
Kıbrıs Sorunu Üzerindeki Türk-Yunan Diyalogunun Başarısızlığı (1966-67) ve İngiliz Politikası

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Özet

Kıbrıs sorununun çözümüne yönelik birçok girişim olsa da Kıbrıs sorunu hala çözümlenememiştir. Sorunun çözümüne yönelik girişimlerin analizini yapmak hangi nedenlerin çözüm çabalarının başarısızlığa uğramasında önemli bir rol oynadığını anlamaya yönelik önemli bir noktadır. Bu açıdan, geçmiş Türk-Yunan diyalogları Kıbrıs tarihi açısından önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Her iki ülke de Kıbrıs sorununun çözümünde kendilerini iki önemli güç olarak görmüşlerdir. Genel olarak, uluslararası kamuoyu da bu yönde düşünmüş ve Kıbrıs sorunu üzerine Türk-Yunan görüşmelerini önemli olay olarak karşılamıştır. Fakat 1966 ve 1967 yıllarındaki başarısız diyaloglar Kıbrıs sorununa çözüm aramadaki yöntemi etkilemiş ve göstermiştir ki 1959 yılındaki Zürih ve Londra Antlaşmalarının aksine Ankara ve Atina'nın birbirleriyle Kıbrıs sorunu üzerinde anlaşması kolay bir mesele olarak gözükmemektedir. Ayrıca, bu başarısız Türk-Yunan diyalogları adadaki Kıbrıslı Türk ve Rumların Kıbrıs sorunu üzerinde yapılan barış görüşmelerinde aktif bir rol oynamasına da yol açmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu makale 1966 ve 1967 yılları arasındaki Türk-Yunan barış çabalarının ve Britanya'nın bu süreçteki değerlendirmelerinin incelemesini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıbrıs Sorunu, Kıbrıs Barış Görüşmeleri, Türk Dış Politikası ve İngiliz Dış Politikası

The Failure of the Greek – Turkish Dialogue on the Cyprus Problem (1966-67) and British Policy

Abstract

There have been many attempts to find a solution to the Cyprus issue, but the problem remains unresolved. The examination of these attempts is essential in understanding what reasons played a role in the failure of the past efforts for a solution. In this respect, the past dialogues between Greece and Turkey had a

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significant place in the history of Cyprus. Both countries considered themselves as major players in a solution to the Cyprus dispute. Generally, international opinion was also the same and, Turkish-Greek dialogue regarded as an important event. However, unsuccessful dialogues of 1966-1967 affected the way a solution was sought for the problem, and, contrary to the successful dialogue that led to Zurich and London agreements of 1959, proved it was not easy for Athens and Ankara to reach an agreement on the issue. Furthermore, these unsuccessful Greek-Turkish dialogues also led the Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island to begin to play an active role in the peace talks. Therefore, this essay aims to examine the peace efforts made on the part of Greece and Turkey between 1966 and 1967 and the British assessment of this process.

Keywords: The Cyprus Problem, Cyprus Peace Talks, Turkish Foreign Policy and British Foreign Policy

Introduction

The 1950s were uneasy years for the island. First, a campaign of violence against British colonial rule was started by Greek Cypriots under the leadership of Archbishop Makarios and General Grivas, who was the founder of EOKA (1955) (the underground National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters).¹ The Greek Cypriots were fighting for *enosis* (unification of Cyprus with Greece). In the first stage, the Greek Cypriot guerrilla fighters regarded British Colonial rule as a major obstacle to achieving their goal but subsequently, the Turkish Cypriots also became a target for them.

Inter-communal fighting started on the island after 1955. ‘This resulted in the loss of several hundred lives, and alienated the Turkish Cypriots, who countered *enosis* with a call for partition into separate communities (*taksim*) each associated with its motherland.’² In fact, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots did not have a problem with British colonial rule, but they believed ‘if Britain were to relinquish sovereignty over Cyprus’³, the Greek Cypriots could not have the sole sovereignty over the island. Therefore, the Turkish Cypriots took action against *enosis*.

¹ Joseph S. Joseph, *Cyprus: Ethnic Conflict and International Politics from Independence to the Threshold of the European Union*, (London, 1997), pp. 19-20.

