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**THE CYPRIOT-TURKISH CONFLICT AND NATO-  
EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION**

by

Alan M. Janigian

June 2017

Thesis Advisor:  
Co-Advisor:

David Yost  
Ryan Gingeras

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**THE CYPRIOT-TURKISH CONFLICT AND NATO-EUROPEAN UNION  
COOPERATION**

Alan M. Janigian  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 2011

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June 2017**

Approved by: David Yost  
Thesis Advisor

Ryan Gingeras  
Co-Advisor

Mohammed Hafez  
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite having 22 member states in common, the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have been unable to fully cooperate since 2004. Chief among the causal factors for this divide is the persistent conflict between Turkey and Cyprus. NATO requires that every state it shares security information with be a member of its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Accession to the PfP program requires unanimous approval by all NATO states. Turkey has not recognized the Republic of Cyprus since 1963, however, and has blocked its accession to PfP.

Cyprus joined the European Union in 2004. The EU has a regulation requiring all member states to be present at security-related meetings. Since Turkey, a NATO ally, does not recognize Cyprus, however, a “participation problem” has resulted. The EU and NATO have not been able to fully cooperate since Cyprus joined the EU.

This research analyzes the historical roots of the 1974 conflict involving Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey, and the current factors that prolong the Cypriot-Turkish stalemate. The thesis argues that overcoming the conflict would be beneficial for the island and the region, and would allow full NATO-EU cooperation to resume.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AKEL	Anorthotikon Komma Ergazomenou Laou (Progressive Party of the Working People)
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters)
ESDP	European Security and Defense Program
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PFP	Partnership for Peace
ROC	Republic of Cyprus
SBA	Sovereign Base Area
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
WEU	Western European Union

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## I. INTRODUCTION



Figure 1. Map of Cyprus<sup>1</sup>

### A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The European Parliament in its resolution of February 19, 2009, clearly stated that “NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] forms the core of European military security and the EU [European Union] has sufficient potential to support its activities, so that strengthening the European defense capabilities and deepening cooperation will benefit both organizations.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that 94% of European Union citizens are

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Morelli, *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive* (CRS Report No. R41136) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 18, 2017), 2, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41136.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> “The Role of NATO in the Security Architecture of the EU,” European Parliament, Resolution of 19 February 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0076+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization nation, the two organizations have been unable to officially meet on most topics since 2004.<sup>3</sup> Interrupting a history of close cooperation, a schism has occurred that has stopped the two organizations from engaging in mutually advantageous cooperation, forcing work-arounds, necessitating redundancy in operations, and increasing danger for military personnel. The root of this estrangement rests in the unresolved dispute regarding the divided island nation of Cyprus. This thesis investigates the “participation problem” and its negative impact on NATO-European Union relations, and will analyze the factors serving to prolong the conflict and forestall resolution. Additionally, further research will delve into the relatively recent discovery of natural gas in the region and consider how the new lucrative economic incentive may influence the stalled peace process.

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was forced to adapt to a new reality. In the absence of the Soviet threat to the east, NATO expanded both geographically and functionally as its focus widened “to include stabilization operations in conflict prevention, crisis management and more general concerns.”<sup>4</sup> Developing in parallel, the European Union has grown from its roots as an economic partnership into a comprehensive federation that faces mutual threats under a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).<sup>5</sup> Twenty-two of the 28 NATO members are also EU member states (despite the June 2016 “Brexit” vote, the United Kingdom has yet to formally remove itself from the union). As noted previously, 94% of all EU citizens are also citizens of NATO member states. The chiefs of defense staff of those EU member states sit on both the European Union Military Committee as well as NATO’s leading military body, also named the Military

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<sup>3</sup> This statistic was calculated using CIA World Factbook country data. The 94% overlap was derived by dividing the total population of the European Union by that of the combined populations of the NATO members that are also EU members.

<sup>4</sup> Marta Latek, “EU-NATO Partnership in Stagnation,” Library of the European Parliament, April 9, 2012, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2012/120344/LDM\\_BRI\(2012\)120344\\_REV1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2012/120344/LDM_BRI(2012)120344_REV1_EN.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The term “CSDP” officially replaced the phrase European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in December 2009.

Committee. Further ingraining the connection, the chair of the EU Military Committee attends all joint North Atlantic Council and EU Political and Security Committee meetings. Despite these converging interests and clear overlapping memberships, due to the “participation problem,” there “have been no formal meetings between the two organizations” since 2004,<sup>6</sup> except for the dialogues concerning Bosnia and capabilities, which began before the EU’s enlargement in 2004.

The “participation problem” or “frozen conflict” refers to “the conflict of principles that has since the 2004 enlargement of the European Union limited effective cooperation between the members of the European Union and NATO.”<sup>7</sup> The European Union requires that all member states be present at meetings with NATO, while NATO requires that all EU members it meets with be part of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and parties to a security agreement with NATO in the PfP framework. The Republic of Cyprus joined the EU during the 2004 enlargement along with Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The Republic of Turkey has been a NATO member since 1952 and has since 1963 refused to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, instead recognizing only the legitimacy of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus since it declared its independence in 1983. NATO requires that all member nations “recognize and approve candidates for Partnership for Peace membership,” and as a result “Ankara’s non-recognition policy vis-à-vis the Nicosia government blocks any move toward PfP membership by Cyprus.”<sup>8</sup> In retaliation for this dispute in recognition, Cyprus “has blocked administrative arrangements between the European Defense Agency and Turkey, as well as the signature of a security agreement with Turkey necessary for EU secret documents to be transmitted to NATO.”<sup>9</sup> In the European Parliament’s words,

The Turkish-Cypriot dispute continues to badly impair the development of EU-NATO cooperation, given that, on the one hand, Turkey refuses to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup> David Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 256.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 256–257.

<sup>9</sup> Latek, “EU-NATO Partnership in Stagnation,” 3.

allow Cyprus to participate in ESDP missions involving NATO intelligence and resources and that, on the other hand, in response, Cyprus refuses to allow Turkey to engage in the overall development of ESDP and to an extent commensurate with Turkey's military weight and strategic importance to Europe and [the] transatlantic alliance.<sup>10</sup>

The results of this “participation problem” have manifested themselves in countless ways since 2004. There are 16 European Union operations taking place, but since 2004 only one, Operation Althea, has been able to benefit officially from NATO cooperation under the auspices of the “Berlin Plus” package of agreements.<sup>11</sup> At the moment, NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU's Operation Atalanta are both anti-piracy operations taking place in the Gulf of Aden; however, they are forced to carry out their missions with redundantly separate headquarters, communications, and operational activity. This overlap forces commanders in the field to juggle both the demands of the mission as well as tasks such as de-confliction and coordination that normally take place at levels far above and behind the scenes. When operating in Kosovo and Afghanistan, NATO forces and EU forces were forced to “operate in parallel without a formal framework.”<sup>12</sup> With EU civilians in Afghanistan totally reliant on NATO military protection, in order to coordinate protection in the absence of a formal NATO-EU agreement, the EU had to work individually and make separate agreements with 14 individual NATO nations.<sup>13</sup> The lack of cooperation at the highest levels of diplomacy has had real tactical and operational repercussions, and “the search for case-by-case solutions on the ground is frustrating to both civilians and military personnel, being time consuming and inefficient.”<sup>14</sup> In the world of military operations, “time consuming and inefficient” are factors that increase risk and danger to personnel.

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<sup>10</sup> “The Role of NATO in the Security Architecture of the EU,” European Parliament, Resolution of 19 February 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0076+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

<sup>11</sup> Latek, “EU-NATO Partnership in Stagnation,” 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

### C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Covering the wide range of subjects that support the overall research question, preliminary research suggests that the available literature on the subject of the effects of the frozen Cypriot-Turkish conflict on NATO-EU relations falls generally into three categories. The first category is that of NATO-European Union relations, especially focusing on the time period since the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004. By better understanding the overall relationship between these two organizations, the impact of the Turkish-Cypriot conflict becomes clearer. This can help to serve as a “before-and-after” snapshot to better quantify the negative impact when the post-2004 activities are compared with those of the pre-2004 timeframe. The second category of literature concerns the 1974 conflict itself. The contributing elements that led a British protectorate from post-colonial sovereignty to a battlefield have been clearly analyzed, and literature on the subject tends to follow the same facts, with competing Cypriot and Turkish interpretations and historical emphasis. The third category examines the factors that are serving to prolong the conflict and forestall its resolution. This is a broad field of study, containing contributing elements such as current geopolitical realities in the Mediterranean, Russian economic and military expansion as tools of foreign policy, and the global economic interest sparked by the 2009 discovery of large natural gas deposits in Cypriot waters.<sup>15</sup>

Works that contribute to the study of NATO-European Union relations during the period in question include scholarly studies such as Jolyon Howorth’s *Security and Defense Policy in the European Union*, Roy Ginsberg’s and Susan Penska’s *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact*, David Yost’s *NATO’s Balancing Act*, and Derek Mix’s *The European Union: Foreign and Security Policy*.

Books on NATO or the European Union typically devote a section or chapter to their cooperation, and devote little attention to the impact of the Cypriot-Turkish conflict. For specific analyses, scholarly journal articles such as Muzaffer Yilmaz’s “The Cyprus Conflict and the Question of Identity” in the *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, George Chistou’s “Bilateral Relations with Russia and the Impact on EU Policy: The Cases of

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Ratner, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean* (CRS Report R44591) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 15, 2016).

Cyprus and Greece,” in *The Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Stephanie Hofmann’s and Christopher Reynolds’s “EU-NATO Relations: Time to Thaw the ‘Frozen Conflict,’” from *The German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, Munevver Cebeci’s “NATO-EU Cooperation and Turkey” in *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, and George Vassiliou’s “EU Entry: Catalyst for a Cyprus Solution” in *Global Dialogue* strive to provide unbiased and balanced assessments and analyses in contrast with the self-interested accounts by governments or by politically engaged authors seeking to promote their interpretations of national interests.

In his 1997 speech on NATO and the European Security Architecture, Javier Solana, then the NATO Secretary General, declared that the “European Union is preparing for the next century.”<sup>16</sup> There was a tone of optimism in the literature of the 1990s. This was expected to be an exciting new age in which, Solana said, instead of NATO, some “operations, by virtue of their size or location, might be best launched by the WEU.”<sup>17</sup> Until October 1998, the UK had viewed indigenous European military cooperation as redundant when compared to the existing NATO framework, preferring that only the Western European Union (which consisted exclusively of NATO members) be “responsible for implementing EU decisions with defense implications.”<sup>18</sup> In 1998 the United Kingdom reversed its position, and as a result, June 1999 saw the European Union begin to establish the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The published literature makes clear that NATO’s outlook was hopeful, since, according to an official declaration in 2002, “a stronger European role will help contribute to the vitality of the Alliance, specifically in the field of crisis management.”<sup>19</sup> It was under this spirit of cooperation that the “Berlin Plus” arrangements were completed in 2003. According to these arrangements, NATO and the European Union agreed to share planning capabilities, military assets, and adaptation of NATO’s defensive planning mechanisms

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<sup>16</sup> Javier Solana, “The New NATO and the European Security Architecture” (speech, European Security Architecture in Vienna, Austria, January 16, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Yost, NATO’s Balancing Act, 253.

<sup>19</sup> “EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP,” NATO, December 16, 2002, press release (2002), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_19544.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm).

for EU-led missions.<sup>20</sup> Soon thereafter, joint NATO-EU operations began in 2003 with Operation Concordia, followed in 2004 with Operation Althea. It was at this point that Cyprus joined the European Union and the “participation problem” began.

It is at this point that the literature takes a negative turn. After the enlargement of the European Union, with Cyprus among the new EU members, literature on the subject changed from a positive outlook for the future to confused pessimism. In 2014 Judy Dempsey, writing for Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, stated that an “uneasy situation has been going on ever since Cyprus joined the EU on May 1, 2004. It is absurd, dangerous, and costly for both the EU and NATO.”<sup>21</sup> Further indications of the breakdown in cooperation are apparent in the fact that no further official operations under the Berlin Plus package have taken place since Operation Althea.

The participation problem has hindered NATO-European Union relations for over a decade, and it is generally regarded as a problem that needs to be overcome. However, there are competing schools of thought regarding the reasoning behind settling the conflict. These alternate explanations attempt to downplay the mono-causal attribution of the Cypriot-Turkish conflict as the sole source of NATO-EU “decoupling.” Generally originating from Turkish scholarship, authors such as Munevver Cebeci of the Marmara University have sought to demonstrate that the Cypriot-Turkish conflict is serving as a scapegoat distraction for an underlying confrontation of European schools of thought, that of Transatlanticists and Europeanists. These two camps are allegedly composed of a French led group of “Europeanists” who “doubt U.S. military engagement in Europe and seek European autonomy” and that of the “Transatlanticists,” led by Great Britain, who seek to “emphasize NATO’s primacy in European security and are against the development of an autonomous European defense capability at the expense of the Alliance.”<sup>22</sup> Arguing that a “deeper and historically embedded dynamic”<sup>23</sup> is at play, Cebeci claims that the EU is

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<sup>20</sup> Yost, NATO’s Balancing Act, 254.

