

The Wisdom of Indifference: Henry Kissinger, Cyprus, and the Value of Deprioritizing

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2019

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2021

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The Wisdom of Indifference: Henry Kissinger, Cyprus, and the Value of Deprioritizing

submitted by Mina Rigby-Thompson in partial fulfillment of the requirements

the degree of Master of Arts

in History

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which top American policymakers, led by Henry Kissinger, crafted the American response to the Cyprus crisis in 1974. Cyprus is primarily comprised of two ethnic communities—Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The tensions between the two populations increased as Cyprus approached independence from Great Britain, which it achieved in 1960. Greece and Turkey maintained a vested interest in protecting their respective Cypriot communities, but the two countries had fundamentally incompatible goals for Cyprus. Athens desired for the island to unite with Greece, whereas Ankara wanted to partition the island into two separate states. The United States had no geostrategic interests in Cyprus itself, but as Greece and Turkey were two important Cold War allies, American policymakers had an interest in ensuring relative stability in the region.

The 1974 Cyprus crisis began when Greek military officers helped to orchestrate a coup d'état to depose the Cypriot President, Archbishop Makarios III. Turkey responded by launching a military operation on the island, which resulted in two rounds of United Nations-mandated peace conferences between the involved parties to negotiate a short-term ceasefire and then a longer-term solution. While not an official member of the peace conference process, the United States did have a significant interest in avoiding a Greek-Turkish war in the valuable Eastern Mediterranean region. The American response was led almost entirely by Henry Kissinger, particularly because Gerald Ford took office in the middle of the crisis. Against the advice of many within the broader American foreign policy establishment, Kissinger advocated for a policy of minimal American involvement.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines the American response to the 1974 Cyprus crisis. Greece and Turkey each have a long history with Cyprus and in the summer of 1974 were on the brink of war to secure their respective positions on the island. This thesis uses a variety of American foreign policy documents to explore how American policymakers understood the Cyprus crisis within the broader American foreign policy agenda. While all the policymakers agreed that preventing a Greek-Turkish war over Cyprus was essential, they disagreed on the way in which that goal should be achieved.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Mina Rigby-Thompson.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| Abstract..... | iii |
| Lay Summary..... | iv |
| Preface..... | v |
| Table of Contents..... | vi |
| List of Abbreviations..... | vii |
| Acknowledgements..... | viii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Greek-Turkish-Cypriot Relations and the Creation of the Pax Americana..... | 12 |
| A Greek Coup, a Turkish Invasion, and a Cypriot Crisis..... | 26 |
| A Second Invasion, Kissinger’s Disinterest, and the Pike Committee..... | 39 |
| Conclusion..... | 53 |
| Bibliography..... | 61 |

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NSA | National Security Agency |
| NSC | National Security Council |

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my supervisor Dr. Jeffrey Byrne who, over the past several years, has helped to inspire and guide my research interests. His support, encouragement, and guidance has been indispensable. I am grateful for his and my second reader Dr. Jessica Wang's thoughtful comments and suggestions during this process, and to Dr. Steven Lee for agreeing to be the third reader for this project.

Thank you to my friends and family who have offered their support, kind encouragement, and perspective throughout this experience.

Thank you to my fellow students in the History Department who have inspired me over the past two years. This process would have been so much more daunting without the supportive, encouraging, vibrant community we have with each other.

Additionally, I could not have completed this project without the generous financial support from the UBC Faculty of Arts and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Introduction

On August 9, 1974, Thomas Boyatt wrote a dissent memo to the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to express criticism of the American handling of the Turkish-Greek tensions over Cyprus. Former Secretary of State William Rogers established an official Dissent Channel in 1971 as controversy rose over the United States' position in Vietnam as Rogers felt there were no adequate avenues for State Department employees to communicate dissenting opinions.¹ The channel gave foreign service officers the opportunity to send their policy disagreements directly to the Secretary of State, who would then be required to read the memo, carefully consider its merits, and send a response directly back to the dissenting officer.² By early August 1974, Greece and Turkey were several weeks into a crisis which began when the Greeks sponsored a coup d'état to oust the Cypriot President and the Turks responded with military action. At the time of Boyatt's dissent memo, Turkey had responded to the coup with military intervention on Cyprus and both Athens and Ankara were in the midst of a second round of United Nations mandated peace conferences to attempt to find a political resolution to the crisis.

In his dissent memo, Boyatt argued that the “present crisis could have been prevented.”³ He emphasized that on May 17, State Department officials advised the American Ambassador to Greece of the need to make it clear to the Greek military junta that a “direct confrontation between Greece and Turkey would become inevitable” if the regime sponsored a coup to depose the Cypriot president and install pro-Greek leadership.⁴ Boyatt, a career diplomat and director of the Cyprus Bureau at the State Department, had been reviewing evidence for months which suggested that the Greek military regime supported

¹ Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Message on the Dissent Channel, August 8, 1995, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/of/abt/18990.htm>.

² Hannah Gurman, *The Dissent Papers: The Voices of Diplomats in the Cold War and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 171.

³ US Department of State, “Critique of the Substantive Handling of the Cyprus Crisis from Boyatt to Kissinger,” Dissent Channel Message, August 9, 1974, Department of State Records, Records of Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco, Record Group 59, National Archives.

⁴ *Ibid.*

overthrowing the Cypriot President and declaring “Cyprus part of Greece.”⁵ Boyatt knew that if Cyprus became united with Greece:

Turkey would invade Cyprus. I knew that. And I knew that if Turkey invaded Cyprus, we’d have two NATO armies fighting each other, illegally, with American supplied weapons and on the basis of American training, and that it would damage our position in the eastern Mediterranean for a generation, and provided - who knew at the time - what opportunities for the Soviets.⁶

There had been two previous Cyprus crises involving Turkey and Greece in the 1960s. American policymakers viewed Turkey as an essential geostrategic buffer zone between the Soviet Union and vital American oil interests in the Middle East. Given that Cyprus is only eighty kilometres off the southern Turkish coast, American officials had long been concerned that a crisis could make the island vulnerable to Soviet intervention, which could, in turn, threaten regional American interests. Boyatt’s short-term predictions came to fruition five days later on August 14, when Turkey launched a military operation on Cyprus which ultimately resulted in the Turkish military occupying a third of the island. That region of Cyprus to this day remains a self-declared independent state, recognized only by Turkey. Kissinger never responded to Boyatt’s dissent memo (despite the requirement to do so) and thanked him for his efforts by promptly removing the State Department’s top Cyprus expert from his position.

Fourteen months later, in October 1975, the Boyatt dissent memo continued to cause headaches for Kissinger and the White House administration. The House Select Committee on Intelligence, known as the Pike Committee after its chair, Otis Pike, a Democratic Congressman from New York, was established in 1975 to investigate illegal activities by the CIA, the FBI, and the NSA. Along with the Church Committee and the Rockefeller Commission, the Pike Committee resulted from broader efforts to investigate covert actions and executive branch overreach.⁷ As part of the investigation process, the Committee subpoenaed Boyatt’s official dissent memo. Kissinger responded by offering to provide a summarized version of the

⁵ Thomas Boyatt, Presentation at the Foreign Service Institute, September 30, 1992, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project (The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 1998), 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁷ Hannah Gurman, “The Other Plumbers Unit: The Dissent Channel of the U.S. State Department,” *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 2 (2011): 338.

dissent memo. Pike objected, arguing that the Committee should make its judgments based on the best evidence doctrine, and that “the best evidence of what Mr. Boyatt said is not your summary of it, or anybody else’s summary of it. It is what Mr. Boyatt said.”⁸ Ultimately, the State Department presented the Committee with a version of Boyatt’s memo which Chairman Pike described as having been “mixed into a number of other paragraphs drafted elsewhere in the State Department—ostensibly to protect Mr. Boyatt. It ended up very much like the proverbial ‘riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.’”⁹ The Committee also faced considerable obstacles in hearing Boyatt’s testimony due to a September 22, 1975 order that stipulated Boyatt was not to share any “information which would disclose options considered by or recommended to more senior officers in the Department,” and that any testimony given by Boyatt would “have to be in the presence of State Department monitors, by order of the Secretary.”¹⁰

Despite the obstacles in attaining evidence, the Committee did investigate the Cyprus crisis. Congressional opponents of the investigation successfully prevented the final report from being published publicly (in contrast with the Church Committee’s final report, which was published in April 1976) when it was completed in February 1976.¹¹ A copy of the report was leaked to CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr, who subsequently gave it to the *Village Voice*.¹² On February 16, 1976, the *Village Voice* published a lengthy expose on the report. Aaron Latham summarized the consequences of the American failure in Cyprus, stating that

the coup which the United States might have been able to prevent led not only to thousands of casualties, a near war between NATO allies, and a deterioration of our relations with Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. It also got an American ambassador killed. Roger Davies, our ambassador to Cyprus, was fatally shot during an anti-American demonstration at the embassy in Nicosia.¹³

⁸ Pike Committee Hearings - House Select Committee on Intelligence, 94th Congress, 1st session, 1975 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), 843.

⁹ *CIA: The Pike Report* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1977), 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹ David P. Hadley, *The Rising Clamor: The American Press, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Cold War* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 164.

¹² Hadley, *The Rising Clamor*, 164.

¹³ Aaron Latham, “The CIA Report the President Doesn’t Want You to Read,” *Village Voice* (New York), February 16, 1976, accessed through *The Village Voice Archives*, July 20 2020: <https://www.villagevoice.com/2019/09/16/the-cia-report-the-president-doesnt-want-you-to-read/>

The Committee found that the Cyprus crisis constituted an intelligence failure which, when considering the short and long term consequences, “may have been the most damaging intelligence performance in recent years.”¹⁴

Considering Kissinger’s failure to act on Boyatt’s concerns in the dissent memo, the administration’s significant attempts to avoid cooperation with the Pike Committee investigation, and the damning statements in the report describing American actions in Cyprus, it would seem natural to suggest that the administration failed in its handling of the crisis. Evidence was available and regional experts like Boyatt were clearly well attuned to the nuances of the crisis, its historical context, and the likely outcomes. Kissinger, on the other hand, was described by a fellow career diplomat as someone who “knew nothing about Cyprus and did not bother to inform himself.”¹⁵ This lack of regional knowledge and apparent disinterest in informing himself only compounded the degree to which Kissinger exercised a significant degree of control and influence over the direction of American foreign policy. Kissinger had “maneuvered himself to the forefront of American foreign policy to such an extent that foreign policy decision-making in Washington had virtually become a one-man show.”¹⁶ This approach to foreign policy, combined with his penchant for shuttle diplomacy, led George Ball, a former Ambassador to the United Nations and Under Secretary of State, to characterize Kissinger as trying to “run the State Department single-handedly from an airplane.”¹⁷

Kissinger’s hands-off approach to the Cyprus crisis could be regarded as a success for the United States. The conflict did not evolve into a serious Cold War crisis, despite Boyatt’s fears that it had the potential to, as he articulated in his memo. There were clear negative consequences to the crisis, both regionally and in terms of temporarily worsened American relations with Greece and Turkey. From the perspective of protecting American interests, the United States was still able to successfully enact its foreign

¹⁴ *CLA: The Pike Report*, 162-163.

¹⁵ George Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (New York: Norton, 1982), 359.

¹⁶ Andreas Constandinos, “US-British Policy on Cyprus, 1964-1974,” *The Cyprus Review* 23, no. 1 (2011): 32.

¹⁷ Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, 359.

policy agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the long-term, both Greece and Turkey remain members of NATO and even though a United Nations peacekeeping force has maintained a decades-long presence on the island, there have been no additional Cyprus crises since 1974. Kissinger's decision to pursue a policy of non-intervention did serve American interests. However, this policy was largely born out of Kissinger's relative indifference toward Cyprus and his lack of knowledge regarding the nuances of the crisis, particularly with regards to understanding the conflict as one with deep-seeded ethnic origins rather than primarily through a Cold War geopolitical lens. The Nixon/Ford/Kissinger era of foreign policy has numerous examples of excessive American interventionism, often with disastrous outcomes for states like Vietnam, Chile, and Cambodia. In contrast, the Cyprus case had a much more successful outcome, but a significant portion of that success has to be attributed to the unintended geopolitical benefits of disinterest, indifference, and deprioritization.

