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1976: British Cyprus and the Consolidation of American Desires in the Eastern Mediterranean

'He [Kissinger] was also concerned with United States policy over Cyprus on the resolution of the Arab/Israel problem, and he regarded this as more important than Greek hostility towards the United States [...]'¹

Introduction

The latest foreign policy documents released by the British government (albeit somewhat selectively)² under the 'Thirty Year Rule' for the year 1976, less than two years after the Turkish invasion of the former British colony, reveal a veritable bevy of sensitive international relations questions and topics. Most are predicated on, or at least connected to, the intractable problem of the Sovereign base Areas (SBA's), territories essentially annexed by Britain at Cypriot 'independence'³ in 1960, and particularly useful to the USA's strategic ambitions. The documents reveal how Cyprus was a quintessential cat's-paw of the power games and ambitions of large countries, and suggest that the obsession of large outside powers with the island is likely to continue, particularly be-

¹ 'British Policy on Cyprus: July to September 1974', Paper prepared by FCO, 14 January 1976, FCO 9/2379-file WSC 020/548/1: *Relations between Cyprus and UK*.

² See postscript.

³ I have put the word 'independence' in inverted commas, because Cyprus' 'independence' in 1960 was very much a qualified one, laden with various foreign policy constraints resulting from Britain's annexation of Cypriot territories.

cause of the ever simmering tension in Palestine and much of the rest of the Middle East. The questions and topics which we shall now consider are the following: the British Foreign Minister, Callaghan's, eventually failed attempts to blur the truth about his foreknowledge of the two-stage Turkish invasion of 1974; British navel-gazing and dithering about the future of the SBA's; British realism –bordering on cynicism– about the intercommunal negotiations; Kissinger's obsession with Cyprus in relation to the Arab-Israel dispute; his pro-Turkish leanings and negative attitude towards the French; British disdain and frustration at Turkish behaviour, in particular over Turkey's negotiating stance; the French 'love affair' with Greece (so described in an official paper), balanced by French cynicism about Greek statistics; British efforts to keep the EEC from involving itself in Turkey's dispute with Greece over the Aegean; and the question of British nuclear (Vulcan) bombers stationed on Cyprus.

Fact versus Fantasy

Shortly before the first Turkish invasion, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) had already informed Callaghan's Private Secretary about 'an invasion of Cyprus by Turkish Forces in the next few days in accordance with [their] the JIC expectation of the Turkish plan of operations'.⁴ Then, while the Turkish army continued to advance (despite a 'ceasefire'), and during Callaghan's frenetic talks with Greek and Turkish leaders in Geneva, the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations) informed Callaghan in a 'Top secret' message of the 'likely Turkish plans' to take over more than one third of the island. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff in turn informed the FCO that Callaghan was most '*most concerned* about hard line attitude being adopted by Turkish delegation at Geneva

⁴ William Mallinson, "The Year After: Cyprus and the Shipwrecking of British Sovereignty", *Defensor Pacis* 18 (July 2006). FCO 9/1984, file WSC 1/10, pt. E.

and the *strong indications* that they may attempt a major break out.⁵ [my italics]

On 19 February 1976, Callaghan appeared before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Cyprus, accompanied by the head of Southern European Department of the FCO and two FCO legal advisers. The record shows that he directly contradicted his own knowledge:

[Mr Rees-Davies]: [...] *you recognised, did you not, that there was to be an immediate invasion by the Turks into at least northern Cyprus at the time and that that was imminent? [the initial invasion].*

[Callaghan]: *No.*

[Mr Rees-Davies]: *Events [...] still continued to indicate that there was a real danger of further advance, did they not?*

[Callaghan]: *No, I do not think it was indicated at all.*⁶

The sensitivity of the question of Callaghan's obvious foreknowledge had shown itself only a week before Callaghan's appearance before the committee, when the British High Commissioner in Cyprus, Gordon, had been interviewed by the Cypriot newspaper 'Simerini', and ignored –or avoided answering– the charge that 'you [the British] knew that the invasion was to take place'. Callaghan thereupon instructed the Head of Southern European Department to instruct London to 'correct the untruth'.⁷

Although it is not for this writer to cast aspersions on Callaghan's integrity, some factors should be highlighted. First, during the invasion, Callaghan had succumbed to Kissinger's persuasion, and British foreign policy –or at least military policy– had become increasingly integrated with that of the US.⁸ The independence that Britain had begun to demonstrate vis-à-vis the US, and its increasing co-operation with and within Europe, had evaporated when the

⁵ Ibid., FCO 9/1915, file WSC1/10, pt. 2.

⁶ Ibid., FCO 9/2192, file WSC 3/548/10, pt. C.

⁷ Weston to Goodison, 13 February 1976, Minute, FCO 9/2382, file WSC 023/1, pt. B.

