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### REVISITING CYPRUS 1963-4: BUNGLING THE PLAN OR PLANNING THE BUNGLING?

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#### Introduction

It is well enough known that the 1963/4 crisis that resulted in Turkish bombing and a near invasion of Cyprus undermined co-operation between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and much has been written about it. The purpose of this brief paper is to look at British diplomacy in President Makarios' introduction of the so-called '13 Points' that led to the intercommunal fighting and the *facto* death of the constitution. It needs to be said now that the Foreign Office denied any involvement in President Makarios' introduction of his thirteen points to amend a clearly unbalanced and unworkable constitution, despite the fact that the amendments were actually promoted and worked on by the Foreign Office; but first, a spot of background.

#### 1960

The treaties that led to Cyprus' qualified independence were dysfunctional, as later admitted by the Foreign Office itself and even by the chief promoter of the so-called 'Annan Plan', David Hannay. The Republic of Cyprus was created by treaties. The euphoria over independence (insofar as it can be considered proper independence *à la India et al*), did not last long. There were immediate disagreements over boundaries, but also over the sacking of Turkish Cypriot policemen who had been hired by the British as auxiliaries during the EOKA campaign, and over the setting up of integrated armed forces (vetoed by the Turkish Cypriot vice-president). Most important, perhaps, in terms of practicalities, the guarantor powers had left a vital job undone on Cyprus's independence on 16 August 1960: the question of the separate municipalities, in other words the details of the grass roots administration so vital to the smooth running of the everyday life of the two communities. The question was left to post-independence negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communal chambers.

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Agreement proved difficult on this and some other issues, and President Makarios was compelled to propose thirteen amendments to the constitution intended to 'remove obstacles to the smooth functioning and development of the state.' This was done with the encouragement of the Foreign Office, whose High Commissioner in Cyprus, Arthur Clark, considered the proposals 'a reasonable basis for discussion.'

The result was unfortunate. The proposed amendments were immediately rejected, initially by Turkey and subsequently by the Turkish Cypriot leadership, which had no choice but to fall into line with Ankara's policy to partition the island. The Turkish Cypriot Vice-President declared the constitution dead, arguing that the two communities could not work together. 'Call it partition if you like,' he said. The atmosphere on the island became tense and volatile, with a series of minor incidents escalating into intercommunal clashes, fuelled by outside interference. The crisis became international.

The Foreign Office seemed to agree with President Makarios that amendments (which became known as the 'Thirteen Points') were necessary to make the constitution more workable. The amendments included the revision of the ratio of Greek to Turkish Cypriots in the public services and armed forces (although the Turkish Cypriots represented some eighteen per cent of the population, they had disproportionate weighting in the public services), abandonment of the right of veto for the president and vice-president, and the unification of the administration of justice. The British rôle in the attempted amendments is clear from the following, contained in a minute of 10 March 1971<sup>1</sup> from Kieran Prendergast of the High Commission to the High Commissioner, Peter Ramsbotham: 'It could, therefore, be argued that Sir A. Clark (albeit on instructions from HMG) did indeed encourage the President to put forward proposals to the Vice-President for the amendment of the 1960 Constitution. But this was only after the Archbishop had hinted that he might take unilateral action and was therefore intended to avoid a serious break down [sic] in intercommunal relations. Moreover, as the Archbishop told Y.E.<sup>2</sup>, he, and he alone took responsibility for the thirteen points.'

The next day, the head of Southern European Department, Reginald Secondé, wrote to Ramsbotham: 'Please refer to your letter of 22 February. We have been through the 1963 papers, which tend to confirm that the Thirteen Points were indeed framed with British help and encouragement; that the then High Commissioner [Arthur Clark] considered them to be reasonable proposals; and that our intention was to promote their acceptance by the Turks. Archbishop Makarios seems to have consulted Sir Arthur Clark closely on the form and manner of presentation of the proposals. [...] I am tempted to add that since the presentation of those thirteen points was followed by the crisis of December 1963, this episode would seem to provide an instructive example of the dangers of direct involvement in details of the intercommunal dispute.'<sup>3</sup> Ramsbotham replied to

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<sup>1</sup> BNA/FCO 9/1353, file WSC 1/1.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot for the life of me ascertain who Y.E. was.

<sup>3</sup> BNA/FCO 9/1353, file WSC 1/1. See Mallinson, William, *Cyprus: A Modern History*, Bloomsbury (ex I.B.Tauris), 2005 and 2009, p.35, and endnote 13, Chapter 3.

Secondé: 'Makarios, ever the gentleman, took sole responsibility for the Thirteen Points.'<sup>4</sup>

The Foreign Office continued to deny any involvement in public for at least another forty years, when the documents were released. But there is yet more: in a secret telegram of 6 December 1963, Ramsbotham wrote: 'Three and a half years of independence have since demonstrated that the Zurich Conference in fact resulted in a hastily contrived Constitution which has proved unworkable, uneconomic and capable of abuse. [...] Furthermore, Clark said that from his contacts in the American Embassy he was in a position to know that they found Makarios' memorandum "very moderate" and that the American ambassador pressed on the Turkish leadership not to hold a negative stand.'<sup>5</sup> But the Americans were now to come face to face with Turkish intransigence. Let us look a little more closely.