<sup>21</sup> Judy Dempsey, “Time to End the EU-NATO Standoff,” *Carnegie Europe*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 8, 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=57423>

<sup>22</sup> Munevver Cebeci, “NATO-EU Cooperation and Turkey,” *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Volume 10, Number 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

using the frozen conflict to strengthen and distance itself from NATO in order to achieve an independent capability. He argues that the architect of this design is France, which “leads the Europeanist Allies in all...instances of decoupling in NATO.”<sup>24</sup>

Since the first shots of the 1974 Turkish-Cypriot conflict, scholars have devoted much attention to its origins. In view of the island nation’s tremendous historical, cultural, and geographic significance, this was not a conflict that the world could well afford to ignore. A researcher is spoiled for choice regarding sources that go far in depth regarding the political movements within Cyprus following its independence, the internal tensions between the Greek majority and Turkish minority, and the details of the Turkish landings and military activities. These sources naturally fall into two schools of thought, those sympathetic to one side or the other, usually from Greek and Turkish sources respectively.

Greek Cypriot narratives of the historical events are best provided by the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus. In *The Republic of Cyprus: An Overview*, the Cypriot government laments that the 1974 conflict “was the latest scenario in a succession of major acts in which the island featured, because of its geographical position—attracting foreign invaders and colonizers throughout its history that can be traced back to the sixth millennium B.C.”<sup>25</sup> The Greek perspective’s emphasis on the long history of the island serves to dilute the impact of Ottoman rule. The Greek-oriented account of the conflict centers around the 200,000 displaced Greek Cypriots, the Turkish military’s bombings of civilian population centers, and the “intransigence” shown by Turkey in cease-fire and resolution negotiations.<sup>26</sup>

The Republic of Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents a separate account of the conflict and the events that led to the 1974 war. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “the island of Cyprus...is geographically an extension of the Anatolian peninsula,” and furthermore “Cyprus has never been Greek.”<sup>27</sup> Given this view

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Press and Information Office, Republic of Cyprus, *The Republic of Cyprus: An Overview* (Nicosia: Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus, 2001), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>27</sup> “Cyprus, Historical Overview.” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-\\_historical-overview\\_.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-_historical-overview_.en.mfa)



that the Cypriot interpretation is “a serious misconception,”<sup>28</sup> the Turkish government’s position shows that the governments of Turkey and Cyprus disagree even about the ancient history of the island, let alone the details of the conflict since Cyprus gained independence. The Turkish interpretation considers the start of the military conflict to be 1955, rather than 1974. In the Turkish account, “the Greek Cypriots, in conspiracy with Greece, launched a violent campaign for annexing the Island to Greece” in which they allegedly “murdered everyone in their way.”<sup>29</sup> In an effort to justify the 1974 military invasion of the island, the Republic of Turkey has asserted that “those killed in the fighting with the Turkish army would not have died if the Greek Cypriots and Greece had not tried to annihilate the Turkish Cypriots and annex the island to Greece, and the blame for their deaths must rest firmly upon their own leadership.”<sup>30</sup> This interpretation holds that the Greek Cypriots instigated actions that justified the Turkish military invasion, annexation of the northern third of the island, thousands of deaths, and the forced relocation of over 200,000 Greek Cypriot civilians.

Cypriot historian Vassilis Fouskas offers a competing narrative in which Turkish aggression was unjustified and illegal. Stating that Turkey’s 1974

second invasion [on August 14 following the initial invasion in July and the UN-brokered cease-fire] inevitably undermined its argument that its action was initiated to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority on the island from Greek nationalists. Moreover, the second invasion served to persuade the international community to go along with Greece’s balanced suggestion that the invasions were both immoral and, from the point of view of international law and the constitutional settlements of 1960, totally illegal.<sup>31</sup>

The tone of each interpretation is evidence that each side can still recall the pain of forty years ago and still carries grievances.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “Cyprus, Historical Overview,” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-\\_historical-overview\\_.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-_historical-overview_.en.mfa).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Vassilis Fouskas, “Reflections on the Cyprus Issue and the Turkish Invasion of 1974,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2001), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240740340\\_Reflections\\_on\\_the\\_Cyprus\\_Issue\\_and\\_the\\_Turkish\\_Invasions\\_of\\_1974](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240740340_Reflections_on_the_Cyprus_Issue_and_the_Turkish_Invasions_of_1974).

Disputing the Cypriot account, Turkish historian Muzaffer Yilmaz chooses to start with the 1571 Ottoman “liberation” of the island from Venetian rule. He emphasizes how Ottoman rule “abolished feudalism and serfdom, terminating the Latin persecution of the Greek-speaking Christians.”<sup>32</sup> He describes a lack of cohesive loyalty to Greek traditions on the island and concludes that “it was hardly possible, even impossible, to talk about a distinct Cypriot identity.”<sup>33</sup> The Turkish scholar’s account further identifies the time immediately preceding military intervention as a period in which “terrorism prevailed on Cyprus,”<sup>34</sup> justifying Turkey’s military airstrikes and occupation. These distinctly opposed viewpoints are evidence of the deep political and cultural fracture in Cypriot-Turkish relationship and understandably complicate the search for unbiased literature on the subject.

Further academic attention has focused on the elusive peace process following the conflict. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has published numerous studies relevant to the research, including works on Turkish relations, Cypriot reunification, and the potential consequences of the recent natural gas discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean. Each of these works provides insight into specific elements of the conflict and can contribute greatly while maintaining a high level of academic neutrality not always found in scholarship regarding controversial subjects. The CRS studies most useful for this thesis are the following: *The European Union: Foreign and Security Policy*,<sup>35</sup> *European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey’s Accession Negotiations*,<sup>36</sup> *Cyprus: Status of U.N. Negotiations and Related Issues*,<sup>37</sup> *Turkey:*

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<sup>32</sup> Muzaffer Yilmaz, “The Cyprus Conflict and the Question of Identity,” *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, March 14, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Derek Mix, *The European Union: Foreign and Security Policy* (CRS Report R41959) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 8, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Vincent Morelli, *European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey’s Accession Negotiations* (CRS Report RS22517) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 5, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Carol Migdalovitz, *Cyprus: Status of U.N. Negotiations and Related Issues*, (CRS Report RL33497) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 20, 2007).

*Background and U.S. Relations In Brief*,<sup>38</sup> *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive*,<sup>39</sup> and *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*.<sup>40</sup>

The influence of resurgent Russia is also well documented and widely discussed. Pursuing hybrid warfare across numerous media, cyber, and traditional battlefields, the grand strategy and geopolitics of this powerful influence extend even into NATO-EU issues. Tracing trade deals and economic influence, Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, scholars at the European Council on Foreign Relations, have shown consistent Russian influence in European affairs. Showing that “the EU may not have succeeded in changing Russia, but Russia is certainly changing the EU,”<sup>41</sup> their research has shown consistent Russian support for Cyprus.

Dating back to the first days of the conflict in 1974, historian Robert Cutler shows, the Soviet Union used the Cypriot-Turkish dispute as a propaganda opportunity. The USSR immediately came to the defense of Cyprus, decrying Turkey’s actions as “a provocation [designed] ... to create a crisis situation [to be used] as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of Cyprus...so that a NATO presence could be asserted on Cypriot soil.”<sup>42</sup> Moscow has remained involved in the conflict and the region ever since.

In terms of grand strategy, famed military theorist Sun Tzu encouraged a commander to divide the strength of his enemies,<sup>43</sup> and in the same manner anything that can create a rift between NATO and the European Union is in Russia’s interest, and it has leveraged its economic influence with the island to its advantage. In a comprehensive

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<sup>38</sup> Jim Zanotti, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations In Brief* (CRS Report R44000) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 4, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Vincent Morelli, *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive* (CRS Report R41136) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 25, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Ratner, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, “A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations,” European Council on Foreign Relations publication, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Robert M. Cutler, “Domestic and Foreign Influences on Policy Making: The Soviet Union in the 1974 Cyprus Conflict,” *Soviet Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 1985): 60–89, <http://www.robertcutler.org/download/html/ar85svs.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Internet Classics Archive, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, accessed May 30, 2017, <http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html>.

study on EU-Russian relations, Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu show that this support is now largely economic in nature. Over the last decades, “Cyprus has become the most important haven for Russian capital in the EU” and in return, firms in Cyprus account for “almost a fifth of total foreign investments in Russia.”<sup>44</sup> As a result of these close economic ties, Andreas Andrianopoulos, writing on the subject of Cypriot-Russian relations, concludes that “it is obvious that the shots are called by the Kremlin and Athens [and Nicosia] simply react to Moscow’s initiatives...The jingles of the balalaika are much stronger than the tunes of the bouzouki.”<sup>45</sup> George Christou of the University of Warwick, argues that the close ties are not a result of economics, but rather that “Greek and Cypriot objectives towards Russia, while reflecting national interest, are very much embedded in the language of a multilateral EU approach and on working towards a strategic partnership with Russia.”<sup>46</sup> Whether the close connections between Cyprus and Russia are economic in nature or simply reflect larger EU approaches, the fact that there are powerful connections between the two is clear.

One of the greatest positive factors that may contribute to breaking the stagnant inertia of the frozen conflict is the 2009 discovery of large natural gas deposits in the eastern Mediterranean. Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades has emphasized that “energy developments in the eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus itself, could be a ‘catalyst’ for peace, stability, and regional integration.”<sup>47</sup> Until this discovery, the status quo encouraged stagnation. With natural gas pipeline deals in development between Turkey and Israel, the Cypriot exclusive economic zone stands in their way. According to Michael Ratner of the CRS, Turkey “strangely opposes the development of Cypriot natural gas resources unless the Turkish Cypriots will share in the financial benefits,”<sup>48</sup> and at the same time, the Republic of Cyprus will “not allow any gas pipeline connecting

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Andreas Andrianopoulos, “Greece and Russia: Dancing to the Tunes of the Bouzouki or Balalaika?,” News in Securities, <http://www.andrianopoulos.gr/2008/06/greece-and-russiadancing-to-tunes-of.html>.

<sup>46</sup> George Christou, “Bilateral Relations with Russia and the Impact on EU Policy: The Cases of Cyprus and Greece,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 19:2, 226.

<sup>47</sup> Keith Johnson, “Can Natural Gas Put Cyprus Back Together Again?” *Foreign Policy*, July 2016, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Ratner, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*, 6.

Israel and Turkey to be constructed in its exclusive economic zone until a Cyprus solution is found.”<sup>49</sup> With high expectations for natural gas exports and high predictions of increased energy revenue, new attention has been focused on the region. This economic incentive has created a new sense of optimism where a stagnant status quo had created pessimism. In a conflict perpetuated by culture, religion, and geopolitics, economics may lead the way to peace and prosperity.

Remarkably few studies have bridged these categories in a coherent narrative, especially considering the recent influences of valuable natural resource discoveries and updated progress from the island’s two governments. Understandably the larger UN efforts such as the 2004 “Annan plan” for the island’s conflict resolution have received the lion’s share of media and scholarly attention. However, the indigenous peace process has showed real potential for providing a just and amicable solution. Serving to update the available literature with recent developments in the peace process, the increasing Russian influence in the Mediterranean, and operational difficulties stemming from the schism between NATO and the European Union, this thesis will build upon considerable existing resources and contribute to the dialogue by bridging previously distinct areas of study related to the conflict.

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Despite the intractable nature of the conflict and the stagnation of international peace attempts, efforts to identify a clear path forward continue. With the research question centered around identifying and understanding the causal factors that are serving to prolong the conflict and forestall resolution, the research is premised on the assumption that there is probably no one correct answer. Rather the thesis will investigate the relevance of a series of hypotheses about causation and consider a number of factors that may each contribute to sustaining the conflict. The potential hypotheses for why the conflict has been prolonged include the following:

- The status quo has been in the Republic of Cyprus’s economic favor, giving a disincentive to change. As seen in Germany, reunification can be

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

extremely costly, and the Republic of Cyprus is in no hurry to cover that expense. This economic factor has shifted with the lucrative discovery of natural gas in the area and can now serve as a positive factor instead of a negative one.

- Fundamental cultural and religious conflicts continue between the Greek Orthodox Cypriots and the Turkish Muslim Cypriots.
- Turkish military occupation and settlement activity have, from the point of view of the Republic of Cyprus, negatively influenced the situation and have complicated the peace process by changing the fundamental conditions.
- Elements within the EU desiring increased capability and autonomy for the European Union have used the conflict to “decouple” the EU from NATO. French policy makers in particular have reportedly been wary of NATO’s United States leadership and have seen the European Union and its common defense as an area in which France might enjoy a commanding position.
- French opposition to Turkish accession to the European Union has caused Turkey to entrench on any position that it can use as leverage in future negotiations.
- Disinclined to expend further political capital, the United Nations and other organizers of failed peace attempts have left the challenge unresolved and have shifted their focus to more immediate concerns.

This list of potential explanations is subject change with further research and analysis. The goal of the research process will be to critically evaluate these potential explanations and assess their significance as causal factors that are prolonging the conflict and forestalling a resolution.