⁸ See Mallinson, *op.cit.*, and "US Interests, British Acquiescence and the Invasion of Cyprus", *Defensor Pacis* 16 (January 2005).

mildly Gaullist Prime Minister, Edward Heath, had lost the elections in early Spring 1974. To tell the truth would have suggested that Britain had essentially aided and abetted Kissinger's plans; it would have displeased the Americans no end, and embarrassed Callaghan and the FCO less than two months before Callaghan himself become Prime Minister. It is little wonder that the work of the Select Committee on Cyprus was considered 'unconstructive' by the government,⁹ particularly when Callaghan was being groomed for the premiership. Second was the fact that Britain had now succumbed willy-nilly to American pressure not to give up the SBA's, in 1974,¹⁰ although in 1976, as we shall see, various options were still being seriously considered. Even as early as 1964, the FCO had admitted to the then Prime Minister that British sovereign rights in the SBA's and her treaty rights in Cyprus would be regarded as increasingly anachronistic by world public opinion.¹¹ The FCO even admitted that the Treaty of Guarantee was contrary to the UN Charter,¹² and that Britain's moral position was not strong.¹³

The British Territories

1976 witnessed some curious navel-gazing by the FCO about the SBA's, where various possibilities about their future were considered. Only the previous year, a policy paper had stated that Britain did not want lasting commitments in Cyprus, but that this was not possible while Britain 'retained a physical presence in the bases'.¹⁴ The same paper had continued:

⁹ The British government appear to have had the same attitude towards the Committee as that of the Turkish government.

¹⁰ Mallinson, "The Year after", *op.cit.* "British Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean", 11-4-1975, FCO 46/1248, DPI/516/1.

¹¹ 'Brief for British High Commissioner's visit to London: June 1964', Nicosia, 18-6-1964, DO/220 170, file 2MED 193/105/2, pt. A.

¹² See William Mallinson, *Cyprus, A Modern History*, I. B. Tauris, London 2005, pp. 55, 93.

¹³ Mallinson, *Cyprus, op.cit.*

¹⁴ 'British Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean', *ibid.*

*Although our own preferred policy is for a complete British military withdrawal from Cyprus, we recognise that we cannot do so at present, given the global importance of working closely with the Americans.*¹⁵

The very same paragraph mentioned Kissinger's views that Britain must hang onto 'this square on the world chess board'.

The 1976 navel-gazing about the future of the SBA's is thus predicated on an apparent contradiction: on the one hand, Britain wished to divest itself of all its responsibilities (the SBA's had proven to be an 'embarrassment'),¹⁶ while on the other she was constrained to 'work closely' with the Americans (perhaps 'follow' or even 'obey' would be apter words, however irritating to the Anglo-Saxon jingoist tendency), and therefore not relinquish them. This dichotomy underpins the FCO considerations about the bases in 1976.

In August, the British Ambassador to Ankara, Phillips, wrote a despatch underlining his view that partition was becoming increasingly likely, and that a two-state solution would emerge.¹⁷

Whatever emerged, whether a federal republic of two autonomous states, de facto partition, or a federal state later collapsing into partition, while retaining certain defence establishments, we should be able to dispose of the Sovereign

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Steering Brief for Secretary of State's discussion with Dr. Kissinger in New York, 24-9-1974, FCO 82/446, file AMU3/548/8, pt. B.

¹⁷ It had become clear much earlier that British policy encouraged 'separateness' of identity, so there is little novel in the ambassador's opinion; indeed, the whole 'Annan Package' was based on separateness, with a public relations veneer of a single state. The Americans and Turks had now achieved de facto separation, and simply wanted the fact recognised, hence the Annan Plan. The length to which the US was prepared to go to achieve acceptance of the 'Annan Plan' is brought into relief by Marios Evriviades, who quotes a senior State Department official, Daniel Fried, as telling journalists that the US offered Turkey two incentives: to allow passage to American troops through Turkey in the Iraq war: 'Several billion dollars [...] and Cyprus in the form of the Annan Plan'. See Evriviades' review of Claire Palley's seminal study of the machinations surrounding the Annan Plan (*An International Relation Debâcle*, Oxford 2005) in *Mediterranean Quarterly* 17/2 (Spring 2006).

*base areas by agreement with the two communities and Turkey and Greece, [...] on partition other than by violence the United Kingdom would presumably wish to dispose of the Sovereign base areas. The obvious division would be Akrotiri [the western territory] to the Greeks and Dhekelia [the eastern territory] to the Turks.*¹⁸

He continued by dismissing the idea that Turkey did not want partition because ‘this would bring Greece to within striking distance of the South in addition to the north-west of Turkey’. The Turks, he said could easily monitor Greek military or air activity in Cyprus, and any Greek base there could be neutralised by a Turkish one. He put his view that given the history of Cyprus since 1960, ethnic separation might be better for all in the long run, concluding that if the Turks showed any inclination towards partition, whether preceded by UDI¹⁹ or not, ‘we should not be reluctant to dismiss this as an alternative provided it was not intended by those concerned that development towards it should not be violent’. In plain, less diplomatic English, the Ambassador to Ankara was saying that it would be in British interests to encourage partition and give up most of its territories to the Greeks and Turks.