There was a significant shift in the landscape of global affairs from the early Cold War period to the 1970s. Bipolar superpower competition played less of a role in defining the state of international relations. The United States was also no longer the same type of industrial and economic dynamo that it had been in the early postwar period.¹⁸ In the 1970s, the United States shifted toward a foreign policy model wherein it preferred to delegate more regional security responsibilities to regional allies. In 1971, President Nixon argued before Congress that the United States was “at the end of an era. The postwar order of international relations—the configuration of power that emerged from the Second World War—is gone. With it are gone the conditions which have determined the assumptions and practice of United States foreign policy since 1945.”¹⁹ He stated that with the move away from “rigid” bipolarity, other nations “can and should assume greater responsibilities.”²⁰ The Nixon Doctrine advocated for reducing American interventionism in regional disputes that did not serve American interests.

¹⁸ Daniel Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

¹⁹ Richard Nixon, “Second Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy,” February 25, 1971.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

In this thesis, I argue that the success of the American non-interventionist Cyprus policy in 1974 relied more on unintended benefits and less on purposeful intent. While Nixon did advocate for a foreign policy doctrine based on less direct American involvement in regional disputes like Cyprus, it is clear from the available evidence that Kissinger's decision-making process was guided largely by his disinterest in Cyprus and lack of nuanced regional knowledge. Kissinger's approach to the Cyprus crisis can be regarded as a type of ironic success—Cyprus was not a priority for the Nixon or Ford administrations and it is perhaps this lack of interest in Cyprus which helped to push Washington toward a non-interventionist policy. In contrast, some of the regions that received the most Nixon-era attention, such as Chile, Cambodia, and East Timor, also suffered the most from disastrous American foreign policy interventions. Additionally, Cyprus being in Europe and Greece and Turkey both being NATO members also likely influenced the American reluctance to avoid direct involvement in the crisis. American policymakers were concerned that instability in the Eastern Mediterranean could result in Soviet intervention in the region. But without evidence of any clear and overt Soviet threat, though, there would be no significant advantage for the United States to intervene militarily in a conflict where the primary belligerents were both American allies and already solidly within the broader Western alliance and sphere of influence.

The Cyprus crisis features heavily in the existing scholarship of Greek and Turkish foreign policy, Cypriot history, US-Greek relations, and US-Turkey relations. However, the crisis itself is relatively absent from the field of US foreign policy. Historians of US foreign policy looking at the Eastern Mediterranean region have largely focused on US-Greek and US-Turkish relations during the early years of the Cold War. Prior to World War II, the dominant Western power in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions had been Great Britain. In the post-war period, however, London was economically devastated and incapable of maintaining its previous international presence. While Great Britain was still objectively a powerful country, particularly in military terms, Andrew Preston and Fredrik Logevall argue that its power was declining

relative to countries like the United States and the Soviet Union.²¹ This relative decline compared to the emerging superpowers created a power vacuum in the regions where British influence had previously been dominant, and the United States stepped in to take on that role—a type of unofficial transfer of power from Pax Britannica to Pax Americana.

Şuhnaz Yılmaz and Evanthis Hatzivassiliou argue that this transfer of power brought new challenges and opportunities for smaller states, like Turkey and Greece.²² Athens and Ankara were both keen to establish tangible relations with the United States with two main priorities: financial assistance and a clear defence relationship. The Greek military did not have the resources to protect itself from Bulgaria and Turkey was likewise worried about potential Soviet intervention, particularly regarding the Turkish Straits. Both Greece and Turkey were adamant about solidifying their respective relationships with the United States and viewed NATO membership as a way to ensure their security, as well as gain entrance to the Cold War Western alliance. The two countries coordinated their NATO policies as they attempted to gain membership, including sending troops to Korea to show their willingness to support a multi-nation defence strategy and demonstrate loyalty to the West.²³ Süleyman Seydi argues that Turkey was instrumental in shaping the early Cold War. Washington had no prior interest in the Turkish Straits, for example, until the Soviets began aggressively campaigning for control over them and Turkey appealed to the West for protection and assistance.²⁴ Turkey's key role in the early Cold War has been well-researched by historians such as Şuhnaz Yılmaz, Şaban Halis Çalış, and Mustafa Bilgin, who argue for Turkey's role as an active

²¹ Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston, "Introduction: The Adventurous Journey of Nixon in the World," in *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977*, 3-24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

²² Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "The transformation of Britain-Turkey-United States relations at the advent of the Cold War (1945-1952)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 56, no. 5 (2020); Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Frontline State, 1952-1967* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

²³ For more, see Spero Simeon Z. Paravantes, *Britain and the United States in Greece: Anglo-American Relations and Origins of the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021); Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Turkey's Quest for NATO Membership: The Institutionalization of the Turkish-American Alliance," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 12, no. 4 (2012); James Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History & Power, 1950-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Cameron S. Brown, "The One Coalition They Craved to Join: Turkey in the Korean War," *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 1 (2008); Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Frontline State, 1952-1967* (New York: Routledge, 2006); John Vander Lippe, "Forgotten Brigade of the Forgotten War: Turkey's Participation in the Korean War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000).

²⁴ Süleyman Seydi, "Making a Cold War in the Near East: Turkey and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1947," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17, no. 1 (2004): 113-114.

participant in shaping the early Cold War.²⁵ As much as Turkey needed American aid, assistance, and protection, the United States equally benefited from the relationship by having a solid ally in a region the Americans had deemed geostrategically crucial.

Greece's political situation was a priority for Washington, as top policymakers felt that preventing Athens from falling to communism was essential to the American goal of halting the spread of Soviet communism.²⁶ James Miller argues that while the Cyprus crisis sparked increased anti-Americanism in Greece and that Greek-American relations remain sensitive, ultimately the crisis had no significant negative consequences to the US-Greek relationship. In the period following the Cyprus crisis, the Greek military dictatorship fell and during the process of democratizing, Greece became a very reliable and strong American partner.²⁷ Evanthis Hatzivassiliou similarly argues that the Cyprus crisis contributed to a rise of anti-Americanism in Greece, but that the diplomatic relations most negatively impacted by the crisis were, in fact, Greek-Turkish relations.²⁸

My thesis will build on this existing body of literature in order to explore the American Cyprus policy. The United States' interest in Cyprus was driven by its pre-existing interests with Turkey and Greece. Peripheral countries such as Turkey and Greece undoubtedly played a significant role in shaping the direction and nature of the Cold War. Indeed, Şaban Halis Çalış argues that from beginning to end, Cold War history cannot be properly written without Turkey.²⁹ Turkey played an active role in helping to construct and maintain the Cold War, as the Turkish government felt that the nature of the Cold War was

²⁵ See, for example, Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Turkey's Quest for NATO Membership: The Institutionalization of the Turkish-American Alliance," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 12, no. 4 (2012); Şaban Halis Çalış, *Turkey's Cold War: Foreign Policy and Western Alignment in the Modern Republic* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017); Mustafa Bilgin, *Britain and Turkey in the Middle East: Politics and Influence in the Early Cold War Era* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007); and Didem Buhari Gulmez, "The Resilience of the US-Turkey Alliance: Divergent Threat Perceptions and Worldviews," *Contemporary Politics* 26, no. 4 (2020).

²⁶ For more on this, see Spyridon Litsas, *US Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean: Power Politics and Ideology Under the Sun* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020).

²⁷ James Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History and Power, 1950-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 9-10.

²⁸ Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Frontline State, 1952-1967* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

²⁹ Şaban Halis Çalış, *Turkey's Cold War: Foreign Policy and Western Alignment in the Modern Republic* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 2.

beneficial to Turkey's material, security, and ideological interests.³⁰ Historians often view the Cyprus crisis, however, as a small component of US foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Americans' evolving relations with Greece and Turkey. Cyprus does stand in contrast to some of the major Nixon and Ford-era foreign policy crises where the United States pursued interventionist policies, such as in Vietnam and Cambodia, often with disastrous and far reaching consequences. I argue that understanding the American response to the Cyprus crisis, a country most top policymakers did not consider to be an American priority, is an important addition to the broader existing historiography of American foreign policy in the 1970s. Cyprus highlights the difference in foreign policy decision-making for regions the United States paid little attention to, and this thesis will demonstrate how this contributed to the American response.

Daniel Sargent argues that the initial postwar world order broke down by the late 1960s, and with it, the Pax Americana that American policymakers had constructed in their postwar sphere of influence.³¹ My thesis builds on Sargent's work exploring the changes in the international order during the middle period of the Cold War and agrees with his assessment that international relations in the 1970s were fundamentally different than they had been in the fifteen or twenty years of the Cold War. However, rather than view the 1970s Pax Americana as a fractured and outdated model, I argue that the Cyprus crisis demonstrates how policymakers' deprioritizing Cyprus contributed to the Americans' decision to avoid intervening in a deep-seeded ethnic conflict overseas which had the potential to use significant American resources without a tangible resolution.

There is an extensive body of scholarship on Henry Kissinger's foreign policy. Notably, Jussi Hanhimäki and Mario Del Pero have both offered critiques of Kissinger's approaches. Del Pero argues that Kissinger's geopolitical focus was almost exclusively "Atlantic and Eurocentric," to the point of almost

³⁰ Ibid., 1.

³¹ Daniel Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.

avoiding the third world altogether.³² Hanhimäki similarly argues that Kissinger struggled to craft a successful foreign policy doctrine to adapt to detente, arguing that while he might have been an effective negotiator, he was unable to move away from some of the rigid bipolarity that had defined the early Cold War period, which ultimately limited the United States.³³ In contrast, Jeremi Suri argues that one of Kissinger's most successful attributes was his ability to maintain a core set of consistent beliefs and principles, but that he was flexible in their application based on circumstance.³⁴ My thesis owes much to the work of historians like Hanhimäki, Del Pero, and Suri. I adopt a similar approach to analyzing Kissinger as Thomas Schwartz, avoiding either of the two extreme perspectives on Kissinger's foreign policy—veering from war criminal condemnations on the one hand to hagiographic 'Super K' narratives depicting Kissinger as a paragon of diplomatic excellence on the other.³⁵

1975 was known as the Year of Intelligence due to the three major Congressional enquiries investigating the intelligence community and executive branch overreach.³⁶ Of the three, however, the Church Committee and the Rockefeller Commission have received the bulk of scholarly attention to date. The Pike Committee is largely discussed as the House companion to the Senate Church Committee, rather than discussed and explored in its own right, despite the Pike Committee investigating several important foreign relations and intelligence issues in addition to the Cyprus coup and subsequent crisis, including the Tet Offensive, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the 1974 coup in Portugal, and the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. My thesis will contribute to historiographical debates on 1970s US foreign policy,

³² Mario Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 59.

³³ Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), xvi-xviii.

³⁴ Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 3.

³⁵ Thomas Schwartz, *Henry Kissinger and American Power: A Political Biography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2020), 4-5.

³⁶ For more on the Year of Intelligence, see Dafydd Townley, *The Year of Intelligence in the United States: Public Opinion, National Security, and the 1975 Church Committee* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Peter Roady, "The Ford Administration, the National Security Agency, and the 'Year of Intelligence': Constructing a New Legal Framework for Intelligence," *Journal of Policy History* 32, no. 3 (2020); Brent Durbin, *The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Loch K. Johnson, "A Conversation with Former DCI William E. Colby: Spymaster during the 'Year of the Intelligence Wars,'" *Intelligence and National Security* 22, no. 2 (2007).

Kissinger's role within the broader US foreign policy apparatus, and the nature of successful foreign policy practice using a post-Vietnamization lens to balance ensuring American interests are protected with avoiding prolonged involvement and entanglement in other nation's disputes as much as possible.

The available evidence clearly demonstrates that the United States was interested in Cypriot affairs solely due to two of its allies' long-standing tensions over an island in a region the Americans considered geostrategically vital to its own interests. However, I argue that the Cyprus crisis is an important event to consider within the wider history of American foreign policy in the 1970s. On one hand, the conflict represents a successful example of a revised 1970s-era Pax Americana foreign policy model focused on protecting American interests with minimal direct overseas engagement in regional disputes. On the other hand, Kissinger's non-interventionist policy was clearly driven by general disinterest and lack of knowledge in Cypriot affairs. This thesis will demonstrate that the American response to the Cyprus crisis was ultimately successful in terms of protecting American interests and advancing American goals, but that the success was largely the unintended result of the United States' indifference to Cyprus.

Chapter one of this thesis will chart the creation of the Pax Americana with a specific focus on the nature of American postwar relations with both Turkey and Greece, demonstrating the vital geostrategic importance that the United States placed on the Eastern Mediterranean during the Cold War. Additionally, I will discuss the historical context for the 1974 Cyprus crisis and will explore American, British, Greek, and Turkish objectives and interests regarding Cyprus and their respective aims during the 1974 crisis specifically. In the second and third chapters, I will explore the nature of the American reaction and response to the conflict. Chapter two will focus on the events of July 1974—the Greek-supported coup on July 15, the first Turkish military operation on July 20, and the first peace conference in Geneva from July 25-30. Chapter three will focus on the second Geneva peace conference from August 8-14 (during which Boyatt wrote his dissent memo, dated August 9) and the second Turkish military operation on August 14.

