

**GRECO-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE QUESTIONS OF CYPRUS
AND AEGEAN ISLANDS
ACCORDING TO BRITISH DOCUMENTS
(1955-1975)**

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Abstract

Since its founding, Greece has been struggling to make the Aegean Sea a Greek lake and has had activities that threaten Turkey from time to time. Therefore, due to the policy that Greece followed in Aegean, the two countries occasionally came to the brink of war. This policy of Greece has adversely affected relations between the two countries and occasionally affected relations with NATO and other international organizations in a negative way. Turkey, on the other hand, has always acted in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty and international law. Therefore, this issue has gradually become a problem between the two countries and has been evaluated as an international question. For this reason, we have tried to look, understand and analyse the Turkish-Greek relations and the Aegean Islands problem from the English perspective.

Keywords: Turkey, Greece, Britain, Aegean Sea, Aegean Islands, Cyprus, Turkish-Greek Relations

Özet

**İngiliz Belgelerine Göre
Türk-Yunan İlişkileri ve Ege Adaları Sorunu
(1955-1975)**

Kurulduğundan bugüne kadar Yunanistan Ege denizini bir Yunan gölü haline getirme çabası içinde olmuş ve zaman zaman Türkiye'yi tehdit edecek faaliyetlerde bulunmuştur. Dolayısıyla Yunanistan'ın Ege'de takip ettiği politika nedeniyle iki ülke zaman zaman savaşın eşiğine gelmiştir. Yunanistan'ın bu politikası iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri olumsuz etkilediği gibi zaman zaman NATO ve diğer uluslararası kuruluşlarla olan ilişkileri de olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir. Türkiye ise genelde hep Lozan Antlaşması ve uluslararası hukuk çerçevesinde hareket etmiştir. Dolayısıyla sorun zamanla iki ülke arasındaki bir sorun olmaktan çıkmış ve uluslararası bir sorun haline gelmiştir. İşte bu nedenle biz bu bildirimizde Türk-Yunan ilişkilerine ve Ege Adaları Sorununa İngiltere penceresinden bakmaya, anlamaya ve analiz etmeye çalıştık.

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Ege Adaları, Kıbrıs, Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri

1. Introduction

Greco-Turkish enmity has deep roots going back to the struggle between the Greek Christians and Turkish Moslems which began in the “Middle Ages” with the gradual conquest of the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire by the Turks. Until the foundation of the modern Greek state in 1830, Greece was occupied by the Turks. Thereafter, during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Greece enlarged its territory primarily at the expense of the declining Ottoman Empire. It was only with the defeat of Greece at Turkish hands in Anatolia in 1922, that the Greek irredentist ambition enshrined in the “Great Idea”, the dream of retaking Istanbul and restoring Byzantine Greece to its former territorial and cultural dimensions, was effectively abandoned.¹ Meanwhile Atatürk had decided to turn his back on the Empire in order to concentrate on the development of the Turkish mainland into what subsequently became the modern Turkish state. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which, *inter alia*, established the present borders between Greece and Turkey² and provided for a compulsory exchange of minority populations as well as for the protection of remaining minorities, marked the beginning of a new phase in Greco-Turkish relations. Over a million Greeks had already left Turkey during the fighting and another 188,000 were transferred under the auspices of the mixed Commission established by the Treaty of Lausanne. Over 350,000 Moslems were also transferred from Greece to Turkey. At the time, the implementation of these measures exacerbated relations but, in the longer term, the removal of this major remaining cause of friction between the two countries

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¹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Şükrü Sina Gürel, *Tarihsel Boyutları içinde Türk-Yunan İlişkileri, 1821-1993*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2018), passim.