Things were of course not that simple, with a senior FCO official writing that all sides would need to renegotiate the 1960 Treaties if British territory was going to be given away, and that the Turks might even try to take Akrotiri by force. Various options were considered, including leasing and splitting the eastern territory between the Greeks and Turks. Perhaps the most complicating factors were American interests and the intelligence gathering facilities:

The Americans’ recent serious difficulties over the use of their leased bases in Turkey and Greece for intelligence-gathering will not incline them to accept leasing as a reasonable alternative to sovereignty in the British bases in Cyprus. Dr. Kissinger has frequently spoken of the value of this ‘real

¹⁸ Phillips to Foreign Secretary, Despatch of 24-8-1976, FCO 9/2376, file WSC 011/7.

¹⁹ Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

estate' and the necessity to keep it as a 'British square on the chequer board.' Under a leasing arrangement, Soviet and non-aligned pressure on the Cyprus government to dislodge the British garrison would be less easily withstood than at present. The Cyprus Government would be in a position to deny use of the intelligence facilities to the Americans, which is impossible while HMG is sovereign in the Base Areas. If intelligence requirements were to continue to be met, almost any surrender of territory would require a move of one or other of the intelligence installations from its present site to a new site in secure, 'sovereign'²⁰ British territory [...] As long as any intelligence requirement is maintained, any surrender of territory would necessitate expensive construction of substitute intelligence installations [...].²¹

One curious aspect of the paper is that it stated that a NATO base on Cyprus would be resisted by the Greek Cypriots and Soviets. Yet a (secret) British map of Cyprus in 1972 pinpoints a 'NATO Communications station' at Cape Greco, in the South-east of the island.²²

All the above being said, it is significant that the FCO deliberations were nothing new. Indeed, two years earlier, similar ideas and arguments had been thrashed out at length, with no firm conclusions,²³ underscoring how intractable the problem really was from British officials' viewpoint and how Britain dared do nothing significant without American agreement.

Post Operative Therapy – The Intercommunal Negotiations

We have seen how the British Ambassador to Ankara subtly advocated partition as a logical path to giving up the bases. The chief

²⁰ The use of inverted commas by a British official is curious, since it suggests that insiders did not consider the SBA's as properly sovereign.

²¹ Southern European Department to Minister of State, 27-10-1976, FCO 9/2388, file WSC 023/1, pt. H.

²² FCO 46/837, file DP14/441/1.

²³ 'British Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean', *ibid.*

factor that persuaded him about partition was his observation – eminently sensible, in the light of today– that it would occur willy-nilly, as can be read between his lines:

*[...] it is now two years since the communities began trying to negotiate a settlement. In that time, progress has been minimal and attitudes on both sides have hardened. And the Turkish Cypriots supported by Ankara have consolidated their hold on the north to an extent that makes them more than ever reluctant to yield anything near the minimum acceptable to the Greek side as a basis for settlement.*²⁴

This, and the Ambassador's other above-quoted views on the likelihood of partition, give the lie to claims that, from the British view at least, the intercommunal negotiations were really meant to lead to a fast-and-hard solution. Even if the two communities had reached a solution, the question arises as to whether the by now perhaps rather euphemistically called 'guarantor' powers would have sanctioned anything other than a NATO-friendly solution. This was all the more so, given Kissinger's influence. With the question of the SBA's, and suspicion of the Soviet Union, it is fully understandable why Britain emphasised the importance of the 'negotiations', since they served as a useful public relations smoke-screen to detract attention from the SBA's and, perhaps more to the point, from Britain's responsibilities as the primary responsible power. In a fascinating letter, a First Secretary of the British High Commissioner in Nicosia, Perceval, wrote:

In my view, the merit of the inter-communal talks is that there is no danger of their leading to a Cyprus constitutional settlement. There never has been any such danger, ever since the talks began in 1968 [...] The real, as opposed to the formal purpose of the 1968-1971 and 1972-4 series of inter-communal talks was surely to further the international and more specifically Western aim –negative but highly impor-

²⁴ Phillips to Foreign Secretary, *ibid.*

*tant— of preventing the Cyprus problem from starting a war between Greece and Turkey.*²⁵

In effect, the intercommunal talks were merely a vehicle —as they still are— to distract attention from the hard backstage power politics of the major stakeholders, who, therefore, supported them, in the knowledge that a real long-term settlement was unlikely. Long before the invasion, the Americans had already advocated a continuing *modus vivendi* as the only realistic solution.²⁶ To enrich the scene, Makarios' rival, the Anglophile Cleridis, was accusing Makarios of having lost an opportunity by not agreeing to a 1973 constitutional model. This public posturing disguised harsh reality: Perceval continued:

*Substitution of the 1973 model for the 1960 constitution would, I fear, merely have given the combatants a new set of rules within which to resume their struggle. A 1976 model, I have little doubt, would do just the same. Cleridis knows this, but believes Cypriot Greek commercial dynamism would again enable them to dominate both parts of a federal Cyprus. Furthermore, he would stand an excellent chance of becoming the Greek Cypriot leader.*²⁷

Even more pertinently, a Cleridis supporter, Polyviou, had stated:

[...] one should not be deluded into placing too much trust and confidence in the value and efficacy of Constitutions as such. However well balanced, they are not panaceas; and no Constitution in the world can artificially create social unity and political harmony if, in fact, the operative currents are flowing too strongly in the opposite direction.

