

WLMUN XVIII: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

Forum: Historic Security Council

Issue: Addressing the Ongoing Occupation in Cyprus

Student Officer: Arthur Vadjal

Position: President

Introduction

The island country of Cyprus is the site of a continuous occupation that still partitions the island into the 21st century. Since achieving independence from the United Kingdom, the majority of Greek and the minority Turkish populations shared fundamental differences in what independence would look like for both communities which further divided both ethnic groups firmly on ethnic lines. Both communities trod a fine line for peaceful cohabitation until the status quo was shattered when a coup launched by pro-Greek paramilitaries provoked a Turkish land invasion in the North of the island. Until forced to cease hostilities by the United Nations a hard border and buffer zone was established between the Turkish Cypriots in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south. Throughout the division, tensions remained present as the Republic of Cyprus experienced economic prosperity while the north remained at the mercy of subsidies provided by Türkiye. As of 2005, To this day the region is dogged by hard division between the Greek and Turk Cypriots with 35% of the island still under Turkish occupation. A standstill between Türkiye and the Republic of Cyprus remains, with Türkiye holding a stake in Turkish Cypriots in the north, and the RoC (Republic of Cyprus) holding European Union membership, jeopardizing Turkish membership, resulting in a current unsolvable, immovable obstacle of division.

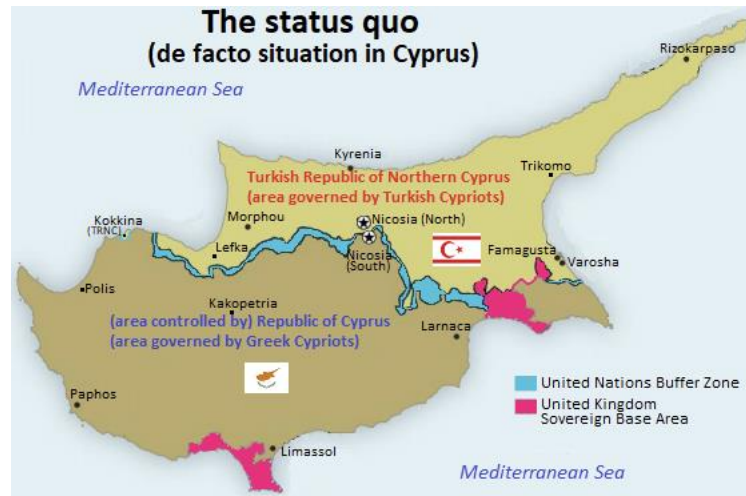


Figure 1: Political Map of Division on Cyprus

Key Terminology

Casus Belli

a situation or pretext that justifies the act of declaring war

Ethnicity

the population of people of similar cultural backgrounds or of descent

Paramilitary

unofficial organization of armed forces

Partition

division of land and or territory to create separation

Territorial Dispute

disagreement between two states on the sovereignty of a particular piece of land or a region