Greek-Turkish-Cypriot Relations and the Creation of the Pax Americana

When William Handley, the new US Ambassador in Turkey, arrived in Ankara to start his new post in 1969, he was greeted by a letter from the outgoing US Ambassador in Cyprus, Taylor Belcher. Belcher cautioned that the American tendency to place Cyprus on the “back burner of our diplomatic discourse with the Turkish Government” was a problem that he hoped Handley could remedy.³⁷ Diplomats in the region paid minimal attention to the persistent Cyprus problem until, “on several different occasions, it erupted to become our central concern.”³⁸ Belcher closed the letter by cautioning Handley that there had been several instances where the countries involved had come very close to war over the Cyprus dispute. Belcher was not the first, nor would he be the last, to recommend that the United States needed to take an active role in pushing for a Cyprus resolution. Those responsible, though, for crafting the overarching big picture American foreign policy remained of the opinion that the United States should have as little involvement with Cyprus and the Greek-Turkish tensions over the island as possible. When crises did arise, the American response tended toward short-term crisis management and de-escalation rather than involving itself in searching for long-term solutions. Starting in 1960, when Cyprus achieved independence from Great Britain, top American policymakers were clear that an ideal Cyprus policy would include as little American involvement as possible. The National Security Agency described Cyprus as having “been important to the United States primarily because the controversy over the future status of Cyprus caused a dangerous deterioration of Greek-Turkish and Greek-British relations and disrupted NATO cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.”³⁹

From the start of the Cold War, the United States considered Turkey and Greece to be essential to its broader foreign policy strategy. Cyprus was relevant to American interests only because it was a point of tension between two important American allies and NATO members. It was also located close to Turkey’s

³⁷ Letter from the Ambassador to Cyprus (Belcher) to the Ambassador to Turkey (Handley), Nicosia, June 20, 1969 (Document 342), *Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS]*, 1969-1976, Volume XXIX, Eastern Europe; Eastern Mediterranean, 1969-1972.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ National Security Council Report, NSC 6003: Statement of US Policy Toward Cyprus, Washington, February 9, 1960 (Document 347), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region; Soviet Union; Cyprus.

southern coast, a region that American policymakers deemed geostrategically vital, as Turkey provided a geographic buffer between the Soviet Union and American oil interests in the Middle East. This chapter begins by charting the creation of the Pax Americana, specifically focusing on the nature of postwar American relations with Turkey and Greece. Starting with the Truman Doctrine in 1947, it was clear that the United States considered the Eastern Mediterranean to be a vitally important region for its own Cold War interests. While Cyprus was not central to the United States' geopolitical goals, the island's location and historic ties with Greece and Turkey meant that it remained on the American radar even if it was not a priority. Additionally, this chapter will also discuss the historical context for the 1974 Cyprus crisis and explore American, British, Greek, and Turkish interests and objectives as the crisis occurred.

On March 12, 1947, President Harry S. Truman gave a speech before Congress introducing the policy objectives which would be further developed into the Truman Doctrine. Truman directly requested assistance for Greece and Turkey. He focused on the unstable political and economic state of Greece, imploring Congress to supply assistance to ensure the country remained free and democratic, especially since, as Truman stated, there were no other countries willing or able to extend that assistance to Greece.⁴⁰ Despite Turkey's comparatively more stable position, Truman also requested assistance to help Turkey modernize, which would strengthen its national integrity, which, in turn, would be "essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East."⁴¹ In his address to Congress, Truman stressed that Great Britain was no longer able to continue providing support to Greece and Turkey due to London's need to reduce or liquidate "its commitments in several parts of the world."⁴²

Great Britain's relative decline in global power in the postwar period created a power vacuum, which the United States stepped in to fill. The United States was in a unique position in the immediate postwar period—not only did the country not require any economic reconstruction, its economy had actually been flourishing. Sumner Welles, a Foreign Service diplomat and Under Secretary of State, described the war as

⁴⁰ Harry S. Truman, "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress," Speech, United States Congress, March 12, 1947.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

having enhanced “the magnitude of our material resources and the supreme quality of American industrial capacity.”⁴³ This economic position and the strength and capacity of the American military to protect American interests on a global scale gave the United States the type of postwar and early Cold War geopolitical options that other countries simply did not have. As Stephen Wertheim argues in his account of the American efforts to pursue global supremacy, “the capacity to lead the world would count for nothing without the will to do so.”⁴⁴ The unofficial transition of power from Pax Britannica to Pax Americana was not inevitable or accidental—American policymakers explicitly chose to pursue a national policy predicated on achieving the type of global supremacy and primacy that accompanies superpower status. The establishment of the Bretton Woods system helped to solidify the Pax Americana as the Pax Britannica’s successor and outlined a new international order predicated on American supremacy.

The bipolar nature of the Cold War almost necessitated increased US-Turkish relations. Turkey’s location made it a type of geographic buffer between the Soviet Union’s growing Eastern bloc and the rest of the Middle East. In addition to being deemed geostrategically valuable to the United States, Turkey also needed American support to protect itself against Soviet aggression. The Soviet Union’s desire to gain some degree of control over the Turkish Straits pre-dated World War II, as Moscow hoped it would help strengthen Soviet security and expand into the Mediterranean region.⁴⁵ Washington’s interest in the Straits was solely due to the increasing Soviet aggression, as they had previously identified no American strategic value there.⁴⁶ In March 1945, the Soviets launched a campaign of daily criticism directed at Turkey via the official Soviet press, which both Ankara and London suspected could be an early stage of a Soviet plan to make increased demands about the control of the Straits.⁴⁷ Under increased Soviet pressure, Ankara

⁴³ Sumner Welles, “The American Opportunity,” Address at Lafayette College, PA, June 24, 1944, Box 196, Sumner Welles Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum as cited in Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of US Global Supremacy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020), 163.

⁴⁴ Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World*, 164.

⁴⁵ Süleyman Seydi, “Making a Cold War in the Near East: Turkey and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1947,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17, no. 1 (2004): 114.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 115; for an example of the Soviet press concerning Turkey at this time, the March 21 edition of *Izvestiya* contained an article entitled “Regarding Soviet-Turkish Relations” which asserted that “it cannot go unmentioned that during present war Soviet-Turkish relations have left much to be desired at various times. Automatically to leave in force a treaty concluded under

appealed to both London and Washington for support, although London lacked the ability to offer meaningful assistance. Turkey's primary desire in the conflict over the Straits was to retain independence and not "become a Soviet satellite."⁴⁸ The United States shared this goal, as the State Department indicated in 1945 that the primary American interest in the Straits was to ensure the "continuance of a genuinely independent Turkey."⁴⁹

While the United States' concerns regarding Turkey in the early Cold War were primarily geostrategic, the concerns for Greece were more political and financial. American policymakers were concerned about Greece's political stability, particularly in the face of Bulgarian and Yugoslavian claims on Greek territories in 1946 and the 1946-1949 Greek civil war where Greek communist forces were supported by communist Eastern European countries.⁵⁰ In January 1946, the United States Ambassador in Greece argued that if the United States failed to "deal with the Greek problem with imagination and understanding at this moment, it is our view that the present democratic government will certainly fall and probably be succeeded by a regime of the extreme right which, in turn, could scarcely fail to produce in a due course a Communist dictatorship."⁵¹ The Ambassador emphasized that the problem was "critical" and a "matter of extreme urgency," and explained that he felt it was his duty to warn the Secretary that if the United States did not step in, "Greece will not only be a source of grave political trouble for some time to come, but will also in all probability be condemned to bloodshed and famine."⁵² While preventing Greece from falling to communism was clearly important in the United States' early Cold War foreign policy, Washington was clear that Turkey was the most important country in the region for furthering American interests. In August

completely different circumstances would not, of course, be in internal interests of either side. It would also not be in interest of fruitful development of international relations as whole at time when democratic countries united for defeat of German aggressor have already concerned themselves with laying foundation for lasting peace," Cable from American Ambassador in the Soviet Union to the Secretary of State, March 21, 1945 (Document 1183), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The Near East and Africa, Volume VIII.

⁴⁸ Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State "The Problem of the Turkish Straits," December 19, 1945 (Document 622), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Near East and Africa, Volume II.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Frontline State, 1952-1967* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8.

⁵¹ The Ambassador in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State (868.00/1-1146: Telegram), Athens, January 11, 1946 - 1pm (Document 49), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Near East and Africa, Volume VII.

⁵² Ibid.

1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff summarized Turkey's importance and potential if provided with the necessary equipment and support:

Strategically Turkey is the most important military factor in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. She is one of the few national entities and the only nation now possessing, according to best available information, a firm resolution to oppose the apparent Soviet policy of expansion in the area. While lacking an effective navy and air force, Turkey possesses a rugged and considerable ground army which, particularly if properly equipped and supported, is capable of offering material resistance, even to the Soviets, if the nation is attacked.⁵³

Keeping Greece solidly within the American sphere of influence was necessary, but it is clear top American policymakers considered Turkey the more geostrategically vital of the two.

By making Greece and Turkey such important parts of its early Cold War foreign policy, the United States, perhaps unwittingly, gained an interest in the continued stability of Cyprus, a small island approximately eighty kilometres off the southern coast of Turkey. Cyprus is comprised of two distinct ethnic communities—Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Greece's Cypriot connection dates back to 1400 BC, when Greeks from the Asia Minor and Aegean regions began populating the island.⁵⁴ The island remained culturally Greek until the Ottoman Empire colonized it in 1571.⁵⁵ Great Britain took administrative control of the island in 1878 and Cyprus later became a formal British colony in 1923.⁵⁶ This transfer of power to Great Britain not only introduced a formalized imperial management of the island, but it also added another state in addition to Greece and Turkey which had a vested interest in Cypriot affairs. Neither Turkey nor Greece had any formalized relationship with Cyprus in the way that Great Britain did during this period, but due to the ethnic make-up of the island, both Athens and Ankara felt strongly about advocating for their respective populations and having a say in determining Cyprus' future. When Cyprus gained independence in 1960, its constitution reflected the island's ethnic divisions. The constitution

⁵³ Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, August 23, 1946 (Document 675), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa, Volume II*.

⁵⁴ Clement Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

⁵⁵ William Mallinson, *Cyprus: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 3.

⁵⁶ Harry Anastasiou, *The Broken Olive Branch: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and the Quest for Peace in Cyprus, Volume I: The Impasse of Ethnonationalism* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 5.

included specific clauses which called for a Greek Cypriot President and a Turkish Cypriot Vice-President.⁵⁷ The constitution was created alongside a Treaty of Guarantee, which granted guarantor powers to Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey to maintain the “independence, territorial integrity and security” and overall constitutional order on Cyprus.⁵⁸ The treaty not only solidified the three states’ interests in Cyprus, but also gave them the power to intervene on the island to prevent threats to Cyprus’ constitutional stability. While Cyprus was ostensibly a newly independent state in 1960, the terms of the Treaty of Guarantee rendered Cyprus a virtual protectorate with Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain all with a formalized role in Cypriot affairs.

The relationship between Greece and Turkey is equally as complicated on the international stage as it is on Cyprus itself. The two countries have a long, and oftentimes adversarial, history with one another. In many respects, each state’s position in the current global order can be traced back to fighting the other for nation-state status.⁵⁹ Modern-day Greece was born out of an independence war in 1821 against the Ottoman Empire, which had previously ruled much of today’s Greek territory for centuries.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Republic of Turkey emerged after defeating the Greek occupation of the Western Anatolia region in the post-World War I years.⁶¹ Both countries also share a unique geography, being spatially and psychologically located between the boundaries of East and West, although this has been a far greater consideration for Turkey than Greece.⁶² After a period of relative friendship in the 1930s and 1940s, Greek-Turkish relations

⁵⁷ “The State of Cyprus is an independent and sovereign Republic with a presidential regime, the President being Greek and the Vice President being Turk elected by the Greek and the Turkish Communities of Cyprus respectively,” from Article 1, Part I: General Provisions, 1960 Cyprus Constitution, accessed November 28, 2020, through the Constitute Project, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Cyprus_2013?lang=en.

⁵⁸ Treaty of Guarantee, signed at Nicosia, August 16, 1960, Articles I and IV.