Most pertinently of all, the perceptive Perceval wrote that one 'should not, in deference to the island's mythical sovereignty, inde-

²⁵ Perceval to Fort, letter of 29-7-1976, FCO 9/2386, file WSC 023/1, pt. F.

²⁶ Mallinson, *Cyprus, op.cit.* FCO 9/971, file WSC 3/318/2.

²⁷ Perceval to Fort, *ibid.*

pendence and territorial integrity, insist on re-complicating matters with constitutional structures'.²⁸ [my italics]

This is the context in which the failed and now defunct 'Annan Plan' can be seen. Conceived to maintain Anglo-American interests on Cyprus and to keep the island out of mainstream EU security structures (legal Cyprus, and for that matter, Greece, as a member of a future independent EU defence organisation would be an Anglo-Saxon nightmare), it could well have led to further strife, just as the cratocidal 1960 constitution did. It is nevertheless clear that the intercommunal talks had to be permanently on the agenda, with lip service being paid to a new constitution, while, in the meantime, the strategic realities of Anglo-American interests were –and indeed are– pursued. This scenario also explains why the legal government of Cyprus is eminently correct in insisting on the letter of international and EU law. Even as the ink is drying on this paper, the backstage pressure is continuing to be applied on the Cyprus government to negotiate on the basis of a re-vamped 'Annan Plan', with the US government (with no legal locus standi on Cyprus) leading the way, while Britain orchestrates the 'EU end'. Meanwhile, the 'post-operative therapy of the intercommunal negotiations continues', thirty three years after the operation.²⁹

We see also in 1976, the Kissinger-inspired origin of the abortive Annan Plan, labelled by the FCO as the 'principles initiative,' and resisted –for a while– by the French.³⁰ Its key similarity with the 'Annan Plan' was the third of the five 'principles':

Simultaneously with agreement on territorial modifications, the parties will agree on constitutional arrangements for the

²⁸ Here, we see an honest, albeit understandably cynical, attitude. Detractors might argue that Perceval only meant to apply the word 'mythical' to the post-invasion situation, but this is highly unlikely, given the general tone of his letter, and, obviously, the very constraints imposed by the cratocidal constitution of 1960.

²⁹ Perceval is presumably referring to the invasion as the operation; but one could also assume that he was referring to the troubles of 1963, which led to the intercommunal talks of 1968 onwards.

³⁰ FCO brief for Dr. Kissinger's call on the Prime Minister of 10-12-1976, FCO 82/667, file AMU 020/548/7, pt. D.

*establishment of a federal system on a bizonal basis with relatively autonomous zones which will provide the conditions under which the two communities will be able to live in freedom and to have a large voice in their own affairs, and will agree on the powers and functions of a central government.*³¹

Although one can only speculate about the backstage pressures currently being applied, they are unlikely to be significantly different today, although the ‘war on terrorism’ is now wheeled out as the reason for hanging on to the SBA’s on the US’ behalf, rather than the war on communism. Here there is a faint whiff of hypocrisy, since the basic Anglo-Saxon (to use a Gaullist term) strategy is still to keep the Russians out. 1976 is merely a repetition of today, with Kissinger’s well-known –but rarely scrutinised by academics– obsession with the defence of Israel.

Kissinger, US Interests and Israel

Although Kissinger’s publications are too slyly and selectively written to be used to point fingers at him easily, some British documents do help to unravel the picture, showing that, contrary to the view that Kissinger did not focus on Cyprus at the critical period of the invasion in 1974 (because of Watergate), he was in fact very much on the ball.³² His interest in Cyprus as a tool for the defence of Israel is revealed in high-level ‘Secret and Eclipse’³³ paper of January 1976.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Kissinger was not only closely involving himself with the Cyprus issue, but even expressly procrastinated to give the Turkish armed forces the time they needed to prepare and invade. Apart from being expressly lackadaisical about insisting that the Greek government immediately withdraw their [putschist] officers from Cyprus, he stalled a NATO meeting in Brussels, a meeting which would likely have isolated the Turkish government. See Mallinson, “US Interests, British Acquiescence”, *op.cit.*, and “The Year After”.

³³ ‘Eclipse’ is an FCO security category. It means ‘Do not show to the Americans’.