² Ronald J. Fisher, “Cyprus: The Failure of Mediation and the Escalation of an Identity-Based Conflict to an Adversarial Impasse”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Special Issue on Conflict Resolution in Identity-Based Disputes (May, 2001), p.310.

³ Sharon Anderholm Wiener, *Turkish Foreign Policy Decision-Making on the Cyprus Issue*, (Duke University, 1980), p.54.

Following the Zurich and London agreements of 1959, the inter-communal strife declined on the island and it was agreed that an independent Cyprus state would be established and it came into existence on 16 August 1960.⁴ Britain, Turkey and Greece were the guarantor powers of the agreement and the British presence on the island also continued with the creation of two Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.⁵ Under the name of the Republic of Cyprus, both Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities took part in the country's administration. However, peaceful conditions on the island did not last long. After President Makarios presented thirteen amendments⁶ to the Cyprus constitution on 30 November 1963, inter-communal fights started again on the island.⁷

Therefore, under British management, a conference was held in London in January 1964. Both Turkish and Greek Cypriots attended the conference. However, the conference did not provide a solution to the problem.⁸ Then, the Cyprus issue was discussed in the United Nations Security Council. After the negotiations over the Cyprus problem, 'the Security Council acted promptly and its resolution of 4 March 1964⁹ set up a peace-keeping force on the island to take over the role of peace-keeping from the British.'¹⁰

However, it was not an easy task to stop the fighting that was still continuing on the island. In the end, Turkey and Greece agreed to conduct a dialogue (1966-67) on ending the dispute but they would see how difficult it was to reach an agreement. Also, they would understand one more time that their

⁴ Necati Münir Ertekün, *Inter-Communal Talks and The Cyprus Problem*, (Nicosia, 1977), pp.10-11.

⁵ Klearchos A Kyriakides, "The Sovereign Base Areas and British Defence Policy since 1960" in Faustmann, H. and Peristianis, N. eds. *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, 1878-2006*. (Berlin, 2006), p. 512.

⁶ Some of these amendments were: '- The right of veto (both president and Vice-president) to be abandoned, -The constitutional provisions regarding separate majorities to be abolished, - Unified municipalities to be established, - The division of security forces in to police and gendarmerie to be abolished, - All decisions of the public Service Commission to be taken by simply majority.' (Zaim M. Nedjatigil, *the Cyprus Conflict- a Lawyer's View*, (1982), p. 11.

⁷ Norma Salem, "The Constitution of and its Failure", in Norma Salem ed., *Cyprus A Regional Conflict and its Resolution*, (London, 1992) p. 122.

⁸ Claude Nicolet, "Lack of Concern, Will and Power: British Policy towards Cyprus, 1961-1974" in Faustmann, H. and Peristianis, N. eds. *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, 1878-2006*. (Berlin, 2006), p. 494.

⁹ United Nations, Security Council, 4 March 1964, *Res.186(S/5575)*.

¹⁰ Michael Harbottle, *The Impartial Soldier*, (London, 1970), p. 16.

historical dispute was one of the major obstacles to the solution of the problem.

The Turkish-Greek Dialogue on the Cyprus Problem and Its Representation in the British Sources

An examination of the dialogue between Turkey and Greece on the Cyprus issue is a noteworthy point to comprehend the events which led to the Cyprus Crisis in 1967 and the start of the direct negotiations between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island for a solution to the problem. The decision to form an independent Republic of Cyprus was taken by Britain, Greece and Turkey and the Turkish and Greek Cypriots did not have an active role in this agreement. With the constitutional crisis in the late 1963, inter-communal strife resumed on the island. After the failure of the US and UN mediation efforts to solve the problem, the Turkish and Greek governments started bilateral talks to find a solution to the Cyprus issue.¹¹ The US also promoted¹² the talks primarily because the US did not want any problem between two significant NATO members. Also, it was believed that an agreement between Turkey and Greece was crucial for the solution of the problem. The Zurich and London agreements of 1959 were a significant base for this argument.

