

The Cyprus Crisis of 1967 and The British-Turkish Policies^{*}

1967 Kıbrıs Krizi ve Türk-İngiliz Politikaları

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Özet

1963 yılının son aylarında yaşanan gelişmelerin ardından 1960'ta ilan edilen Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti dağılmış ve adada iki toplum arasında çatışmalar yeniden başlamıştır. Türkiye adadaki Türklerin durumunu yakından izlemiştir. Kıbrışlı Türkleri korumak için adaya askeri müdahale seçeneğine başvurmaktan geri durmayacağını açıkça belli etmiştir. 1964 yılında Türk hükümeti adaya yönelik bir askeri müdahale planlamış, ancak ABD tarafından durdurulmuştur. 1967 yılının Kasım ayında Rumların adadaki iki Türk köyüne saldırısından sonra adada yeni bir kriz ortaya çıkmış ve Türkiye yeniden adaya yönelik askeri bir operasyon hazırlıklarına başlamıştır. Bu çalışma 1967 krizinin öncesi ve sonrasında yaşanan gelişmelerin analizini yapmaktadır. Kıbrıs Cumhuriyetinin kuruluşunda garantör devletlerden olan Türkiye ve İngiltere'nin krize yaklaşımları arşiv belgeleri çerçevesinde incelenmistir. Yapılan calışma göstermiştir ki Türkiye gerektiğinde adaya askeri müdahale gerçekleştirmeye hazırken, İngiliz yönetimi buna karşı çıkmış ve Türkiye'nin askeri müdahale yapmasını engellemeye çalışmıştır. 1964 krizinden itibaren Kıbrıs sorununda artan Amerikan etkisi İngilizlerin bu politikasına yardımcı olmuştur. 1967 krizinin Türkiye'nin adaya müdahale etmeden sona ermesi İngilizleri memnun etmiş diğer taraftan Türk kamuoyu Türk hükümetinin kriz esnasında izlediği politikadan rahatsız olmuştur. Adaya askeri bir operasyona izin vermediği için Demirel hükümeti eleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma İngiltere ve Türkiye'nin politikaları üzerinden 1967 Kıbrıs Krizinin bir incelemesini yapmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1967 Kıbrıs Krizi, Kıbrıslı Türkler, Türk Dış Politikası, Türk-İngiliz İlişkileri.

^{*}This article is based on a chapter from the author's PhD thesis: Yasin Coşkun, "The Cyprus Problem and Anglo-Turkish Relations 1967-1980" (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2015).

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Abstract

Following the developments in the last months of 1963, the Republic of Cyprus, declared in 1960, was ended and the conflicts between the two communities on the island started again. Turkey followed closely the situation of Turks on the island. Turkey made it clear that it would not hesitate to conduct a military intervention on the island in order to protect the Turkish Cypriots. In 1964, the Turkish government planned a military intervention in the island, but it was stopped by the U.S. In November 1967, a new crisis emerged on the island after the Greeks attacked two Turkish villages on the island. Turkey began preparations for a military operation in the island. This study analyzes the developments before and after the 1967 crisis. Turkey and Britain were one of the quarantor powers of the Republic of Cyprus. Their approach to the crisis was examined in the light of archival documents. This study showed that while Turkey was ready to perform military intervention on the island, the British government was opposed to it. Britain tried to prevent a possible Turkish military intervention. Starting from the crisis of 1964, the increasing American influence on the Cyprus problem helped this policy of the British. The British were happy that the 1967 crisis was ended without Turkish intervention on the island. On the other hand. Turkish public opinion was disturbed by the Turkish government's policy during the crisis. The Demirel government was criticized for not allowing a military operation. This study made an examination of the 1967 Cyprus crisis in the framework of British and Turkish policies.

Keywords: The Cyprus Problem, The Cyprus Crisis of 1967, Turkish Cypriots, Turkish Foreign Policy, Anglo-Turkish Relations.

This article examines the British and Turkish policy at the time of the November crisis in 1967 which was started by the attack by the Greek forces against two villages, Boğaziçi (Ayios Theodhoros) and Geçitkale (Kophinou) in Cyprus. This was considered as an important event in the history of the Cyprus problem because of the possible danger of a war between Greece and Turkey.

The first section of this article looks at the significant developments prior to the Cyprus crisis of 1967 and the way the Turkish government handled the crisis. This is a substantial point to make a comparison between the policy of Britain and Turkey. Proceeding from this point of view, the second part of this study concentrates on the British reaction to the crisis in the light of the archival documents. Furthermore, the assessment of the British government on the Turkish government's attitude towards the crisis is also presented at this point. In particular, the evaluation of the British ambassador in Ankara on this issue is examined. Also, the discussions inside the British cabinet to prevent a possible Turkish military action on the island have also been investigated. The increasing the U.S. influence on the Cyprus problem by the time of the November crisis is also the subject of this study. This is a significant point because Britain was criticised in that it did not make sufficient effort to end the crisis, and this situation effectively forced the U.S. to play more active role in the Cyprus question. In this sense, William Mallinson also expressed that the view that the increase in the U.S. influence was the result of the low British profile (64-65). Therefore, this article looks at the negotiations made by the U.S. with Athens and Ankara to reach a solution of the crisis and the British approach to the American diplomatic actions in this process.