*He [Kissinger] was also concerned with the effects of United States policy over Cyprus on the resolution of the Arab/Israel problem and he regarded this as more important than Greek hostility towards the United States, despite the effect of this dissension on the Southern Flank of the Alliance.*³⁴

Kissinger was of course to lose his job as Secretary of State once the moderate Jimmy Carter took up his post as US President, and was therefore, towards the end of 1976, doing all he could to ensure that his policies would remain in place. Hence his introduction of the above-mentioned ‘principles’. His view on Cyprus as important to the defence of Israel needs to be seen in the context of his particular geopolitical mindset and his hard-nosed political realism.³⁵ He had already written to the malleable Callaghan in 1974 of his ‘very strong belief that elimination of the SBA’s in Cyprus could have destabilising effect on the region as a whole’. To this we must add US intelligence facilities, the US’s sharing of Britain’s intelligence-gathering, and Kissinger’s bias towards Turkey in general, of which the Turks were aware.³⁶

The Turks seem to have concluded early on that American pressure would not be backed by anything stronger [e.g. sanctions]; this was no doubt a factor in their tactics at the second Geneva conference. It is certainly the case that Dr. Kissinger was concerned with the maintenance of Turkish goodwill as a bulwark between the Soviet Union and the

³⁴ See note 1 above.

³⁵ According to one academic, ‘Kissinger almost single-handedly helped to revive the term [geopolitics] in the 1970’s by using it as a synonym for the superpower game of balance-of-power politics played out across the global political map’. See L. Hepple, ‘The Revival of Geopolitics’, *Political Geography Quarterly* 5 (supplement, 1986), 521-536, in Gearoid Tuathail–Simon Dalby– Paul Routledge (eds.), *The Geopolitics Reader*, Routledge, London and New York 1998, p. 1.

³⁶ It would be naïve to assume that the Turkish Prime Minister, the late Bulent Eçevit (a former student of Kissinger) was not *au fait* with Kissinger’s desires. See FCO paper of 14-1-1976, ‘Relations between Cyprus and UK,’ FCO 9/2379, file WSC 020/548/1.

*Arab States as well as the continued use of the US bases in Turkey.*³⁷

To this we must add the US-sponsored military co-operation between Israel and Turkey,³⁸ that Turkey could use as a strong lever on the US, in the knowledge that Kissinger was concerned with Israel's defence. Kissinger had his personal priorities. A fascinating telephone conversation between Kissinger and Callaghan (after the latter had become Prime Minister), provides us with an insight into Kissinger's negative attitude towards Greek and French policy. Kissinger telephoned the Prime Minister at home³⁹ on 16 August, while the UN was thrashing out a resolution condemning Turkey for sending an oil-exploration ship into Greek waters.

Dr. Kissinger: [...] *The Greeks are trying to run a resolution through with a lot of support from the Europeans. [...]*

Prime Minister: *I see. I'm out of touch with it really, Henry [...]* *I'm in Sussex. I'm on holiday really.*

Dr. Kissinger: *I'm sorry.*

Prime Minister: *No, It's all right. I am in touch all night. But I haven't been following this one in particular except in the newspapers [...]* *Is it the EEC countries who are being difficult or what?*

Dr. Kissinger: *It's the French who are pushing a very pro-Greek line.*

Prime Minister: *Ah yes. Well they would, of course. Yes, I see. And what about the others'.*

Dr. Kissinger: *We are not anti-Greek. We just don't see any point in humiliating the Turks right now.*

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Begun in 1958, it has now blossomed into full-scale (but still somewhat secret) co-operation on manufacturing, joint plans and overflying rights for Israeli warplanes on training exercises.

³⁹ The fact that Kissinger, rather than the US president telephoned, is one of many examples that Kissinger tended to run US foreign policy virtually as a one-man show.

Prime Minister: *No. There's certainly no point in doing that. On the other hand, the Greeks have been humiliated often enough. [...] Anybody with the French?*

Dr. Kissinger: *You and the Italians.*

Prime Minister: *We're with the French, are we, at the moment? [...] This problem of the Greeks and Turks is a difficult one because none of us likes to look as though we are opposing the Greeks. You know, we all go around saying that we want them very badly as part of the Community. Everybody goes on on these lines.*

Dr. Kissinger: *But they do have a tendency to overlay their hands.*

Prime Minister: *Well I know they always did from 1945 onwards, and indeed before then. Righto Henry [...].*⁴⁰

One barely needs to read between the lines of this extraordinary conversation, to see how essentially lackadaisical Callaghan was in his attitude, while Kissinger was, in comparison, obsessed with not upsetting Turkey. The conversation hardly represents a high point in British foreign policy formulation. Moreover, from the point of view of correct protocol, this would be a matter dealt with by the US president. Kissinger, however, never having been a trained, professional diplomat, was not known for correct protocol.⁴¹

The French EU Connexion

Cyprus had at various times been an irritant in Anglo-French relations. Napoleon III recognised the island as an important obser-

⁴⁰ 'Prime Minister's Conversation with Dr. Kissinger, 16-8-1976,' PREM 16/1157.