² Strictly speaking, the 1923 Lausanne Treaty did not establish the present borders between Greece and Turkey. These were finally established by the Treaty of Peace with Italy in 1947 when the Dodecanese Islands became Greek. See FCO51/402/RR5/12, From M. J. H. Wood, British Embassy, Athens, to E. E. Orchard, FCO Research Department, 7 October 1975.

facilitated a *rapprochement* at Governmental level which lasted from 1930 until the mid-1950s.³

In 1930, by a Treaty of Friendship, the two countries recognized the Treaty of Lausanne as final; this was followed by a Pact of Cordial Friendship in 1933 guaranteeing the inviolability of their common frontiers. In a Balkan Pact in 1934 both Governments then and later recognised their strategic inter-dependence. After 1952 common membership of NATO brought a further improvement in relations. However, while the desire for co-operation at governmental level was clearly evident until the mid-1950s, the traditional enmity and suspicion between the two peoples persisted beneath the surface. It came to the fore over the Cyprus question and since then has spilt over into other aspects of bilateral relations, notably minority problems, the Aegean and occasionally into minor difficulties over the land frontier in Thrace. In 1967, and again in 1974, Greece and Turkey came to the brink of war over Cyprus.⁴

2. Cyprus

British annexation of Cyprus, which had been ruled by Turkey between 1571 and 1878, was confirmed by the Treaty of Lausanne. The island has always had strong cultural connections with Greece, and Greek-Cypriot agitation for union with Greece (ENOSIS), dates back to the nineteenth century. It was not until 1954, however, that popular pressure caused the Greek Government publicly to support the movement.⁵ The attitudes of Greek Governments after this time were ambivalent. Faced with the dilemma, on the one hand, of popular demands which they could not ignore (and periodically have encouraged) and, on the other, of the importance of membership of NATO and the need to avoid war with Turkey,

³ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

⁴ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

⁵ This is not true since it is clear from diplomatic reports of 1951 and 1952 that the Greek government had already given public support to ENOSIS in those years. See FCO51/402/RR5/12, From M. J. H. Wood, British Embassy, Athens, to E. E. Orchard, FCO Research Department, 7 October 1975. Şükrü Sina Gürel, *Kıbrıs Tarihi (1878-1960): Kolonyalizm, Ulusçuluk ve Uluslararası Politika*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1995), Passim.

successive Greek Governments were unwilling to give wholehearted support to the Enosis movement. Relations with Archbishop Makarios were frequently strained; he was virtually coerced in 1959 by Karamanlis and Averoff into accepting the London and Zurich Agreements and thereafter a conflict developed between Makarios and the Greek Government for leadership in the direction of Cyprus policy. Greek Governments did not allow Cyprus policies to lead them into direct military conflict with Turkey. In July 1974, when the Greek Junta apparently wished to retaliate against Turkish intervention by military action against Turkey, it was restrained from doing so by the Greek General Staff.⁶

The Turkish attitude became consistently tougher and the Turks showed much greater willingness to resort to military action. Turkish governmental interest in Cyprus was primarily strategic. The Turks wished to avoid the dangers of another (and major) link being added to the island chain which already flanks the Aegean coastline and which, if militarised, could pose a threat to central and eastern Anatolia. The Turks also feared that if the island came under Greek control (or indeed remained under the undivided control of Makarios), it might sooner or later come under communist influence and end up accepting a Soviet base. Governmental reasons were strongly buttressed by continuing auspicious of the Greek "Great Idea" and by the political need to support the Turkish community in Cyprus (whatever feelings are entertained about its members who were frequently regarded as pampered provincials making disproportionate demands on the central budget).⁷

Greco-Turkish relations deteriorated seriously after riots inspired by the Turkish Government against the Greek minority in Istanbul and Izmir, which resulted in the suspension of the Greco-Turkish-British trilateral talks in London

⁶ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975.
FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974. See Cihat Göktepe, *British Foreign Policy towards Turkey, 1959-1965*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), Passim.

⁷ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975.
FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974. See Ata Atun, *Kıbrıs Anlaşmaları, Planları ve Önemli BM, AB Kararları (1571-1983)*, Cilt: I, (Mağusa: Samtay Vakfı Yayınları, 2007), Passim.

in September 1955. By 1957 the Turkish Government, concerned about the possibility of British withdrawal from Cyprus, was demanding partition. Greece feared the possible Turkish seizure of Greek islands in the Aegean and action against the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. Communal violence had also become acute in Cyprus itself. By the latter half of 1958, however, both Governments were ready for compromise and conversations between the two Foreign Ministers culminated in the Zurich Agreement of 11 February 1959. Consent to the Zurich Agreement was imposed on the reluctant Cypriots at the London Conference in February 1959 and the Agreement was included in the Cyprus settlement of August 1960.⁸

