup>98</sup>.

It was particularly striking that a leader who had opened the door to discussing the matter a year earlier was now adopting such a rigid and uncompromising stance<sup>99</sup>. This development was not merely a rejection of a diplomatic proposal; it also demonstrated that both parties had returned to hardline positions and had rapidly moved away from the flexibility and openness to dialogue that had characterized the previous phase<sup>100</sup>. In this respect, the Kollias-Demirel meetings represented not only a failed diplomatic encounter but also a symbolic turning point, illustrating how the positive atmosphere shaped by the Toumbas-Çağlayangil talks had been dramatically reversed<sup>101</sup>.

At this point, it is necessary to emphasize a critical issue regarding the protocol. The only available official document concerning the Toumbas-Çağlayangil negotiations is the written protocol signed by both parties; beyond this, there is no definitive information about any possible secret commitments made during the talks. In fact, this ambiguity may be one of the main reasons why there has been no scholarly consensus on the scope, binding nature, or diplomatic significance of the protocol. Vangelis Koufoudakis highlights this uncertainty in his article titled “Greek-Turkish Relations: The Dialogue, the Intercommunal Talks and the Destabilization of the Republic of Cyprus” in which he also offers a revealing account of the period’s diplomatic backdrop. According to Koufoudakis, a Greek diplomat he interviewed stressed that the true importance of the protocol could only be understood not through the official text alone but through the content of the notes taken during the negotiations. However, those notes-if they were ever archived-have yet to be officially released or made available to the public<sup>102</sup>.

After Çağlayangil-Toumbas “fiasco”, attempts to revive the secret negotiations produced little tangible outcome. Meanwhile, the Czech arms shipments to Cyprus became an increasingly serious concern for Turkey<sup>103</sup>. Ankara’s persistent calls for these weapons to be placed under UN supervision went unanswered. Tensions between the parties continued to escalate systematically. Even after the political uncertainty in Athens ended with the military junta’s rise to power in 1967, the strain between the two countries did not ease. On the contrary, the political climate quickly evolved into one where hopes for a peaceful resolution

<sup>97</sup>After the talks had concluded, Demirel frequently stated in his public remarks that continued insistence on Enosis, or any attempt to impose a fait accompli, would lead to a Turkish-Greek war. His statements were particularly highlighted in the Turkish Cypriot press. “Demirel Stated That an Enosis Fait Accompli Would Turn a Turkish-Greek War into a Fait Accompli” *Bozkurt*, 11 September 1967.

<sup>98</sup>TNA, FCO 9/76, “Athens to Foreign Office, No.992 ? September 1967

<sup>99</sup>BOA, Başkanlık Özel Kalem Müdürlüğü, “Başbakan Süleyman Demirel’in Millet Partisi Genel Başkanı Osman Bölükbaşı’nın, Yunanistan Başbakanı ile görüşmesi ve Kıbrıs konusu üzerine mektup”, Fon:30-1-0-0, Kutu:10, Dosya:61, Gömlek: 22, 19 Ekim 1967.

<sup>100</sup>TNA, FCO 27/85, Ankara to Foreign Office, No.1263, 12 September 1967

<sup>101</sup>“At this point, a critical question arises: In light of Demirel’s statements, was the failure of the negotiations in fact a fortunate outcome or escape for Turkey? In other words, had Ankara narrowly avoided making a major strategic mistake by moving toward acceptance of the Enosis cum Dhekelia formula?”.

<sup>102</sup>Vangelis Koufoudakis, *op. cit.*, 263.

<sup>103</sup><https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v16/d249>

vanished. The collapse of the Stephanopoulos government and the failure to form a stable administration capable of carrying the diplomatic process forward extinguished any momentum that had been built. In retrospect, the breakdown of negotiations and the accumulation of unresolved tensions after 1966 directly contributed to the rupture that culminated in the events of 1974.

## Conclusion

The Çağlayangil-Toumbas talks and the Enosis *cum* Dhekelia formula emerged during a period in which both parties appeared convinced of the need for a radical paradigmatic shift to realign their bilateral relations. These negotiations represented not merely a renewed attempt at Turkish-Greek dialogue, but also a significant effort to address-first and foremost-the Cyprus issue, along with other enduring sources of tension. The process reflected a shared aspiration to restore the equilibrium established by the Treaty of Lausanne and to initiate a new phase in Turkish-Greek diplomacy. Indeed, both sides came remarkably close to enacting a transformative approach aimed at resolving a long-standing dispute that had continuously undermined the already fragile peace between them.