⁴¹ British diplomatic files are peppered with unfavourable references to Kissinger. For example, a senior British diplomat wrote in 1971: 'It is impossible to square Kissinger's expressed views with reality [...] It is rather his manner of conceiving and conducting foreign policy without reference to, or knowledge of, the State Department or anyone else which is most worrying. It leaves one with the fear that any day something could go seriously wrong because the normal sources of advice, restraint and execution are wholly by-passed. (Tebbit to Wiggins, letter of 30-12-1971, FCO 82/62, file AMU 3/548/10).

vatory over the provinces of Turkey in Asia and Africa,⁴² and the French were irritated when Britain had slyly obtained Cyprus in 1878.⁴³ In 1916, at French insistence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement carving up the Middle East included a clause whereby the British would agree to consult the French in the event that they gave up the island.⁴⁴ As for de Gaulle, he thought that Cyprus was not properly speaking a state at all, and that it should be returned to Greece.⁴⁵ In 1971, France took the same line as that of the Soviet Union in supporting Makarios against double-enosis, while the British government were unable to stop the Cyprus government from allowing France to set up a 'broadcasting station' at Cape Greco.⁴⁶ The French Foreign Minister was annoyed at lack of co-operation by the FCO during the crisis over the 'Samson coup'.

Given the close contacts between Karamanlis, (who had exiled himself to Paris) and the French government, it was hardly surprising that Greece emulated the French example of 1966, by pulling out of NATO's military integrated structure following the Turkish invasion. In the words of the British Ambassador to Greece, France had emerged as Greece's major champion over the EEC and was losing no time in capitalising on her advantage.⁴⁷ British policy in the Greek-Turkish question was diametrically opposed to that of France.⁴⁸

⁴² See Reed Coughlan, "Enosis and the British: British Official Documents 1878-1950", Vol. XI, *Sources for the History of Cyprus*, edited by Paul Wallace and Andreas G. Orphanides, Greece and Cyprus Research Centre, Altamont-New York 2004. Coughlan reproduces Arnold J. Toynbee's article "Cyprus, the British Empire and Greece".

⁴³ Coughlan, "Enosis and the British", *op.cit.*

⁴⁴ Residual tensions exist today.

⁴⁵ Butler to Dodson, letter of 4-5-1964, FCO 371/174750, file C10115/1400.

⁴⁶ Ramsbotham to Secretary of State, Cyprus: Annual Review for 1970, 1-1-1971, FCO 9/1358, file WSC1/1 and Kilburn to Killick, letter of 9-9-1974, FCO 9/1946, file WSC 3/303/1.

⁴⁷ Richards to Secretary of State, Greece: Annual Review for 1974, 7-1-1975, FCO 9/2226, file WSG 1/3.

⁴⁸ The situation seems to have modified somewhat today, at least as regards Turkish claims to Greek territory. The French, like the British, 'have not taken a

Britain's new-found⁴⁹ objective was to keep the EEC out of any serious involvement in Greek-Turkish problems other than supporting the intercommunal talks. Thus, over the Aegean, although the FCO privately recognised the weakness of Turkey's case,⁵⁰ it followed the American line. The FCO foreign for the EEC's Political Committee in April 1976 stated: 'We do not consider that the Nine could have anything to gain or to contribute by any attempt to become involved between the two sides in any of the Aegean disputes.'⁵¹ In an interesting insight into Franco-German differences on the Greek-Turkish question, the same brief stated:

It is becoming more difficult to keep the Nine together over Cyprus. The French have, since the Summer of 1974, seen themselves as the principle protectors of the Greeks. The Germans have always been sympathetic to the Turks, but their partisanship for Turkish views has increased considerably since the beginning of 1976 when Herr Leber visited Turkey.⁵²

Despite the 'Greek Love affair'⁵³ with France continuing to flourish, at least at the high political level, lower down the ranks

formal position', Gallagher (British Embassy, Athens) to author, 23-6-2006 and Berezziat to author, 20-9-2006, letters.

⁴⁹ It is well known that the US often uses Britain as its surrogate policy-maker vis-à-vis the EU.

⁵⁰ 'They can presumably not have much confidence in winning their case at the Court on its merits alone', wrote a British diplomat in 1975, referring to Turkey's Aegean claims. The situation is the same today, privately; but officially, Britain has to pursue US interests. Fullerton to Wright, letter of 24-9-1975, FCO 9/2233, file WSG3/318/1.

⁵¹ See note 49.

⁵² FCO brief for Political Committee, Luxembourg, 22/23-4-1976 (Item No. 6b), FCO 9/2397, file WSG 020/318/1. Whether the German position, which appears to have modified today, was the result of similar national characteristics between Germans and Turks or the large number of Turkish (and Kurd) guest-workers in Germany, or a combination of these (and other) factors is a moot point, but begs further research.