The settlement provided for independence for the island with both ENOSIS and partition permanently ruled out. The Constitution firmly safeguarded the rights of the Turkish Cypriot minority and was guaranteed by Britain, Turkey and Greece, any of which could intervene unilaterally to uphold the constitution, territorial integrity and independence of Cyprus. Both Greece and Turkey, as guarantors of the settlement, were allowed to station small contingents on the island and to ensure that the settlement was observed.⁹

The constitution proved unworkable. It gave the Turkish-Cypriots a position which Archbishop Makarios and the Greek-Cypriots regarded as privileged and unfair. The Turkish Cypriots were accordingly made to feel unwelcome and attempts were made to undermine their position. This, coupled with the latent fear that the Greek-Cypriots were still in fact seeking ENOSIS and the economic as well as numerical inferiority of the Turkish-Cypriots, made the latter more arrogant and demanding. Under these circumstances no distinct sense

⁸ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974. See Faruk Sönmezoğlu, *Tarafların Tutum ve Tezleri Açısından Kıbrıs Sorunu (1945-1986)*, (İstanbul: İÜ İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1991), Passim.

⁹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974. See Salahi R. Sonyel, *Cyprus: The Destruction of a Republic; British Documents 1960-65*, (Huntington: Eothen Press, 1997), Passim.

of Cypriot nationality could emerge, and a *de facto* separation of the two communities developed after the 1963/64 inter-communal fighting.¹⁰

Proposals for modification of the constitution were put forward by Archbishop Makarios in November 1963 and rejected by Ankara. Inter-communal fighting broke out in December and Turkish intervention appeared imminent, but was averted by the establishment of the British Peace-Keeping Force. A Conference of the interested parties, convened in London in January, could reach no solution and in April United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was established. American diplomatic pressure, however, prevented a Turkish invasion, although Greco-Turkish relations deteriorated to a level not reached since the early 1920s. Between June and July, the Greek Government, fearing Turkish intervention, sent 8,000 regular troops to Cyprus as “volunteers” in the hope that they could be used to influence the situation there and to hold up any Turkish invasion, without formally committing the Greek Government, until international pressure could bring about a Turkish withdrawal. In August, the Turkish air force intervened to defend Turkish-Cypriot supply lines during fighting at Kokkina.¹¹

Both Governments were nonetheless prepared to seek a bilateral solution without Cypriot participation. Talks in July and August under the auspices of a UN mediator and the former American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, failed largely because the Greek Government were unable to persuade the Greek-Cypriots to accept the proposed solution of ENOSIS, in return for which Turkey was to be compensated by a large base on Cyprus. In bilateral talks after the NATO Ministerial Meeting in May 1965, the Turkish Government suggested ENOSIS with territorial compensation for Turkey. This was the only occasion on which Turkey seemed ready to sacrifice the interests of the Turkish-Cypriots, but the

¹⁰ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. See Melek M. Fırat, *1960-71 Arası Türk Dış Politikası ve Kıbrıs Sorunu*, Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1997), Passim.

¹¹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

exchanges were cut short by the fall of the Greek Government and premature publicity. A fresh dialogue between the two countries, based largely on personal confidence between the two Foreign Ministers, Çağlayangil and Admiral Toumbas, began in May 1966. It was continued at official level, but failed to survive the fall of the Government of which Admiral Toumbas was a member in December. No attempt however, had been made to tackle the basic political problem of the ultimate status of the island and the Turks appear to have misled the Greeks into thinking that Turkey would still accept ENOSIS on terms. Because of their international isolation, the military junta which had seized power in Greece in April 1967 was anxious to improve relations with Turkey by reaching an early settlement over Cyprus, but a meeting between the two Prime Ministers on 9-10 September 1967 failed, the Greeks being willing only to discuss ENOSIS.¹²

In November 1967, 23 Turkish-Cypriots were killed by the Cypriot National Guard. Under the threat of immediate Turkish intervention, the Greek Government withdrew the illegal force sent in 1964 together with General Grivas, who was then *de facto* head of all Greek and Greek-Cypriot forces in the island. The effect of the withdrawal of Greek forces was slightly more complex than this, and included the result that Makarios was more amenable in some ways to Greek influence because he was more exposed to Turkish threats. The result was a significant improvement in Greco-Turkish relations and a defusing of the Cyprus situation. Inter-communal talks on the island followed but, in spite of initial hopes of success, dragged on until the Athens-inspired coup against Archbishop Makarios on 15 July 1974 which was the culmination of a period of tension in which the Greek mainland officers in the Cyprus National Guard were in active collusion with the Archbishop's EOKA-B opponents. Experience of US diplomatic pressure in 1964 and 1967 had convinced the Turks that they must never again be put in a position where they would be obliged by the US to refrain from intervention when they judged that their vital interests were at stake.¹³

