Forum: Special Conference

Issue: Addressing the delayed Cypriot reunification

Student Officers: Merve Özdemir, Burcu Korkmaz, Barbaros Pazarcı

Position: President, Deputy Presidents

Introduction

The Republic of Cyprus, with its 1.1 million inhabitants, is the most populous island country in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is quite diverse, with 78 percent Greek Cypriots, 18 percent Turkish Cypriots and some Christian minorities. The majority of Greek Cypriots are Orthodox Christians and the majority of Turkish Cypriots are Sunni Muslims. The Republic of Cyprus controls only two thirds of the country; even though The Republic of Cyprus is internationally recognized as a sole legitimate state, Turkey recognizes the north third of the island as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a self declared state guarded by the Turkish military.

Since the Turkish military invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974, the tension between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots has been a cause of dispute. The state has been divided ever since, separated by a buffer zone called Green Line. Greek Cypriots put a lot of effort in rebuilding the shattered nation after gaining independence, and were able to mend the economy, also maintaining their international recognition as the sole legitimate representative of Cyprus. However, despite all attempts to solidify the independence of Cyprus in terms of its relation to Turkey, the political and social tensions between these two countries remain, as well as the hopes for a Cypriot reunification.

Definition of Key Terms

Reunification: restoration of political unity to a place or group, especially a divided territory

Buffer zone: a neutral area that separates hostile forces or nations, especially in conflict situations

Guerrilla group: a group of combatants such as paramilitary personnel, armed civilians or irregulars, usually using military tactics like ambushes and sabotage to fight larger traditional military

General Overview

During the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century, Cyprus was under British control, with many Greek Patriots supporting political union between Greeks under Turkish rule, and many Turkish Cypriots supporting the partition of the island between Greece and Turkey. During the 1950s, The National Organization of Cypriot Fighters, a guerilla group, rebelled against the British rule. This sparked a period of conflict for Cyprus, during which Greek Cypriots agreed to independence rather than uniting with Greece. This state of tension continued until 1974, when conflict once again broke out.

In 1974, Greek Cypriots attempted a short-lived coup to make Cyprus a part of Greece, which put the Turkish Cypriots in danger. As a response, Turkish troops invaded and occupied northern Cyprus. Since that day, Cyprus has been divided in two: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and Southern Cyprus. The division, achieved by a neutral zone about around 116 miles long and 3 miles wide, is not always safe and successful. There are narrow areas in the neutral zone, especially in a place named Spear Alley in Nicosia, the historic capital of Cyprus, where the distance of the division shrinks to around 10 feet. Spear Alley and other such narrow points are where the danger lies; soldiers from opposing sides demonstrate violent activities at these points. With the number of deaths at this line increasing steadily, both sides have reduced the number of troops they have at the border, thus decreasing the deaths in the recent years.

Despite this ongoing tension in Cyprus, the country has managed to remain mostly peaceful throughout this dispute, and Cyprus remains as a popular tourist spot. In fact, it is estimated that thousands of people have crossed the line since 2003, when the travel restrictions were eased. The country remains more or less at peace, and its status in international politics remains to the extent that Cyprus has even joined the European Union in 2004, while the division remained. The buffer zone not only serves as a line that separates the north from the south, but also as a mindset and a way of life that is required for the people of Cyprus to keep going.

The line of division is seen as a metaphorical scar, symbolizing the differences between the two groups that prevent them from sharing their home state in peace. Although there aren't any ongoing conflicts in the country, the "scar" keeps reminding people of the damage of years, and of the hardships of living in a divided state. A New York Times article explains the sense of melancholy one feels in the streets of Cyprus as "City streets dead end where the zone begins, blocked by ugly barricades. Neighborhoods are divided. and in one case so is a factory that used to make springs. What were once some of the city's most elegant buildings are scarred by

bullets and ruined by enforced neglect, their walls of mud and brick crumbling" (Frantz).

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The National Organization of Cypriot Fighters: A guerilla group which rebelled against British colonial rule on April 1955, hoping to achieve self-determination and union with Greece.

Turkey: Ottoman Empire and Britain rule on Cyprus has been a major period in the island's history. After the Cypriot coup d'état on 15 July 1974, the Turkish military invaded the island on 20 July 1974, resulting in a conflict between the two groups that lasted for years, and continues in the present day. The north third of Cyprus is now recognized by Turkey as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Britain: Britain took over Cyprus in 1878 after signing an agreement with the Ottoman Empire. During its occupation, Britain faced problems maintaining the balance between the two groups in Cyprus, and against the desired union with Greece.

Timeline of Events

1878	Britain invaded Cyprus and British rule began.
1960	Cyprus became an independent nation.
4 March 1964	UN SC created a UN Peacekeeping Force to operate on the island.
March 1966	UN Secretary-General appointed a special representative to ensure political agreement.
15 July 1974	Cypriot Coup D'état took place.
20 July 1974	Threatened by the short-lived coup, Turkey invaded North Cyprus.
1983	The declaration of a Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was only recognized by Turkey.

UN Involvement

The UN Security Council decided on the creation of a United Nations Peacekeeping Force on the island with the decision no. 186 of 4 March 1964. The Security Council has linked the framework of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force on the Island to the prevention of repetition of conflicts between the parties, to the provision and protection of the order and law, and to the conditions for returning to normal order. The Security Council also proposed that the

Secretary-General of the United Nations appoint a mediator to find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem.

On 4 March 1966, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed the Special Representative in and out of the Cyprus for the purpose of promoting a political agreement.