⁵³ This is a term used by the British Ambassador to Athens in 1976; Richards to Secretary of State, Greece: Annual Review for 1975, 1-1-1976, FCO 9/2395, file WSG 014/1.

matters were not quite as rosy. According to a British diplomat, a senior French Foreign Ministry official, Villemur

*[...] was preparing a study on the subject [agriculture] and was gravely handicapped by the extraordinary lack of statistics. He agreed [...] that when the Greeks produced what they said were the facts and what they said were the statistics that backed them up, it was difficult to see how we could double check. M. Villemur wondered if in fact certain statistics existed at all. The French had noticed that when they tried to extract statistical information the Greeks became very secretive [shades of today?!].*⁵⁴

Today, the 'love affair' is not so much in evidence, although the recent Franco-Cypriot military agreement that has infuriated Turkey, could herald a return to the 1970's. The French, as does the EU generally, appear to toe the Anglo-American line on Cyprus, leaving only Russia as the joker in the pack, a Russia whose priorities currently lie closer to home geographically, and which needs to have reasonable relations with Turkey in its efforts to slowly but surely make inroads into what is possibly the most lucrative arms market in the world, the Graeco-Turkish one. Add to that the right of passage through the Dardanelles, and it is easy to see why Russia will only react when it sees its interests directly threatened, as with the abortive Annan Plan, when it vetoed a UN Security Council resolution strengthening the plan. Today, Russia tends to keep its cards close to its chest on Greek-Turkish problems, refusing even to answer questions about whether or not it recognises the indisputably Greek island of Gavdos as Greek.⁵⁵

Nuclear Games

Cyprus, abject object of external power games, has not even escaped the nuclear controversy. Once too sensitive to even mention,

⁵⁴ Vereker to Ambassador (British Embassy, Paris), 13-7-1976, FCO 9/2401, file WSG 022/598/1.

⁵⁵ Mallinson, *Cyprus, op.cit.*, p. 154. Plus my own recent research.

the recently released papers finally confirm suspicions that Cyprus was used as a Cold War nuclear base: a Cabinet paper stated:

the nuclear bomber force declared to CENTO⁵⁶ with its associated medium range tactical support squadron, must be located in Cyprus in order to achieve maximum efficiency and to obtain the maximum effect on the regional members of the Alliance.⁵⁷

The Defence White Paper of 1975 stated, in its turn, that ‘we will no longer permanently station Vulcans on Cyprus’.⁵⁸

It is difficult to be certain about the current situation, given the official silence over nuclear ‘details’ and the suspicion on the part of many that most official pronouncements on Cyprus need to be taken with a pinch of salt, given the record of veracity on the part of various leading politicians and officials then and now (the most obvious current example being that of Iraq).

Conclusions

The study of FO, FCO, Cabinet and Prime Minister’s Office documents, not to forget Colonial Office and FRUS papers, is particularly interesting as regards Anglo-Greek relations and Cyprus, providing the researcher with a rich field from which to harvest, although there are many important lacunae (see Annex). After fourteen years’ study (by this author), one does begin to develop a sense of *déjà vu*, as each year’s batch of papers are released. One of the biggest problems is the question of how much to look at. Clearly, all the Greek and Cyprus files need to be scrutinised, as must many of the Turkish ones. Yet so must the Russian, US and French files (at the least) be looked at, since they sometimes contain important references. Clearly, one person would have to spend a whole year just to see a fraction of the overall releases for a given

⁵⁶ Central Treaty Organisation.

⁵⁷ Cabinet Interdepartmental Working Group on Cyprus draft memorandum, Annex A, 14-11-1973, FCO 46/1018, file DP14/441/2.

⁵⁸ FCO brief for visit of CENTO Secretary-General to UK, 6-13 March, FCO 8/2652, file NBC017/1.

year. In an ideal world, a large team of experts needs to spend two years studying the most pertinent government files in a whole range of countries, just to form a reasonably balanced picture of the 'Cyprus Game'.

Given the lack of such an ideal situation, but nevertheless basing one's analyses and evaluations on the most directly pertinent papers, fourteen years is nevertheless a reasonable period in which to form some reasonable views about the Cyprus and related papers released for 1976 and earlier. What emerges with almost irritating consistency for a 'true Brit' is Britain's 'butler' relationship with the USA on strategic matters: even when Britain wished to give up the territories it had procured in 1960, Kissinger simply said 'No'. The fact that Heath (the only British Prime Minister to visit 'independent' Cyprus) lost the elections in 1974 obviously smoothed Kissinger's path. Another important factor is that Turkey knew it could invade and remain in Cyprus with impunity, since its leaders knew that Kissinger was behind them. This explains another recurring theme, that of Turkish intransigence.⁵⁹ The origins of the 'Annan Plan' can also be seen in Kissinger's above-mentioned principles, which still appear to form the backstage to today's intercommunal negotiations. Current Anglo-American efforts to keep Cyprus (and Greece, if possible) out of mainstream EU defence structures also have their origin in the seventies, when, as we have seen, Britain and the US worked against any French-led EEC role, other than to glean support for the interminable intercommunal negotiations, the well-broadcast panacea, the hidden aim of which was to prevent all-out war between Greece and Turkey, rather than a serious agreement, an agreement that could even threaten the existence of the SBA's. In other words, any agreement, such as the 'Annan Plan, would have to preserve the SBA's and US interests in the region, while clipping any 'wings of independence'.