Arguably, these talks constituted the last genuine opportunity to reach a negotiated and lasting diplomatic settlement of the Cyprus problem within the framework of Turkish-Greek relations. Following the resolution, Makarios's political standing was significantly enhanced, and the island began progressing toward "full independence." This trajectory raised serious concerns in both Ankara and Athens about the potential destabilization of the existing status quo. Confronted with these shared anxieties, both governments saw the need to reengage through bilateral diplomatic channels in hopes of preventing a deeper crisis.

The "agreed solution" formula, framed along the lines of the Enosis *cum* Dhekelia arrangement, sought not only to reestablish the political balance between the two communities in Cyprus, but also to recalibrate broader regional power dynamics between Turkey and Greece. Makarios's increasing alignment with the Soviet Union created a shared sense of threat in both capitals, reinforcing the imperative that Cyprus remain within a controlled and stable Western-oriented structure.

According to the terms of the proposed settlement, Greece would, without formally abandoning its Enosis objective, agree to grant Turkey a permanent military base on the island. In turn, while refraining from officially endorsing the union with Greece, Turkey would adopt a flexible posture, approaching a solution that could partially address its core security concerns. This proposal clearly reflected both parties' willingness to pursue a pragmatic framework for compromise-one that could realistically transform the island's existing status.

Turkey had demonstrated considerable flexibility by agreeing to consider sovereignty over the British-controlled Dhekelia area-a considerably smaller zone than the Karpas Peninsula offered in the 1964 Acheson Plan. This shift indicated Ankara's determination to definitively resolve the Cyprus issue and establish long-term regional stability. British diplomatic records from the period further suggest that London, too, had come close to relinquishing its hold over the Dhekelia base. Nonetheless, despite these promising developments, the negotiations ultimately failed to deliver the expected breakthrough.

One of the primary reasons for this failure was the deepening political instability within Greece. The resignation of Stephanos Stephanopoulos and the formation of a fragile interim government severely hampered decision-making processes, undermining the continuity and seriousness of the negotiations. Meanwhile, the opposition Centre Union, led by Georgios Papandreou, intensified public pressure on the government by invoking accusations of "betraying the national cause," rendering any form of diplomatic

flexibility on the Cyprus question politically untenable. In such a polarized political environment, Foreign Minister Toumbas's warnings that Makarios should be excluded from the negotiations found little resonance among decision-makers in Athens. The military coup of April 1967 not only disrupted Greece's democratic order but also brought an abrupt end to the fragile Turkish-Greek dialogue.

For Greece, the proposed formula presented a strategic opportunity to contain Makarios's political influence and to advance the long-standing ideal of Enosis through diplomatic means. For Turkey, the process offered a chance to close the Cyprus file and to establish a more balanced and predictable bilateral relationship with Greece. However, the breakdown of the talks further eroded Turkish trust in Greece and prompted Ankara to adopt a more assertive and maximalist stance on the Cyprus issue.

These developments reveal that the 1966 Çağlayangil-Toumbas negotiations were not merely a temporary series of diplomatic exchanges, but in fact marked a critical historical juncture for understanding why the Cyprus issue has remained unresolved as a structural crisis to the present day. The process illustrated how political will for resolution could easily be sacrificed to domestic political calculations and nationalist rhetoric. Even when parties approached consensus, entrenched mistrust and leadership deficits proved insurmountable. Thus, the Çağlayangil-Toumbas negotiations should be viewed not only as a failed diplomatic initiative, but also as a missed historic opportunity for building long-term peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. From today's perspective, these talks are viewed as one of the rare diplomatic moments when both parties attempted to transcend their maximalist positions and sought a compromise that would accommodate mutual interests. In this respect, they not only illuminate the political history of the period but also offer a broader perspective on the dynamics of conflict resolution in Cyprus.

The abrupt and traumatic breakdown of dialogue imposed a heavy cost on all parties involved in 1974. Moreover, this cost was not merely a historical rupture; it gave rise to a prolonged period of instability, the effects of which continue to resonate to this day.



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