The point is that the Turkish and Greek Cypriots did not take place in this process. However, after the unsuccessful Turkish-Greek negotiations that were ended by the 1967 Cyprus crisis, the two communities on the island would start inter-communal talks with each other to try and solve the problem.¹³ The idea of bilateral Turkish-Greek talks, without the participation of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, was initiated in late 1965.¹⁴ The government change in Turkey after the 1965 elections had an important effect in starting the talks with the Greek government. ‘Süleyman Demirel, who came to power in November 1965 in a landslide election victory,

¹¹ YasinCoşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem and Anglo-Turkish relations 1967-1980’, Ph.D. Thesis, (University of East Anglia, 2015), p. 25.

¹² NasuhUslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American relations 1959-2003*, (New York, 2003), pp. 88-90.

¹³ Coşkun, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁴ Polyvios G. Polyviou, *Cyprus Conflictand Negotiation 1960-1980*, (New York, 1980), p. 44.

seemed intent on making a fresh start with the peaceful resolution of the conflict.’¹⁵

The new Turkish government believed that the solution to the Cyprus problem could be found in Turkish-Greek dialogue. The Turkish Prime Minister, Süleyman Demirel, also underlined this issue in the National Assembly: ‘In the end, Greece accepted our opinion that the Cyprus problem is a matter between the Turks and the Greeks and agreed to make negotiations with us about the Cyprus issue rather than searching for a solution in the UN.’¹⁶ This statement of the Turkish Prime Minister is a good example to see Turkish approach to the Cyprus question.

Although the idea of commencing bilateral Turkish-Greek talks had emerged in the late 1965, in real terms, the talks started in June 1966. Both sides tried to understand each other’s approach towards the problem and to find a solution in accordance with their own views. The Turkish Foreign Minister also pointed this out in one of his speeches in the National Assembly.¹⁷ He said: ‘We did not start the talks immediately. We waited to see promising developments on the Greek government’s attitudes towards the Cyprus issue. After that, we agreed to undertake the negotiations.’¹⁸

Before starting the talks with Greece, the Turkish Government determined four important points as vital in dealing with the Greek government:

*1-Cyprus should not be annexed unilaterally by either Greece or Turkey, 2- neither Cypriot community should dominate the other, 3- the balance of power established by the Lausanne Treaty (1923) in the Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey should be preserved, 4- the 1959 Cyprus Treaties should not be revised unilaterally.*¹⁹

First, the talks between Turkey and Greece were made by the respective Ambassadors in secret. Süleyman Demirel gave details of the talks in a national Assembly speech. He said:

¹⁵ Süha Bölükbaşı, *Superpowers and the Third world: Turkish American Relations and Cyprus*, (New York, 1988), p. 129.

¹⁶ *Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, (Official Records of the Turkish National Assembly), term: 2, session: 2, vol. 11, 25 January 1967, p. 443.

¹⁷ Coşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem’, p. 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.9.

¹⁹ Bölükbaşı, *Turkish American Relations and Cyprus*, p. 131., *Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, (Official Records of the Turkish National Assembly), op. cit., 4 January 1967, p. 9.

*The dialogue, which was initiated at the end of June 1966, with Greece over the Cyprus issue is still continuing. When Our Foreign Minister was in Paris last week for the NATO Council Meeting he had a long meeting with the Greek Foreign Minister Tumbas. In this meeting, the outcome of the negotiations, which have been conducted so far in secret at the level of ambassadors, reviewed mutually and after that, it was decided to conduct the talks at the level of Foreign Ministers rather than Ambassadors. The date of the next meeting will be decided subsequently together with the Greek government.*²⁰

Although Demirel said that the talks with Greece would continue, after a short period of time, ‘the confidential talks continued between the Greek and Turkish Governments from June to December 1966, were interrupted by the fall of the Stephanopoulos Government in Greece on Dec. 21.’²¹

The interruption of the Turkish-Greece dialogue threatened to affect the Cyprus problem adversely. ‘Mr. Paraskevopoulos, the new Greek Prime Minister, proposed the resumption of the secret talks on Jan. 9, 1967, stating that he considered it advisable that they should be continued "with firmness and sincerity" on both sides’²² and then ‘he confirmed on Feb. 6 that the Greco-Turkish dialogue would continue at ministerial level.’²³