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Building on initial research into the topic, the research design for this thesis will pursue a strategy of cultivating knowledge in separate areas of study. Using the hypotheses about potential explanations as research areas, the design for further research is to maximize understanding of each factor that may be prolonging the conflict so that its relative importance can be determined. As competing narratives gain and lose strength under the press of analysis, the causative factors will come into sharper focus. Diversifying the areas of research and the types of supporting material will help to

strengthen the analysis. Economic data concerning the deep ties between Cyprus and Russia will, for example, help to show the powerful influence Russia enjoys in the region.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The thesis consists of five chapters. The introduction provides an overview of NATO-EU cooperation and the negative effects of the Cypriot-Turkish conflict. Chapter II will offer a historical account of the origins and development of the conflict. Chapter III will investigate the factors that appear to prolong the conflict, including the parties that appear to benefit from the immobility and how they have contributed to the course that the conflict resolution process has followed. Chapter IV will assess the importance of overcoming the obstacles presented in the previous chapter and review the advantages of quickly and justly resolving the conflict for moral, operational, and economic reasons. This would signify “thawing” the frozen conflict. Chapter V, the concluding chapter, will present an analysis of the conflict drawing from the evidence examined in Chapters III and IV, with findings about the validity of the initial hypothesis.

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## II. ORIGINS OF THE TURKISH-CYPRIOT CONFLICT

The origins of the 1974 war between Turkey and Cyprus lie deep in the storied history of the eastern Mediterranean. Cyprus and its people can trace their lineage back through ages of adversity far into antiquity. Owing to its strategic location at the nexus of three continents, the United Kingdom's special envoy to Cyprus, Lord David Hannay, wrote that "the story of Cyprus, from classical times down to its independence in 1960, was one of domination by outside powers."<sup>50</sup> According to Andrew Borowiec, "raids, conquests, and colonial domination in various forms have helped to form a highly insular and stubborn race, convinced of its importance and attraction to the world."<sup>51</sup> Firmly entrenched in their respective beliefs regarding the island, each side of Cypriot-Turkish dispute possesses long memories. In many ways the dispute since 1974 is the continuation of a thousand years of turbulent relations. The long series of events leading to the 1974 conflict can be divided into three eras: ancient history, the Ottoman Empire, and the Cold War. This chapter will demonstrate that the roots of the Cypriot-Turkish conflict are much older than they may appear, and stem from historically complex and violent relations between these culturally and religiously diverse peoples. Comprehending the dynamic history of the region and the fundamental character of the island sets the stage and its actors by creating a framework for understanding the events leading to the 1974 invasion.

### A. ANCIENT HISTORY

Cyprus enjoyed a key position as the crown jewel of multiple empires. Whoever enjoyed "control of the eastern Mediterranean also controlled Cyprus, and the history of the island has been the succession of one foreign ruler after another. Mycenaeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Romans, the Ptolemies, Byzantines, Franks, Venetians, Turks, and the British left their mark on Cyprus."<sup>52</sup> Indeed, "few countries in the world

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<sup>50</sup> David Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 1.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), 13.

<sup>52</sup> Kyriacos Markides, *The Rise and Fall of the Cyprus Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 2.

have been subjected to the degree of violence that has plagued Cyprus throughout most of its known existence.”<sup>53</sup> Defiant in the face of foreign rulers, the island’s language, religion, and culture have remained steadfast. Rather than wear down the Cypriot people over centuries of outside control, foreign influence and occupation served only to reinforce the island’s connection to its Greek language, Greek culture, and Greek Orthodox Christian faith. In examining the intimate historical and cultural relationship between Greece and Cyprus, it should not be overlooked that Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was herself regarded as a Cypriot.<sup>54</sup> For an island famous for love, its long history of violence is all the more tragic.

Archeologists can trace evidence of a human presence on the island back over nine thousand years.<sup>55</sup> It is estimated that the island first became populated in the 7th millennium BC.<sup>56</sup> Greek settlement and the “Hellenization” of the island began with the Mycenaean Greeks in the 15th century BC, followed by the Achaean Greeks in the 13th century BC. These iron-age Greek settlers brought the rich language and culture that remain to this day, “and no subsequent historical event succeeded in changing this basic Hellenic cultural pattern until the 1974 Turkish takeover of the northern part of Cyprus.”<sup>57</sup>

The first foreign conquest of Cyprus was in 708 BC. Sargon II, king of the Assyrians, wished to create a Mediterranean empire, and the strategic value of the island made it a key target. Recognizing the importance of domestic support of further foreign conquest, Sargon left in place the Cypriot king and allowed considerable autonomy for the Cypriot people. As power shifted in the region, Cypriot control fell to the Egyptians. This change in outside rule had relatively little impact on Cypriot life, and would

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<sup>53</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 11.

<sup>54</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. “Aphrodite,” last modified October 25, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aphrodite-Greek-mythology>.

<sup>55</sup> Republic of Cyprus, 11.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Markides, *The Rise and Fall of the Cyprus Republic*, 2.

ultimately only lead to a change from Assyria to Egypt as Cyprus's main economic trading partner.<sup>58</sup>

By the late 6th century BC, the power of the Persian empire was on the rise. When Egypt fell to Persia, so did its possessions, including Cyprus. As with the Assyrians and the Egyptians, the Persian rulers felt that tribute and membership in their empire were sufficient, and "the Cypriot kings continued to enjoy considerable autonomy while paying tribute to Persia, and were even allowed to strike their own coinage."<sup>59</sup> Despite enjoying a high degree of autonomy and few negative effects under Persian rule, when the Ionian Greeks rebelled against Persia in 498 BC, Cyprus promptly joined them in a spirit of Hellenic unity. Quickly suppressed, the revolt serves to illustrate the deep Hellenic cultural connection between Greece and Cyprus.<sup>60</sup>

Following Alexander the Great's final defeat of the Persian empire in 333BC at the Battle of Issus, Cyprus once again changed hands. In gratitude for Cypriot assistance at the Siege of Tyre, Alexander granted Cyprus independence and full self-rule. This was the first time in centuries that Cyprus was free of outside control. Despite good will and a desire for unity by both Greece and Cyprus, unification was impossible at that time as Greece was the seat of Alexander's empire. This period of independence proved brief: Alexander died a mere ten years later in 323 BC.<sup>61</sup>

The power vacuum left behind with the death of Alexander was tremendous. Alexander's empire experienced eleven years of turmoil and power struggles among various would-be heirs. Eventually Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, emerged as the new emperor in 294 BC and established the Ptolemaic empire from the fruits of Alexander's conquests. Cypriot independence had been gift from an appreciative ruler. Ptolemy did not share his predecessor's gratitude, and Cyprus was quickly enveloped by this new empire. Centuries of relative autonomy and respect for internal control were at

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Eric Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991) 8.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

an end. During the Ptolemaic period, which “lasted for two and one-half centuries, the city-kingdoms of Cyprus were abolished and a central administration established.”<sup>62</sup> This change in Cypriot internal politics, from a united group of Greek city-states into a unified Hellenic island, would prove fortunate as it made the island stronger by enabling one voice to speak for all the cities of Cyprus in future matters of foreign relations and economic affairs. After two and a half centuries of rule, the Ptolemaic empire ended with Roman annexation in 58 BC.<sup>63</sup>

Roman rule would prove to be a prosperous time for Cyprus. The peace dividend that followed the instability of the end of the Ptolemaic empire and the rise of Rome gave birth to a period of economic reinvestment that “allowed the mines, industries, and commercial establishments to increase their activities.”<sup>64</sup> Rome bore the tremendous economic burden of military expansion and governing a large empire, and “the object of Roman occupation was to exploit the island’s resources for the ultimate gain of the Roman treasury.”<sup>65</sup> In order to increase the economic output and thus the overall tax revenue from Cyprus, Rome invested in massive infrastructure projects, ranging from a complex road network to aqueducts, bridges, and harbors. While Rome may have enjoyed increased taxation from the new economic developments on the island, the gains made by the local economy granted an increased quality of life for the Cypriot population.<sup>66</sup>

While economic growth took place under Roman rule, the most significant development of this time was the introduction of Christianity to the island in 45AD. This new faith spread quickly through the proselytization efforts of the Apostles Paul, Mark, and Barnabas, the last a native Cypriot, and became the bedrock of Cypriot culture and identity. It was under Roman and Byzantine rule that “the Greek orientation that had been prominent since antiquity developed the strong Hellenistic-Christian character that

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

continues to be a hallmark of the Greek Cypriot community.”<sup>67</sup> Cyprus became part of the Eastern Roman Empire with the division between Rome and Byzantium in 285 AD, and economic prosperity, deep Christian faith, and peace were to characterize the next four centuries.

Following the introduction and rapid spread of Islam in the early days of the 7th century, a new Arab power was emerging a mere one hundred miles to the east of Cyprus.<sup>68</sup> The Byzantine period of tranquility ended in 647 AD when “the peace that many generations of Cypriots enjoyed during the middle centuries of the first millennium AD was shattered by Arab attacks.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, began three hundred years of bloodshed in which “many Cypriots were slaughtered and great wealth carried off or destroyed. No Byzantine churches survived the Muslim attacks.”<sup>70</sup> Starting with a 1,700-ship strong invasion fleet, Muawiyah, Amir of Syria and later Caliph of the Muslim empire, led an invasion of Cyprus and sacked the city of Constantia, massacring its population, and reducing its churches and public buildings to rubble. This would prove to be only the start of numerous raids, both large and small, that would characterize a time of great suffering for the island. By the end of this 300-year period of violence before Byzantium could gain the strength to properly defend Cyprus, “thousands upon thousands were killed, and other thousands were carried off into slavery. Death and destruction, rape and rampage were the heritage of unnumbered generations.”<sup>71</sup>

Byzantine control over the island was reestablished in the 12th century, as the first crusade began. King Richard the Lionheart set his sights on Cyprus as he led his force of crusaders across the Mediterranean, and the island “became a strategically important logistic base and was used as such for the next 100 years.”<sup>72</sup> If the Arab wars had not

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>68</sup> Jane Smith, “Islam and Christendom,” Oxford Islamic Studies, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780195107999/islam-9780195107999-chapter-7>.

<sup>69</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 13.

sparked a deep hatred between Cypriots and Arabs, the use of Cyprus as a Crusader launching point for conquest deep into Arab lands cemented the animosity.

As the costs of the first crusade mounted, Richard sold Cyprus to the Knights Templars. Their control over the island proved tyrannical, and after “the people again rebelled and suffered a massacre...their persistence led the Templars, convinced that they would have no peace on Cyprus, to depart.”<sup>73</sup> Reverting back to King Richard, the island was once again sold—this time to Guy de Lusignan, the ruler of Jerusalem at the time. Though Guy de Lusignan died only two years after taking possession of the island, the dynasty he established would rule over Cyprus for three hundred years.<sup>74</sup>

Lusignan proved ambivalent toward Cypriot Orthodox Christianity. Once he died and control was inherited by his brother Amaury, Cyprus would have its faith tested as French rulers sought to install Latin Catholicism on the island. This religious conflict and “the harshness with which the Latin clergy attempted to gain control of the Church of Cyprus exacerbated the uneasy relationship between the Franks and the Cypriots.”<sup>75</sup> Despite the 1260 decree by Pope Alexander IV titled the “Bulla Cypria,” declaring once and for all the supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith over the Cypriot Orthodox church, Cyprus refused to turn from its faith. The Vatican eventually realized that the harder it fought to convert the Cypriots, the more entrenched in their faith they became. By the 14th Century the Roman Catholic Church had relaxed its efforts to suppress the Cypriot church, and this period of Cypriot history demonstrated to the world how committed the Cypriots were to their Orthodox faith. This became more significant when Ottoman rule tested the religious resolve of the island.

In 1291 Acre fell to Muslim forces as they began retaking the Holy Land, “capturing Christian fortresses one after another as they moved along the eastern Mediterranean littoral.”<sup>76</sup> These losses meant that the remaining Christian forces lost their foothold in the region and were forced to retreat to Cyprus. For the next century,

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<sup>73</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 13.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

“Cyprus attained and held a position of influence and importance far beyond that which such a small kingdom would normally enjoy.”<sup>77</sup> All European trade was forced out of the coastal ports from Egypt to Anatolia, and rerouted to Cyprus. According to Eric Solsten, “under the rigid feudal system that prevailed, however, the new-found prosperity fell to the Franks; the native Cypriots, who were mostly serfs, benefited little or not at all.”<sup>78</sup> As trade increased, so did interest from offshore powers. The Republics of Genoa and Venice were rising powers in the Mediterranean, and their economic influence on the island of Cyprus expanded greatly during this time. Eventually, “through intrigue, force, and financial power, the two Italian republics gained ever-increasing privileges, and at one point in the fourteenth century Famagusta was ceded to Genoa.”<sup>79</sup>

With growing competition in the economy of the island, the “Lusignans’ ability to control Cypriot cultural, economic, and political life declined rapidly in the first half of the fifteenth century.”<sup>80</sup> Coupled with this loss of influence over the island was a resurgence in Islamic power to the east, and Cyprus was forced to turn with increasing urgency to its Venetian allies. Eventually, through the royal marriage of King James II of Cyprus with Caterina Cornaro, a daughter of a Venetian ruling family, Cyprus became tied to Venice by blood. With the death of James in 1473, and Caterina’s abdication in 1489, Venice officially annexed the island of Cyprus.<sup>81</sup>

The pre-Ottoman era of Cypriot history is significant in understanding the origins of the Cypriot-Turkish conflict in that it clarifies the nature of the relationship between the two parties. Cypriot history, more than just a long list of successive foreign rulers, is a series of fierce battles to maintain the indigenous culture and way of life in the face of those who would control and change the island. After centuries of dying for their faith, Orthodox Christianity, Cypriots regarded it as an essential element of their identity. Greek culture has remained despite every effort to replace it, and with each attempt it has

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<sup>77</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

become more firmly entrenched in the hearts and minds of Cypriots. Their history is one of resisting foreign influence, and the establishment of a bedrock foundation of Greek culture and Christianity. This understanding of the history of Cyprus helps to show why the events of 1974 and the current standoff with Turkey are merely the continuation of centuries of struggle.