⁵⁹ Mustafa Aydın, “Contemporary Turkish-Greek Relations: Constraints and Opportunities” in *Turkish-Greek Relations: Security Dilemma in the Aegean*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (London: Routledge, 2004), 23.

⁶⁰ John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Modern Greece: A History Since 1821* (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 2.

⁶¹ Ryan Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the Age of Atatürk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 64 and 66.

⁶² Mustafa Aydın, “Contemporary Turkish-Greek Relations: Constraints and Opportunities” in *Turkish-Greek Relations: Security Dilemma in the Aegean*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (London: Routledge, 2004), 23.

experienced an increase in tension starting in the mid-1950s over the issue of the potential decolonization of Cyprus.⁶³

Athens, along with much of the Greek Cypriot population, had a longstanding goal of imposing a policy called *enosis* (unification), which was the political unification of Greece and Cyprus. This goal dated back to 1821 when the Greeks were battling the Ottomans for independence and became a type of national inspiration for Greek Cypriots.⁶⁴ Archbishop Makarios, the President of Cyprus, initially supported *enosis* but after his election as president of the newly independent Cyprus, he declared that Cyprus would be a non-aligned country, much to the Greek government's annoyance.⁶⁵ Makarios publicly supported *enosis*, but put his terms for it "impossibly high" to the point where, "in practice," he was working to achieve the continued "independence of the Cyprus Republic."⁶⁶ In line with his non-aligned orientation, Makarios purchased arms from Czechoslovakia, a move which irritated Greece and Turkey.⁶⁷ Makarios' desire to pursue an independent Cypriot foreign policy, and his seeming growing disinterest in *enosis*, was a complicating factor for Greece. Understandably, considering the intense Greek desire to push for *enosis* and Makarios' Cypriot-first style, the Archbishop spent several years worried about potential death threats, especially after several unsuccessful attempts to kill him. In fact, when the 1974 crisis broke out and there were unconfirmed reports that Makarios was dead, Kissinger expressed surprise that Makarios had not been killed earlier.⁶⁸

When it came to Cypriot independence, Turkey's greatest fear was that Greece would gain control of the island. Cyprus is located off the coast of Turkey and the Turks feared that if Cyprus was independent

⁶³ Leonidas Karakatsanis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society, and the Politics of Friendship* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 6-8.

⁶⁴ Şevki Kıralp, "Cyprus between Enosis, Partition and Independence: Domestic Politics, Diplomacy and External Interventions (1967-74)," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 6 (2017): 591.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Warner, "The United States and the Cyprus Crisis of 1974," *International Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2009): 130.

⁶⁶ Mr. S.L.J. Olver (British High Commissioner in Nicosia) to Sir A. Douglas-Home (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), Nicosia, 24 October 1973 (No. 1), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

⁶⁷ Telegram From the Embassy in Cyprus to the Department of State, Subject: Consequences of Makarios' New Arms Deal with Czechoslovakia, Nicosia, February 17, 1972, 1615Z (Document 390), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXIX, Eastern Europe; Eastern Mediterranean, 1969-1972*.

⁶⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Subject: Cyprus, Washington, July 15, 1974, 10:18-10:43am (Document 80), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

or in union with Greece, that this would give the Greeks a geostrategic advantage vis-a-vis the Turks.⁶⁹ This fear was to such a degree that Ankara would have preferred “an indefinite continuation of British administration” if the island would not be partitioned into separate Greek and Turkish sections.⁷⁰ Adnan Menderes, then the Turkish Prime Minister, stated that the only change to the administration of Cyprus that Turkey would even consider was partition. He argued that “any other arrangement which did not finally separate Turkish and Greek administration would only prolong communal strife and be exploited by the Greeks for their own side.”⁷¹ Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots favoured *taksim* (partition or division), a solution which would partition the island between the two ethnic communities and their respective metropolises. Despite the Turkish Cypriots being the minority population, Turkish leaders felt that by advocating for partition, they were doing Athens a favour, since they were graciously not seeking to claim the entire island.⁷² By pursuing a policy of partition, the Turkish leaders felt they were making a sacrifice for the greater good—compromising to ensure a peaceful resolution.⁷³ The British High Commissioner in Nicosia reported in 1973 that, in his view, the Turkish authorities’ strategic goal was to “ensure that Cyprus shall never come under Greek or other hostile foreign control.”⁷⁴

The 1960 Cypriot independence agreement forbade both *enosis* and *taksim*, and included a provision that any major policy decisions must have the approval of the Turkish Cypriot vice president.⁷⁵ Neither side was truly satisfied with the agreement and the arrangement did not offer much in the way of resolving the underlying ethnic separation between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots.⁷⁶ This dissatisfaction

⁶⁹ Vassilis Fouskas, “Reflections on the Cyprus Issue and the Turkish Invasions of 1974,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2001): 112.

⁷⁰ Cable from British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office, November 27, 1957, FO 371/130098, British National Archives, London, England.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Seçkin Barış Gülmez, “From Indifference to Independence: Turkey’s Shifting Cyprus Policy in the 1950s,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 56, no. 5 (2020): 747; unsurprisingly, Greek leaders did not view it the same way.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Mr. S.L.J. Olver (British High Commissioner in Nicosia) to Sir A. Douglas-Home (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), Nicosia, 24 October 1973 (No. 1), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

⁷⁵ Fouskas, “Reflections on the Cyprus Issue and the Turkish Invasions of 1974,” 116.

⁷⁶ Helge Jensenhaugen, “Filling the Void?: Turkish Settlement in Northern Cyprus, 1974-1980,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 7, no. 3 (2017): 357.

and continued underlying ethnic tension meant that neither side truly abandoned their original goals, but would have to search for alternative methods to achieve them. *Enosis* and *taksim* were fundamentally incompatible, so any successful negotiations would require both sides to abandon their original goals for a new compromise or for one side to acquiesce to the other. Neither prospect seemed overly likely. The United States had no desire to involve itself in the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus. In 1960, the American Cyprus policy was merely “that it is [an] area of primary Greek-Turkish-UK interest.”⁷⁷ The United States was reluctant to involve itself in Cypriot affairs, but as Great Britain’s ability to maintain a presence in the region continued to dwindle, Washington became slowly more involved. The State Department was concerned about tension between the Cypriot ethnic communities devolving into serious conflict because of the potential consequences for American interests. The State Department described its concern in Cold War terms, stating that a conflict on Cyprus “could afford opportunities for expansion [of] communist power in Cyprus, endanger Greek and Turkish governments and seriously weaken NATO.”⁷⁸ The top American policy-makers were interested in Cyprus only insofar as they were interested in maintaining stability in, and good partnerships with, Greece and Turkey. If Athens and Ankara, two of the most geostrategically important states in the Western alliance, were not involved in a seemingly never-ending dispute over Cyprus, it is unlikely that the United States would have involved itself at all in Cypriot affairs.

The first major Cold War-era Cyprus crisis began in December 1963. A Greek Cypriot police officer killed two Turkish Cypriot civilians during a traffic stop and the event resulted in heavy violence between the two communities.⁷⁹ The traffic stop killing was the catalyst, but tensions between the two populations had been steadily brewing over the Cypriot constitution. In 1962, Makarios, a Greek Cypriot, stated that he would “disregard or seek revisions” to parts of the constitution which he felt Turkish Cypriots were abusing

⁷⁷ Cable from the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey, December 17, 1960 (Document 363), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region; Soviet Union; Cyprus*.

⁷⁸ Cable from the Department of State to the Embassy in Cyprus, January 9, 1963 (Document 268), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey*.

⁷⁹ Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict*, 51.

to gain an advantage in the government, which he argued was “endangering the Republic’s existence.”⁸⁰ The Cypriot constitution protected the Turkish Cypriot role in the government, including guaranteeing them the Vice President position. Makarios argued that the constitution was only a “temporary accommodation,” which worried Turkey and Turkish Cypriots.⁸¹ Just before the December 1963 crisis began, Makarios sent a letter to the Vice President suggesting a series of thirteen constitutional amendments, later known as Makarios’ Thirteen Points, which would have reduced some of the existing protections the Turkish Cypriot population received in the original constitution.⁸²

It is unlikely that the United States would have involved itself in the crisis if Turkey had not threatened a military response. While the United States preferred a diplomatic solution to the crisis, the Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü felt that the “time for persuasion [had] now passed,” and that Turkey only had two options—“either submit to Makarios or beat some sense into his head by force.”⁸³ With geostrategic consequences in mind, President Lyndon B. Johnson was determined to convince Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü not to launch a military operation on Cyprus. Johnson sent a harshly worded letter to İnönü which threatened to revoke American, and potentially even NATO, support if a Turkish operation on Cyprus prompted a subsequent Soviet intervention, stating that

I hope you will understand that your NATO allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Cable from the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State, January 5, 1962 (Document 254), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey.*

⁸¹ Cable from British Ambassador to Turkey, December 13, 1962, FO 371/163839, British National Archives, London, England.

⁸² Makarios sent the Vice President a letter with his Thirteen Points on November 30, 1963, which included suggestions for a unified administration of justice (rather than Greek Cypriots tried by Greek Cypriot judges and Turk Cypriots by Turkish Cypriot judges), a reduction of Turkish Cypriot members of public service, army, and security forces from 30% (40% for the army) to 18% to reflect the true population percentage, 13 Points by Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicosia, November 30, 1963.

⁸³ Cable from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, May 12, 1964 (Document 43), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey.*

⁸⁴ Lyndon B. Johnson and İsmet İnönü, “Correspondence between President Johnson and Prime Minister İnönü, June 1964, as released by the White House, January 15, 1966,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 3 (1966): 387.

The threat of revoking support for a fellow NATO member in the face of a Soviet threat sent a strong message about Turkey's place in the Western alliance. Under Secretary of State George Ball described the letter in his memoir as the "the most brutal diplomatic note [he] had ever seen" and stated it was the "diplomatic equivalent of the atomic bomb."⁸⁵ Ball went on to state that he felt the Johnson letter would prevent İnönü from invading Cyprus in the short-term, but that he did not know "how we'll ever get him down off the ceiling after that."⁸⁶ Johnson's message accomplished the short-term goal of defusing the crisis, as Turkey did ultimately choose not to pursue a military operation, but did nothing to move Turkey and Greece toward a more longstanding solution.

In November 1967, tensions once again boiled over. On November 15, Turkish Cypriots were attacked in the southern villages of Agios Theodoros and Kofinou in a premeditated event planned by the Greek Cypriot National Guard and Greek police officers.⁸⁷ The Turkish government viewed the conflict on Cyprus as one with Athens, rather than a Turkish-Cypriot one. The three countries directly involved all had very different desired outcomes, which were largely incompatible with each other. Greece—now under a military dictatorship after colonels had taken over several months prior—wanted to unite the island with Greece, the Turks wanted to partition the island, and Makarios wanted to maintain an independent Cyprus. The Americans' were primarily concerned that two of their most geostrategically important NATO allies would clash, and that they would do so with American supplied weapons.

American diplomats in Cyprus were tasked with finding out what was going on each side and determining what "elements could be fed into a negotiated solution, as opposed to a military solution."⁸⁸ The Turks made an effort to make their willingness to use military force clear, not just to Greece, but also the United States and Great Britain. Thomas Boyatt, then stationed in Cyprus, recalled that:

⁸⁵ Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, 350.

⁸⁶ Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, 350.

⁸⁷ Cihat Göktepe, "The Cyprus Crisis of 1967 and its Effects on Turkey's Foreign Relations," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41.3 (2005), 438.

⁸⁸ Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt, interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy, March 8, 1990, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 12.

the Turks kept turning up the pressure, doing all sorts of cute things like they sent their military attaché over to be, “Please give us the map coordinates of every house where there is an American.” They did the same thing with the Brits, “because we’re planning air attacks at any minute.” That sort of stuff.⁸⁹

Both sides were supported with a flood of mainland troops and officers—Greek officers with the Greek Cypriots and Turkish officers with the Turkish Cypriots, which Boyatt described as completely “illegal on both sides.”⁹⁰ For Turkey, the Cyprus issue remained a dispute with Greece, rather than one with Cyprus itself. Greece’s strongest motivation was to secure *enosis* and, ideally, avoid future Turkish intervention with the island at all.