However, the army took over the government in Greece on 21 April 1967. As a result of this military coup, the Turkish-Greek talks could not be reactivated. The military Junta established its own government. ‘The policy of the new government of Greece would shape the fate of the Turkish-Greek dialogue on the Cyprus problem. After the coup in Greece, Turkey waited to see the new military government policy on the Cyprus issue before taking an action.’²⁴

The Turkish-Greek dialogue was monitored carefully by Britain. The British Embassy in Ankara especially reported the discussions in the Turkish National Assembly about the talks with Greece. As some ambassadorial reports showed, the Turkish Government’s decision to begin the dialogue

²⁰ *Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, (Official Records of the Turkish National Assembly) term: 2, session: 2, vol. 11, 25 January 1967, p. 443.

²¹ Keesing’s Record of World Events (*Contemporary Achieve*), 1960-1990 (cd).Volume 16, March 1967.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Coşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem’, p. 28.

with Greece was criticised by the opposition parties.²⁵ In one of the Embassy's reports to London, it was said:

*On the Cyprus issue, the tone of opposition speech was more severe than in recent past. Mr. Erim (Republican People's Party) criticised the government for pinning its hopes on bilateral talks, thereby losing valuable time, instead of working for improvement of Turkish position in the island.*²⁶

As can be seen from the report, the government policy on Cyprus did not win the full support of the opposition parties in Turkey. The talks with Greece were regarded as a waste of time. Especially, the government faced accusations of accepting *enosis* as a solution to the Cyprus problem. In the National Assembly, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Çağlayangil, responded to these accusations and claimed that the government did not agree on any solution which provided for *enosis*.²⁷ This issue was also presented in the British Embassy's report to London which mentioned the Turkish Foreign Minister's speech:

*On bilateral talks, the minister denied they had ever been conducted on basis of enosis; The Cyprus problem would be solved not by optimistic speeches in Athens but according to actual situation between Turkey and Greece. Government had never entertained false hopes about bilateral talks, but time was not longer working against Turkey and the government had thought that talks could not harm Turkey's interest.*²⁸

'The Turkish Government denied that they had accepted *enosis*. However, after the talks ceased at the end of 1966, there were some rumours that Turkey had agreed to their resumption on the basis of *enosis* in return for a NATO base on the island in which Turkey would deploy its own soldiers. This issue also attracted British attention.'²⁹ When Zeki Kuneralp, the secretary of Turkish foreign minister, visited Cyprus in March, 1967; the British High Commissioner on the island had an interview with him and asked questions about Turkey's opinion regarding the resumption of the talks. Kuneralp's reply to the commissioner's question was summarised in an official document sent to London:

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Public Record Office (PRO): Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 9/75, Territorial Waters: Greek-Turkish Negotiations on Cyprus, 1967.

²⁷ Coşkun, 'The Cyprus problem', p. 29.

²⁸ PRO: FCO 9/75, op. cit.

²⁹ Coşkun, op. cit.

*He (Mr. Kunalp) said he thought that the Turkish Government would probably agree to the resumption of the dialogue, but it was apparent that discussions had not been as was alleged on the basis of enosis with compensations for Turkey. Enosis was just not acceptable to Turkey and he also disparaged the NATO base idea. He said there had been some suggestions of compensation for Turkey in Thrace, but the Greeks were not able to agree to this. The dialogue so far had shown that there was no real prospect of finding a basis of agreement between Turkey and Greece for an overall solution of Cyprus problem.*³⁰

As can be seen, Turkey was against any solution which allowed *enosis*. However, the Greek side insisted on *enosis*. This was one significant reason why the talks yielded no solution. After the military coup in Greece, the New Greek government's policy on Cyprus would be decisive in whether or not the dialogue with Turkey continued.