## **B. OTTOMAN ERA**

The most prominent successor state of the Ottoman empire, modern Turkey struggles daily with attempts to both celebrate and distance itself from its Ottoman past. Modern Turkish-Cypriot relations still ring with the echoes of the Ottoman era on the island, and the emotional power and historical significance of names such as “Famagusta,” “Lepanto,” and “Smyrna,” are recognized by Cypriots of every age.

Ruling from afar, Venetian control over Cyprus was weak at best. This tenuous foreign control left the island a vulnerable target to Ottoman Turk raiders. Having conquered Constantinople in 1453, the new Ottoman Empire was quickly gaining power in the east and overrunning the remains of the Byzantine empire.<sup>82</sup> Starting in 1489, Turkish violence began with an attack on the island’s Karpas Peninsula which resulted in wanton destruction and robbery, with thousands of Cypriots captured and sold into Ottoman slavery. In 1539, Turkish forces attacked and destroyed Limassol, a major port city on the island’s southern coast. The Venetians responded to these attacks as best they could by fortifying the major cities of Famagusta, Nicosia, and Kyrnia. The Venetian treasury could not, however, afford to defend the rest of the island, leaving much of Cyprus exposed to further violence.<sup>83</sup>

Concentrating Venetian and Cypriot forces within fortified cities left the rest of Cyprus a tempting target, and by the summer of 1570 the Turks ended their raids and began their invasion. 60,000 troops under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha landed nearly unopposed at the remains of the previously sacked city of Limassol. Marching

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<sup>82</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. “Ottoman Empire,” last modified February 15, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire>.

<sup>83</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 17.



quickly to the gates of Nicosia, they laid siege to the defended city for two months. On September 9, 1570 Nicosia fell to the Ottomans, and in “an orgy of victory...20,000 Nicosians were put to death, and every church, public building, and palace was looted.”<sup>84</sup> Marching on from Nicosia, Mustafa besieged Famagusta, which famously heroically resisted the combined might of the Ottoman army and navy for over a year. Eventually, as August of 1571 dawned, the exhausted defenders of Famagusta fell, and Ottoman rule began awash with bloodshed. The Cypriots were to quickly learn that:

The Ottoman Turks excelled in total disregard for the lives of their own troops as for those of the defeated enemies. Some 80,000 Turks died in the siege of Famagusta in 1571...When the city on the eastern coast of Cyprus fell, the victorious Ottomans violated the conditions of the surrender; cut off the nose and ears of the Venetian commander, Marcantonio Brigadino; skinned him alive and stuffed the skin with straw.<sup>85</sup>

Once Ottoman rule was assured and all Cypriot defenses crushed, “archbishops, bishops, and Greek notables were periodically beheaded or hanged when they displeased the Sublime Porte.”<sup>86</sup> One account of Ottoman cruelty observed that “the Turks had first saddled the bishops and ridden them like horses, breaking their teeth as they thrust the bits into their mouths and pricking them with spurs to make them prance.”<sup>87</sup> To an island people deeply committed to their faith, the maltreatment of their religious leaders was the deepest of insults.

Shortly after the fall of Cyprus to the Ottomans, the Holy League composed of Venetian, Spanish, and papal states, sent a fleet commanded by Don John of Austria to reclaim the island. The opposing fleets met at Lepanto in a decisive naval battle, but the “victory over the Turks... came too late to help Cyprus, and the island remained under Ottoman rule for the next three centuries.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 13.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 17.

One of the first acts of the new Ottoman rulers was to carve out and depopulate swaths of land as prizes for the soldiers that had besieged, massacred, and looted the Cypriots during the Turkish takeover. These landed Turkish soldiers and peasants “became the nucleus of the island’s Turkish community.”<sup>89</sup> Modern Turkish Cypriots trace their origins on the island to this violent time, and are seen today by Greek Cypriots as the descendants of their former oppressors.

Under Ottoman rule Cyprus withered as “the island fell into economic decline”<sup>90</sup> due to “the empire’s commercial ineptitude.”<sup>91</sup> The Ottoman *millet* system was heralded as fair because it allowed religious minorities a degree of autonomous rule, but underlying this policy was an intent to reduce the cost of government oversight and to better identify non-Muslims within larger populations.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, taxation was based on religious affiliation, and applied more heavily to non-Muslims. Taxation rules contributed to the sharp division on the island and “the administrative separation of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots helped them maintain their ethnic identity, but it also contributed to the politicization of ethnicity.”<sup>93</sup> These ethnic and religious groups grew increasingly separate as rights and privileges became unbalanced. When Greek Cypriots attempted to appeal to the government courts for equality under the law, they found that they “had little recourse in the courts because Christian testimony was rarely accepted.”<sup>94</sup>

Part of the Ottoman Empire’s economic ineptitude stemmed from inconsistent leadership, “at times indifferent, at times oppressive, depending on the temperaments of the sultans and local officials.”<sup>95</sup> After “centuries of neglect by the Turks, the unrelenting

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<sup>89</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 17.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Joseph S. Joseph, *Cyprus: Ethnic Conflict and International Politics* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 18.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

poverty of most of the people, and the ever-present tax collectors,”<sup>96</sup> a strong desire for freedom from the Ottoman yoke pervaded all aspects of Cypriot life. Understanding that they were in danger of a potential rebellion on the island, Turkish authorities sought to make an example of those who might oppose them. When the Greek War of Independence began in 1821, Ottoman authorities realized that Cyprus, already unstable, was in danger of joining the Greeks in their rebellion. If the Cypriots were to join in the conflict with Greece it would be under the leadership of their Archbishop Kyprianos and the Church of Cyprus, assumed Ottoman authorities. Seeking to preempt a potential Cypriot uprising, “Kyprianos, his bishops, and hundreds of priests and important laymen were arrested and summarily hanged or decapitated on July 9, 1821.”<sup>97</sup> The horrified reaction to the decapitation or hanging of respected and beloved religious figures was intense. Whereas before the Cypriot people wanted only to shed themselves of Ottoman rule and unify with Greece, now “the Ottoman Turks became the enemy in the eyes of the Greek Cypriots, and this enmity served as a focal point for uniting the major ethnic group on the island under the banner of Greek identity.”<sup>98</sup>

As Ottoman power waned in the Eastern Mediterranean and the threat posed by Imperial Russia intensified, the “sick man of Europe” was in search of any way to stop its decline. In exchange for military protection from Russia, the Sultan offered Great Britain occupation, administration, and basing rights on the island of Cyprus. Offered in 1833, 1841, and 1845, Britain finally accepted Cyprus in 1878.<sup>99</sup> According to a 1878 British military report on the condition of Cyprus, “the face of the island is stamped with relics of a past prosperity that has been destroyed by the Muslims. It is said that wherever the horse of the Turk treads nothing will ever grow afterwards.”<sup>100</sup> The officer’s report goes on to describe the Cypriot people as “a wretched lot as far as I can learn, but what can be expected of a people bred under such a form of slavery and ground down as they have

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>97</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 18.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Foley, *Island in Revolt* (London: Longman’s, 1962), 121, quoted in Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 21.

been by masters who did not even care to conceal the contempt in which they held them.”<sup>101</sup>

Following the Ottoman Empire’s decision to join the First World War on the side of Germany, Britain annexed Cyprus as a spoil of war. In the aftermath of the Great War, Article 20 of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne saw Turkey officially recognize the British annexation and relinquish any claim on the island of Cyprus. Furthermore, in Article 21 Turkey agreed that “Turkish nationals ordinarily resident in Cyprus on the 5th November, 1914, will acquire British nationality subject to the conditions laid down in the local law, and will thereupon lose their Turkish nationality.”<sup>102</sup> This would prove significant because decades later Turkey would justify its connection to Cyprus as defending the rights of Turkish citizens.

Brutal oppression and economic collapse were the legacies left by three hundred years of Ottoman rule on Cyprus. The current Turkish-Cypriot population traces itself back to these dark days and serves as a reminder to the Greek-Cypriot population of those times. In light of this historical relationship, it is clear that the 1974 military invasion and the preceding intercommunal conflict were linked to the Ottoman-Cypriot conflict that had begun over four hundred years before.

### **C. THE COLD WAR ERA**

The title of this section could also be the “Era of Independence,” or the “Post-Colonial Era.” However, the context of the global Cold War is significant in light of the tremendous impact that outside influences would play in what would have otherwise been a largely internal matter. With larger NATO and Soviet concerns overshadowing the potential orientation of non-aligned Cyprus, as well as the possibility of an intra-NATO conflict between Greece and Turkey, the significance of internal discord on the island was greatly magnified. The “unsinkable aircraft carrier”<sup>103</sup> of the eastern Mediterranean,

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923. *The Treaties of Peace 1919–1923, Vol.II* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924.)

<sup>103</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 21.

Cyprus to NATO and the USSR was important as a geopolitical military asset, and both powers adapted their respective foreign policies accordingly.

With all vestiges of Ottoman rule gone, Cyprus became officially a colony of the British crown. During this time of transition, “Cyprus witnessed the overturning of the entrenched, imperial system with its corresponding ideologies, along with a renegotiation of the relations of power within the Greek Orthodox and Muslim communities.”<sup>104</sup> High colonial taxation coupled with economic and political reforms saw a rise in the island’s quality of life, but with a corresponding increase in desire for Cypriot unification with Greece. Previously, Britain had been able to dissuade the *enosis* movement by pointing out that the British were only administrators, and that sovereignty over Cyprus was still Ottoman. With this obstacle removed following the First World War, Great Britain was forced to confront the matter alone. With unification desires heightening in Cyprus under British rule, the Bishop of Kition, in a famous welcome address to the new British governor, announced as early as 1878 that “we accept the change of government inasmuch as we trust Great Britain will help Cyprus, as it did the Ionian islands, to be united with Mother Greece.”<sup>105</sup> These high expectations would prove to be misplaced, because the British government had no such intention. Rather than help Cyprus unite with Greece, the British decided that “their immediate mission was to safeguard the Mediterranean route to the Suez Canal” and that, “snatched from the spiral of Ottoman collapse, Cyprus would be set aright under British rule.”<sup>106</sup> Winston Churchill, then the British Colonial Secretary, described the Cypriot desire for *enosis* as “natural” and recognized that the Greek-Cypriots “regard their incorporation in what they call their mother country as an ideal to be earnestly, devoutly and fervently cherished.”<sup>107</sup> Despite this understanding, in a moment of foresight Churchill feared that allowing such a union

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<sup>104</sup> Rebecca Bryant, *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 18.

<sup>105</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 21.

<sup>106</sup> Bryant, *Imagining the Modern*, 24.

<sup>107</sup> St. George Hill, *History of Cyprus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 515. (as quoted in Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 25.)

would “create a permanent and dangerous antagonism between the two sections of the community.”<sup>108</sup>

With Britain’s understanding that the island’s population was distinctly split between its Greek and Turkish portions, the British period of control over Cyprus was characterized by a desire to maintain the island’s political status quo. What Britain did not understand was that its presence had already upset the status quo. As a province of the Ottoman Empire, Cyprus was a small portion of a much larger whole. For over three centuries in the larger context of Ottoman rule and Islam, Greek Orthodox Christians on Cyprus were a small minority population. With British control that larger context vanished and the proportionate weight of the two ethnic and religious groups shifted from one end of the political spectrum to the other. Whereas before Greek Orthodox Christians were a powerless minority in a distant Ottoman province, now they were a powerful majority in a British colony.

With Cyprus governed by an eighteen-member legislative council, Great Britain intentionally created political gridlock on the island by controlling the representation of the island’s population on the council. Six seats on the council were for British appointees, three seats were reserved for Turkish-Cypriots and the remaining nine seats for Greek-Cypriots. The council was “more apparent than real, for its composition meant that, in practice, the British official members and the Turkish elected members could together, backed by the casting vote of the high commissioner, exert a permanent veto over the Greek elected members.”<sup>109</sup> Repeated votes regarding the issue of *enosis* were met with unanimous approval by the nine Greek-Cypriots, and conversely unanimous disapproval by the three Turkish-Cypriot representatives. Seeking to avoid a civil war and later the geopolitical ramifications of intra-NATO conflict between Greece and Turkey, the six British appointees sided with the Turkish-Cypriots, creating a tie. The British Governor would then cast his tie-breaking vote in favor of the status quo, and the motion for *enosis* would be overruled, despite the support of 80% of the island’s

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Stephens, *Cyprus: A Place of Arms* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), 18. (as quoted in Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 24–25.)

population.<sup>110</sup><sup>111</sup> In response to this gridlock, the Greek-Cypriot population attempted to appeal to the UN for support for their desire for political self-determination, but Great Britain repeatedly vetoed any UN vote regarding Cyprus. Any matter involving Cyprus, in London's view, was a domestic British issue and not the UN's concern.<sup>112</sup>

Hampered both on the island and internationally by British control, the Greek-Cypriot population, now happily enjoying majority status, began to seek alternative means to make their will heard. When British taxation increased to offset deficits brought about by the global economic recession of the early 1930s, the combined pressure culminated in protests, demonstrations, and ultimately mob violence in October 1931.<sup>113</sup> Recognizing that their control over the island was in jeopardy and that the island's anti-colonial movement was gaining strength, the British government imposed a number of harsh measures aimed at putting down resistance. Additional British troops were called for, the power-sharing constitution was suspended, strict press censorship was implemented, and many Greek-Cypriots that had participated in the protests were exiled.<sup>114</sup> With the constitution suspended, the legislative council was disbanded, and political parties outlawed. This removed any legal check on the British Governor's decrees. The resulting measures added legal restrictions barring Greek and Turkish history from being taught in schools, displaying Greek or Turkish flags, and images of Greek or Turkish heroes.<sup>115</sup> Recognizing the prominent role that the Cypriot Orthodox church played in the rising nationalist feeling, "the British enacted laws governing the internal affairs of the church."<sup>116</sup> These religious controls went so far as "subjecting the election of an archbishop to the governor's approval."<sup>117</sup> Britain's taxation and political control over the Orthodox Church reminded the Cypriots of the Ottoman era, and only

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<sup>110</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 21.