The United States was determined to prevent an inter-NATO military conflict between two allies in a vulnerable geostrategic region. Johnson appointed Cyrus Vance, a lawyer and former Deputy Secretary of Defense, to mediate the situation on behalf of the United States.⁹¹ Vance and his hastily assembled team quickly went to Ankara, with Johnson instructing him not to attempt to find a final and permanent solution to the Cyprus problem but to “do what you have to do to stop the war [...] good luck.”⁹² Washington desperately wanted to avoid the outbreak of war but needed to tread carefully with Turkey considering the Johnson letter three years prior left the Turks feeling angry and betrayed. The Turks were reluctant to trust an American mediation of the conflict, and the Foreign Minister and the Cabinet were worried that Vance was merely a “living Johnson letter.”⁹³

The key factor in Vance’s success in quickly preventing a potential war—the entire 1967 Cyprus Crisis lasted less than a month from the initial outbreak to the resolution—was the limited scope of his mission. Vance was not tasked with finding a permanent solution to the Cyprus issue, nor overcoming centuries of conflict and problems in the Greco-Turkish relationship.⁹⁴ He met with government officials in

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁹¹ Parker T. Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War: Cyprus, A Firsthand Account of Crisis Management, 1965-1968* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1990), 68.

⁹² Personal notes of Cyrus R. Vance, undated, Yale University Archives, Papers of Cyrus and Grace Sloane Vance, M.S. 1664, Series I, Box 2, Folder 16.

⁹³ Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War*, 69.

⁹⁴ The State Department expressed clearly in 1967 that the Cyprus issue itself was “trivial compared [to] peace between Greece and Turkey” in the view of the American interests in the region and that their responsibility was the “support [the] central US

Athens and Ankara, shuttling between the capitals in an attempt to mediate between the two countries with the help of the American ambassadors in each country. The purpose of this shuttle diplomacy was solely to prevent the outbreak of war. It was a short-term mission with Vance being given limited instructions and he was not tasked with considering the long-term implications of whatever solution he deemed would be necessary to prevent war in late 1967. Despite Vance's presence and mediation efforts, it was ultimately not the American diplomatic intervention which prevented a Greek-Turkish war. Neither Athens nor Ankara truly wanted to declare war over Cyprus, given their respective military positions.⁹⁵ Washington was keen to avoid conflict in the region, but Vance's shuttle diplomacy efforts were secondary to the Greek and Turkish decisions to not pursue military action.

It is additionally important to note one important political factor which distinguished the 1974 crisis from the previous conflicts: all of the involved governments, with the exception of Turkey, were experiencing significant domestic turmoil in the lead up to the crisis. That summer represented the peak of the Watergate scandal, and Nixon's resignation came during the month-long critical period of the Cyprus crisis. The United States was forced to contend with domestic unravelling whilst simultaneously attempting to preserve the stability of NATO's southeastern flank and avoid war between two of its most important regional allies. In Great Britain, Foreign Secretary James Callaghan was determined to distance the British government from involvement in Cypriot affairs and was also attempting to replace the then-Prime Minister, Harold Wilson.⁹⁶ Greece's formal government had no power, its bureaucratic institutions were crumbling, and the military junta that had been in charge was not a cohesive unit but was instead divided into multiple sub-factions.⁹⁷ In November 1973, the Greek President Papadopoulos was ousted by

national interest," Cable from the Department of State to the Embassies in Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, November 23, 1967 (Document 318), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey.*

⁹⁵ Neither side had a clear military advantage over the other: the Greeks had a naval advantage, but the Turks had the advantage in the air and on land, Summary Notes of the 579th Meeting of the National Security Council, November 29, 1967 (Document 332), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey.*

⁹⁶ James Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History and Power, 1950-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 186; Callaghan would eventually succeed in this and replaced Wilson as Prime Minister in April 1976.

⁹⁷ Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece*, 185-186.

Dimitrios Ioannides, the Chief of Military Police.⁹⁸ The new regime under Ioannides had a very close connection with Cyprus and felt Makarios was not radical or pro-*enosis* enough for their liking.⁹⁹ In Cyprus, Makarios was still President but was constantly threatened by the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Greek military who sought to oust him from power.¹⁰⁰ Kissinger speculated that Makarios was not intensely pro-*enosis* because he “preferred the presidency of an independent country to the governorship of a Greek province,” and once the military junta took power in 1967, Makarios was increasingly perceived as an “obstacle to fulfilling Greece’s national mission.”¹⁰¹ Turkey, by virtue of simply not being in the midst of internal disorder, was the most internally stable country of the five interested parties. Athens, Nicosia, and Washington were in political crisis, London had a Prime Minister with diminished authority in Parliament, and Ankara seemed primed to take advantage of the relative chaos and political weakness. If the United States had been disinterested in involving itself in the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus in the 1960s, it certainly was not more inclined to prioritize the Cyprus crisis during the height of the Watergate scandal and in the midst of Gerald Ford transitioning into office.

⁹⁸ Jan Asmussen, *Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict During the 1974 Crisis* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 17.

⁹⁹ Asmussen, *Cyprus at War*, 16-17.

¹⁰⁰ Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece*, 186.

¹⁰¹ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 198.

A Greek Coup, a Turkish Invasion, and a Cypriot Crisis

At 6am on July 15, 1974, Henry Kissinger received a memo from the National Security Council reporting that the Nicosia embassy had sent word that the “Greek-officered National Guard on Cyprus has taken over the government and Archbishop Makarios is reported dead.”¹⁰² The crisis was in its early hours and information was still quite limited. The British High Commissioner in Cyprus sent a similar telegram to the Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, reporting that the Nicosia airport was sealed and controlled by tanks, telephone lines had been cut and the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority was “believed to be under the control of [the] National Guard,” and that the “Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation has just announced the death of Makarios.”¹⁰³ There had been tension between Makarios and the Greek junta, which only intensified in November 1973 when the Greek Chief of Military Police, Dimitrios Ioannides, ousted the Greek President Papadopoulos. Ioannides’ regime felt that Makarios was not radical or pro-*enosis* enough.¹⁰⁴ The potential for a Greek-orchestrated coup was well-known, not just to the Americans but amongst other countries in the region as well.¹⁰⁵ The Greeks installed Nikos Sampson in Makarios’ place. Sampson was described by the Washington Special Actions Group as a far right-leaning “killer...[with] twelve notches on his gun.”¹⁰⁶ Even Ioannides, the leader of the coup which installed Sampson as President,

¹⁰² Memorandum From Rosemary Niehuss of the National Security Council Staff to Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, July 15, 1974, 6 a.m. (Document 79), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁰³ Mr. Olver (Nicosia) to Mr. Callaghan, No. 180 Telegraphic [WSC 1/10], Nicosia, 15 July 1974, 8.15am, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series III, Volume V: The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon (London: Whitehall History Publishing, 2006); the High Commissioner position is equivalent to Ambassador, the top diplomat in another Commonwealth country is the High Commissioner, whereas the top diplomat in a non-Commonwealth country is an Ambassador.

¹⁰⁴ Asmussen, *Cyprus at War*, 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ For example, in March 1974, the Secretary General of AKEL (the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus) spent the night in Sofia, Bulgaria en route to Moscow. While in Bulgaria, the Secretary General informed the Bulgarian Communist Party’s Central Committee that Ioannides was preparing a coup d’etat with the goal to “oust Makarios,” Report to Todor Zhivkov Regarding a Request for Arms Delivery to Cyprus in View of a Possible Greek Coup on the Island, March 19, 1974, History and Public Program Digital Archive, Central State Archive, Sofia, Bulgaria, fond 378-B, file 1138, papka 3, obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group, translated for the Cold War International History Project by Kristina Terzieva, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113661>.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group (Subject: Cyprus), July 15, 1974 (Document 80), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

described him as “crazy,” but that Sampson was the choice of the Greek Cypriot nationalists¹⁰⁷ It would not be until the next day, after a call between Kissinger and Callaghan, that the United States felt confident confirming that Makarios was, in fact, alive.¹⁰⁸

Under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain all had the right to take action to protect the constitutional status quo on Cyprus. While the United States did not have a similar guarantor power to intervene on Cyprus, it also had the benefit of not having any obligation toward protecting Cyprus or its political stability. The Americans were free to act solely in their own best interests, as they had no rights or obligations from the Treaty of Guarantee to consider in their decision-making the way that Athens, Ankara, and London did. This chapter focuses on the events of July 1974—the initial coup which started the crisis, the Turkish military response, and the first UN-mandated peace conference in Geneva. The United States avoided any decisive action in the early days of the crisis, led by Kissinger who preferred to wait and watch the crisis unfold before committing the Americans to a course of action. Regional experts like Thomas Boyatt certainly felt that the United States was too lax in responding to the Cyprus crisis. However, Kissinger was responsible for the big picture of American geopolitics. Cyprus was not, and never had been, an American priority. The only reason the crisis was on the American foreign policy radar in the summer of 1974 was because of the potential threat to Eastern Mediterranean and NATO stability.

Approximately four hours after Kissinger received word of the crisis, the Washington Special Actions Group met to discuss the events which had unfolded overnight. Sisco, acknowledging that there was too much confusion and uncertainty to take any concrete action right away, clearly outlined that the two most important objectives for the United States should be to “do what we can to avert war between Greece

¹⁰⁷ Telegram From the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, Athens, July 16, 1974, 1645Z (Document 88), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁰⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Washington, July 16, 1974, 10:36-11:20am (Document 86), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*; Kissinger and Joseph Sisco relayed conflicting reports about Makarios and potential British or United Nations protection, but despite this, Kissinger stated that “everyone, at least now, agrees that Makarios is alive.”

and Turkey; and do what we can to avert Soviet exploitation of the situation.”¹⁰⁹ Kissinger was less focused on the former, as he felt that the primary American priority “should be to prevent any kind of Soviet action.”¹¹⁰ Callaghan, Kissinger’s British counterpart, later stated in his memoirs that British and American responses to the crisis were relatively uncoordinated. While Great Britain had an obligation to Cyprus under the Treaty of Guarantee, the United States had no such relationship or background. Washington was primarily focused on avoiding

an extension of Soviet influence in the Middle East, and to the extent that this meant preventing Turkey and Greece from getting at each other’s throats, British and American policy coincided. But it also resulted in the United States being less willing to antagonise either the Greek Colonels in the early stages of the conflict or the Turks in their invasion.”¹¹¹

For his part, Kissinger viewed Callaghan’s approach of blaming the Greeks for the coup and then blaming the Turks for the invasion as contradictory and impractical.¹¹² From the outset, London and Washington appeared to be on different pages with regards to their understanding of the crisis.

While American policymakers had initially feared Makarios might be sympathetic to communism, by 1974 they regarded him more as “a nuisance than a menace.”¹¹³ In particular, Kissinger maintained that while the administration was “wary” of Makarios, they had always treated him respectfully and were in no way supportive of him being overthrown in a coup.¹¹⁴ The United States was clear about this position with Greece, including in the immediate aftermath of the coup when the American Ambassador in Greece visited Ioannides to discuss the recent events. When Henry Tasca explained that the Americans supported Cypriot independence and opposed any attempts to force *enosis*, Ioannides “literally blew up, jumped up, backed up, knocked over a table, broke empty glass, and uttered a strong obscenity” in response.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Subject: Cyprus, Washington, July 15, 1974, 10:18 - 10:43am (Document 80), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*; the meeting was chaired by Henry Kissinger and included representatives from the State Department, Defense Department, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Council, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ James Callaghan, *Time and Chance* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1987), 339.

¹¹² Geoffrey Warner, “The United States and the Cyprus Crisis of 1974,” *International Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2009): 143.

¹¹³ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 199.

¹¹⁴ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 199.

¹¹⁵ Cable from the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, July 16, 1974 (Document 88), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

Despite the outcome of the 1964 and 1967 crises, Turkey never abandoned the idea of using military action to further its interests on Cyprus. A year prior, in 1973, the Turkish foreign minister had stated that if the issues on Cyprus “became a threat to the security or rights of the Turkish Cypriot community, Turkey was ready and determined to take action to eliminate that threat” and continued to emphasize that “our Cyprus policy has been established for years. Governments change but the Cyprus policy remains unchanged.”¹¹⁶ American officials worried that the fact that Turkey had been persuaded to back down in 1964 and 1967 would only increase their desire to intervene in 1974 to finally have a chance to settle things on the island.¹¹⁷

The Washington Special Actions Group met on the morning of July 18 to agree on the immediate next steps. Kissinger expressed that the United States was “not opposed to Makarios,” but that the goal was for the Americans to “try to avoid taking a stand.”¹¹⁸ This view was reflected in the meeting’s three main conclusions—the Joint Chiefs of Staff would look into what types of military units were available to move to Cyprus and how long it would take to move them to the island; the amphibious task force would stay 24 hours away from Cyprus for the time being; and the United States government would not cut-off military aid to Greece.¹¹⁹ In the meantime, Joseph Sisco, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, was sent on a diplomatic mission to London, Ankara, and Athens to attempt to push for a non-military solution to the coup. In his July 18 meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, Ecevit emphasized that the Turks were adamant about “strengthening the Turkish presence in Cyprus” and explained that he felt the coup was an attempt at “creeping *enosis*.”¹²⁰ Unwilling to bend to American interests, Ecevit laid out what the Greeks would need to agree to in order for Turkey to back away from military intervention. The Turks demanded that Sampson be replaced, Greek officers withdrawn from Cyprus, and Turkish troops be

¹¹⁶ Cable from Harrison, February 13, 1973, FCO 9/1697, British National Archives, London, England.