The last part of this article looks at the British and Turkish assessments after the end of the 1967 crisis. According to the British, the crisis ended with Turkish victory over the Greeks, but there were some criticisms of the Turkish government's policy in Turkey which are examined in this part.

1. The Situation on the Island Prior to the 1967 November Crisis

Britain took control of the island in 1878. In the 1950s, the Turkish community on the island was worried about the activities of the Greek Cypriots for enosis (unification of Cyprus with Greece) (Yeşilbursa 158). Inter-communal fighting started on the island in the mid-1950s. As a result of the growth of conflicts between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Britain had to agree to relinguish the administration of the island. Following the Zurich and London Agreements of 1959, a state was established under the name of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. The Turkish Cypriots opposed the demand of the Greek Cypriot leader Makarios to change the constitution of the state on November 1963 and inter-communal fighting started again on the island. On December 1963, many Turkish civilians were killed by the militants of a Greek Cypriot terrorist organization named EOKA. Armed attacks against the Turks on "21 December 1963 is known and remembered throughout Cyprus history, in particular, for the Turkish Cypriots as the Bloody Christmas" (Keser 265). Due to the conflict in Cyprus, the Turkish government decided to intervene militarily to protect the safety of the Turkish community on the island. However, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson sent a threatening letter to Turkey on 5 June 1964 in order to prevent a Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. This letter adversely affected Turkish-American relations. Later, the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Kollias and Turkish Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel met on September 9 and 10, 1967 to find a solution to the Cyprus issue on the Turco-Greek border. They met first in "Keşan in Turkey, and on the next day on Alexandroupolis (Dedeağaç) in Greece" (Kuneralp 8). However, the two sides failed to reach an agreement on the Cyprus issue.

This unsuccessful attempt of Turkey and Greece to solve the Cyprus issue in September 1967 made the situation worse on the island. In particular, the tough living conditions of the Turkish Cypriots (Denktash 45-46) were still a major problem and Turkey's negotiations with Greece had not made any positive contribution to their life. From the Greek Cypriot perspective, the failure of the Turkish-Greek dialogue did not affect their situation on the island. Actually, the Greek Cypriots had not been happy with negotiations between Turkey and Greece. According to their general opinion, Turkey and Greece should not have been overly involved in the Cyprus issue. The Cypriot Foreign Minister Mr. Kyprianou stated that "the Cyprus government had always felt that the problem of Cyprus was not essentially one between Greece and Turkey, but one for the people of Cyprus to decide" (FCO 9/73, 23 October 1967). According to the British Foreign Office's assessment, after the unsuccessful meeting between the Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers in September, the Greek Cypriots leadership was trying to gain the British support for the idea that the Greek-Turkish dialogue for the solution for the problem was "completely dead" (FCO 9/73, 26 October 1967).

In this connection, Makarios had also told the British High Commissioner in Cyprus, Sir Norman Costar, that the dialogue between Ankara and Athens on the Cyprus dispute "was dead and should not be revived" (FCO 9/72, 18 October 1967). According to the Greek Cypriots, they "could not approve the continuation of discussion of vital concern to them from which they were excluded" (FCO 9/72, 18 October 1967). In fact, rather than Greece, the Greek Cypriots considered Turkey's involvement in the Cyprus issue as a major problem because Turkey had closely followed the events in Cyprus and threatened to carry out military operations on the island. According to the Greek Cypriot High Commissioner in London, Mr. Costas Ashiotis, "the Greek Cypriot government had never expected any result, but had had to consent -albeit with some reluctance- to the discussions being held" (FCO 9/72, 20 September 1967).

Therefore, the Greek Cypriot government seemed to be pleased with the unsuccessful meetings between Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers. The British Foreign Office Central Department's memorandum in 1967 stated that the Greek Cypriot side's "main concern at present is probably to gain currency for the idea that the dialogue, which they have never liked, is over" (FCO 9/72, 9 October 1967). Also, according to another British Foreign Office's assessment; "Makarios was clearly delighted at the breakdown of the Greek-Turkish dialo-

gue. This fitted in well with his policy of paying lip services to Enosis" (FCO 9/72, 9 October 1967).

Britain did not give support to the ideas of the Greek Cypriot side and made its policy over the Cyprus issue clear: "Our position is that we hope that the Greek and Turkish governments will have further talks. We should certainly not give the Cyprus government ground for supposing that we share their view that the dialogue should not be resumed" (FCO 9/72, 25 September 1967). However, the events on the island would not develop as Britain hoped and Turkey once again would prepare to launch an attack against the island in the Mediterranean.

The first crisis occurred October 31, 1967, when Rauf Denktaş, a Turkish Cypriot communal leader "exiled from Cyprus since 1966" (Hart 44), was arrested by Greek Cypriot forces while trying to enter the island secretly. Since he was a charismatic leader among the Turkish Cypriots, his intentions were to increase the Turkish Cypriot community's resistance against the Greek Cypriots' demands for enosis (Firat, 221). The situation on the island became tense again. The Greek Cypriots accused Turkey of being responsible for the attempt of Denktaş to come back, but Turkey rejected this accusation (Hart 44). According to the Turkish Prime Minister Demirel's statement, the Turkish government did not have any knowledge of Denktaş's action (Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni, no: 38, November 1967, 13). Turkey's ambassador on the island, Ercüment Yavuzalp, was also shocked when he was informed about Denktaş's arrest. He said that:

"After having my dinner at home, I started to watch Greek Cypriot channel on TV which was the only channel we could watch on the island. Then, I saw picture of Denktaş on TV. Because of I could not speak Greek; I did not understand the situation at first. Then, after translation, I understood that Denktaş had been arrested by the Greek Cypriot forces. It was a big surprise for me. I immediately informed Ankara but they also did not have any information about Denktaş's action" (Yavuzalp 47-48).