Buffer Zone

a neutral area serving to separate hostile forces or nations

Background

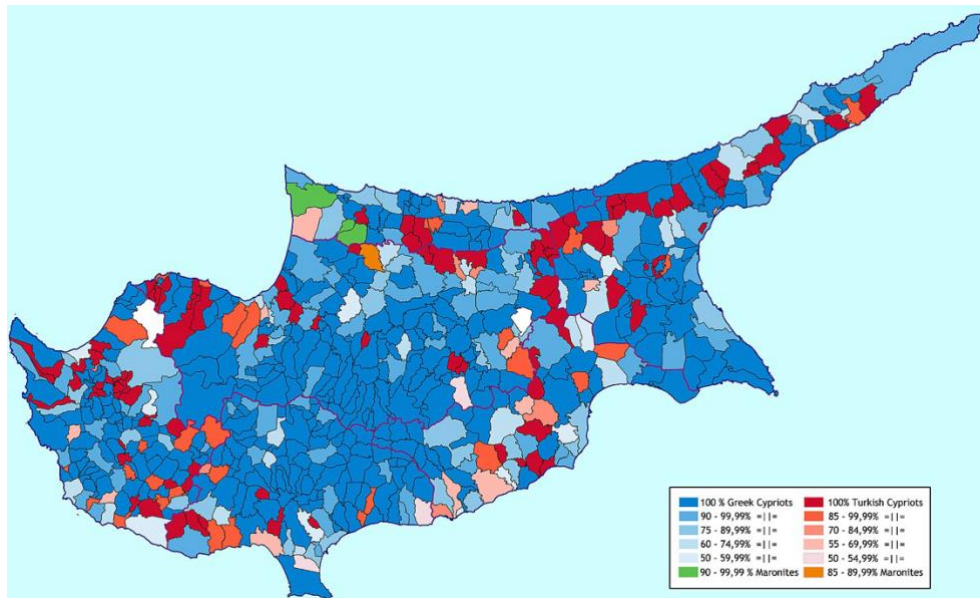


Figure 1: Political Map of Division on Cyprus

As an island in the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus has always invited geopolitical interest. After being purchased by the British from the Ottoman Empire, the island became integral for the British military presence in the region hosting naval bases on the island. Following the events of World War 2, a growing movement of Greek Cypriots backed the idea of Enosis, reunification with Greece, while the minority of Turkish Cypriots backed the idea of Taksim, partition of the island between Greece and Türkiye. Starting from 1955 Greek Cypriots begin engaging the British in a guerilla campaign for enosis leading to a compromise in 1960 in which the United Kingdom would grant independence to Cyprus and maintain British naval bases on the island. Both Greek and Turkish Cypriots sign a constitution that enshrines the coexistence of both communities. In addition, the newly elected president of Cyprus and leader during Enosis was the Archbishop of Cyprus, Makarios, a Greek, and the Vice President Fasil Kuçuk was a Turk as a gesture of peace between the two communities. Despite initial efforts to de-escalate tensions, over the next decade, conflict brewed between the two main communities.

The ethnic tensions would come to a head on July 10, 1974, with a coup d'état of Makarios. The coup sponsored by the Greek Military Junta installed Nikos Sampson, a Greek

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nationalist Enosis supporter, which instantaneously ignited conflict between the Greek and Turkish populations. Viewing the coup as casus belli, In an effort to protect the minority Cypriot Turks from ethnic violence, Turkish armed forces landed in the north of Cyprus five days after the coup. Initially supported by the international community, Turkish forces spread across the entire north and one-third of the island. Meanwhile, the coup government collapses as well as the Military Junta back in Greece, resulting in Makarios being reinstated as president. A ceasefire was achieved however, despite multiple resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council, Turkish forces refused to leave. As a result, around 165,000 Greek Cypriots in the north and 45,000 Turkish Cypriots were forced to relocate as a result of violence perpetrated towards such communities. The division persisted years after the invasion and became so stark that the Turkish north proclaimed the virtually unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Major Parties Involved

European Union (EU)

Ever since the admittance of the Republic of Cyprus, the EU has permanently wedged itself into the territorial dispute on the island. The EU permits the RoC with many economic benefits that the north of the island does not have. Deals have been made with Türkiye regarding resource rights in north Cyprus however another issue arises with the consideration of Türkiye joining the EU. As an EU member, Cyprus can singlehandedly deny Türkiye's long-awaited entry into the EU over disputes with north Cyprus. The EU in effect is playing a balancing act in the region that balances the interests of both Greek Cypriots and Türkiye.

Republic of Cyprus (RoC)

The surprise Greek backed coup in 1974 unleashed a domino effect that forever eroded the stability of the island. Initially, the only nation on the island that represented all communities on the island, the subsequent invasion of northern Cyprus and the demographic shift in the region permanently established the RoC as the Cyprus for Greek Cypriots, no longer

all Cypriots. Bearing that reputation, the government has always accepted peace talks with the Turkish Cypriots of northern Cyprus and seemed to be warming up to reunification according to the Annan plan. Though reunification failed, RoC attained new powers, and now RoC has leverage over Türkiye on matters regarding EU membership. A revolving door of pro-reunification and anti-reunification governments in both nations of Cyprus has made reunification talks incredibly difficult, but as the namesake country of the island, the RoC one day hopes to unify the island under one country once again.