<sup>111</sup> Makarios Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War* (Nicosia: Alfadi Books, 2016), 5.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 22.

<sup>114</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 22.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

served to increase the desire for change on the island. With all political means for representation exhausted, the Greek-Cypriot anti-colonial and pro-*enosis* movement went underground in the form of numerous resistance movements.

When the British government repealed the law against political parties in 1941, resistance groups were afforded the opportunity to achieve legitimacy. Among these groups was the communist Progressive Party of the Working People (the Anorthotikon Komma Ergazomenou Laou, abbreviated AKEL). Moreover, a loose federation of Orthodox Church groups and nationalist associations formed the Panagrarian Union of Cyprus (Panagrotiki Enosis Kyprou, or the PEK). These two groups, though both strongly in favor of *enosis*, were mostly opposed on all other political matters largely due to their respective and distinct constituencies.<sup>118</sup>

As both the AKEL and the PEK grew in power, Great Britain in 1946 decided to enact a liberalizing policy toward Cyprus in hopes of fostering good will. A new Consultative Assembly was invited to help create a new constitution. Media and education restrictions were lifted, and all exiles from the 1931 protests were invited to return with full pardons.<sup>119</sup> Skeptical of these new policies, the AKEL and the PEK formed a new assembly and attempted to stabilize the island. When the assembly attempted to expand self-government for the island and minimize the political role of the British government over the island that had deadlocked the previous council, the presiding officer, Chief Justice Edward Jackson, ruled that such an objective was “outside the competence of the assembly.”<sup>120</sup>

Concurrently, the Orthodox Church, with a view to encouraging a change in British policy, organized a referendum on *enosis*. The result of the referendum was predictable: 96% of all Greek-Cypriots voted in favor of unification.<sup>121</sup> Though the vote was ignored by the British colonial administration, it succeeded in popularizing the

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>119</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 25.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 30.



referendum's organizer, a young bishop named Makarios III. This led to his election as the head of the island's Orthodox Christian Church, the Archbishop of Cyprus.

Recognizing that the colonial administration's new liberal policies were in reality just business as usual, all hopes of independence and *enosis* through political cooperation with Great Britain vanished. With conditions on the island deteriorating quickly and with a repeat of the 1931 anti-colonial protests looming, Greece attempted to intervene in 1954 by appealing to the United Nations to support self-determination for Cyprus.<sup>122</sup> The UN convened a series of talks and meetings with all parties in an attempt to find a diplomatic solution. As these meetings went on with no visible progress, patience and hope in diplomacy ran thin.

It was at this point that a retired Greek Army Colonel, George Grivas, decided to lend his particular skills to the mix. A decorated soldier of Cypriot birth, Grivas had served in the Greco-Turkish War of 1920–1922. He later earned fame during the Nazi occupation of Greece when he “led a right-wing extremist organization known by the Greek letter X (Chi), which some authors describe as a band of terrorists and others call a resistance group.”<sup>123</sup> He fought against the Axis occupation of Greece and was skilled in guerrilla warfare. As the political situation in Cyprus deteriorated, he decided to apply his specific skillset to the problem of achieving *enosis*.<sup>124</sup> Grivas justified his desire to start a guerrilla war against the British by citing a series of broken promises:

When, in the Second World War, the swastika flew over the Acropolis in Athens, our hopes were kept alive by the promises of Britain and America...30,000 Cypriots were induced to join the British army by assurances that they were fighting for “Greece and freedom.” Like every other Cypriot, I believed that we were also fighting for the freedom of Cyprus. But when the war was over and democracy was safe once more, these promises were broken and the principles for which we had struggled were trampled into the dust. As the empty post-war years went by I was

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 30–31.

<sup>123</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 27.

<sup>124</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 27.

forced to realize that only in one way would the island win [the] freedom which it [had] sought so long: by fighting for it.<sup>125</sup>

Archbishop Makarios attempted to moderate Grivas's violent intentions. His desire to find a peaceful diplomatic solution for the island kept order until January 1955, when the UN General Assembly announced its decision regarding the issue of Cypriot self-determination. Adopting a proposal from New Zealand, the UN General Assembly stated that it had decided "that for the time being, it does not appear appropriate to adopt a resolution on the question of Cyprus, [and] ...not to consider further the item entitled 'Application, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in the case of the population of the Island of Cyprus.'"<sup>126</sup> The resulting riots in Cyprus were the worst since 1931 and in their aftermath the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston-EOKA) was founded.

Starting in April 1955, a campaign of anti-British violence on the part of EOKA arose across Cyprus. Under Grivas's leadership a series of coordinated and simultaneous attacks on police, military, and colonial government targets was conducted with military precision. Despite repeated overtures by the EOKA to the Turkish-Cypriot population asking them to "stand clear, to refrain from opposition, and to avoid any alliance with the British," a rival Turkish resistance and counter-terrorist group named VULCAN joined with the colonial administration in hopes of stopping the EOKA. In this "increasingly insecure atmosphere, the chasm between the communities grew to unprecedented proportions."<sup>127</sup> This was the start of a four-year period of civil conflict in Cyprus.

Numerous attempts at cease-fires and negotiations took place, both on the island and in London. Finally, breaking from its stance that the Cyprus question was an internal matter, Britain invited Greece and Turkey to participate in resolution talks.

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<sup>125</sup> George Grivas, *Memoirs of General Grivas* (London: Longman's, 1964), 2. As cited in Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 31.

<sup>126</sup> United Nations General Assembly. "Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly during its Ninth Session." Section 814(IX), 17 December 1954, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/095/49/IMG/NR009549.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>127</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 33.

Conspicuously absent was any form of Cypriot representation. Greece and Turkey echoed the wills of their respective Cypriot parties, and no solution could be found. Turkey's representative, Foreign Minister Fatin Rustu Zorl , proposed that if Britain were to relinquish control of Cyprus it should revert to Turkish ownership. This proposal was in direct violation of the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, and it was rejected. The Greek representative encouraged Britain to grant Cyprus its independence, as it had with Egypt. This was rejected by the Turkish side because any mention of independence or self-rule was interpreted as a stepping stone to *enosis*.

With the failure of diplomatic efforts, the British turned to force. Martial law was declared in October 1955, and 28,000 troops were mobilized and deployed across the island to suppress the violence and restore colonial law and order.<sup>128</sup> The "intensive British security measures led to some successes against EOKA, but continuous arms searches, mass interrogations, curfews and other selective punishments produced the inevitable effect of such repression."<sup>129</sup> EOKA membership increased as anti-British sentiment intensified. Arrested in January 1956 for allegedly inciting violence, Archbishop Makarios was exiled to the Seychelles. Instead of his absence decreasing the violence as the British intended, the EOKA increased its attacks, free of the Archbishop's moderating influence and now in control of both the political and military aspects of the independence movement.<sup>130</sup>

Realizing that the military crackdown was failing to stop the EOKA and only serving to strengthen its ranks, the British government in 1958 again pushed for a diplomatic solution. After having "zigzagged between the options of keeping the island under colonial tutelage in perpetuity for geostrategic reasons and a traditional gradualist approach to self-government,"<sup>131</sup> the British decided to cut their losses. Offering what would be known as the Macmillan Plan, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan invited representatives from Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus to meet and proposed a plan to partition

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<sup>128</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 34.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>130</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 31.

<sup>131</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 2.

the island into separate Greek and Turkish spheres of control. This plan was rejected unanimously, but the new approach stimulated further talks. All the parties, including the exiled Archbishop Makarios, met again in Zurich in 1959. At this meeting a new plan was proposed, in which Cyprus would be granted independence, but without the possibility of *enosis* in order to placate the Turks, but equally barred from *taksim* (partition), to placate the Greeks. With these preconditions accepted, Britain, Greece, and Turkey agreed that the three of them would guarantee the agreement and intervene on the island if necessary to safeguard the peace.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, Britain was allowed to retain 99 square miles, or 3% of the island, as sovereign military base areas (SBA). With the acceptance and signing of the London-Zurich Agreements on February 19, 1959, Cyprus became an independent nation for the first time in nearly three millennia.<sup>133</sup>

Independent Cyprus as created by the guarantor powers “was an enormous historic compromise”<sup>134</sup> on the part of the Greek-Cypriots. Despite consisting of 80 per cent of the island’s population, Greek-Cypriots were allowed no more than 60 per cent representation in the government, along with a stipulation that the vice-president be a Turkish-Cypriot with veto power over foreign policy decisions.<sup>135</sup> From the Turkish-Cypriot perspective, the agreements were a major success. With *enosis* avoided and guaranteed equal participation in the new government, the Turkish-Cypriots adapted their goal of *taksim* to one of ensuring that the agreements were implemented fully in order to consolidate their political gains.<sup>136</sup>

The London-Zurich Agreements had been acceptable to the British, Turks, and Greeks because it maintained the island’s balance and avoided conflict within NATO. This status quo and “stability on the island itself, relations between Greece and Turkey and by extension the West’s interests in the broader region of the Balkans and the Eastern

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<sup>132</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 2.

<sup>133</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 40. See also Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 5.

<sup>134</sup> Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 5.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 6.

Mediterranean all depended on upholding this equilibrium.”<sup>137</sup> Fourteen years later, when Turkey invaded northern Cyprus, it was as a result of the perceived loss of that careful equilibrium.

Returning from exile in triumph, Archbishop Makarios was immediately elected the independent nation’s first president. Rather than focus on implementing the London-Zurich Agreements and establishing a stable government, Makarios instead sought to influence the implementation in order to block aspects that he “considered to be excessive and unfair on the Greek Cypriots.”<sup>138</sup> Envisioning that through the UN his young republic could achieve true independence without foreign stipulations, Makarios embarked on a foreign policy designed to earn alliances and forge new relationships. Increased international support would, he maintained, translate into increased support in the UN. Makarios did not want future resolutions regarding Cyprus snubbed and dismissed as they had been in 1955. Enacting this plan would require carefully exploiting the geopolitical realities of the Cold War. Ignoring the foreign policy veto of Turkish-Cypriot Vice President Fazil Küçük, Makarios flew to Belgrade in September 1961 to attend the founding conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. By establishing Cyprus’s neutrality in the Cold War Makarios was moving the island away from its NATO parentage and creating the possibility of cooperation with the USSR. At the same time, mindful of how his actions would be perceived in the West, Makarios also began “integrating Cyprus into the US’ anti-communist campaign programmes.”<sup>139</sup> It was at this stage that the “United States began to take an interest in Cyprus, but largely from the point of view of avoiding an open conflict between two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, and the consequent weakening of NATO’s southern flank.”<sup>140</sup> Considering the global realities of the Cold War, the Soviet Union’s interest in Cyprus increased as well, and

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>139</sup> Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 7.

<sup>140</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 3.

through the communist AKEL party Moscow started “lending largely unquestioning support to Makarios.”<sup>141</sup>

Domestically, the strict checks and balances of the new constitution created an uneasy government. Great Britain’s special envoy to Cyprus, Sir David Hannay, would later confess that the constitution “could only ever have worked smoothly with a high degree of cooperation between the two sides; in the hands of people who were in no way motivated to try to make it work, it provided a recipe for deadlock and frustration.”<sup>142</sup> The dysfunctional government experienced a major crisis in 1963 when the Turkish-Cypriots decided to withdraw their participation, citing disputes over fiscal and tax irregularities. This action was interpreted by the Greek-Cypriots as a deliberate attempt to undermine the constitution with a view to restarting the partition plan. Threatening to take advantage of the lack of Turkish-Cypriot representation by amending the constitution to remove the Turkish-Cypriot veto, the Greek-Cypriots hoped to bring order back to the stalled government. Instead of resuming cooperation, however, both sides resorted to active paramilitary resistance. The EOKA B (the successor to the original anti-British group) and the Turkish TMT (*Türk Mukavemet Teskilati*- Turkish Resistance Organization) were formed in the style of the anti-colonial organizations of the previous decade.<sup>143</sup>

Violence began in earnest in March 1964. The two communities, previously intermixed throughout the island, began to separate and form distinct defensible enclaves.<sup>144</sup> Responding to appeals by the Cypriot government, the UN sent 6,500 peacekeeping troops to the island in an attempt to stop the violence and the alleged atrocities reported by both communities. This action was interpreted by President Makarios and the Greek-Cypriots as the UN superseding the guarantor authority of the London-Zurich Agreements in the place of Britain, Turkey, or Greece as the dispute was raised to the global level. The Turkish government and the Turkish-Cypriot community

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 36.

interpreted the UN involvement as reinforcing the validity of the London-Zurich Agreements. This key distinction between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot interpretations showed a fundamental difference in understanding the global political position regarding their island. The Greek-Cypriots felt that the treaty obligations were flexible and would change with the situation on the ground. The Turkish-Cypriots felt that the London-Zurich Agreements were set in stone and were internationally recognized as permanent. This Turkish outlook led to invasion preparations in 1967 as Turkey set out to intervene on behalf of the Turkish-Cypriot population and restore the constitution of 1960 as per the London-Zurich Agreements. The invasion was canceled “at the last moment by a brutally forceful demarche from the then president of the United States, Lyndon Johnson.”<sup>145</sup> This phone call surprised the Turks as they realized that the political reality vis-à-vis the London-Zurich Agreements was much closer to the Greek-Cypriot interpretation than to the Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot interpretation.