The situation was also difficult for Makarios. There were demonstrations on the island in support of Denktaş by the Turkish Cypriots. Putting Denktaş on trial and sending him to prison could make the situation worse on the island. Therefore, Makarios was reluctant to take any action against him. Eventually, the crisis was solved after intensive negotiations. Denktaş gave an assurance that he would not try to enter the island illegally again and returned to Turkey November 12, 1967 (Hart 44). This crisis had an important impact on Turkey's Cyprus policy. When Denktaş was arrested, the public pressure on the Turkish government to carry out a military operation on the island increased. In particular, the Turkish Cypriots accused the Turkish government of not helping them and, in a demonstration, they even attacked the Turkish Embassy building on the island (Yavuzalp 60). Turkey was being forced to make a military operation in Cyprus. When the Denktaş crisis started, the President of Turkey, Cevdet Sunay, was in Britain for the official visit. He gave a speech in London on 5 November at the organisation which was arranged by the Turkish Cypriot community in Britain. He said that Turkey was working to solve the Cyprus problem in a peaceful way and added that "we hope, as a last choice, we would not have to apply the other option for the solution" (Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni, no: 38, November 1967, 12). The comment of Sunay implied that the Turks were ready to use the military option in the Cyprus issue.

2. Turkey's Second Attempt to Intervene on the Island

Shortly after the solution of the Denktaş issue, Cyprus faced another dispute which would turn into a major international problem. The crisis started in the region the west of Larnaca when Turkish Cypriots of the village of Boğaziçi (Ayios Theodhoros) had not allowed passage to the Greek Cypriot police patrols through the Turkish part of the village (Wiener 153). Actually, the Greek Cypriot police was able to patrol once a week on this road without having any problem but "after two serious outbreaks of shouting during July in 1967 the Greek Cypriot police suspended the weekly visit" (Harbottle 95). By November, the Greek Cypriots wanted to resume patrolling in this road. In a meeting with Makarios and Greek General Grivas, UN Special Representative Bibiano Fernández Osorio y Tafall and UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) Commander Armas-Eino Martola had strongly advised them to not take any action and postpone a resumption of their demands to patrol until an acceptable solution by all sides could be reached. However, they replied that we "might not be in a position to wait any longer" (Hart 44-45).

The first reaction of Ankara to the Greek Cypriot request for patrolling was negative. The Turkish Cypriot Leadership demanded the removal all other Greek Cypriot blockades on the island in return for allowing the Greek police passage through Boğaziçi (Ayios Theodhoros) but this argument was rejected by the Greek side (Harbottle 95). Turkey's ambassador on the island, Ercüment Yavuzalp, saw no harm in opening road for the Greek police patrolling. He also sent a telegram to Ankara about this issue but his argument was rejected. However, Yavuzalp sent another telegraph to Ankara November 13, 1967, and strongly advised them to allow resumption of patrolling. Afterwards, Ankara replied to Yavuzalp that "his suggestion about the issue was under consideration and they would send the last decision of Ankara to him soon" (Yavuzalp 74). Turkey seemed to concede to the idea of opening Boğaziçi (Ayios Theodhoros) for the Greek Cypriot patrolling. However, the Greek Cypriots did not wait for the end of the negotiation and, "despite UNFICYP's disclosure that a settlement was in sight and that confirmation was expected very shortly that Turkey had accepted the status quo" (Harbottle 95), they started patrolling by armoured cars in Boğaziçi (Ayios Theodhoros) on 14 November "without the U.N. escort which usually accompanied the forces of the "government" within the Turkish controlled areas" (Bölükbaşı 134).

Contrary to expectations, the Turkish Cypriots did not take any action against the Greek Cypriot police force. However, it was too early to think that the crisis was over because on the same day and the following day the heavily armed Greek Cypriot forces continued their patrolling, which turned into a show of strength. The Chief of Staff of the UNFICYP Michael Harbottle criticised this action of the Greek side and accused General Grivas:

"There seems little doubt that General Grivas was determined to provoke the Turks into a fight, for even UN Special Representative Osorio-Tafall and UNFICYP Commander Martola were making strong representations to the "government" to stop this provocative action, Grivas ordered yet another patrol into the village in the early afternoon of the 15th" (Harbottle 95).

The clash in Ayios Theodhoros started on 15 November (Hitchens 65). According to the Greek side, when their heavily armed convoy entered the village, the Turkish Cypriots opened fire (Bölükbası 134). After the several hours of battle, the Greeks completely took the control of Ayios Theodhoros. Then, on the same day, the Greek Cypriot forces attacked another Turkish village Gecitkale (Kophinou) which was not linked to the original patrol issue (Uslu 97). At the end of the day, "22 Turks had been killed; many of them civilians lying in the ruins of their homes, and 9 more had been wounded" (Harbottle 96; UN Security Council Reports for the period 13 June to 8 December 1967, (S/8286); Kuneralp 160) When Ankara heard about the Greek Cypriot attack against the two villages, the Turkish Security Council (NSC) gathered and Turkey sharply warned the Greek government and Makarios (Göktepe 439) on 16 November 1967 that the Turkish Air Force would bomb the Greek Cypriot targets if they continued to occupy the two villages. After Ankara's warning, on the same day, the Greek side agreed to withdraw their forces from Ayios Theodhoros and Kophinou (Bölükbası 135; Uslu 98).