The Meeting of the Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers

When the military junta came to power on 21 April 1967 in Greece, as a first impression, its policy on the Cyprus problem seemed to be aggressive and to provide for *enosis* quickly rather than continuing a long-term dialogue with Turkey for the solution of the problem. A possible explanation for this is, by uniting Cyprus with Greece immediately, that the junta wanted to show its success in Foreign policy to gain popular support in Greece.³¹

The new military government's approach to the Cyprus issue also affected its relations with Makarios. 'The relations between both sides were less than warm from the start.'³² There was a power conflict between the military regime and Makarios. The junta wanted to control Makarios. However, he wanted to be free in his actions rather than being dependent on a military regime. This power struggle would become more evident over time.³³

The Greek military government's approach to the Cyprus problem was also observed with concern on the island. Particularly, there was a concern about

³⁰ PRO: FCO 9/75, Territorial Waters: Greek-Turkish Negotiations on Cyprus, 1967.

³¹ Baskın Oran (Ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, (2001, İstanbul), p.735.

³² Thomas Ehrlich, *International Crisis and the Role of Law Cyprus 1958-1967*, (Great Britain, 1974), p.95.

³³ See Constandinos, A.J.L. *America, Britain and the Cyprus Crisis of 1974: Calculated Conspiracy or Foreign Policy Failure?*, (The United Kingdom, 2009), pp. 77-93.

a possible Greek intervention in Cyprus. The British High Commissioner monitored closely the situation on the island and informed London of the developments:

*Ever since the Army coup in Greece there have been repeated rumours of an attempt to extend the military regime through the Greek regular officers in Cyprus, in such a way as to bring about enosis quickly by encouraging the right-wing elements in Cyprus and if necessary displacing President Makarios. The move would probably, though not necessarily, be made through General Grivas on orders from Athens. It appears from these that the intention is that this weekend the Greek regular forces in Cyprus, with or without Grivas and National Guard, will make some move against the communist(AKEL), probably by arresting their leaders and placing restrictions on the remainder.*³⁴

Additionally, the Soviet Union was also concerned about the New Greek military regime because the new government was very anti-communist. Therefore, from the USSR perspective, by unification of Cyprus with Greece, the island would turn into a NATO base which was unacceptable to Moscow. In one of its letters to Britain, the USSR underlined this issue:

*The military government in Greece has in effect decided on a policy to unite Cyprus to Greece by force. Frankly, we have the impression that behind the backs of those who want to resolve the "Cyprus problem" to detriment of the interest of the Cypriot people, there stand certain circles of NATO. The Soviet Union is against any plans for dismembering and at turning the island into a NATO military base.*³⁵

In spite of the rumours about the Greek junta's policy on Cyprus, in fact it was not an easy task for them to unite the island with Greece quickly. An aggressive policy by the Greek junta on Cyprus would cause problems with Turkey that could weaken the southern flank of NATO. This could not be approved by the US. Furthermore, international support was important for the New Greek government.³⁶ However, like the Soviet Union, 'international reaction to the military takeover was immediate and adverse'.³⁷ It was difficult for an anti-democratic regime to gain other countries' support.

³⁴ PRO: FCO 27/178, Greek coup being extended to Greek officers in Cyprus in such a way as to bring about enosis, 01 Jan 1967- 31 Dec. 1967.

³⁵ PRO: PREM 13/1370, Possible coup in Cyprus by General Grivas, April-July 1967.

³⁶ Coşkun, 'The Cyprus problem', p. 32.

³⁷ Ehrlich, *International Crisis*, p. 94.

Therefore, ‘at this juncture the increasingly isolated Greek Junta took the initiative and Prime Minister C. Kollias invited his Turkish counterpart S. Demirel to hold talks on bilateral issues’³⁸ which were mainly about the Cyprus problem. ‘On the Turkish side, Çağlayangil, the Turkish Foreign Minister, persuaded Prime Minister Demirel’³⁹ to meet with his Greek counterpart. Therefore, ‘two Prime ministers heading their respective delegations met on September 9 and 10, 1967, on the Turco-Greek border, first in Keşan in Turkey, and on the next day on Alexandroupolis (Dedeağaç) in Greece.’⁴⁰