The United States feared that, if left unchecked, the situation on Cyprus could upset the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance in the eastern Mediterranean. With the communist overthrow of the Batista government fresh in mind, the U.S. State Department feared Cyprus might become the “Mediterranean Cuba.”<sup>146</sup> George Ball, the U.S. Under Secretary of State, recalled that “the British wanted above all to divest themselves of responsibility on Cyprus.”<sup>147</sup> This realization led to the American decision that “Henceforth it was to be in Washington rather than London that the major external decisions were taken.”<sup>148</sup> It was this position that led the United States to stop the 1967 Turkish invasion plan and try to broker a peaceful resolution and, in so doing, reinforce NATO’s south eastern flank and avoid a proxy Greek-Turkish conflict.

Diplomacy took center stage as the United States, the UN, and the guarantor powers attempted to restore order and resolve the Cyprus question. The veteran American

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<sup>145</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 5.

<sup>146</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 60.

<sup>147</sup> George Ball quoted in Christopher Hitchens, *Cyprus* (London: Quartet Books, 1984), 55, as cited in Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 58.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

diplomat Dean Acheson entered the fray at the behest of Washington with the appropriately titled “Acheson Plan.” Partition in all but name, both Cypriot communities rejected the plan, asserting that either too much or too little land was allowed to each side. Taking advantage of the failed diplomatic talks, the Turkish-Cypriots in late 1967 announced the establishment of a “transitional administration,” which was essentially a separate government for the Turkish-Cypriot community of Cyprus. With the previous establishment of Turkish-Cypriot communal enclaves, this created a de facto partition of the island.<sup>149</sup>

For the next seven years Cyprus remained a partitioned country as international diplomacy continued fruitlessly. Returning in secret from his retirement in Greece, the leader of the EOKA anti-colonial group, General Grivas, resumed his violent anti-Turkish activities. Grivas blamed Archbishop Makarios personally for the breakdown of the island’s government, the divided state of the island, and the lack of progress toward *enosis*. He began expanding the EOKA B and even went so far as to mount a failed assassination attempt on Makarios in 1970.<sup>150</sup> General Grivas died of a heart attack in January 1974 and was promptly replaced by Nicos Sampson, a trusted EOKA B lieutenant known for being strongly anti-Turkish and anti-communist.<sup>151</sup>

Meanwhile, across the Aegean, a military junta had overthrown the government of Greece in 1967. Known as the “Coup of the Colonels,” the junta took power in response to growing communist power within the Greek government. Horrified by Makarios’ flirtations with the USSR and his attempts to create a non-aligned Cyprus, the Greek military leadership working with EOKA B concluded that Makarios and his communist leanings had to go. On July 15, 1974, Greek troops that had been stationed on Cyprus to assist with peacekeeping led a military coup, in conjunction with the EOKA B, against the Makarios-led Greek-Cypriot Government. As uniformed Greek soldiers and EOKA B guerrilla fighters stormed the presidential palace in a flurry of mortar and heavy

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<sup>149</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 38

<sup>150</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 73.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.



machine gun fire, Makarios narrowly escaped in an unmarked car to the safety of a British special base area.<sup>152</sup>

With Makarios temporarily out of the picture, Nicos Sampson declared himself the new president of the Republic of Cyprus and within hours Turkey's military was at its highest state of alert.<sup>153</sup> In a final attempt at diplomacy, "Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit flew to London to elicit British aid in a joint effort in Cyprus, as called for in the 1959 Treaty of Guarantee, but the British were either unwilling or unprepared and declined to take action as a guarantor power."<sup>154</sup> Ankara's appeal to the United States fell on similarly deaf ears due to the strong anti-communist position of the new government of Cyprus as well as the total preoccupation of President Nixon with the unfolding Watergate Crisis.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was vocal in its accusation that "the coup against Makarios was a NATO conspiracy, enacted by the Greek junta at the instigation of the U.S. and aimed at enosis and Cyprus' subjection to NATO, via Greece."<sup>156</sup> As a result, "Turkey played one superpower against the other and managed to secure both the US' and the USSR's tolerance of its invasion of Cyprus."<sup>157</sup>

Recognizing that no other guarantor power was going to assist in an intervention, and that Ankara had the diplomatic support of the USSR and the ambivalence of the United States, Turkey continued its military operation. Within three days, the military junta in Greece would collapse, Sampson would resign in failure, the threat of war between NATO allies Greece and Turkey would vanish, and Cyprus would be divided into the two halves that have remained at odds since 1974.

Turkey's military invasion of Cyprus in response to the Greek-sponsored coup was the culmination of thirty years of intercommunal violence. Rather than stop the warring factions, foreign governments instead allowed the civil unrest to intensify

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<sup>152</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 42

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Solsten, *Cyprus: A Country Study*, 42.

<sup>155</sup> Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, 88.

<sup>156</sup> Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 24.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 15.

unchecked, with only halfhearted diplomatic responses. The backdrop of the Cold War served to prolong the intercommunal violence as Britain, Greece, Turkey, and the United States were unwilling to alter the balance of power along the iron curtain between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The unsustainable international status quo policy only created the conditions in which the island's deepening division could grow. With independence from the British crown in 1960, the fledgling Republic of Cyprus inherited the task of managing an inherently unstable population and failed to shoulder the tremendous burden of the island's violent history.

### III. PROLONGING FACTORS

Since the 1974 Turkish military invasion, Cyprus has been partitioned and partly under military occupation. The northern third of the island is recognized only by Turkey as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), while the southern two-thirds of the island (the Republic of Cyprus) has become an EU member state and a vibrant economic and tourist center in the eastern Mediterranean. Since the violent days of the 1960s and 1970s, a clear desire for resolution, expressed both by domestic and international forces, has overshadowed all diplomatic exchanges concerning Cyprus. The partition of the island has widened a division within NATO as the Cypriot-Turkish Conflict has magnified the Greek-Turkish dispute, and has further created an obstacle to cooperation between the European Union and NATO. Despite strong desires for resolution by all concerned parties, factors that contribute to prolonging the frozen conflict and thereby perpetuating the NATO-EU “participation problem” remain and have yet to be overcome. These factors include the positive status quo for the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) when compared with the TRNC, the strong influence of Russia on the issue, and the unavoidable influence of a turbulent history.

#### A. ECONOMIC STATUS QUO

Since 1974, the Republic of Cyprus has enjoyed tremendous economic growth and now enjoys a considerably higher standard of living than the TRNC. For example, the average per capita income of those living in the north is \$15,109.<sup>158</sup> By comparison, their southern neighbors enjoy an income over twice that at \$32,700.<sup>159</sup> The economic imbalance on the island stands out in the respective Gross Domestic Products, with the

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<sup>158</sup> Republic of Turkey, Turkish Ministry of Economy, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, [http://www.economy.gov.tr/portal/faces/home/disIliskiler/ulkeler/ulke-detay/Turkish%20Republic%20of%20Northern%20Cyprus?\\_afLoop=243495199311707&\\_afWindowMode=0&\\_afWindowId=197383t6u2\\_75#!%40%40%3F\\_afWindowId%3D197383t6u2\\_75%26\\_afLoop%3D243495199311707%26\\_afWindowMode%3D0%26\\_adf.ctrl-state%3D197383t6u2\\_95](http://www.economy.gov.tr/portal/faces/home/disIliskiler/ulkeler/ulke-detay/Turkish%20Republic%20of%20Northern%20Cyprus?_afLoop=243495199311707&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=197383t6u2_75#!%40%40%3F_afWindowId%3D197383t6u2_75%26_afLoop%3D243495199311707%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3D197383t6u2_95). The most recent available statistics provided by the Turkish Ministry of the Economy regarding the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are from 2014.

<sup>159</sup> CIA World Factbook, Cyprus, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cy.html>. This figure is from 2014 in order to provide a more accurate comparison. Per capita GDP for 2015 was \$33,600 and for 2016 was \$34,400.

TRNC producing \$4.032 billion and the Republic of Cyprus producing seven times more at \$28.05 billion. Since 1994, trade between the TRNC and the EU has been illegal, creating what Turkish-Cypriots refer to as an “embargo.”<sup>160</sup> This limitation has hurt the economy of the north while benefiting that of the south.<sup>161</sup> On average, the size of the TRNC’s economy is between a fifth and a seventh that of the ROC, and the TRNC relies heavily on Turkey for economic survival.<sup>162</sup> Though the entire island is officially part of the European Union, the “implementation of the ‘acquis communautaire’ has been suspended in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots...until political conditions permit the reunification of the island.”<sup>163</sup> This clear economic incentive has unfortunately not succeeded in overcoming the various other obstacles to resolution.

The stark contrast between the standards of living is not a secret to the islanders. Both sides of the conflict are well aware of the economic disparity, and this has become an influential factor in domestic politics. While the rest of the world seeks a peaceful resolution to this frozen conflict, the incentive for the typical Cypriot citizen of the Republic of Cyprus is not as powerful as one might imagine. With the latest estimates of the cost of Germany’s political and territorial reunification now at €2 trillion, Cypriots of both territories know on which side the economic burden of a resolution would fall.<sup>164</sup> Though estimates of the cost of Cypriot unification are substantially less than the cost of German unification (on the order of €25-€30 billion), it still proves a powerful disincentive for the ROC to compromise in any resolution settlement. Given that the ROC will likely “foot the bill” of Cypriot reunification, the two sides are not approaching the negotiating table on an equal footing. This makes the ROC less willing to compromise in key areas such as territory exchanges, citizenship rights, political structure, and security.

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<sup>160</sup> David Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 234.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 234–35.

<sup>162</sup> CIA World Factbook, Cyprus.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> J. Arthur White, “German reunification bill hits €2,000,000,000,” *The Local*, May 5, 2014, <https://www.thelocal.de/20140505/bill-for-german-reunification-runs-to-two-trillion-euros>.

This positive status quo for the ROC and its negative disposition toward further compromise is made clear in a recent opinion poll conducted throughout the Republic of Cyprus. This poll found that a settlement to the “Cyprus Problem” had fallen to the fourth place in a list of concerns for the average Cypriot and made clear that a “change from the status quo does not appear to be generating significant momentum on Cyprus.”<sup>165</sup> Unfortunately, it is exactly that indispensable “significant momentum” that is so desperately required for any sort of negotiated resolution.

Looking back on the long series of failed attempts to resolve the Cyprus problem, the British Special Representative for Cyprus, Sir David Hannay, cited this issue as pivotal. From his perspective negotiators had found it impossible “to get agreement to making the painful compromises necessary for a solution when the status quo was not urgently unsustainable and when the two parties had not been worn down by conflict.”<sup>166</sup> Without compromise there can be no solution on Cyprus, and this obstacle must be the first surmounted if any sort of positive dialogue is to result.

## **B. RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICS**

The “participation problem” and the larger schism that the division of Cyprus has created between NATO and the European Union present a serious obstacle to cooperation. In the zero-sum reality of realist international relations, obstacles to some are opportunities to others. Any check in cooperation between these two Euro-Atlantic institutions of economic and military might is clearly in the interest of their competition, which can take advantage of the weakness that disunity creates. Which power stands to gain from NATO-EU disharmony? The Russian bear looms as the prime suspect.

Russian, and previously Soviet, interest in Cyprus dates back long before the 1974 conflict. Recognizing the strategic significance of this “unsinkable aircraft carrier”<sup>167</sup> in the eastern Mediterranean, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact regarded Cyprus as an asset along the border between their respective spheres of influence. Beginning with the 1959

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<sup>165</sup> Vincent Morelli, *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive*.

<sup>166</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 228.

<sup>167</sup> Andrew Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 21.

London-Zurich Agreements, Moscow actively attempted to derail negotiations using its proxy, the Communist Party of Cyprus (AKEL), in order to “undermine the cohesion of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean.”<sup>168</sup> Moscow recognized that *enosis* could result in two unifications, the first being Cyprus with Greece, and the second being Cyprus with NATO. Fearing that the USSR would lose “its influence on a member state of the Non-Aligned Movement as Cyprus would become part of NATO,”<sup>169</sup> Moscow began to strengthen relations with the island. Seeking to stop NATO enlargement, the USSR began a campaign to create gridlock and drive the Cypriot-Greek-Turkish thorn deep in the side of NATO. Under the guise of Soviet intentions “to protect Cyprus, to save Cyprus and its people from the wolves of international imperialism,”<sup>170</sup> Cyprus and its domestic crisis became another front of the Cold War.