However, Turkey was still frustrated by the Greek action. The Turkish government was in a very difficult situation because the government had already been strongly criticised in the Denktas crisis by the opposition parties and the public for applying a passive policy against the Greek side. This time the situation was much more serious, 22 Turks were killed which provoked a change in the climate of Turkish public opinion (Göktepe 439). The Turkish government was expected to intervene on the island. The Turkish side considered the Greek attack against Ayios Theodhoros and Kophinou as a pre-planned action to achieve enosis because the villages were strategically important Turkish "enclaves on the Nicosia (Lefkosa)-Limassol (Limasol) motorway and they were controlled by the self-established Turkish Cypriot administration" (Uslu 97). The report of United Nations Secretary General U Thant on the incident also supported the Turkish argument: "The magnitude of the Ayios Theodhoros operation and the speed with which it was carried out clearly indicated that the (Greek) National Guard had planned in advance to carry out this operation in the event of any show of opposition by the Turkish Cypriots" (UN Security Council, 16 November 1967, (S/8248).

Actually, in the first stage, when the Greeks responded to Turkey's demands positively and agreed to withdraw the Greek forces from the two enclaves, the Turkish government was relieved. The Turkish Foreign Minister, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, stated that "we could exchange congratulations that the crisis was past" (Hart 53). Prime Minister Demirel also "pronounced in a press conference at 11 a.m. on November 16 that the crisis was over" (Hart 53). However, the pressures, even from the inside of the government, affected the Turkish government approach towards the 1967 crisis. The U.S ambassador to Ankara, Parker T. Hart, describes the situation: "There had been an intense battle of wills on the nights of the 15th and 16th in the Turkish cabinet between the hawks and doves. Later, I was to learn that the line-up was between Demirel, Çağlayangil and Defence Minister Ahmet Topaloğlu, who sought a peaceful solution, and other ministers who occupied secondary position" (Hart 53).

The opposition parties in the Turkish National Assembly also heavily criticised the policy of the government in Cyprus. The Republican People's Party (RPP) representative Nihat Erim blamed Demirel for "reacting slowly to the news of violence on 15 November 1967 and missing a good chance to teach Makarios a lesson" (Bölükbaşı 136). The Turkish Cypriots also were not happy with the Turkish government policy. The Turkish Cypriot fighters stated that they no longer believed that Turkey would perform a military operation on the island (Akşam, 17 November 1967). The pressures on the government led Prime Minister Demirel to apply a more rigid policy on the crisis.

First, on 17 November, the Turkish National Assembly authorized the government to use the Turkish armed forces "outside Turkey". Then, on the same day, the government was to send a harsh note to Greece stating Turkey's demands for calling off an intervention (Bölükbaşı 136; Wiener 155). These demands were:

"1- The recall of General Grivas. 2- The withdrawal of the all Greek troops stationed in Cyprus since 1964(12,000 by Turkish estimates and 6,000 by Greek estimates) (Wiener 157). 3- The disbandment of the National Guard and, under UNFICYP supervision, collecting arms from unauthorised civilians and militants. 4- The removal the pressure from the Turkish community by ensuring freedom of movement. 5- Compensation for the victims and the damage caused to Turkish Cypriots at Ayios Theodhoros and Kophinou" (Hart 60-61; Uslu 99; Papandreou 211-21).

From Ankara's perspective, there was no time to wait anymore and Greece had to give a response to Turkey's demands immediately. However, there was no answer from the Greek side until 22 November. Only the recall of General Grivas to Athens on 19 November could be considered as an important Greek action. In its reply on 22 November, Athens rejected Turkey's requirements (Bölükbaşı 139, Uslu 100). After this reply, as the UN Secretary General U Thant reported rather starkly that, "Greece and Turkey are now on the brink of war" (Göktepe 439). According to the U.S. intelligence report, Turkey would initiate a military action within twenty-four hours (Bölükbaşı 139, Uslu 100). The Turkish military preparations could be observed fairly easily. The Turkish aircraft were being loaded with bombs and troopships were being loaded for the naval landing. In Greece, there were also counter preparations. At this point, the U.S. took an initiative and intervened in the crisis as had happened in 1964. President Lyndon B. Johnson announced that he was sending his personal representative, Cyrus Roberts Vance, to Ankara then to Athens for "consultations in an effort to assist the governments of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus to discover a peaceful way out of the present tension and remove the danger of war from the eastern Mediterranean" (Wiener 156) After the U.S. ambassador Hart informed Turkey about the Vance mission on 22 November, the Turkish government decided to wait and see what his actions would be before launching a military operation (Bölükbaşı 139-140). As his first destination, Vance was on the way to Ankara to search a solution for the serious crisis that had developed between two NATO allies.

Britain also monitored the situation on the island. In particular, the British government was worried about the possibility of a Turkish military operation in Cyprus. Therefore, the next section explored the British position at the times of crisis and the British approach to the Turkish policy.