On March 12, 1975, the Security Council decided on 367 that the Secretary General ahs undertook a new Good Mission to introduce the parties to commence their work within the framework of the agreed new procedures and to put them in the service of the parties in person. After this date, the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the Special Representatives for inter-communal negotiations were based on this decision.

Between 1975 and 1976, five rounds of inter-communal meetings were held in Vienna under the supervision of the Secretary-General. During these negotiations, known as the Vienna Talks, the parties issued a statement at the end of each round where all aspects of the Cyprus problem were discussed. The most important outcome of the Vienna Meetings was the voluntary decision of both sides to make a population exchange within the framework of the program and aid to be arranged by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

With the support of the UNFICYP and Good Offices Mission on the island,various programs have implemented humanitarian efforts and confidence-building measures. Financial assistance is also provided to strengthen the capacity of Turkish and Greek Cypriots to participate in the reconciliation process. These programs include the United Nations Development Program - Action for Trust and Cooperation (UNDP-ACT), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP-PFF), the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Cyprus.

Relevant UN Documents

This resolution established UNFICYP. **(4 MARCH 1964 S/RES/186)**

This resolution urged the parties to resume negotiations "whose outcome should not be impeded or prejudged by the acquisition of advantages resulting from military operations." **(16 AUGUST 1974 S/RES/360)**

This resolution regretted the unilateral decision to create a "Federated Turkish State" and stated that it would not prejudge the final political settlement of the problem of Cyprus. **(12 MARCH 1975 S/RES/367)**

This resolution further condemned Northern Cyprus. **(11 MAY 1984S/RES/550)**

This resolution called upon the two leaders to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General and committing to a set of principles. **(29 JUNE 1999S/RES/1250)**

This resolution expressed concern about the military build-up on both sides. **(29 JUNE**

Treaties and Events

Treaty of Nicosia: This treaty has been signed between the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus in August 1960. The treaty includes the fundamental basis for the establishment of an independent Republic of Cyprus. It articulates the rights of UK in the area.

Treaty of Guarantee: This treaty has been signed between Great Britain, Turkey, and Greece in 1960. It is a part of the Treaty of Nicosia. The nations promise to undertake the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus, and not to promote the union of Cyprus with other states or partition of the Island.

Treaty of Alliance: This treaty is a part of the Treaty of Nicosia that includes the parts concerning the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. UK, Cyprus, Turkey, and Greece sign it in 1960, and by signing the treaty, they undertake to cooperate for their common defense.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

On November 11, 2002 the United Nations Secretary-General of the time, Kofi Annan, tendered the draft of "The Basis for Agreement on a Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem", which is an agreement that offered to designate a common state that would act as a single legal personality in the foreign relations to come. This agreement was also referred to as the Annan Plan. This plan has addressed many controversial issues between the two parties, which have lead to many other problems. Through the negotiations that took place for over 16 months, the agreement has been updated multiple times in order to reach a consensus. The Republic of Cyprus, over the course of time, took an action that complicated the matters even more. They have signed an accession treaty with the European Union (EU) to become a member in 2004, no matter the result of the negotiations. As this has made the events take a dramatic turn, the UNSG Annan has submitted a final plan and has declared that this would be put on to referenda on both sides of the island. 76% of Greeks rejected the plan, whereas 65% of the Turks accepted it. The results were highly disappointing for the world community and Kofi Annan, in particular. He has stated that the Cypriots had to show some willingness for this problem to be solved peacefully.

The same attempt of forming a common state has been brought up many times including the 2008 Christofias - Talat negotiations. As a result of negotiations that took about 18 months, in one of the speeches of Christofias to the Greek Cypriots, he has stated that the issues are insurmountable and that they have reached a standstill. The next elected president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Derviş Eroğlu supported more autonomy for both communities. Nevertheless, the negotiations continued with this presidency too, not changing any outcomes. Although presidencies have changed in time for both sides, the outcomes have never changed. Multiple negotiations that took months would end with no results. Therefore, as the British foreign secretary has once stated about Cyprus, "the international community should

accept the reality that there is division and that [Cyprus has] partition" (Frantz).

Possible Solutions

Alexander Downer, former UN special envoy to Cyprus once stated that "U.N. would reconvene the meetings when there was a clear indication that both sides had something substantial to conclude". Looking at the quote stated by Downer, it is obvious that the major parties included and the UN itself got bored from the negotiations that don't result with anything.

In accordance with the UN's stance, negotiations should be once again initiated if and when the parties are eager to do so. As an outcome of the meetings, the final decision on reunification or partition should be given. According to the result, an agreement should be signed or the previous treaties should be updated with a conference in Cyprus or UN Headquarters. Either autonomy will be respected in both sides or a common state can be formed. However, as Eroğlu once stated: "certainly it was possible to find a solution to make these two people live together, however people should bear in mind, it is 'not' realistic to establish one state from two separate states". If autonomy is the preferred option, then parties should still come together to reach a consensus on the issue that no UN Buffer Zone would be needed in the region.

Notes from the Chair

There are a few things the delegates should consider while writing clauses in order to achieve success and peace in the area:

1. Delegates should take into consideration one question while writing a resolution: Reunification or Partition?
2. Considering there have been many failed attempts of reunification they may have to find a solution that will look out for political equality of the two peoples and the equal status of two constituent states if reunification is preferred.
3. They should not hesitate to get the consultancy of the UN bodies if necessary and should have a decision on whether to keep the United Nations Buffer Zone or not. If reunification is preferred removing the buffer zone could be a considerable idea.
4. The delegates should finally find the ultimate solution in the UK base area. They may want to remove it if necessary agreements can be done with the United Kingdom in order to achieve whole integrity of the two sides and a common state if, again, reunification is favored.

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