The fall of the Soviet Union has had little effect on Moscow’s policies vis-à-vis Cyprus. From the realist perspective, anything that hinders NATO or the European Union, or better yet both, is clearly a net gain for Russia. For decades, “Russia has consistently sought to position itself as a peer to the United States and NATO—sometimes as a partner and sometimes as a competitor,”<sup>171</sup> and Cyprus has been an element of that strategy. If NATO and the European Union, respectively powerhouses of the military and economic spheres, deepened their cooperation, the increase in military effectiveness and economic efficiency would force Russia to attempt to keep pace. For Russia, this could imply increased military spending, economic strain, international posturing, and diminished control over areas that Moscow views as within its sphere of influence. Intending to strengthen profitable relations with Cyprus in order to forestall resolution, Russia has positioned itself as a strong economic partner and has bought influence as a result. Owing to this mutually profitable relationship, Cyprus has repeatedly been described as Russia’s “Trojan Horse” in the European Union. The ROC

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<sup>168</sup> Makarios Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War* (Nicosia: Alfadi books, 2016), 9.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>170</sup> Drousiotis, *The Cyprus Crisis and the Cold War*, 133.

<sup>171</sup> Michael Cecire, “Russia’s Art of War: State Branding by Other Means,” *Foreign Affairs*, February 7, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2017-02-07/russias-art-war>.

frequently defends Russian interests, and the close economic ties between Cyprus and Russia create mutual benefit.<sup>172</sup>

Not only is the frozen conflict beneficial to Russia's geopolitical objectives; it is designed to maximize its economic profitability. Domestic and foreign policy interests regarding Cyprus are structured to create a profitable economic relationship with Cyprus, while carefully maintaining the rift that the island's conflict has created between Russia's long standing adversaries, NATO and the European Union. Of the roughly eight hundred thousand inhabitants of the island of Cyprus, one in twenty is Russian.<sup>173</sup> According to the Republic of Cyprus's Ministry of Finance, over 800,000 Russian tourists visited Cyprus in 2016, and trends indicate that Russia will surpass Great Britain as the largest tourist demographic visiting Cyprus by the end of the decade.<sup>174</sup> Described as "an offshore haven for post-Soviet money, tiny Cyprus is officially the biggest source of foreign direct investment in Russia."<sup>175</sup> In the second quarter of 2016 alone, little Cyprus accounted for over \$2.8 billion in investment funds in Russia, "more than twice as much as the next country."<sup>176</sup>

All aspects of Russia's economy have created ties with Cyprus, including its powerful organized crime syndicates. In 2016, an investigation revealed that a "syndicate of Russian officials and hard criminals"<sup>177</sup> known as the Klyuev Group had made Cyprus its base of European operations. Moving massive sums of money onto the island, the syndicate was able to create close ties with the island's banking industry. Exploiting this connection, untold millions of euros were successfully laundered via Cypriot banks as the

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<sup>172</sup> Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, *A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2007).

<sup>173</sup> Leonid Bershidsky, "Why Putin Would Want the Cyprus Talks to Fail," Bloomberg, January 16, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-01-16/why-putin-would-want-the-cyprus-talks-to-fail>.

<sup>174</sup> Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Finance, Statistical Services, Tourism, [http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/services\\_71main\\_en/services\\_71main\\_en?OpenForm&sub=1&sel=2](http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/services_71main_en/services_71main_en?OpenForm&sub=1&sel=2).

<sup>175</sup> Bershidsky, "Why Putin Would Want the Cyprus Talks to Fail."

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Andrew Rettman, "Cyprus in spotlight on Russia money laundering," *Euro Observer*. February 2, 2016, <https://euobserver.com/foreign/132111>.

ROC authorities allegedly failed “to apply money laundering legislation” in order to share in the profits.<sup>178</sup>

Further deepening ties to the conflict, Turkey imports over half its natural gas directly from Russia. This large dependence makes Russia Turkey’s largest energy sector supplier and Turkey one of Russia’s best customers. Russia’s Gazprom energy supplier is state-owned, meaning that what is in the interest of Gazprom is in the interest of Russia. This overlapping interest makes Russian foreign policy a tool for the country’s economic growth. Andrew Higgins of the *New York Times* notes that “a solution in Cyprus would end a deep rift within NATO between Turkey and Greece, both members, and open the way to the development of large gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean that could upset the grip of Gazprom, Russia’s state-controlled energy giant, on the Turkish market.”<sup>179</sup> If the frozen conflict on Cyprus was allowed to thaw, stronger economic ties between Cyprus and Turkey would create competition for Gazprom as Cypriot oil fields could take advantage of the geographic proximity to Turkey and begin to undercut Russian competition.

Moving beyond close economic relations, Russia has created strong military ties with the island, and it now plays a major role in Moscow’s operations in the Mediterranean. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 assured Moscow of continued warm-water access for its navy. However, its relative inaccessibility in the Black Sea limited the far-reaching intentions of the Kremlin. Recognizing that Syrian instability threatened Russia’s access to the military port of Tartus, Moscow adjusted its sights westward. Since Cyprus has been barred from NATO accession by Turkey’s unwillingness to recognize the ROC and allow its membership in the Partnership for Peace program, there was nothing to stop the ROC authorities from signing profitable and comprehensive agreements granting port access to Russian naval vessels. Clearly reminiscent of the Cold War, Moscow’s increased access to the Mediterranean has significant tactical implications. Access to Cyprus greatly extends the reach and

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Andrew Higgins, “Cyprus Fears Russian Meddling in Its Settlement Talks,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 2017. <https://nyti.ms/2kaGwb1>.



operational endurance of Russian military forces in the eastern Mediterranean by providing a convenient expeditionary refueling and resupplying depot. This allows Russian ships to remain on-station for drastically longer durations than when they were obliged to return to the Black Sea.<sup>180</sup> Claiming that “our friendly ties aren’t aimed against anyone,”<sup>181</sup> President Putin was able to exploit Russia’s economic influence with the ROC to gain access to a country that had been traditionally a NATO military asset, owing to the British Sovereign Base Areas on the island.

### C. COMPETING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Looming over all attempts at resolution is the enormous weight of the island’s history. Raised to believe competing narratives, each side feels that it is the proper heir to represent the country’s heritage. Divergent historical narratives have consistently burdened negotiations and functioned as obstacles to cooperation. Education in these two distinct interpretations, each diametrically opposed to the other, starts at an early age, as “children are brought up to regard the other side as the ‘enemy,’ taught bigoted songs at nursery and given time off to demonstrate on significant anniversaries.”<sup>182</sup> With the violence of the 1960s and 1970s two generations in the past, a growing majority of the island’s population did not experience this turbulent time first-hand. Rather, they think about these times only through the lens of their respective educations, and, in the words of Britain’s Special Envoy to Cyprus, Sir David Hannay, “the history syllabus taught to each side is a travesty.”<sup>183</sup>

Resulting from these competing interpretations of history are two specific mindsets with which each side approaches negotiations. The Turkish-Cypriots see themselves as a vastly outnumbered and economically downtrodden minority fighting for equality as they struggle to keep from being swallowed by the majority. Their traditional nightmare has been that in any resolution to the island’s division “those wily Greek

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<sup>180</sup> “Cyprus Signs Deal To Allow Russian Navy To Use Ports” BBC News, February 26, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31632259>.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 232.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

Cypriots would end up dominating a reunited Cyprus and repressing the Turkish Cypriots as they had done in the Cyprus of the 1960 agreements.”<sup>184</sup> Greek-Cypriots hold that their island has been split apart by an ongoing illegal military occupation, and that they are victims denied much of their historic homeland. This translates to fears that in any settlement the will of the people would be ignored as safeguards for the Turkish minority would amplify their role in politics and leave the island’s government vulnerable to being taken hostage by the Turkish-Cypriots and forced into shutting down, as in 1963.

Ethnographic research on Cyprus conducted by Rebecca Bryant of the London School of Economics and Political Science has shown that these narratives discount the centuries of peaceful cooperation and cohabitation by Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Aspects of history that are not in keeping with each group’s current narrative are ignored by politicians who feel that it is their historic duty to their constituencies to carry on in the same unsuccessful manner. These narratives must be refuted and new paths forward must be blazed that recognize and take “seriously the neighborliness that has survived three decades of separation.”<sup>185</sup> Bryant sees this as a vital factor in resolution negotiations and hopes that this “neighborliness...can now be put into political action.”<sup>186</sup> If the antagonistic narratives can be overcome, the vast common ground between these communities can create a new state that looks ahead to prosperity rather than back to conflict.

This collection of three factors that create obstacles to a resolution of the Cyprus problem is in no way comprehensive. Rather, this discussion of these issues is designed to highlight the depth and complexity of island’s troubles. Ranging from domestic economics and historical narratives with deep cultural meaning to major international geopolitics and superpower confrontation, the Cyprus problem will require major involvement by all parties in order to forge a lasting and comprehensive solution. Any resolution to the long-standing division of the island will require substantial domestic compromises, international support, and economic incentives. If these obstacles can be overcome, the dream of a united Cyprus may well be realized, facilitating NATO-EU cooperation.

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<sup>184</sup> Hannay, *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*, 231.

<sup>185</sup> Bryant, *Imagining the Modern*, 252.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

## **IV. DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF REUNIFICATION**

The Cyprus question has persisted for decades. Failed peace attempts litter the years since 1974, and the negative repercussions of the conflict continue to hamper intercommunal Cypriot cooperation, economic development, and most importantly, NATO-European Union cooperation. Now more than ever before, the powers concerned need to overcome this obstacle in order to enjoy the numerous benefits that will follow the resolution of the Cyprus problem. The political situation on Cyprus has remained essentially stagnant since the invasion in 1974, but changes in the eastern Mediterranean and in Europe make finding a solution now more important and more lucrative than in the past. The large natural gas deposits discovered in the eastern Mediterranean have created a strong financial incentive to unite the island in order to both share in and maximize the profit.

### **A. DOMESTIC ECONOMIC INCENTIVE**

The current economic conditions on Cyprus are unsustainable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the current disparity between income levels has created a stark distinction in quality of life for the island's respective inhabitants. Despite the relative prosperity enjoyed by the south since its 2004 accession into the European Union, recent studies by economists at Oslo's Peace Research Institute show that despite strong tourism revenue for the Republic of Cyprus, "both parts of the island are currently significantly underperforming."<sup>187</sup> With negligible total factor productivity, all indicators point "to a continued future of very weak overall economic growth and high unemployment."<sup>188</sup> With current unemployment levels in the Republic of Cyprus approaching twelve percent, up from only four percent in 2008, Cyprus can ill afford further job losses.<sup>189</sup> Solutions to Cyprus's economic concerns are, however, impossible in its current divided

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<sup>187</sup> Fiona Mullen, Alexander Apostolides, Mustafa Besim, *The Cyprus Peace Dividend Revised*. PCC Report 1/2014. (Oslo: Peace Research Institute, 2014), V.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> CIA World Factbook, Cyprus.

state. A resolution to the island's division would have both immediate and long-lasting economic benefits. Future resource exploitation aside, reunification would result in an economic windfall for the island through "opening up the Turkish market of 74m people to Greek Cypriots and the European Union market of 500m people to Turkish Cypriots."<sup>190</sup>

The service sector currently accounts for over 86 percent of the Republic of Cyprus's Gross Domestic Product and employs 81 percent of its workforce.<sup>191</sup> Reunification would allow tourist access to currently prohibited sites, including Larnaca's Hala Sultan Tekke mosque, Famagusta's St. Barnabas monastery and church, and the ancient ruins of Kourion and Salamis.<sup>192</sup> With an infrastructure already designed around tourism, the Cypriot economy is prepared to maximize the additional revenue that access to these high-demand locations would generate. Additionally, reunification would allow Cyprus to leverage its geostrategic location for economic benefit. Historically Cyprus's location made it an ideal target for conquest and its colonial past meant that profits would be sent to far away capitals. As an independent nation, the island's location potential at the crossroads of three continents could finally be realized to transform Cyprus into a regional business and trade hub. Since the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is unrecognized by all states but Turkey, opening northern ports that are currently off-limits to EU shipping would shorten trade routes and increase Cypriot profits. Further encouraging resolution, unification would remove complex legal restrictions on property and real estate, allowing for boosts in the construction and employment sectors as expansion into undeveloped areas of the island would drive new projects while lowering housing costs.<sup>193</sup>

Current forecasts for divided Cyprus's combined Gross Domestic Product over the next twenty years envisage a rise of approximately €25 billion. With the peace dividend that resolution would bring, GDP estimates for the same time frame nearly

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<sup>190</sup> Mullen, Apostolides, Besim, *Cyprus Peace Dividend Revised*, VI.

<sup>191</sup> CIA World Factbook, Cyprus.