3. The British Reaction to the Crisis

The British position in the 1967 crisis was vital because they had a strong connection with the island. First of all, Britain was one of the guarantor powers in the Treaty of Guarantee and held two important Sovereign Base Areas on the island. It also had a significant role in UNFICYP. The situation was serious on the island. Turkey was threatening to make a military operation and Britain had to involve in the crisis to prevent a possible war between two NATO allies. Therefore, from the beginning, the Foreign Office observed the crisis closely. The FCO's Research Department memorandum described the situation:

"The crisis of November 1967 started with an attack led by General Grivas, who had returned to Cyprus in 1964 and become commander of the Defence of Cyprus, on the Turkish inhabitants of two villages and their houses. Over 20 Turkish-Cypriots were killed. Ankara's reaction was immediate. If the Greek and Greek Cypriots' forces had not been withdrawn (from the occupied villages) by dawn the next day, Turkish bombers would have gone to action" (FCO 51/47, 4 December 1968).

After this information, a careful analysis was made of the Turkish demands for ending the crisis. Also, from the perspective of Britain, there was assessment of Turkish public opinion as regards to the crisis:

"The withdrawal gave time for reflection, but by itself it was not enough to satisfy Turkey. Nor even was the prompt removal of General Grivas to Greece. True to their principles they put full responsibility on the Greek government, and demanded the removal of all illegal Greek forces from the island, otherwise Turkey would "invade" Cyprus. During a week of near war hysteria the Turkish government had the overwhelming support of the army and the people, most of whom would have been glad to see an "invasion" which they thought, would settle the Cyprus problem once and for all" (FCO 51/47, 4 December 1968).

The British ambassador to Ankara also provided useful information about the Turkish reaction to the crisis. In a secret message from the British Embassy in Ankara, he reported developments in Turkey and the preparations of the government for a military operation: "The latest indications are that Turks declared intent on landing in Cyprus may well be to redress imbalance between illegal Greek troops and Turkish troops. I still consider that the Turks will attempt to establish at least two beaches. Kyrenia possibly extending to the area Morphu bay and Famagusta bay area. As far as I know there is virtually no suitable beach head in Cyprus on which the Turks can land without the Greeks knowing. Whatever the Turkish intention I cannot see individual Greek units failing to oppose them. If the Greeks fight, the Turks will attempt to annihilate all opposition in the immediate vicinity of the landing. Of course that will lead to full scale fighting. I believe that as a result of Kophinou military thinking was clear and decisive. The Cyprus problem has to be settled quickly once and for all by immediate negotiation or the Turkish forces must "invade" and protect the Turkish Cypriots themselves. They were ready to go" (DEFE 11/539, 24 November 1967).

Another insightful assessment by the British ambassador to Turkey about the Turkish feeling about the Cyprus problem showed the reason why the Turks were so eager to intervene on the island in 1967 crisis: "Turkish troops will undoubtedly have thoughts of revenge but not only for Kophinou. My belief is that after years of frustrations they feel they have lost face. Their public image is damaged and they must do something drastic to restore it" (DEFE 11/539, 24 November 1967).

Britain knew that a Turkish military operation in Cyprus would go beyond the island. According to British Cabinet's opinion, "if Turkey "invaded" Cyprus it would probably "invade" Greece as well. The attack on Cyprus would not be against the Cyprus government but against the Greek forces on the island, of whom the Turks alleged that about 12,000 were there illegally" (CAB 128/42, 23 November 1967). Britain also considered the situation in terms of the British military bases on the island. In a discussion, "the Cabinet was informed that if Turkey "invaded" Cyprus, the plan was to concentrate all United Kingdom nationals in the Sovereign Base Areas which were not expected to be involved in a Turkish "invasion" (CAB 128/42, 23 November 1967). However, "the stress was so great that England transferred 2400 British citizens on the island to Dhekelia base" (Armaoğlu 245; FCO 47/156, 1967 Jan 01-1968 Dec 31).

Although it seemed that there was no great danger for the British position on the island, Britain tried to find an answer the question, what is "position of United Kingdom government in international law in relation to the threatened Turkish action against Cyprus?" (FCO 27/166, 24 November 1967). This issue was discussed by the Foreign Office Legal Adviser in a meeting on Friday 24 November 1967. The law officers were asked to advise "whether the United Kingdom government were under any obligation under the Treaty of Guarantee to take unilateral action in the current situation against the Turkish attack. The law officers were of the opinion that no such obligation was imposed by Treaty" (FCO 27/166, 24 November 1967). According to this opinion, British advocated that:

"Under Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee we are obliged to consult with Greece and Turkey, the other guarantor powers, if a breach of the Treaty occurs. The "invasion" of Cyprus would of course be such a breach. But as Turkey would have caused the breach we obviously could not have the kind of three power consultation envisaged in the Treaty, at least until the fighting had stopped" (Göktepe 439).

Nevertheless, the British were aware that they had to do something to stop a possible war between the sides. At a meeting in the British cabinet, they discussed this issue:

"We should bring all possible pressure to bear on Turkey, seek to involve the United Nations as deeply as possible and take political action at every level to stop the fighting. We should consider the possible reaction of the Soviet Union. It was also necessary to consider whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) could play a role in bringing to an end a war between two of its members. There was a danger that NATO intervention might lead to a breakup of the Alliance. It might therefore be preferable to act through the United Nations" (CAB 128/42, 23 November 1967).