¹² FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

¹³ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

The appointment as President of Nicos Sampson, a former EOKA gunman, seemed to presage ENOSIS, and gave the Turks both reason and international excuse finally to launch their invasion of Cyprus, which took place on 20 July. The fighting was confined to the island, but led to the fall not only of Sampson but also of the Greek Junta. However, the Turks failed to seize more than a small area in the North before the first tripartite conference at Geneva halted major hostilities to launch a second assault in mid-August to seize the third of the island which was their long-standing objective. At the second Geneva conference the Turks demanded immediate acceptance of the principles of bi-regional federalism, and Greek-Cypriot evacuation of around 34% of the island. The Greek and Greek Cypriot delegates rejected this ultimatum and the conference broke down early in the morning of 14 August. A few hours later the Turks mounted their second operation, which left some 40,000 troops in control of around 34% of the island, displacing some 182,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes and seizing agricultural and industrial assets which accounted for approximately 70% of the island's GNP. Inter-communal talks were resumed in September, dealing initially with humanitarian questions. These broke down early in 1975 when the Turkish zone of the island was constituted as the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, but resumed with varying fortune at Vienna and New York during the summer of 1975. By September the talks appeared to have run into the sand, when the Turkish side failed to advance proposals for territorial adjustments and other possible concessions.¹⁴

3. Minorities

The exchange of populations effected by the Treaty of Lausanne excluded the Greek minority in Istanbul and the Turkish minorities in Western Thrace and the Dodecanese Islands. The Greek minority in Istanbul has since declined drastically in size. After the Lausanne settlement there were 108,725 Greeks in Istanbul. By 1969 the figure was between 25 and 30 thousand, including a high proportion of old people, and the Greek estimate of June 1973 gave the figure as

¹⁴ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

16,000 of whom 1,000 were Greek citizens and about 15,000 Turkish subjects of Greek origin. The Turkish minority in Western Thrace increased slightly after 1923, and in 1974 numbers were around 120,000. It is centred on the towns of Rodophi, Xanthi, and Evros. In 1974, the Turkish population of the Dodecanese Islands, Rhodes and Cos, numbered around 5,000. A problem arose on the Turkish Island of Imbros whose population in 1964 was around 6,000 Greeks and a few hundred Turks. By 1969 the two populations were almost equal in size.¹⁵

These minorities constituted a very small percentage of the respective Greek and Turkish population, but they remained an irritant in the relations between the two countries. The treatment of minorities had been laid down by the Treaty of Lausanne, but, while both governments tended to observe the letter of the Treaty, they repeatedly violated the spirit. The main areas of complaint were concerned with education and property, although the degree of administrative and even, on occasion, physical harassment to which the minorities were subjected, depended on the state of Greco-Turkish relations, notably over the Cyprus question. The Greek minority in Istanbul suffered most. Its presence in Istanbul together with that of the Ecumenical Patriarch kept alive Turkish fears of the “Great Idea”.¹⁶

In October 1944, the Turkish Foreign Minister referred to the minority as the one outstanding question left between Greece and Turkey, and it appeared that some thought was then given to the expulsion of both minority and Patriarch. The 1955 riots, initially intended as a means of putting pressure on Greece over the Cyprus question, got seriously out of hand. In 1964, the Turks denounced the Agreement on Trade, Residence and Navigation of 1930, which governed the treatment of Greek nationals in Turkey, and these were subsequently expelled. The teaching of Greek was forbidden on Imbros and Tenedos and the Greek minority

¹⁵ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 137-141. Also see Baskın Oran, *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991).