The first meeting in Keşan on September 9 did not produce any solution for the Cyprus problem. The main dispute between the two sides was *enosis*.⁴¹ The Greeks believed that the Turks would accept *enosis* in return for ‘minority guarantees for Turkish Cypriots and territorial adjustment on the Greco-Turkish border in favour of Turkey’⁴². However, it was unacceptable to Turkey to sign any agreement that allowed *enosis*. Therefore, ‘the Turks rejected *enosis* and demanded either a return to 1959 status quo or double *enosis*’⁴³ (division the island between Turkey and Greece). Zeki Kuneralp, who was the secretary of Turkish Foreign Minister and an attendee in the meetings, stated after the first meeting:

*The Greek Prime Minister Kollais started the discussions as the initiator of the talks. He demanded enosis (attachment to Greece) for Cyprus and asked for the London-Zurich Agreements to be repudiated. He argued that this would be to the benefit of all countries concerned. Demirel at once rejected Kollias’ argumentation and unequivocally stated Turkey’s position: Adherence to the London-Zurich agreements only could provide ground for a solution of the problem.*⁴⁴

According to the Greek argument, ‘*enosis* was also good for the Turks. Seeing a Greek flag flying over the island south of the coast of Turkey would be an assurance that the island was in Allied hands and therefore

³⁸ Zeki Kuneralp, *A Footnote to Turco-Greek History: The Kesan-Alexandroupolis Talks, September 9-10, 1967*, (İstanbul, 1998), p.8.

³⁹ Parker T. Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War: Cyprus, a Firsthand Account of Crisis Management, 1965-1968*, (London, 1990), p. 31.

⁴⁰ Kuneralp, *A Footnote to Turco-Greek History*, p. 8.

⁴¹ Coşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem’, p. 33.

⁴² Uslu, *The Cyprus Question*, p. 96.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.96.

⁴⁴ Uslu, *The Cyprus Question*, p. 8.

safe. Otherwise, there was a great danger that Cyprus would go communist.⁴⁵ However, this was just their opinion and could not affect the Turkish side. Turkey was concerned about losing Cyprus. The bitter experiences of Turkey were important reasons for the Turkish concern because in the past, struggles for the Aegean islands, Rhodes and Crete were easily lost by Turks. Therefore, Turkey did not want the same end for Cyprus. Therefore, ‘the Turkish reply, which Kollias later explained took him greatly by surprise, was to say flatly that *enosis* was no solution.’⁴⁶

‘The point is that before the meeting on 9 and 10 September, the Turkish and Greek Foreign ministers met in Luxemburg in June and talked about the Cyprus issue. After the meeting, the Greek side thought that Turks were ready to accept *enosis* as a solution but the Turkish side rejected this argument.’⁴⁷ This misunderstanding between the parties adversely affected the frontier meetings of September 9 and 10.⁴⁸

The subsequent meeting was held on the next day on Alexandroupolis (Dedeğaç) in Greece. However, this talk also did not produce any solution because, according to Zeki Kuneralp, the secretary of Turkish foreign minister, ‘both sides continued to be agreeing to disagree.’⁴⁹

By the end of the frontier meetings, the Turkish-Greek dialogue which had been continuing since June 1966 was also over without producing any solution to the problem. Although it was thought that the talks could provide a peaceful solution on which both sides could agree, in reality there were major differences between the approaches of the two sides towards the Cyprus issue which became clearer after the Keşan and Alexandroupolis (Dedeğaç) meetings.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War*, 32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.33.

⁴⁷ Coşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem’, p. 34.

⁴⁸ There is no certain explanation how this misunderstanding arose. According to the US ambassador to Turkey (1965-68) Parker Hart; ‘in his earlier talks with the Greek counterpart, Çağlayangil, Turkish Foreign Minister, should have made clear that the Turks were willing to explore all sort of alternatives to *enosis*, but not *enosis*. (Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War*, 33). Also, see the quotation 41 on page 9 for British Foreign Office’s evaluation on this misunderstanding between both sides.

⁴⁹ Kuneralp, *A Footnote to Turco-Greek History*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Coşkun, op. cit.

The failure of these talks had adversely affected the Cyprus problem. ‘The rift between Turkey and Greece grew wider’⁵¹ and this led to the second major crisis on the island in November during which two NATO allies, Turkey and Greece, almost went to war with each other.

The frontier meetings between Demirel and Kollais were also considered as an important development by Britain for the solution of the problem. The meetings were featured in British documents. In particular, there were significant evaluations of the failure of the talks.