It was announced from Moscow that the Soviet government was carefully observing the development of the events in Cyprus and it was indicated that the Soviet government was supporting the peaceful solution all questions of relations between the Greek and Turkish population on Cyprus "without any interference from outside" (DEFE 11/539, 23 November 1967). Britain wanted the crisis to be solved through negotiations. The UN and NATO were considered as important actors in this process. However, British policy makers thought that searching for a solution for the problem over NATO could be dangerous. When the UK MILREP (Military Representative to NATO) informed London about the message of the Turkish General Staff to NATO, it was understood that if NATO tried to stop the Turks, this intervention could damage relations with Turkey because the Turkish government would be decisive in sorting out the problem at any cost. In the Turkish General Staff's message to NATO, it was stated that:

"We do not wish to ask your advice. We are the most honoured defendants of peace. But we cannot tolerate cruelty against humankind. What we want from you is that you hinder those who burn and burden our people and destroy their homes, and prevent the cruelty of Greeks and Greek Cypriots who are seeking possession of international waters and airspace (...) It must be clearly understood that, unless the Greek division and Greek Cypriots soldiers equipped with Greek arms are withdrawn from the island, we will have to use our right of intervention granted to us through the agreements with the purpose of safeguarding humankind..." (DEFE 11/539, 24 November 1967).

All of the discussions which were made by the British Cabinet and Foreign Office were aimed at trying to find an appropriate reaction to the crisis. Britain wanted to be cautious in its policy. It was not happy with the Greek action which had caused death of 22 Turks, but it also did not want Turkey to launch a military attack to the island. However, there was no much time left to stop the conflict between the sides. Therefore, as had happened with the 1964 crisis, the U.S would take responsibility to put an end the crisis again.

4. The Increasing Impact of the U.S. in the Cyprus Problem

After Greece refused to accept the Turkish demands, there was no choice left for Turkey other than attack Cyprus. In particular, the Turks wanted Greece to withdraw its troops from Cyprus. In his press statement on 22 November Dr. Fazıl Küçük said that negotiating with the Archbishop Makarios for the solution of the crisis would be pointless unless the Greek troops who were deployed on the island returned to Greece (Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belleteni, no: 38, November 1967, 87). The British Foreign Minister "had been in touch with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Çağlayangil, and urged restraint. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant was also sending a special representative, the Guatemalan José Rolz Bennett, to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey" (CAB 128/42, 23 November 1967) to prevent any conflict between the sides. However, there was heavy pressure on the government in Turkey and it seemed that the British effort alone was not enough to dissuade Turkey from its decision. Therefore, as mentioned before, on 22 November, the President of the United States had decided to send to the area a special representative Cyrus Vance (Coufoudakis 121) "in order to prevent Turkish military intervention in Cyprus and avert the threat of a war between Greece and Turkey" (Stearns 101). The U.S. President gave his full support to Vance and told him: "Do what is necessary to stop the war. If you need anything, let me know. Good luck" (Vance 144).

However, Vance's mission seemed to be difficult because, from the Turkish perspective, it could be regarded as another American intervention which just aimed to stop Turkey. In the 1964 crisis, Johnson sent a threatening letter to

Turkey to prevent a possible Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. This letter disappointed Turkey and resulted in it revising its relations with the U.S. Therefore, this time, President Johnson wanted to be cautious in his action and "he had evidently decided not to repeat the mistake of issuing a blunt veto to the Turks, but to try mediation" (Hale 153). This was a right approach for ending the crisis because when the U.S. ambassador to Turkey informed the Turkish government about Vance's mission, Zeki Kuneralp, the Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Minister Affairs, took the position that Vance was a "living Johnson letter" (referring to the letter of June 5, 1964) (Hart 69). Therefore, the Turkish stage of the crisis. However, Vance had been already on the way to Ankara and the government had to agree to listen to the envoy of the U.S. and give him a chance to persuade the Greeks (Bölükbaşı 140).

On the other hand, the Turkish public did not want to accept the Vance's mission, which was considered to be bringing another "Johnson letter" threatening Turkey (Hart 71). There were anti-American demonstrations everywhere. As a result of these protests, when Vance arrived in Ankara on November 23, his plane landed at a military airport in Ankara rather than the civilian airport Esenboga (Ahmad 145). Vance knew that the situation was serious. He was informed that "Turkish troops were already at the embarkation port and were expected, according to the U.S. intelligence, to "invade" Cyprus the next morning. This would mean war between Greece and Turkey" (Vance 144). In this respect, after he arrived in Ankara, he went without delay to see the Turkish Prime Minister Demirel to determine what kind of measures could be taken to end the crisis. When they met on 23 November, Demirel tried to give an image that Turkey was so determined to launch a military operation in Cyprus. He said the Turkish Cypriots' oppression by "the Greek Cypriots and the mainland Greek forces had been going for years and had now reached the point at which it could no longer be endured" (Hart 72). The Turkish government was in the position that he Greek side had to accept the Turkey's demands for cancellation of the planned Turkish military operation. Otherwise, they would have to attack Cyprus.