¹⁶ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. See Oran, *Batı Trakya Sorunu*, *Passim*.

subjected to harassment. There was continuing evidence that the Greek minority in Istanbul was under pressure to force it to leave. Allegations about mistreatment of minorities, particularly in the press, complicated relations on an official level. In May 1973, the Turkish press complained about the treatment of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, and similar allegations were made by the Turkish Foreign Minister. Pressure on one minority may have been countered by pressure on the other. Greco-Turkish negotiations on minority questions took place in 1959 and again in 1968, but no major agreement appeared to have been reached. The payment of large Greek Government subsidies seemed to have partially stabilised the size of the Greek population in Turkey.¹⁷

4. Ecumenical Patriarch

While his prestige and flock significantly diminished since 1922, the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul remained head of the Orthodox Church, and *primus inter pares* amongst its Patriarchs. His presence in Turkey was unwelcome to the Turkish Government to whom he appeared an embodiment of the “Great Idea” and thus a fifth column for the return of Greeks to Anatolia. At the Lausanne Conference a Turkish delegate subsequently accepted his continued presence on condition that he confined himself to purely religious matters. Turkish pressure at that time was mostly the result of the Cyprus conflict. Some 40 churches were desecrated in 1955 and until 1960 there had been severe restrictions on the Greek Orthodox Church. The Patriarch again came under pressure in 1964.¹⁸ With the rapid decline of the Greek population in Istanbul, the Patriarch’s future was uncertain. While the Turkish Government clearly preferred his departure, they were inhibited by concern that the title might pass to Moscow. Both the Greek Government and the Orthodox Church would be very reluctant for the Patriarch to leave Istanbul.¹⁹

¹⁷ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

¹⁸ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

¹⁹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

5. The Aegean

Although there had been minor disputes in the Aegean for many years, the area only became a major problem in Greco-Turkish relations since the beginning of the dispute over the delimitation of the Continental Shelf in late 1973. The Turks were dissatisfied with the extent of Greek control over the Aegean, including Greek control of air traffic and the division of NATO command boundaries, and they were fearful lest the possible extension of territorial waters around Greek islands turned the area into a “Greek lake”. At stake, therefore, were vital interests-security, sovereignty and the distribution of raw materials, primarily, but not exclusively, oil.²⁰

6. Delimitation of the Continental Shelf

This dispute predated the discovery of oil off the Greek island of Thassos in January 1974. In November 1973, the Turkish Government granted the Turkish State Petroleum Company drilling rights at 27 points in the North-East Aegean Sea bed, notably off the Greek islands of Samothrace, Lesvos and Chios. While within Greek territorial waters, these islands are close to the Turkish mainland and at no point is the water between them and Turkey deeper than 200 metres. Having ratified the Convention on the Continental Shelf of 1958, Greece maintained that the line of delimitation of the Continental Shelf should be the median line, in practice the border between the Greek islands and the Turkish mainland.²¹

Turkey, which did not ratify the Convention, argued that for the purpose of delimiting the Continental Shelf and the Aegean, islands should be ignored and the line of delimitation should be the line of greatest depth. On 18 July 1974, the Turkish Official Gazette published a map which showed that Turkey was

²⁰ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. See Necdet Hayta, *1911’den Günümüze Ege Adaları Sorunu*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2015), Passim. Also see Yaşar Ertürk, *Adalar (Ege) Denizinde Türk-Yunan Mücadelesi*, (İstanbul: IQ Yayınları, 2008), Passim.

²¹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

extending its claim over the Continental Shelf westward to the median line between the Greek and Turkish mainland.²²

7. Territorial Waters

The proximity of the Greek islands to the Turkish coast, the better fishing available in Turkish waters and the actions of over-zealous and xenophobic local officials resulted in frequent incidents in which Greek fishermen were arrested in Turkish waters and imprisoned. In 1964 a Law extending Turkish territorial waters from 3 to 6 miles, with an exclusive outer fishing limit of 12 miles, was passed by the National Assembly. As a result, the Turks were much concerned lest the Greeks should extend their territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles. Such action would result in the Western part of Turkey being separated from the high sea and becoming virtually a landlocked territory. It would also affect Turkish fishing, which made an important contribution to food resources in Turkey, and have implications for oil exploration. The Greeks claimed that they told the Turks in May 1974 that they had no intention of unilaterally making such an extension although this did not imply that they had abdicated their rights to do so at the appropriate time. Turkey opposed proposals permitting a maximum width of 12 miles for territorial waters at the Caracas Law of the Sea Conference of 1974.²³