A British critique of why the Demirel/Kolias talks failed was as follows:

*There was a considerable element of genuine misunderstanding. The Greek government clearly thought that the Turks would be prepared to negotiate on a basis of compensated enosis. The Greeks may have thought that when they turned down the offer made during the meeting between the Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers at Luxemburg (in June) of enosis plus a leased base it was the amount of compensation rather than principle of enosis which made offer unacceptable. But the Turks made it clear when they turned down the proposal put to them at Luxemburg that it was the principle of enosis to which they objected.*⁵²

‘The British assessment of the failure of the talks also highlighted the misunderstanding between the both sides. Although the Turkish Foreign Minister rejected *enosis* in the June meeting, the Greek side did not understand how the Turks had been serious about it. Therefore, in the frontier meetings, the Greek side came to offer *enosis* while the Turks came to prevent it. This was the main problem.’⁵³

After the frontier meetings, Britain reviewed its approach towards the Turkish-Greek dialogue:

Should we urge the Greek and Turks to go on talking?

*We know that State Department took prompt action after the Kollias/Demirel talks to urge the Greek and Turkish Governments not to be discouraged and to go on talking. We thought that this was the right line to take and we believe that it is important that the Greeks and Turks should remain in regular touch over Cyprus even if whatever kind of dialogue they keep up is unlikely to produce any real progress towards a new settlement.*⁵⁴

⁵¹ Kunalp, *op. cit.*

⁵² PRO: FCO 9/72, Cyprus: Political Affairs (Bilateral) UK Policy towards, 1967.

⁵³ Coşkun, ‘The Cyprus problem’, p. 36.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

‘As can be seen, Britain decided to continue to support the dialogue between Turkey and Greece. Britain knew that stopping negotiations between the two sides would adversely affect the Cyprus Problem. However, as previously mentioned, both sides’ approach towards the problem made the resumption of the negotiations almost impossible. As a result, the emergence of a new crisis on the island seemed to be inevitable.’⁵⁵

Conclusion

As a result of the past dialogue between Turkey, Greece and Britain, further conflicts on the island were prevented and the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960. Therefore, it was hoped that the Cyprus problem, which was restarted at the end of 1963, would be solved through dialogue between Turkey and Greece. In this sense, the Turkish-Greek talks, which started in June 1966, could be seen as an important step towards a solution.

Britain also supported and encouraged negotiations between the both sides. However, the talks did not produce any solution for the problem. With the Greek military coup in April, 1967, the dialogue between Turkey and Greece gained a new dimension. The Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers met, on the Turco-Greek border, on September 9 and 10. This was an important step because before this meeting, the talks had been conducted at ambassadorial level.

However, the frontier meetings were also ended without making any significant contribution to a solution. The main reason for the failure of the negotiations was the parties’ approach to the Cyprus problem. While the Greek side considered *enosis* as the only way to solve the problem, the Turkish side was strongly opposed to *enosis*. After the failure of the dialogue between Turkey and Greece, both countries would no longer conduct any direct talks with another and by 1968, the negotiations between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots would take place to seek a solution for the problem. This was a significant result of the unsuccessful Greek-Turkish dialogue.

The British Foreign Office’s assessment of Turkish policy also demonstrated this shift in Turkey’s approach:

The Turks have always maintained that the matter must be settled in the first place between themselves and the Greek Government. However the

⁵⁵ Coşkun, op. cit.

*“dialogue” and other meetings proved a failure, and with the Turkish Cypriots in a state of siege the years 1964-67 were a negative period for Turkey. At the beginning of 1968 Greece and Turkey agreed to allow talks to begin between the two Communities in Cyprus.*⁵⁶

From the British perspective, the frontier meeting of Turkish and Greek Prime Ministers was also a significant development for the Cyprus problem. Britain hoped that the meetings would produce useful results. However, the failure of the meeting did not produce any changes in the British policy. Britain continued to be in favour of any future negotiations between the both sides.

⁵⁶ PRO: FCO 51/47, the Turkish Attitude to Cyprus 1945-1967, 4 December 1968.

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