We can expect to see the same outside interests, the same strategic ambitions, the same *de facto* consolidation of partition, the

⁵⁹ British documents are peppered with private official criticism of Turkish intransigence. See Mallinson, "US Interests, British Acquiescence" and "The Year After", *op.cit.*

same calls for intercommunal negotiations continuing, just as the same linkage to Turkish claims on Greek territories will continue, as long as Turkey knows that big powers will turn a blind eye. Political realism (or power politics) seems to be the order of the day. The US and Britain will continue to use Cyprus as a tool to weaken EU cohesion, by balancing it with their support for Turkey's alleged desperation to join the EU, (along with other 'tools', such as 'New Europe's' disdain for Franco-German and Russian power). An increase in EU power led by France and a more assertive Russia are the only two factors that might contribute to a proper solution to Greek-Turkish and Cypriot problems, in line with international law. In the meantime, the balance of fear is exploited with massive arms sales, because Cyprus has been told that it is a vital part of the Middle East and, doubtless, of the alleged war on alleged terrorism. A dramatic way of calling the bluff of the strategic armchair geo-politicians would be to create a new international border by recognising the occupied part of Cyprus. Yet that could be yet more dangerous, since there is no guarantee that Turkey would relinquish its claims on Greek territory or that the US would allow two genuinely independent states to start negotiating about relinquishing the SBA's. Thus, even such a technically illegal, yet 'politically realistic' solution, might not work.

We are, then, left with the continuation of geo-history, (a sane method of analysis) where the US-UK-Israel-Turkey axis will confront an EU-Russian one, spitting out their bitten fingernails of ambition onto Cyprus, while the tensions rise and fall. In the end, Cyprus could benefit, but essentially by default, when a stronger, oil-rich legal Cyprus simply allows the rest to come back to the fold and have equal rights under the 'acquis communautaire'.⁶⁰ The only problem is geopolitics, a 'primitive form of international relations theory',⁶¹ that seems to be the pseudo-theoretical justification

⁶⁰ The illegal settlers, disliked by the original Turkish Cypriots, would be a problem.

⁶¹ Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2003, p. 168.

for pure power politics, of which Cyprus is a victim.⁶² It is more a problem of strategy (now often called geo-strategy for the sake of semantic braggadocio), but is best understood in terms of geo-history, an approach which sets out to demonstrate how human behaviour remains the same.

Postscript

The historian likes whenever and wherever possible to study documents in their original form. Books rarely suffice, as they are essentially second-or-third-hand filtered information, although they do of course need to be checked for accuracy. This 'Lifeblood' of the diplomatic historian can, in the case of Cyprus, be particularly difficult to come by. The Greek government, for example, refuses to make any Foreign Ministry files on Cyprus available (by parliamentary law). One can but speculate as to why this is so. The Americans have only released a very sanitised version of documents on Greek –Turkish questions, while the British government continues to obfuscate on a number of requests by this author under the so-called 'Freedom' of Information Act. One reason given is that 'release of this information (over thirty years' old!) would, or would be likely to prejudice relations with the US'. In another case, a file is simply missing, while in others 'security' reasons are cited.

This author appealed to the 'Information Commissioner' on 23 February 2006, stating:

I argue that withholding such records is against the public interest, since this only increases the degree of ignorance and suspicion in certain quarters, which can in time lead to misunderstandings and hostility, and to a lack of balance in historical analysis and evaluation and even to the distortion of history. Moreover it is difficult for a rational person to accept the FCO arguments some thirty to forty years after the events that are being covered up/hidden/kept secret. The FCO arguments appear somewhat inconsistent in view of the mass of

⁶² Ioannis Mazis' numerous works on geopolitics and geostrategy provide an interesting analysis and evaluation of geopolitics and geostrategy.

information that has emerged recently over the attack on Iraq, some of it officially inspired, not to mention other officially inspired leaks on a whole range of issues with which the public is regularly fed through the media.

In over one year, I have received three stalling letters, the last one on 7 November 2006, ‘apologising for any inconvenience’. Some typical file headings for 1974 that are not yet released include: ‘Attitude of US towards intercommunal dispute’, ‘The position of the King in Greece’, ‘UK Policy towards Cyprus-Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance’ and ‘Income Tax paid by Turkish Cypriots employed by UK authorities in Cyprus’.

For 1976, a veritable gaggle of files are unavailable, for example Policy Regarding future of Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus (National Archive Defence FCO 9-2391), while the Ministry of Defence released nothing at all in January, for the year 1976; apparently the Ministry still has some problems with asbestos.

The Cyprus question is, *par excellence*, a murky one, from which no government emerges with clean hands. One can but plough on, trying to find the salient facts. One can assume, with some historical justification, that some of what we are told is happening now may be but public relations nonsense, and that we shall only unmask the lies and half-truths (which can be more insidious than straight lies) in thirty to fifty years, if ever.