8. Flight Information Region

The Athens FIR (Flight Information Region) covered most of the Aegean, largely following the political boundary of Turkey's territorial waters. In February 1974 an incident at a NATO exercise, Daffodil Face, when the Turkish commander of the exercise decided to introduce live firing by Turkish aircraft in international waters within Athens FIR despite Greek refusal to grant permission, led to the withdrawal of Greek forces from the exercise. Following Turkish intervention in Cyprus, the Turks issued a "Notice to Airmen" (NOTAM 714) effectively extending the Turkish FIR to the median line in the Aegean, in

²² FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

²³ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 124-129.

accordance with the general Turkish claim for an equal division of the Continental Shelf and other rights in the Aegean. The Greeks retaliated by issuing a NOTAM 1157, establishing a “danger area” which included all of the Aegean. NOTAM 1157 was lifted on 10 April 1975 and talks between Greek and Turkish officials have been held.²⁴

9. Demilitarisation

The position on the demilitarisation of the Greek Aegean islands was as follows:

(1) The islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Nikaria were demilitarised under Article 13 of the Treaty of Lausanne.²⁵

(2) The islands of Lemnos and Samothrace were demilitarised under the Convention of Lausanne. This Convention was superseded by the Montreux Convention of 1936, but no reference is made in the Convention to the demilitarisation of these islands. It appears, however, that some agreement was reached at the time that the islands could be remilitarised. The Greeks have subsequently claimed that on the occasion of the ratification of the Montreux Convention a statement was made to the Turkish Grand National Assembly that the abolition of the restrictions on these islands had been agreed between the Turkish and Greek delegations. On 8 February 1937, the Greek Minister left a Note at the Foreign Office, stating that the Greek Government had now “occupied the islands of Lemnos and Samothrace with military forces”. The Minister was told that the Greek Government were quite within their rights to do so.²⁶

(3) Under Article 14 of the Treaty of Paris with Italy of 10 February 1947, Italy ceded to Greece the Dodecanese islands, comprising Stampalia, Rhodes, Calki, Scarpanto, Casos, Piscopis, Misiros, Calimnos, Leros, Patmos, Lipsos,

²⁴ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 129-137.

²⁵ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

²⁶ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 114-1122.

Simi, Cos, and Castelloriso, as well as the adjacent islands. "These islands shall be and shall remain demilitarised."²⁷

Turkey has a strong strategic interest in all these islands. For three hundred miles along the Aegean coast, there is a string of densely populated Greek islands, two thirds of which are within three miles of the mainland. According to the Turks, their first protest over alleged Greek violation of the demilitarisation clause of the Treaty of Paris, were made in June 1964 at the time of a Cyprus crisis, and Demirel told Wilson on 30 May 1975 that over 30 Turkish protests had been lodged over the last 6 or 7 years over various alleged Greek re-militarisation of the Aegean islands.²⁸

The extent of these infringements prior to 1974 was unclear, but Papadopoulos, was quoted in *Hürriyet* of 13 April 1969 as saying "true, we have a military base in Rhodes...We have military schools in the Islands of Samos and Chios. New recruits are trained there but they do not stay there constantly...the jet airfields are entirely for civil aviation". In the spring of 1974, the Greeks reinforced and fortified all the inhabited islands of the Eastern Aegean and by March 1975 some 13 Light Infantry Brigades appear to have been stationed there. Greece believed that Turkey harboured claims to some of these islands, although no such claim was on record. Turkey did not protest when the Dodecanese were assigned to Greece under the Treaty of Paris, although in 1964 in a newspaper interview Ervin warned that difficulties between Greece and Turkey would remain so long as there was no equilibrium in the Aegean. He described the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece as "the first serious blow" to Greco-Turkish friendship. The reinforcements in 1974 represented an obvious military precaution at a time of growing tension and were also necessary to prevent a major exodus of the local population. While the Greeks are aware that the islands are indefensible against a determined Turkish assault, they appear confident of being able to repel raiding forces or unsupported airborne landings. Although there were a number of

²⁷ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

²⁸ FCO51/402/RR5/12, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975", 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, "Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974", 14 August 1974.