### **Ball's Partition**

On 29 November 1963, President Makarios officially announced the plan, which Turkey rejected on 11 December. Intercommunal tensions began, but were bought under reasonable control by a Joint Truce Force (Britain, Greece and Turkey), led by Major-General Peter Young, with Commander Martin Packard as the chief liaison officer. The Greek and Turkish forces were however disinclined to participate in any meaningful capacity.

On 11 February 1964, in the midst of sporadic fighting between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot fanatics, the State Department's representative, George Ball, visited Athens and Ankara for talks. The following day, in Cyprus, he told Packard: 'Very impressive, but you've got it all wrong, son. Hasn't anyone told you that our objective is partition, not re-integration?'<sup>6</sup> This was despite the fact that Packard had begun to achieve a measure of success. Packard nevertheless continued his work, first for the Joint Truce Force, and from March for the United Nations, despite the fact that some British soldiers were helping the extremist Turkish Defence Force (TMT) with arms deliveries.<sup>7</sup> But his days were numbered: in the middle of his working on a plan to return Turkish Cypriots to their villages, in a bizarre about-turn by the Foreign Office, he was brusquely removed from Cyprus in June. The plan was then aborted.<sup>8</sup> The rest of the story is well-known: Turkish bombing, and then, to Turkish anger, the establishment of the UN Peacekeeping Force, which remains to this day.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also Filippou Stylianou's article 'Britain Behind Makarios' 13 Points', in *The Cyprus Weekly*, 17-23 April 2009. It ends thus: 'The mystery of how the 13 points came about having been solved, it remains now to find out why 46 years on Britain denies involvement and together with Turkey blames the Greek Cypriots for them.'

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Philippos Stylianou: 'Praise for Makarios' 13 Points', *The Cyprus Weekly*, April 24-30 2009. Intrepid researcher Fanoulla Argyrou sent Stylianou the documents.

<sup>6</sup> Packard, Martin, *Getting it Wrong*, Authorhouse, Milton Keynes, 2008, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 376.

<sup>8</sup> According to *The Cyprus Mail* of 18 January 1964, in fifty two villages 4,452 Turkish Cypriots had been forced to move by Turkish Cypriot extremists, but that in those same villages 5,548 Turkish Cypriots had chosen to remain despite such threats.

## Why?

So what was the backstage reality? The answer lies in Ankara's intransigence. A Foreign Office quote explains: 'It is tiresome that the Turkish Cypriots are behaving in this aggressive and pettifogging way (Their obsession with percentages is perhaps illuminating in connection with the causes of the breakdown in the intercommunal negotiations 1960-1963!).'<sup>9</sup>

Initially, the American ambassador in Cyprus did think that Makarios' plan was 'very moderate'. But then Ball visited Ankara, and was told in no uncertain terms that separation of the communities was Turkish policy. Hence Ball's cynicism about Packard's efforts. Another Foreign Office quote says it all: 'We should also recognise that in the final analysis Turkey must be regarded as more important to Western strategic interests than Greece and that, if risks must be run, they should be risks of further straining Greek rather than Turkish relations with the West.'<sup>10</sup>

The reality was that an embarrassed Foreign Office denied their support for the 13 points, and succumbed to Ball's view following his visit to Ankara.

The Foreign Office was now tied to keeping its unwanted military bases, since the US needed them. The Foreign Office wrote: 'The bases and retained sites, and their usefulness to us, depend in large measure upon Greek Cypriot co-operation or at least acquiescence. A 'Guantanamo'<sup>11</sup> position is out of the question. Their future therefore must depend on the extent to which we can retain Greek and/or Greek Cypriot goodwill and counter U. S. S. R. and U. A. R. pressures. There seems little doubt, however, that in the long term, our sovereign rights in the S.B.A's will be considered increasingly irksome by the Greek Cypriots and will be regarded as increasingly anachronistic by world public opinion. [...]'<sup>12</sup>

A nasty sting in the tail to this saga was the virtual end of the Greek presence in Turkey. Turkey expelled the 12,000 Greek nationals living in Turkey, and 'persuaded' most of the 60,000 Turkish citizens of Greek stock to leave. Few people of Greek stock and religion remain in Turkey.

## To Conclude

It may strike some as odd that the Foreign Office actually believed that President Makarios would get away with his 13 points unscathed, particularly since their embassy in Ankara surely knew of the real Turkish agenda. At any event, they were brusquely disabused after Ball's visit to Ankara. Rather than speculate, let

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<sup>9</sup> FCO 9/1178, file WSC 10/14, letter of 30 September 1970 from Prendergast to Fearn.

<sup>10</sup> 'British interests in the Eastern Mediterranean', *paper* prepared by Western European Department, FCO, 11 April 1975, BNA FCO 46/1248, file DPI/516/1.

<sup>11</sup> In 1964, Cuba cut off water supplies to the American base at Guantanamo Bay, since the US refused to return it to Cuba, as a result of which it took measures to become self-sufficient. Such a state of affairs would be embarrassing to Britain, and it is presumably to this that the brief is referring.

<sup>12</sup> DO/220/ 170, file MED 193/105/2, part A.

us recall that it was Dostoevsky who wrote that lying was beautiful, because it could lead to truth.