¹¹⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 207.

¹¹⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Washington, July 18, 1974, 11:41am-12:22pm (Document 94), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Excerpts from Joseph Sisco’s notes from his mission to London, Ankara, Athens, National Archives, Record Group 59, Records of Joseph Sisco, 1951-1976, Entry 4505, Box 21, Cyprus 1974-75, included in Document 96, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

allowed on the island to protect the Turkish Cypriot community.¹²¹ The United States was focused on preventing a Turkish military intervention, as American policymakers felt strongly that the Soviets could exploit the situation to enhance their own position in the Eastern Mediterranean.¹²² Given Ecevit's hardline stance on the situation, Sisco would need to convince him to focus on long-term consequences, including the possibility that a Turkish intervention could be detrimental to Turkish interests.¹²³ Kissinger, meanwhile, seemed skeptical that Sisco would be able to accomplish this, complaining to Nixon that Sisco was nervous about travelling to Athens because of the potential danger due to anti-American sentiments and assured the President that if Sisco did not "lose his nerve completely," then there was a chance the Greeks could be convinced to negotiate.¹²⁴

When Sisco met with Ioannides the next day in Athens, it was clear that the United States would not be able to easily force a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Upon hearing the Turkish demands, Ioannides retorted that the Turks "might just as well have asked for the surrender of Athens at the same time. If they have so much confidence in themselves, let them land on the island" He then threatened that Greece would certainly go to war if the Turks launched a military offensive.¹²⁵ The Greek officials did not seem to fully believe that Turkey would truly send troops to Cyprus. David Tonge, a BBC correspondent in Athens, contacted the Greek Ministry of Information to ask about the news that the Turkish navy had launched ships at sea. The official responded that "there is nothing to worry about. The Turks have formed a habit of going out to sea every year or two just to breathe Mediterranean air and then return home."¹²⁶ By the time Sisco was able to convince them that they needed to come to the negotiating table with real concessions for Ankara to avoid an invasion, it was too little, too late. Sisco reported that he had the "distinct impression

¹²¹ Mehmet Ali Birand, *30 Hot Days* (Nicosia: K. Rustem & Brother, 1985), 11-12.

¹²² Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Posts (Nicosia, London, Paris, Bonn, Athens, Ankara, USNATO, USUN, USCINCEUR, and the White House), Subject: Policy Considerations in Cyprus Situation, Washington, July 18, 1974, 2344Z (Document 97), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger, San Clemente, July 19, 1974, 10:06pm PDT (Document 103), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹²⁵ Birand, *30 Hot Days*, 16.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

that no matter what is done in this situation, the Turks see it as an ideal time to achieve by military intervention a longstanding objective, namely, double-enosis.”¹²⁷ Athens had opened a door for Turkey, which seemed determined to make use of the opportunity it had been granted.

The 1960 Treaty of Guarantee gave Greece, Great Britain, and Turkey the right to “take action with the sole aim of re-establishing the state of affairs created by the present treaty.”¹²⁸ Greece had threatened Cypriot constitutional order by orchestrating a coup against Makarios, so there was no question that the state of affairs established by the treaty had been altered. Greece was the instigator of the conflict, so it would clearly not be intervening on Cyprus with the intention of restoring a constitutional order it had just helped to disrupt. The third guarantor power, Great Britain, refused to intervene militarily, a choice which the British Parliament later heavily criticized. In 1976, a British parliamentary report scathingly criticized the government for not intervening on Cyprus in 1974, particularly given its role under the Treaty of Guarantee. The report summarized London’s lack of action by stating “Britain had a legal right to intervene, she had a moral obligation to intervene, she had the military capacity to intervene. She did not intervene for reasons the government does not wish to give.”¹²⁹ Based on Great Britain’s refusal to intervene on the island, and Greece’s role as the instigator of the chaos, it was impossible for the three countries to proceed with an agreed upon course of action to return Cyprus to the state of affairs laid out by its constitution. Thus, by the terms of the Treaty, Turkey felt more than justified in acting alone to ensure the safety of Cyprus following the coup.

Turkey’s obligations as a guarantor power were not the sole motivator in Ankara’s decision to send troops to Cyprus. In a July 15 meeting, the Turkish Finance Minister suggested that a military operation had become inevitable due to the state of world affairs during détente.¹³⁰ Smaller states now had more room to

¹²⁷ Telegram From the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, Athens, July 19, 1974, 1707Z (Document 99), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹²⁸ Treaty of Guarantee, signed at Nicosia, August 16, 1960, Article IV.

¹²⁹ As cited in John Burke, *Britain and the Cyprus Crisis of 1974: Conflict, Colonialism, and the Politics of Remembrance in Greek Cypriot Society* (London: Routledge, 2014), 20.

¹³⁰ John Sakkas and Natalia Zhukova, “The Soviet Union, Turkey, and the Cyprus Problem, 1967-1974,” *Les Cahiers Irice* 1, no. 10 (2013), 130.

maneuver and the Turks felt as though the superpowers were less likely to interfere in regional conflicts to force solutions, but might be inclined to want to appease states like Turkey. The Finance Minister went on to state that

the most important aspect of today's coup is not the installation [to power] of Sampson, the murderer of Turks and British, but the inevitability that Greece would soon be our southern neighbour. Greece is about to take this last step. This should be prevented.¹³¹

It is clear from these remarks that the responsibilities of Turkey under the terms of the Treaty of Guarantee were not the sole factor in its decision to intervene militarily on Cyprus. Ecevit argued that a Greek-controlled Cyprus posed a serious security threat to Turkey, as it meant that the central and southern Anatolia region would be within range of the Greek air force.¹³² The framing of the intervention was diplomatic, but the discussions put forward within the Turkish National Security Council indicate that Turkish authorities were also heavily motivated by strategy and national security concerns.

A day before the military operation launched, on July 19, Ecevit met with Sisco a second time. The meeting and topic echoed the conversations between Johnson and İnönü a decade earlier when Johnson used the threat of withdrawing NATO support to force Turkey to abandon its existing Cyprus policy. The similarity was not lost on Ecevit, who made a poignant reference to the infamous Johnson letter when Sisco asked for an additional forty-eight hours to formulate a plan which might solve the Cyprus issue without the need for military action. Ecevit responded:

No! Mr. Sisco, it is now too late. A similar meeting to this was held in this very room ten years ago. On that occasion both Turkey and the US made mistakes. You erred by standing in our way, we erred in listening to you. History may repeat itself, but we are not obliged to repeat the blunders of the past. No! We will not listen to you this time; we will not repeat the mistake we made ten years ago and I hope that neither will you. Because of that error, Turkish-American relations have been embittered for the last decade.¹³³

Ecevit's statement above demonstrates the depth of the effect of the Johnson letter from 1964. While the letter had resulted in a short-term success for the United States, it had had a profound psychological effect

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Birand, *30 Hot Days*, 19.

for Turkey. The Turks viewed the letter as a violation of NATO principles and a source of national humiliation, which contributed to a wave of anti-Americanism within Turkish politics.¹³⁴ Ecevit's choice to reference the 1964 crisis and allude to the Johnson letter suggests that, in part, the Turkish authorities viewed 1974 as an opportunity to right the mistakes of the past.

The American policy regarding Greek-Turkish tensions over Cyprus had always been to do what was necessary in the short term to avoid a major crisis between two NATO members in a region Washington considered geostrategically vital to its own interests. Underscoring that goal was a desire to use as few American resources as possible to diffuse tensions and prevent Cyprus from becoming a major focal point in American foreign policy. In 1964, with the United States highly concerned about the potential for the Soviet Union to take advantage of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean, Johnson chose to pursue quite a heavy-handed policy in an effort to force Turkey into backing down from its threats to pursue military action. One of the founding tenets of NATO was the all-important Article V, which stated that an attack against any member state would be construed as an attack against the whole alliance.¹³⁵ Johnson's threat to revoke NATO support in the event of a Soviet intervention in 1964 played a significant role in Turkey's decision to reverse course on a military intervention. By 1974, Ankara had had a decade to think about the 1964 crisis and the Johnson letter. Several months before the crisis broke out, British officials had identified that a significant motivation for Turkey when determining its Cyprus policy was the "government's need to out-shine their predecessors in their own public's eyes."¹³⁶ The legacy of 1964, which George Ball had predicted at the time, only served to strengthen Turkey's resolve a decade later.

The Turkish invasion on Cyprus was short-lived, and prompted an immediate meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the recent developments. Having heard statements from the Cypriot President, along with representatives from Cyprus, Turkey, and Greece, as well as other member states, the

¹³⁴ Fiona Adamson, "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2001): 286.

¹³⁵ The North Atlantic Treaty, Article 5, Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949.

¹³⁶ Cable to Goodison, February 26, 1974, FCO 9/1949, British National Archives, London, England.

Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 353 on the very same day as the invasion, July 20.¹³⁷ The overarching goal was to arrange a cease-fire between Greece and Turkey, which would be a difficult goal to achieve, as neither side showed a strong willingness to compromise. Kissinger found this frustrating, and described the two countries as being “obsessed with their blood feud” and that “neither Ankara nor Athens are ready to negotiate.”¹³⁸ Resolution 353 demanded an “immediate end to foreign military intervention in the Republic of Cyprus,” and called upon Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to “enter into negotiations without delay for the restoration of peace in the area and constitutional government in Cyprus.”¹³⁹

The United Nations-mandated peace conference with Greece, Turkey, and Great Britain began in Geneva on July 25, less than a week after Turkey had launched its military intervention. Turkey and Greece were each represented by their Foreign Ministers: Turan Güneş and George Mavros, respectively, while James Callaghan represented Great Britain. In the lead-up to the conference, the British Foreign Office expressed concern about the difficulty of negotiating a solution between two states with such a long history of conflict. In preparing their agenda for the talks, a British Foreign Office official stated that it would be difficult to “deal with the Cyprus problem without touching on other aspects of Greco Turkish relations,” but that it was essential to attempt to keep the talks solely focused on the present Cyprus issue.¹⁴⁰

As the United States was not a guarantor power, it was not invited to participate in the peace conference as a main member. However, the country had significant interests in a stable Mediterranean region, and therefore, were invested in the potential dispute resolution. On July 22, before the peace conference began in Geneva, the United States established an official Cyprus Task Force to serve as the “coordinating body for all [State] Departmental activity relating to the Cyprus crisis,” and which included a

¹³⁷ United Nations Security Council Resolution 353, July 20, 1974, adopted unanimously at the 1781st meeting, United Nations Digital Library.

¹³⁸ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 220.

¹³⁹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 353, July 20, 1974, adopted unanimously at the 1781st meeting, United Nations Digital Library.

¹⁴⁰ Cable from Tomkys, Agenda for the First Conference Session, July 23, 1974, FCO 9/1916, British National Archives, London, England.

specific Cyprus Planning Group to prepare “political and military intelligence reports, situation reports, and analytical and policy papers” regarding the crisis.¹⁴¹ The Americans’ interests in the region were based almost entirely on securing stability, with minimal preference for how that stability was achieved. Showing consistency with the Johnson administration’s Cyprus policy, the goal was to diffuse the immediate crisis and avoid an inter-NATO war, and as long as that goal was achieved with as little American intervention as possible, the Nixon administration would consider it a success.