incidents in March and April 1975 involving Turkish military over flights of the islands, possibly partly for photo reconnaissance purposes, the Turks have so far confined themselves to diplomatic protests. It was notable that in an interview with *Le Monde* in May, Demirel declared “we are not afraid that the Greeks will invade Turkey, but by fortifying and militarising the islands they are contravening the Treaties.”²⁹

10. NATO Command Boundaries

Disagreements between Greece and Turkey prevented establishment of a NATO command structure in the Aegean until 1957, but the arrangements then made, by which Greece was given operational control over the whole area leaving Turkey responsibility only for its territorial waters, proved an endless cause of friction. The Turks subsequently demanded that the area should be divided into two, Turkey having operational control of the Eastern and Greece of the Western sector. These proposals were resisted by Greece, who saw them as a threat to the sovereignty of the Greek Aegean islands.³⁰

The Aegean dispute developed early in 1974 against the background of a weak government in Athens, and was apparently used by the Junta which had assumed power in November 1973 partly as a means of uniting the army behind their leadership. In April, the armed forces of the two countries were placed on alert, and in June, a Turkish Naval hydrography vessel, reportedly escorted by units of the Turkish Navy, was sent to begin a survey of the continental shelf. In January 1975, again apparently in an attempt to divert the military from domestic politics, the Greek Defence Minister, Averoff, declared “in our own sea, the Aegean, our attitude will be aggressive, if necessary, and a victory will be certain.” In March and April tension again rose as a result of Turkish over flights of Greek

²⁹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

³⁰ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 129-137.

islands, although there was evidence that the Greek Government were exercising some restraint over these incidents.³¹

For some time in early 1974 the Greeks resisted Turkish proposals for negotiations, but the matter was discussed first by the Greek and Turkish Foreign Minister at the NATO Ministerial meetings in Ottawa on 18 June, then by the two Prime Ministers at the NATO summit in Brussels on 26 June 1974. A Turkish proposal that this and other bilateral matters including the question of minorities be referred to a mixed Commission was rejected by the Greek Prime Minister. In January 1975, Greece proposed that the dispute about oil exploration rights in the Aegean be submitted to the International Court of Justice and this was accepted by Turkey. The discussions between the Greek and Turkish Foreign and Prime Ministers in Rome in May 1975 were held in a good atmosphere, but made little progress. There was, however, some discussion of joint exploitation of natural resources in the Aegean.³²

11. Conclusion

In 1975, the outlook for Greco-Turkish relations was not immediately promising. Both Cyprus and the Aegean involved vital and highly emotive interests and the historic enmity between the two peoples clearly remained. Moreover, both countries suffered from weak governments, which did on occasion exploit Greco-Turkish tensions for internal reasons and which, as in the case of the Turkish Government, were unable to make significant concessions. The revival of Greek talk about the “Great Idea” in 1974, the proximity of Greek and Turkish military forces in the Aegean and the Greco-Turkish arms race were not reassuring. Yet while Greece and Turkey had come close to war on a number of occasions since 1955, there were also significant restraints. Greek intervention on Cyprus would be logistically difficult, and the military balance of power consistently favoured Turkey. Both countries recognised the extent of their

³¹ FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974.

³² FCO51/402/RR5/12, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1975”, 16 April 1975. FCO51/355/RR5/17, “Greco-Turkish Relations, 1955-1974”, 14 August 1974. Gürel, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, p. 143-166.

strategic inter-dependence; in Mavros's words, Greece and Turkey were "condemned" to be friends. Both were members of NATO and NATO had provided mediators in times of crisis and for discussion. Indeed, something of the tradition of the Atatürk-Venizelos *rapprochement* still survived at governmental level. This was reflected in the evident willingness of both governments to talk to each other between 1964 and 1967, the improvements in Greco-Turkish relations in the periods of stability in Cyprus and, most spectacularly, in the speed and suddenness with which the Cyprus settlement of 1960 was reached. Karamanlis and Averoff were again in government in Athens. Without some agreement on the Aegean dispute and the development of a reasonably stable situation on Cyprus, there could be no real Greco-Turkish *rapprochement*, nor could the chances of war be excluded. But the historic records suggested that the uneasy peace that had existed since 1955 had relatively firm foundations. Unable to solve their disputes, Greece and Turkey were well aware of the need to survive them.

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