<sup>192</sup> Mullen, Apostolides, Besim, *Cyprus Peace Dividend Revised*, VI.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

double to €45 billion. Divided per capita, that would equate to over €12,000 in additional annual income for each Cypriot.<sup>194</sup> The economic developments currently blocked by the island's division, if overcome, are predicted to overcome the island's stark income disparity between the Turkish and Greek communities in only twenty years!<sup>195</sup> Clearly there is a strong economic incentive for both communities to work together to overcome the division of the island.<sup>196</sup>

## **B. REGIONAL ECONOMIC INCENTIVE**

Expanding the focus from the domestic economy of Cyprus to the greater eastern Mediterranean region, reunification would clear the path for tremendous economic development that could have far-reaching implications for the world energy market. Importing 99 percent of its natural gas and 73 percent of its total energy needs has made Turkey second only to China in terms of natural gas demand growth.<sup>197</sup> Recognizing that Russia's state-owned Gazprom supplies over half of its natural gas, diversifying its energy supply has become a key Turkish policy priority.<sup>198</sup> Implementing steps to achieve this goal, Turkey and Israel have been working to strengthen ties after the disastrous 2010 *Mavi Marmara* incident in order to develop a natural gas pipeline. Energy partnerships in control of the Leviathan natural gas reservoir off Israel's coast are ready to begin construction of a pipeline to Turkey that could see up to 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas per annum flowing north as soon as 2019.<sup>199</sup> The only hurdle standing in the way of this plan for prosperity is Cyprus. Any pipeline between Israel and Turkey would have to run through Cypriot waters, and "Nicosia has said it will block any

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., VII.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> "Turkey's Energy Profile and Strategy," Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Yaacov Benmeleh and David Wainer, "Israel and Turkey Seek to Shield Natural Gas Ties From Politics," *Bloomberg*, December 12, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-12-12/israel-and-turkey-seek-to-shield-natural-gas-ties-from-politics>.

pipeline if the island stays divided.”<sup>200</sup> By adding the lucrative economic incentive of Israeli natural gas coupled with the energy sector security of diversified imports, “Ankara’s appetite for Israeli gas might just give it reason enough to back the reunification of Cyprus some 42 years after Turkish troops invaded and tore it asunder.”<sup>201</sup>

Further incentivizing Turkey to support reunification are recent discoveries that show that Israel is not its only potential new energy partner in the region. Noble Energy, a U.S. oil and natural gas exploration firm, made a major discovery off the southern coast of Cyprus in late 2011. Named after the most famous Cypriot, the Aphrodite Field is estimated to contain between 5 and 8 trillion cubic meters of natural gas.<sup>202</sup> To date, firms such as “ExxonMobil of the United States, Total of France, and Eni of Italy, have bid to drill for gas off the southern coast of the divided island.”<sup>203</sup> This discovery has the potential to transform Cyprus from a tourist destination to a major global energy supplier. Foreseeing windfall profits, Turkey has made clear that it “strongly opposes the development of Cypriot natural gas resources unless the Turkish Cypriots will share in the financial benefits or until a resolution of the ‘Cyprus problem’ is found.”<sup>204</sup> This statement shows that Turkey understands that Cyprus is taking steps to exploit its resources, and the sooner Turkey changes its policies the sooner it can share in the profits. With Cyprus only 100 miles off the Turkish coast, a pipeline connecting Turkey’s domestic market to Cypriot natural gas exports would significantly undercut Russia’s Gazprom while jump-starting the Cypriot economy. Furthermore, a pipeline to Turkey could allow follow on profits as “a transit for gas supplies to the EU.”<sup>205</sup> Hindering any chance at energy cooperation, however, is the fact that Turkey does not recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, thus making any sort of national import-export

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<sup>200</sup> Keith Johnson, “Can Natural Gas Put Cyprus Back Together Again?” *Foreign Policy* July 27, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/can-natural-gas-put-cyprus-back-together-again/>.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ratner, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*, 5.

<sup>203</sup> Johnson, “Can Natural Gas Put Cyprus Back Together Again?”

<sup>204</sup> Ratner, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*, 6.

<sup>205</sup> Mullen, Apostolides, Besim, *Cyprus Peace Dividend Revised*, 21.

deal impossible. Changing this non-recognition policy has tremendous economic potential for the region and, in the words of Sir Michael Leigh, senior fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, “gas might provide an incentive to Turkey to support the process [of Cypriot reunification].”<sup>206</sup>

Cyprus wants to export natural gas to Turkey, and Turkey needs to import natural gas from Cyprus. Neither side can afford to ignore the energy potential that lies off their coasts. The natural economic partnership made possible by their close geographic proximity makes the ongoing non-recognition policy not only a hindrance to NATO-European Union cooperation, but an impediment to their own domestic economic wellbeing. Overcoming the stagnation of the frozen conflict, their competing historical narratives, Russian influence, and a host of other factors would require tremendous courage and determination for both parties, but the reward would be worth the risk. Reunification is the path to tremendous domestic and regional economic wealth, and would mean a rapid improvement in the quality of life for both the citizens of Turkey and those of a unified Cyprus.

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<sup>206</sup> Michael Leigh, as quoted in Johnson, “Can Natural Gas Put Cyprus Back Together Again?”

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## V. CONCLUSION

### A. SCHISM DESPITE INTERDEPENDENCE

In a joint statement issued on December 6, 2016, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, announced that:

Today, more than ever before, the security of Europe and North America is interconnected. NATO and EU face a series of unprecedented security challenges emanating from the South and the East that need to be addressed in a concerted and complementary way that avoids unnecessary duplication.<sup>207</sup>

The reference to “unnecessary duplication” describes the inability of these two organizations to fully cooperate due in large part to the unresolved Cypriot-Turkish conflict. Described by Judy Dempsey of Carnegie Europe as “absurd, dangerous, and costly for both the EU and NATO,”<sup>208</sup> the Alliance and the EU can no longer afford to ignore this issue. Cooperation was increasing until the 2004 Cyprus issue derailed the positive steps the two organizations had made together. Of the several compelling reasons for the reunification of Cyprus, the most urgent is the facilitating effect it would have on NATO-European Union cooperation.

Publicly these two organizations claim to maintain close relations, but “behind closed doors, significant amounts of time and energy are wasted”<sup>209</sup> because of an inability to meet officially, share information, and cooperate in a meaningful manner. The root of the participation problem, in which the internal requirements of each organization create an environment where cooperation is impossible, is the frozen state of divided Cyprus. Turkey refuses to accord diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Cyprus. As a

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<sup>207</sup> NATO, “Statement on the implementation of the Joint Declaration signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” Issued December 6, 2016, [http://www.nato.int/cps/on/natohq/official\\_texts\\_138829.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/on/natohq/official_texts_138829.htm).

<sup>208</sup> Judy Dempsey, “Time to End the EU-NATO Standoff,” *Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, December 8, 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=57423>.

<sup>209</sup> Stephanie Hofman and Christopher Reynolds, “EU-NATO Relations: Time to Thaw the ‘Frozen Conflict,’” *German Institute for International and Security Affairs SWP Comments* 12, June 2007, 1.

result, the Turks veto its accession to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, a prerequisite for a security agreement for information-sharing and cooperation with NATO. The European Union, in turn, requires the full participation of all interested EU member states in matters relating to security, and with Cyprus unable to meet with NATO, the EU as a whole is unable to meet with the NATO Allies. This veto combination negates any possibility of cooperation beyond the single ongoing operation initiated before the 2004 freeze in relations- Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>210</sup>

Long aware of their interdependence and complementary abilities, the European Union and NATO were making great strides toward increased cooperation before the participation problem began. Prior to the EU initiating the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in 1999, all EU defense-related matters had been implemented by members of the Western European Union (WEU), a sub-group of EU members consisting of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.<sup>211</sup> Since all the members of the WEU were NATO members, there were no complications concerning cooperation as the WEU embodied “the European pillar of the Alliance and the defense instrument of the European Union.”<sup>212</sup> Policies shifted with the implementation of the ESDP, and control over WEU institutional resources shifted to the larger EU. Enabling this transition was the 2003 agreement known as “Berlin Plus” whereby under certain circumstances the EU would have access to NATO resources for the planning and execution of military operations.<sup>213</sup> This move was welcomed by NATO, as the Allies predicted that “a stronger European role will help contribute to the vitality of the Alliance, specifically in the field of crisis

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<sup>210</sup> Omer Taspinar, “Cyprus and the NATO-EU Divide,” *Brookings*, November 29, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/cyprus-and-the-nato-eu-divide/>.

<sup>211</sup> “Western European Union,” *Global Security*, Accessed May 22, 2017, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/weu.htm>.

<sup>212</sup> David Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2014), 253.

<sup>213</sup> European Union, “Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy,” August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016, [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/5388/shaping-of-a-common-security-and-defence-policy-\\_en#The+Berlin+Plus+agreement](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/5388/shaping-of-a-common-security-and-defence-policy-_en#The+Berlin+Plus+agreement).

management.”<sup>214</sup> Only two operations combining the political, economic, and military resources of NATO and the European Union were conducted between the 2003 implementation of Berlin Plus and Cyprus’s accession to the EU in late 2004. These successful peacekeeping missions were Operation Concordia in Macedonia from March to December 2003, and Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina starting in December 2004.<sup>215</sup> Since that time, the only operation which NATO and the EU can meet and discuss is Operation Althea since it predates the blockage to cooperation.<sup>216</sup> This period of military cooperation proved short lived, and practically “before the ink was dry on the so-called ‘Berlin Plus’ arrangements, NATO-EU relations entered into a deadlock.”<sup>217</sup> This deadlock is better known as the Cypriot-Turkish participation problem, and it has blocked NATO-EU cooperation since. Aside from Operation Althea, the only topic that the North Atlantic Council and the EU’s Political and Security Committee can discuss without the presence of Cyprus is capability development.

## **B. SHARED THREATS REQUIRE A SHARED RESPONSE**

Faced with numerous significant challenges, both organizations desperately need to strengthen their complementary roles to counter mutual threats. The status quo that has emerged since the 2004 accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union has been characterized by informal work-arounds, inefficiency, redundancy, and high financial costs.<sup>218</sup> The current arrangement is not sustainable and only serves to weaken both the Alliance and the European Union. As the European Union and NATO are inextricably linked by their shared member-states and complementary economic and military capabilities, inevitably a threat to one organization is a threat to both. The

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<sup>214</sup> NATO, “EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP,” December 16, 2002, press release (2002), 142, as quoted in Yost, 254.

<sup>215</sup> Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 254

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Sinem Akgul Acikmese and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, “The NATO-EU-Turkey trilogy: the impact of the Cyprus conundrum,” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, November 26, 2012. 12:4, 555–573.

<sup>218</sup> Hofmann and Reynolds, “EU-NATO Relations: Time to Thaw the ‘Frozen Conflict.’”

“security challenges emanating from the South and the East”<sup>219</sup> mentioned in the joint statement by Junker, Stoltenberg, and Tusk, are clearly references to “the explosive rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the massive influx of refugees to Europe, and continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and beyond.”<sup>220</sup> Neither organization can successfully confront these challenges without the other.

In addition to daunting security challenges, political crises are brewing as well. Decades of perceived unequal burden-sharing by the United States have brought renewed interest in NATO’s goal, reaffirmed in 2014, of achieving defense spending equal to or greater than two percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by each Alliance member.<sup>221</sup> Despite the Berlin Plus agreement, which established “ready access by the European Union to the collective assets and capabilities of the Alliance,”<sup>222</sup> the Cypriot-Turkish participation problem hinders this pooling of resources and forces the twenty-two NATO members that are also European Union member-states into redundant and costly duplication. Closer cooperation would make the results of meeting the two percent goal more substantial because the funds would be spent more productively and efficiently.

### C. FINAL THOUGHTS

In 2010 Herman Van Rompuy, then the President of the European Council, speaking on NATO and the EU, said, “The ability of our two organizations to shape our future security environment would be enormous if they worked together...It is time to break down the remaining walls between them.”<sup>223</sup> In order to confront the wide array of challenges facing both NATO and the European Union, closer cooperation is desperately

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<sup>219</sup> NATO Joint Statement issued December 6, 2016.

<sup>220</sup> Lauren Speranza, “Now is the Time to Put EU-NATO Cooperation Back on the Agenda,” *Atlantic Council*, February 2, 2016, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/now-is-the-time-to-put-eu-nato-cooperation-back-on-the-agenda>.

<sup>221</sup> Rob Page, *Defence Expenditure- NATO 2% Target*, House of Commons Briefing Paper Number CPB7343, October 21, 2015, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN07134>.

<sup>222</sup> North Atlantic Council, “Washington Summit Communique,” April 24, 1999, paragraph 10, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm>.

<sup>223</sup> Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, as quoted in Dempsey, “Between the European Union and NATO, Many Walls,” *The New York Times* November 24, 2010, <http://nytimes.com/2010/11/25/world/europe/25iht-letter.html>.

required now more than ever. The longer these key organizations remain separated by the participation problem, the harder it will be to address the significant regional and global crises facing them. The persistent conflict on Cyprus has derailed the “much needed security arrangements between the world’s most important military alliance and the most successful supra-national model of regional integration,”<sup>224</sup> and it can no longer be allowed to continue. Both organizations must commit their impressive resources and political will to resolving the frozen Cypriot conflict. At the micro level, the economic incentives for both the island and the region make reunification a financially lucrative prospect for both Turkish and Greek Cypriots as well as for Turkey, and at the macro level, the global security implications of effective NATO-EU cooperation are substantial.

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<sup>224</sup> Taspinar, “Cyprus and the NATO-EU Divide.”

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