The conference was in jeopardy before it had even begun, as days before its opening date, the Greek military junta collapsed and the new direction of the Greek government was uncertain. On July 23, Sisco explained to Kissinger that Callaghan was considering starting the Geneva conference without any Greek representatives. Kissinger spoke on the phone with the British Ambassador to the United States, informing him that “under no circumstances” would the United States “support a conference on Cyprus without the Greeks.”¹⁴² The root of this insistence on full Greek participation in the Geneva conference was not due to a strong interest in negotiating a fair settlement to the Cyprus dispute, but rather out of concern that the perception of a “US-UK-Turkish gang up on Greece” would mean that the new Greek government would be anti-American from the beginning, making it much more difficult for the United States.¹⁴³ The United States had significant military and strategic interests in the region, including military facilities in both Greece and Turkey. These facilities were of “major military importance” and provided, among other benefits, “command, control, and communications for the eastern Mediterranean,” and “a US presence which demonstrates US resolve to support NATO’s southern flank.”¹⁴⁴ Strategically, Greece and Turkey

¹⁴¹ Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hartman) to Secretary of State Kissinger, “Cyprus Task Force,” Washington, July 22, 1974 (Document 112), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹⁴² Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: The Cyprus Crisis, Washington, July 23, 1974, 2:30pm (Document 119), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Joint Staff (Ginsburgh) to the President’s Chief of Staff (Haig), Washington, July 25, 1974 (Document 121), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

functioned as “important links in the overall NATO defense to deter or defeat Soviet aggression...they serve as a barrier between Warsaw Pact ground forces and the eastern Mediterranean.”¹⁴⁵

The United States described its “fundamental interests” in the region as being two-fold: “to maintain the Western defense-deterrence capability, which requires NATO cohesion, the maintenance of US/NATO facilities in the area, and Greek-Turkish harmony; and to contain Soviet influence.”¹⁴⁶ An unstable Cyprus, and continued Greek-Turkish tensions over the island, threatened both of those stated interests. The United States was clear that it did “not have fundamental objectives as regards Cyprus itself except in the context of Cyprus’ effect on other US interests.”¹⁴⁷ This stated lack of interest in Cyprus itself, fully acknowledged as part of American policy, is a major factor in why the United States pursued such a short-term response to the crisis, focusing on diffusing immediate tensions with minimal involvement, rather than involving itself in a long-term operation to solve the Greek-Turkish Cyprus question.

Negotiations during the first Geneva conference were challenging, as neither Turkey nor Greece seemed overly amenable to making significant compromises and potentially giving the other side any potential advantage. British officials noted that one of their main objectives at the conference would be to “bring home to the Turks that they would have to concede something and to the Greeks that they would have to accept less than they hoped for if the conference was to continue.”¹⁴⁸ The Turkish representatives “predictably refused to commit to any formulation in referring to the withdrawal of foreign forces from Cyprus.”¹⁴⁹ Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit, back in Ankara, resoundingly refused to accept the word ‘withdrawal’ in any official capacity, which forced the conference members to adopt new wording which called for “timely and phased reduction” of the Turkish military presence in Cyprus.¹⁵⁰ Konstantinos Karamanlis, the new Greek Prime Minister who had only taken office on July 24, one day before the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Briefing Memorandum From the Cyprus Task Force to Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, July 28, 1974 (Document 122), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Cable from Hildyard, July 26, 1974, FCO 9/1916, British National Archives, London, England.

¹⁴⁹ Cable from Wiggin, July 28, 1974, FCO 9/1916, British National Archives, London, England.

¹⁵⁰ Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict*, 118.

conference began, complained to the British Prime Minister that “as a result of the Turkish attitude, the situation in Cyprus is developing in a way rendering impossible the continuation of the Geneva conference.”¹⁵¹ It was becoming increasingly clear that Ankara was willing to come to the table, but only if all of its demands were met and it had to make no concessions to Greece. The conference lasted five days and did not result in an agreed upon plan to restore peace to Cyprus. The conference’s final declaration included a security zone around the areas occupied by Turkish forces, no expansion of the areas controlled by Turkish forces, an agreement on the “timely and phased reduction” of military personnel, and participation in another set of talks to begin on August 8.¹⁵²

Towards the end of the conference, Makarios and Kissinger met in Washington for a meeting where Makarios expressed his wish for the United States to take on a more active role in the conflict resolution and to apply more pressure to Turkey and Greece. Kissinger explained that the situation was complex due to the United States having relations with all three parties. When Kissinger asked what Makarios wanted him to do, Makarios replied that he wanted the United States to “take a more decisive role” and that Washington was in the position where if they made certain proposals, Turkey would accept them, but did not provide Kissinger with any specific requests.¹⁵³ Makarios was concerned about Turkey imposing itself further in Cyprus, calling for partition, and claiming Turkish troops would remain on the island, and he wanted Kissinger to stop being so “cautious” with applying pressure to Turkey.¹⁵⁴ Despite Makarios repeatedly pressing for more “decisive” American action, Kissinger consistently declined to make any concrete promises or commitments, emphasizing that the United States was in a delicate position with the need to consider its relations with all three involved parties.¹⁵⁵ Given Kissinger’s penchant for back-channel negotiations and secretive diplomacy, it seems likely that if he wanted to put his thumb on the scale to

¹⁵¹ Cable from Hooper, July 28, 1974, FCO 9/1916, British National Archives, London, England.

¹⁵² Dodd, *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict*, 119.

¹⁵³ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, July 29, 1974, 5pm (Document 124), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

influence a particular settlement or agreement at the Geneva conference, he certainly could have. Kissinger appeared adamant that protecting long-term US relations with the involved states and focusing on American interests first was a more practical approach than intervening in a longstanding ethnic dispute.

The State Department dissolved its Cyprus Task Force on July 31, a day after Callaghan had finally managed to get the parties to agree to a ceasefire and the establishment of a buffer zone.¹⁵⁶ In the period between the two peace conferences, Turkey would go on to repeatedly violate the terms of the cease-fire. On July 31, the British Foreign Office noted that “the only significant violations of the ceasefire have come from the Turkish side” via “ground advancements and land and sea bombardment” and noted that the Turkish military forces had “also received substantial reinforcements of men and material.”¹⁵⁷ Even though Turkey had violated the ceasefire, the crisis did appear to have moved past its apex, which prompted the Americans to disband the task force. The task force was clearly a temporary crisis measure—put in place to help streamline policy discussions and disbanded as soon as American policymakers could reasonably deprioritize the Cyprus problem. American policymakers had no convincing evidence at their disposal suggesting that the crisis was well on its way to a resolution, but disbanding the task force makes sense, given the Nixon administration’s general disinterest in Cyprus unless it was in active crisis mode.

¹⁵⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 226.

¹⁵⁷ Cable from Olver, July 31, 1974, FCO 9/1916, British National Archives, London, England.

A Second Invasion, Kissinger's Disinterest, and the Pike Committee

In the lead-up to the second Geneva conference, scheduled to start on August 8, Kissinger was focused on ensuring that “both Greece and Turkey remain members of the NATO structure.”¹⁵⁸ Kissinger described the American response to this waiting period between the two conferences, saying that “for a fleeting moment, we again wallowed in the illusion that the crisis was on its way to being defused.”¹⁵⁹ Callaghan shared the American interest in maintaining NATO stability in the region, but there were also significant points of departure in Britain's policy objectives. As the former colonial power, and a party to the Treaty of Guarantee, Great Britain had both a historical background and connection to Cyprus and obligations under the treaty relationship. The Americans had no official role to play in the negotiation process and perhaps partly due to that, were more focused on the geopolitical big picture rather than the nuanced minutiae of Greek-Turkish-Cypriot relations. Additionally, Kissinger and the rest of the top American policymakers were dealing with the impending transition to Gerald Ford's presidency as Nixon resigned from office. Kissinger admitted that his time, “and to an even greater degree” his emotions, “were focused on easing Nixon's travail and preparing for the transition to Ford.”¹⁶⁰ The transition itself was not the only thing occupying a significant amount of Kissinger's energy; the timing of the transition was also significant. Ford took office on August 9, in the middle of the second peace conference in Geneva, only serving to further cement Kissinger as the architect of American foreign policy decision-making.

Kissinger's approach to the Cyprus crisis was consistent throughout the summer of 1974—the United States should be involved only insofar as it was necessary to protect American interests, which in the Eastern Mediterranean region were largely focused on ensuring NATO's continued strength and stability. Notably, neither Greece nor Turkey made any serious threats to withdraw from NATO or turn away from the Western alliance. The Cyprus response was consistent with the foreign policy doctrine that President Nixon had introduced in his first term. In February 1970, Nixon delivered a report to Congress outlining his

¹⁵⁸ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 213.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

administration's approach to foreign policy, explaining that his strategy was a "statement of a new approach to foreign policy to match a new era of international relations."¹⁶¹ Nixon explained that in the initial postwar decades, the United States had invested considerable energy and resources into "coping with a cycle of recurrent crises, whose fundamental origins lay in the destruction of World War II and the tensions attending the emergence of scores of new nations."¹⁶² Acknowledging that the landscape of global affairs had changed considerably since the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Nixon advocated for the Nixon Doctrine—a strategy predicated on the notion that

the United States will participate in the defense and development of allies and friends, but that America cannot—and will not—conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest.¹⁶³

This chapter will explore the August events of the Cyprus crisis: the second peace conference in Geneva and the second Turkish military intervention. It will also discuss the significance of the immediate aftermath and consequences of the crisis, both geopolitically and domestically in the United States. The American response to the crisis demonstrated what an unintended policy success could look like: the United States did not view Cyprus as a priority, paid little attention to the nuances of the conflict itself, and still managed to emerge from the crisis with no obvious negative consequences.

The second phase of negotiations was scheduled in two distinct parts: representatives from Great Britain, Turkey, and Greece would meet in Geneva on August 8-9, and then representatives from the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, Glafcos Clerides and Rauf Denktaş respectively, would join for August 10-11.¹⁶⁴ As the talks started, Callaghan conversed with State Department officials regarding intelligence reports suggesting that Turkey had plans for another military operation which could go into effect if Turkey's

¹⁶¹ Report by President Nixon to the Congress, "US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: A New Strategy for Peace," Washington, February 18, 1970 (Document 60), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Steering Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to Stage II of the Geneva Talks on Cyprus [WSC 1/13], FCO, 7 August 1974 (No. 53), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

“objectives were not obtained by diplomatic means.”¹⁶⁵ Both the American and British records suggest that Callaghan took this information seriously, considered it credible, and felt it was important to begin planning for contingencies, including considering the possibility of a British military response. Callaghan arranged for a private meeting with the United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, to warn him that there was evidence, which Callaghan declined to specify, of a potential Turkish military operation. Callaghan suggested he thought Turkish action “might occur as early as the week beginning 19 August,” whereas Waldheim, based on his own conversations, said he “would not rule out the possibility of even earlier action” within the next week.¹⁶⁶

The Americans received similar reports about the possibility of another Turkish military operation from William Macomber, the US Ambassador to Turkey. On August 9, the opening day of the second phase of the conference, Macomber sent a telegram from Ankara, warning that the United States could not “altogether rule out [the] possibility that [the] Turks will again initiate major hostilities on the island, especially if Geneva II begins seriously to deteriorate.”¹⁶⁷ Macomber expressed his opinion that the Turkish government seemed to desire a solution to the present dispute and was willing to concede a bit in negotiations, but that if the Turks got the sense that the “world is ganging up on them” to push past their negotiating limits, “cooler Turkish heads could be overruled and a new Turkish military initiative threatened.”¹⁶⁸ Having that information, policymakers in Washington felt that Turkish military action was unlikely. Arthur Hartman, the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, relayed to Washington that the Americans had spoken with the Turkish Defense Minister and been “assured that nothing was afoot.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, Geneva, August 9, 1974, 1750Z (Document 125), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁶⁶ Miss Warburton (UKMIS Geneva) to FCO, No. 807 Telegraphic [WSC 1/13], Geneva, 10 August, 1pm (No. 58), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

¹⁶⁷ Telegram From Macomber to Secretary of State, Ankara, August 9, 1974, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger-Scowcroft Office Files, 1969-1977, Box 8, Cyprus 32.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, Geneva, August 9, 1974, 1750Z (Document 125), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

Hartman felt that the best course of action was to seek out the “best estimate of our intelligence services and of our respective Embassies” and then regroup with Callaghan.¹⁷⁰