Türkiye

Türkiye's stake in northern Cyprus has long created a sustaining tension in the region. Casus belli of protecting fellow Turks from an oppressive government warranted a ground invasion onto the island of Cyprus, though short the occupation resulted in major displacement and subsequent migration of ethnic communities causing over-homogenization of communities divided from one another by a UN buffer zone Turkish troops have always remained in the north in efforts to guard and subsidize the Cypriots Turks. In modern times, Turkish forces on the island of Cyprus have become a liability for Türkiye to join the European Union as Cyprus, an EU member can deny membership requests from Türkiye. Türkiye is one of the main contributors to the standoff in Cyprus.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Turks have existed as a sizeable minority on the island of Cyprus for generations dating back to the years of Ottoman rule. Turkish Cypriots shared land and resources with the Greek majority with while forming communities throughout the entire island. During the independence movement, Turkish Cypriot ideals began to diverge from the larger Greek community during the independence movement many Turkish Cypriots fought alongside the British against Greek Cypriot insurgents after independence ethnic strife continued to exist despite the government initially attempting to accommodate both minorities fairly. Once a Turkish military presence during the crisis of July 1974, Turks on the south island were displaced and forced to live in the overwhelming Turkish majority in the occupied North. Even when an

independent republic was established, only recognized only by Türkiye, Northern Cyprus was still economically reliant on Turkish subsidies. While the Greek cohabiters to the south experienced economic prosperity due to a rise in tourism and trade, the Turkish North continued as an agrarian-based economy that even depended on certain services from the Republic of Cyprus such as electricity. It is in imperial for Cypriots Turks to reach some sort of economic arrangement that would allow the Northern Cypriot economy to grow as the RoC did during the 1980s.

United Nations

The United Nations Security Council played an active role in a somewhat inefficient effort to halt the invasion of Turkish forces into Cyprus. Once the hostilities ceased, UN peacekeeping forces established a buffer zone between the Greek south and the Turkish north of the island known as the “green line”. The peacekeeping force remains to this day however the tensions along the green line have been substantially toned down due to the easing of border crossings between the two nations. Throughout the entire division period on the island the UN sought an active role in solving the crisis through reunification. The Annan plan of 2002-2004 was the most involved the UN was in efforts for Cypriot reunification however

Hellenic Republic

Greece is a steadfast supporter of the Greek Cypriot-led Republic of Cyprus, providing political, economic, and military backing. It has consistently opposed the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus since 1974, viewing the issue as a matter of national security and regional influence. Greece maintains a military presence on the island in order to counter to Turkish presence and has been actively involved in UN-led negotiations, leveraging its diplomatic influence within the EU to push for a resolution that aligns with Greek Cypriot interests. The Cyprus crisis is deeply intertwined with the broader geopolitical tensions between Greece and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean, making Greece's role crucial in the ongoing conflict.



Figure 3: UN Green Line Checkpoint Zone

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
1960	Cyprus gains independence from United Kingdom, Makarios elected as president of Cyprus
July 10, 1974	Nikos Sampson backed by Greek Junta overthrows Makarios
July 15, 1974	Turkish armed forces invade Cyprus
July 21, 1974	Nikos Sampson deposed, Makarios reinstated as president
1980	United Nations-sponsored peace talks begin
1983	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus proclaimed Rauf Denktash proclaimed president
April 15, 2004	Annan reunification referendum accepted by Turkish Cypriots, rejected by Greek Cypriots

May 1, 2004	Republic of Cyprus joins the European Union
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Previous Attempts/Solutions