After listening to the Turkish demands, Cyrus Vance went to Greece on the same day. In contrast to Turkey, the atmosphere was calm in Athens. The reason for this might be that they did not believe that Turkey would perform a military operation in Cyprus. During the 1964 crisis, Turkey had threatened but nothing happened. Therefore, they thought it would be the same this time. As a result of this, when Vance met the Greek Foreign Minister Panagiotis Pipine-lis, his reaction to the Turkish demands was at first very negative (Hart 71), but

gradually Vance "persuaded the Greek junta to withdraw its troops from Cyprus by 25 November 1967" (Uslu 102). However, they were reluctant to withdraw their force in such a short time. They demanded seven months to complete the recalling process. Turkey did not agree with this demand and "insisted on unconditional and immediate withdrawal" (Bölükbaşı 142). Finally, on 30 November, Greece accepted Turkey's terms. Then a plan was agreed by the sides which included:

"-Withdrawal of Greek Troops from Cyprus within a fixed time frame. – Dismantling of Turkey's war preparations. -Dissolution of the Greek-Cypriot National Guard and the handing over of all weapons (including the Czechoslovak arms) to the United Nations peace forces and its commander Grivas be recalled Greece. - A reaffirmation of the independence and integrity of the Republic of Cyprus" (Bölükbaşı 140; The Times, 1 December 1967).

Before reaching a full agreement, Vance went to Cyprus on 29 November to meet Makarios who also accepted the withdrawal of Greek mainland troops but he did not want to agree on the disbandment of the National Guard and "Vance was unable to persuade him otherwise" (Bölükbaşı 141). However, on 3 December, the press reported that Turkey and Greece reached an agreement on a settlement (Wiener 157). On the same day both countries stated that "they would abide by the appeal of the U.N. Secretary General who called for the withdrawal of foreign troops illegally introduced into Cyprus and disbandment of paramilitary forces on the island" (Bölükbaşı 141; Uslu 102). Vance also announced that his mission was completed. Thus, the second major crisis was over and the danger of a war between the two NATO allies was successfully averted. The Greek acceptance of most of the Turkish demands had a major role in this agreement.

Some assessments suggested that the reasons for the Greek acceptance of the Turkish demands were:

"When the crisis broke out in Cyprus in November 1967, the Greek junta had only been in power for about half a year. It was weak and internationally unpopular. Also given its firm orientation toward NATO and the United States, the Greek regime was susceptible to American pressure to make concessions and avoid a war with Turkey" (Bahcheli 174).

Furthermore, "although Greece accepted the majority of the Turkish demands, this did not mark a complete victory for the Turks, since Makarios later refused to dismantle the National Guard" (Hale 153). This caused the Turkish government to be heavily criticised in Turkey. From this point of view, it is important to look at the reactions to the settlement of the crisis from the point of both by British and Turkish sides.

5. The British and Turkish Assessments in the aftermath of the 1967 Crisis

Britain was pleased that the crisis was ended without any major conflict between the sides. According to the British evaluation, the articles of the agreement showed that Turkey succeeded in imposing its demands on Greece. The Foreign Office called this situation as "Greece bows out" and said that "one result of the crisis of last November, when war between Turkey and Greece was narrowly averted, has been the evacuation of the "illegal" Greek troops who were in Cyprus and a sharp reduction in Greek involvement in the problem" (FCO 9/73, 20 March 1968). Immediately after the 1967 crisis, according to Foreign Office' analysis, "enosis (union of Cyprus with Greece) is not now being pursued by either the Greek government or the Cyprus government" (FCO 9/73, 20 March 1968). This evaluation could be regarded as true for the short term because the agreement between Turkey and Greece had some heavy conditions for the Greeks. Therefore, they might have lost their motivation for enosis. However, it did not mean that the policy of enosis was completely relinquished by the Greeks.

Britain also gave its own support to Vance and regarded his mission as "encouraging" (CAB 128/42, 30 November 1967). When Vance went to Cyprus to discuss support for the agreement, the British Prime Minister had also sent a message to President Makarios urging him to accept the proposals (CAB 128/42, 30 November 1967). American involvement in the Cyprus issue was considered as an important element for the solution of the problem. Britain also took a lesson from the 1967 crisis and wanted to improve its Cyprus policy to prevent any future crisis on the island. As a result of this, in a discussion in the Cabinet the point was made that: "It was most important that we should, if necessary, be able to exert our proper influence in the event of a new crisis in Cyprus; and we could do so only if we had contacts with the Greek regime" (CAB 128/42, 30 November 1967). From this point of view, Britain wanted to improve its relations with the new Greek military regime.

Another discussion was over UNFICYP which was responsible for maintaining peace on the island. However, in the November crisis, 22 Turkish Cypriots were killed and UNFICYP had failed to prevent this incident. As a result of this, the efficiency of the UN forces started to be questioned by Turkey. Britain was the most important supporter of this UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus and had a significant role in it. Chief of staff of this force was also a British General, Michael Harbottle. Therefore, Britain tried to support the necessity of UNFI-CYP. In his report to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary George Brown, advocated that:

"It is true that UNFICYP was unable to prevent the outbreak of heavy fighting at Ayios Theodoros on 15 November. But it is not within the existing terms of reference of the Force to oppose a deliberate and large scale assault by one side against the other, as happened there. Nevertheless, UNFICYP's presence was essential for the establishing of a cease-fire and for the operations required to provide immediate succour for victims of the outbreak and to ensure that the embers of the fighting did not flare up again" (DEFE 11/539, 30 November 1967).

Overall, Britain welcomed the agreement between Turkey and Greece and thought that the Turks had gained a victory over the Greeks. However, from the Turkish perspective, it was difficult to say that they had the same feeling. In particular, Turkish public opinion seemed to be unhappy with the result. The Times' report from Turkey described the Turkish reaction to the agreement. According to this report, "although the Turks had successfully forced their plan for the settlement of the Cyprus issue upon Makarios, there were no sign of celebrations here, official or otherwise. There is no great feeling of elation among the Turks" (The Times, 1 December 1967). The Demirel government believed that it was a good agreement and tried to explain it to the public. However, there were sharp criticisms of the government especially, in the Turkish National Assembly. The Deputies of the opposition parties blamed the government for missing a good chance to intervene in Cyprus.

The chairman of the right-wing Republican Peasants' Nation Party, Alparslan Türkeş, was one of the Deputies in the parliament who heavily criticised the government action. He strongly accused the government of deceiving the Turkish Cypriots and called for a vote of confidence on the Demirel government. According to him, during the crisis, although the National Assembly gave the right to use the Turkish armed forces outside Turkey, the government did not have any real intention to intervene in Cyprus and was only bluffing. He also argued that the military preparations should have been done secretly. However, the government failed to do so. Therefore, the international pressure on Turkey did not allow for an intervention on the island. He also said that the government committed a major offence by not intervening in Cyprus (MMTD, 1 December 1967, 269-270). Deputy Reşat Özarda also criticised the result of the 1967 crisis. He refused the argument that Turkey had won a victory over Greece and asked questions to the government about the Cyprus issue. According to his view, the agreement between Turkey and Greece did not provide a real improvement in the condition of the Turkish Cypriots situation on the island (MMTD, 8 December 1967, 383-384). The other opposition parties in the National Assembly did not support the argument of Alpaslan Türkeş of calling for a vote of confidence for the government. However, they also made criticisms on the government's Cyprus policy.

The Deputy of the Nation Party, Seyit Faruk Önder, said that instead of finding a permanent solution for the Cyprus issue, the government had only searched for a surface and temporary one. Therefore, the Cyprus problem still remained unresolved. However, he announced that they would reject the motion about the government (MMTD, 4 December 1967, 320-321). Republican People's Party's speaker, Nihat Erim, also said that his party would not support a vote of confidence in the government. The leader of the Reliance Party, Turhan Feyzioğlu, stated that they would not take any negative or positive action about the motion. Rather than calling for a vote of confidence, he suggested calling for a general debate in the National Assembly about the Cyprus issue (MMTD, 8 December 1967, 342). The Turkish Foreign Minister, İhsan Sabri Cağlayangil, rejected the accusations against the government with regards to its Cyprus policy. He defended them arguing that the government had achieved a good result and managed the Turkey's demands in a peaceful way. According to his view, it had to be understood that searching for the best solution for the 1967 crisis and finding a permanent settlement for the Cyprus issue were essentially quite different matters (MMTD, 8 December 1967, 343-348).

The result of the 1967 crisis was evidently also a disappointment for the Turkish Cypriots. They knew that the agreement between Turkey and Greece would not provide a real solution to the problem. On 30 November, the President of Turkish Cypriot Administration, Dr. Küçük, told Vance that "Turkish Cypriots desired a permanent solution which would eliminate the condition of strife on the island" (Bölükbaşı 141) and according to his opinion, "a federation ... of two autonomous communal administrations" was a realistic solution for the Cyprus problem (Bölükbaşı 141).

Conclusion

The November crisis indicated that there were major differences in the reactions showed by Britain and Turkey towards the events on the island. After the death of 22 Turkish Cypriots, Ankara applied a more aggressive policy and was ready to launch a military intervention on the island. Britain was also aware of the seriousness of the situation. In this respect, they criticised the Greek Cypriot action. However, according to the British opinion, attacking Cyprus would not contribute to the solution of the problem. From this point of view, Turkey and Britain diverged sharply.

Britain was in favour of putting international pressure on the Turkish government to discourage it to not to attack the island. However, Britain knew that this would be a difficult task to achieve alone. Therefore, the U.S. came to the aid of Britain. An important result of the 1967 crisis was that Britain accepted the increasing role of the U.S in the Cyprus issue. However, Britain knew that its position on the island was significant and in any possible future crisis, Britain would be expected to take the initiative to solve the problem.

Britain was happy with the result that a possible Turkish military intervention in Cyprus was stopped. Also, the active American role in this process helped the British not to be found itself in a difficult position, such as preventing the Turks from conducting a military operation. As a result of this, the November crisis did not cause trouble in Anglo-Turkish relations. However, Britain understood that Ankara was serious in its military threat. In particular, the public in Turkey was in favour of launching an attack to defend the Turkish Cypriots on the island. Therefore, it was stated in a FCO Research Department memorandum that Ankara's threats of military intervention to protect Turkish Cypriot rights "should never be interpreted as mere bluff" (FCO 51/47, 4 December 1968). It also added that if any future crisis occurred on the island similar to that of November 1967, it would be difficult for a government in Turkey to remain in power without sending the Turkish troops into action" (FCO 51/47, 4 December 1968). Thus, Britain believed that a permanent solution had to be found to prevent any future military crisis in the Cyprus dispute again. After the November crisis, the divergence in the British and Turkish policy on the Cyprus issue continued. There were new developments on the island such as the establishment of a separate Turkish administration which were not approved by Britain.

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