Though initial reunification hopes were dashed, movements persisted. The gingerly peace was sustained through the creation of a “UN green line” buffer zone along the border between Cyprus and Turkish-occupied territory. Peace talks were resumed in 1980 but were dashed in 1983 when Rauf Denktash declared the Turkish-occupied land in Cyprus to be part of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Officially, other than Türkiye recognizing the republic however the message was clear, a clean reunification was drifting further apart. Attempts for reunification persisted. In January 2002, President Denktash and President Glafcos Clrides of Cyprus renewed peace talks backed by the United Nations. Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposes a comprehensive reunification plan which envisages a federation of the two communities as two constituent parts. Simultaneously talks on Cypriot admittance into the European Union were to be accepted on the condition that the UN reunification would be accepted. If the deal was not accepted, only Greek Cypriots would be admitted into the EU. In 2004, twin referendums in both Cyprus communities were held to affirm the Annan plan in hopes of a united Cyprus joining the EU. Turkish Cypriots voted for the reunification plan, however, Greek Cypriots rejected the plan overwhelmingly. Soured by the impasse, the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU without the Turkish north of the island.

Cyprus in the EU presented new challenges for reunification, but ever since hopes for a united Cyprus did not die out. UN peace talks between the two halves of the island resumed in 2008 however discussions for reunification were on and off. The rotation of pro and anti-reunification presidents in both republics made continued peace talks efforts considerably difficult, including a financial crisis in Cyprus that damaged relations between the two communities. Alas, the current predicament of reunification is quite precarious and continued relations between the two republics have been strained as a result of the complications between the Republic of Cyprus being an EU member while Türkiye is not. This potentially

threatens Türkiye's chances of joining the EU via a Cypriot disapproval of membership. A definite resolution on reunification is unknown whether to be within grasp or not.

Potential Solutions

The current occupation in Cyprus is incredibly delicate with clear and uncontroversial solutions being virtually impossible. The reality on the island is that many bridges have been burnt: from the mass relocation and division between Greeks and Turks on the island to the admittance of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU. The UN has attempted to resolve the issue through reunification many times but all attempts have failed to actualize it into something tangible. Perhaps a reunification strategy could be one which fairly represents both Greeks and Turks, sharing economic and resource benefits of being within the EU across the island, and perhaps a guarantee from a unified Cyprus to agree to Turkish EU membership under the condition that Turkish forces are permanently withdrawn from the island.

Others more sympathetic to the Turkish cause of defending widespread prejudice against minorities on the island could favor a clean split between the two nations on the island. The argument could be that the divided nations of Cyprus have become so different and the bridges are virtually unrepairable, that it may be better to just cleanly split off the island into two sovereign nations both recognized by the UN and forge their own paths that way. Some sort of trade deal can be agreed between the two nations and the EU which allows for a pathway for Türkiye to join the EU and the withdrawal of Turkish force from the island.

Or since either reunifying or permanently dividing the island has only seen bloodshed in the past, perhaps the best option is to remain in the status quo with the UN as a mediator. Peacekeeping forces along the green line have retained stability and peace in the region relatively well compared to alternatives and even during tense periods the buffer zone ensured that conflict would be incredibly difficult to actualize. One may argue, "if it has worked so well for long, why change course now? If the British can retain its presence on the island for so long why not the peacekeepers?" Naturally, the solution would also have to contain rather elaborate and complicated solutions to deals to be made regarding the trade between northern Cyprus

and the south and the EU in general, Türkiye's membership request in the EU, and a comprehensive deal in which Turkish forces are to be withdrawn from Cyprus.

One solution which may potentially be able to fulfill the interests of all parties is to reunify the country but grant the Turkish ethnic majority regions a high degree of autonomy in the government of the country. Along with that, both the Greek and Turkish forces on the island must also leave in order to allow for a fully neutral foreign policy for the country to be implemented. In which case the island is able to gain full sovereignty and independence of all parties while also fulfilling the interests of the Turkish community by granting the Turkish majority regions their own autonomy and for the foreign policy of the nation as a whole to be fully neutral. The solutions to these problems will be more complicated than the previous two solutions as all parties will have to work around the UN buffer agreement. Nonetheless, any resolution will be difficult to reach and there will be intense deliberation, while the livelihoods of many are stuck on the pendulum.

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