Callaghan had a meeting with Hartman in the afternoon on August 10 and again expressed concerns about potential Turkish military action. Callaghan had asked Denktaş specifically about what would happen if the talks were to break down. In an answer which did nothing to allay Callaghan’s suspicions, Denktaş remarked that the Turkish government had not sent “their troops to Cyprus to play football.”¹⁷¹ Despite Callaghan’s concerns, and the availability of that information to the Americans, Kissinger remained skeptical about Turkish military action. In a phone call that same day with Ford, Kissinger described the British officials as akin to a “bull in a china shop” due to their desire to quickly wrap up negotiations and claimed Callaghan was “not too experienced.”¹⁷² Kissinger acknowledged that the Turks might take action to claim the thirty percent of the island they believed should be theirs, but did not seem overly concerned about this being a credible possibility. He informed Ford that he had spoken with the Turkish Prime Minister, who had been a student of Kissinger’s at Harvard, and was confident that a letter he was writing to Ecevit would hold off military action and potentially lead to Turkey modifying its demands.¹⁷³ Throughout the second peace conference, Kissinger seemed annoyed at Callaghan’s desire to push the Turks at the negotiating table and ready military options in the event of a Turkish operation.¹⁷⁴ Kissinger, in contrast, did not appear to want to commit to any significant and concrete American action for a Turkish military intervention that had not yet happened.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Hartman at the Hotel la Reserve, Geneva, on 10 August 1974 at 2.30pm [WSC 1/13] (No. 59), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

¹⁷² Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, August 10, 1974, 3:40pm (Document 127), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Kissinger and Ford discussed their mutual desire to “calm down our British friends a bit,” Ibid.; meanwhile, Callaghan found Kissinger’s reluctance to take military precautions to be a mistake, Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Hartman at UKMIS Geneva on 11 August 1974 at 12noon [WSC 1/13] (No. 62), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

On August 12, policymakers in Washington met to discuss the continuing developments of Turkey's potential military operation. The group had received a report from Hartman about a call with Callaghan, who relayed that Denktaş had explained that "his Turkish protectors have gone crazy and that they are ready to shoot their way [out]." Robert McCloskey argued that if the Turks confirmed they were issuing an ultimatum, the United States should "vote against them in the UN Security Council and then consider cutting off military assistance."¹⁷⁵ When Kissinger refused, McCloskey pushed forward, arguing that the Turks could not "continue to enjoy US military assistance if they are running loose in an area the US is interested in."¹⁷⁶ Kissinger continued to advocate for a 'wait and see' policy regarding a potential second invasion. Despite the objections of some of his peers, Kissinger remained steadfast in his overall indifference to Cyprus. He did not appear concerned about the array of evidence suggesting there was a very real likelihood that the Turks would resort to a military operation.

The next day, Kissinger met with Ford and Major General Brent Scowcroft, the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to discuss the crisis and the American response to it. Kissinger explained to Ford that the Americans had "been trying to bail the Cyprus situation out after it got out of control. The British have made a mess of it."¹⁷⁷ The central tenet of the Nixon Doctrine was to utilize direct American involvement when it was necessary to protect American interests and where it was likely to make a difference to the existing situation. The United States and Great Britain had separate but occasionally interlocking interests regarding the Cyprus crisis—London had more complex obligations and history regarding Cyprus to sort through when making its decisions whereas the United States had no international treaty obligations and were thus able to solely pursue a policy prioritizing its own interests. While some of the regional experts in the State Department, like Thomas Boyatt, felt that Kissinger should do more to contain the crisis, it is important to note that Great Britain was considerably more involved and was also

¹⁷⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 12, 1974, 2:45pm (Document 128), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 13, 1974, 9am (Document 129), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

unable to prevent or contain the crisis. There is a possibility that a different American policy could have had a measurable impact on the crisis, but it is equally likely that it could have drawn the United States into a foreign conflict with no significant results to speak of. However, there is no available evidence to suggest that this was the framework that Kissinger used in formulating his policy response to the crisis. Instead, the evidence suggests that while he likely made the correct decision to pursue a non-interventionist response, it was at least partly by accident.

American policymakers were distinctly disinterested in the exact details of a possible Cyprus settlement—beyond one which would diffuse the existing crisis—and were also attempting to balance their position between the Turks and Greeks. On one hand, the Americans were conscious that humiliating the Greeks was undesirable, but they were also highly aware that the Turks felt that “whenever there was a choice between Greece and Turkey, the West chose the Greeks.”¹⁷⁸ Even if the United States was interested in pursuing an active role in negotiating a settlement between Greece and Turkey, the need to balance its position between two allies and fellow NATO members limited the Americans’ room to maneuver. Focusing on NATO stability protected American interests in a region it still considered geostrategically important to its broader foreign policy. This also had the benefit of allowing the United States to avoid choosing sides between Greece and Turkey: with both countries being members of NATO, if the Americans pursued a policy which prioritized NATO strength and stability, it could avoid actively favouring either side and make the argument that a strong and stable alliance was good for both Athens and Ankara in the long run.

Kissinger’s reluctance to alienate either side, even in the face of a potential second Turkish military intervention, can be partly explained by his acknowledgement that even though the Americans considered both Turkey and Greece to be allies, Turkey was the priority for the United States between the two. When Ford asked what would happen if the Turks moved forward with military action, Kissinger explained that

¹⁷⁸ Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Hartman at the Hotel la Reserve, Geneva, on 10 August 1974 at 2.30pm [WSC 1/13] (No. 59), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

the Americans would “have to vote against them in the Security Council. We would have our hands full to keep the Greeks from going to war.”¹⁷⁹ It seemed clear to Kissinger that it would become very difficult to prevent a Greek-Turkish war on Cyprus, as he knew that if the Turks were to “run loose on Cyprus, the Greeks could come unglued.”¹⁸⁰ While Kissinger did not seem overly concerned with Turkey’s demands to gain control over one-third of Cyprus, he explained to Ford that the Americans certainly did not want a war between Greece and Turkey, “but if it came to that, Turkey is more important to us.”¹⁸¹ While the Greeks, Turks, and Cypriots all individually interpreted the lack of overt support for their respective causes as the Americans working against them and their respective interests, the reality is that the United States took no decisive action to pit one ally against the other. Favouring one side during the crisis could potentially have negatively impacted NATO’s internal stability, something the Americans prioritized and were unwilling to risk.

In Geneva, meanwhile, the second phase of the peace conference continued in much the same vein as it had been: each side firmly advocated for their own interests with minimal desire to concede any significant points, and discussions were repeatedly delayed. The delegates representing Great Britain, Greece, Turkey, the Greek Cypriot community, the Turkish Cypriot community, and the United Nations convened on August 13 to continue to discuss proposals for a settlement. Callaghan began the meeting with an observation that the meeting, which began at 6:40pm, started nearly nine hours after its scheduled start time.¹⁸² With the previously stated threats by Turkey regarding a potential second military operation, Callaghan made it clear that while the Turks felt their first military intervention on Cyprus was in line with its obligations and powers under Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee, Turkey should be aware that if it “continued on this course they would have to defend their action against disapproval from the whole

¹⁷⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 13, 1974, 9am (Document 129), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Gunes, Mr. Mavros, Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 13 August 1974 at 6.40pm [WSC 1/13] (No. 76), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

world.”¹⁸³ The State Department, meanwhile, had engaged in contingency planning in the event that the conference broke down and continued negotiation became untenable. The American goal, as with the first phase of the crisis in July, was to “prevent Greek-Turkish hostilities” and promote a diplomatic resolution to the conflict.¹⁸⁴ The Cyprus Task Force paper also acknowledged that the situation would be “worse than in July—both governments will be passionately united, talking will appear to have been unproductive, and the Greeks will have no military option whatsoever on Cyprus.”¹⁸⁵ In the event of a Greek-Turkish war on Cyprus, the task force explained that

the best outcome we can hope for will be a strengthened partition situation on Cyprus, Greek honor saved, and both sides still in NATO and ready to begin talking again. At worst, the Turks will have imposed partition of the island, the Greeks (whether Karamanlis or his over-thrower) will be humiliated, NATO will be shattered, and the Soviets hopping mad.¹⁸⁶

The Americans were focused on keeping both of their allies in NATO and excluding the Soviet Union from the situation as much as possible, including keeping any United Nations involvement to an absolute minimum. It was clear that the Turks were not only willing to threaten military action to achieve their territorial goals on Cyprus, but that they had the means and ability to make good on that threat. Crucially, the Greeks also had no real ability to militarily reinforce the island against a Turkish intervention. Despite the ceasefire attempts, the task force argued that in reality, a ceasefire on the island “could only be obtained by the exercise of extreme US pressure on Turkey to limit its war aims.”¹⁸⁷ Even if the Americans applied extreme pressure on Ankara in an attempt to ensure a ceasefire, it is impossible to say whether this would have had any positive effect on further defusing the Cyprus crisis. The possibility also remained that if the United States asserted itself to force Turkey’s hand, it could risk contributing to prolonging the crisis or prompting a Turkish withdrawal from NATO.

¹⁸³ Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Gunes, Mr. Mavros, Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 13 August 1974 at 6.40pm [WSC 1/13] (No. 76), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

¹⁸⁴ Paper Prepared in the Department of State: Cyprus Contingencies, Washington, undated (Document 130), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*; the paper was drafted by Thomas Simons, John Baker, Martha Mautner, and Igor Belousovitch, and after being cleared by John Day was sent to Robert McCloskey on August 13.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

The conference in Geneva adjourned at 2:25am on August 14, with no agreement having been made between the representatives. Approximately thirty-five minutes later, at 3:00am, Turkish forces resumed military action on Cyprus.¹⁸⁸ Turkish troops launched an armoured assault and were receiving some fire support by Turkish warships off the northern coast.¹⁸⁹ In his memoirs, Kissinger later stated that neither he nor Callaghan had “expected a second Turkish military move.”¹⁹⁰ While it is clear from the archival record that Callaghan certainly took the threat of a second military operation quite seriously, it is not altogether shocking that his American counterpart did not. In looking back at the 1964 and 1967 crises, Kissinger would have seen that Ankara had a pattern of threatening military action without significant follow-through and rather than commit the Americans to an overly involved response based on a potential threat, Kissinger chose to continue monitoring the crisis rather than rushing to take on the position of solving the crisis.

The Washington Special Actions Group convened to discuss the Cyprus developments later that afternoon. Kissinger was joined by representatives from the State Department, Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Security Council. Kissinger explained that at the time being, the Americans’ “major strategy” was to avoid getting themselves “in a position that would give vent to righteous indignation on the part of either the Greeks or the Turks...we don’t want to contribute to the Greek humiliation, and we don’t want the Turks to feel that we have turned against them.”¹⁹¹ Kissinger felt that it was in the United States’ best interest to “keep all avenues of negotiation open.”¹⁹² He made this comment despite an earlier conversation Kissinger had with Callaghan that same day, where Kissinger explained that the Americans were talking about ways to move the negotiation and asked Callaghan if he thought that had any chance, a question to which the Foreign Secretary replied “not in

¹⁸⁸ Record of a meeting between Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Gunes, Mr. Mavros, Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 13 August 1974 at 6.40pm [WSC 1/13] (No. 76), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

¹⁸⁹ Intelligence Memorandum: Cyprus, Situation Report Number 1 (as of 0700 EDT), Central Intelligence Agency, August 14, 1974, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger-Scowcroft Office Files, 1969-1977, Box 8, Cyprus 37.

¹⁹⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 227.

¹⁹¹ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Washington, August 14, 1974, 3:10-3:45pm (Document 131), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

the slightest.”¹⁹³ Kissinger explained to the other members of the Washington Special Actions Group that “if we play our cards right, and with some skill, we will come out of this thing on the good side, with both governments.”¹⁹⁴

Similar to the early chaos and confusion regarding the initial coup d’etat in July, there was a significant degree of uncertainty on August 14 regarding Turkey’s intentions, how Greece would respond, and how to move forward. The Greek military leaders were concerned that Turkey was going to use the military intervention to not only take the parts of the island it had indicated during the negotiations, but that the Turks would take the opportunity to take control of as much of Cyprus as possible and potentially also “manufacture a plausible reason for attacking Greek islands off the coast of Turkey,” which would only escalate Greek-Turkish tensions and almost certainly position both countries in an “all-out defensive war.”¹⁹⁵ The chaotic nature of the crisis further suggests that the American policy of monitoring the crisis from afar, engaging in negotiation as much as possible, and avoiding committing the United States to any significant and formal involvement, was the best way for Washington to keep abreast of how the crisis was developing and protect its own interests. If the United States took responsibility—even joint responsibility—for the Cyprus crisis, it had the potential to embroil itself in a long-term ethnic conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean and there was no guarantee that American involvement would contribute to a quick, peaceful solution. A potential long-term conflict in the region also had no benefits for the United States. Both Greece and Turkey were already solid American allies and NATO members; getting involved in their dispute would not improve the United States’ position or power in the region.

¹⁹³ Record of a telephone conversation between Mr. Callaghan and Dr. Kissinger on 14 August 1974 at 1.45pm [WSC 3/304/2] (Document 77), *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol. V, The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, eds. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon.

¹⁹⁴ Minutes of Meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group, Washington, August 14, 1974, 3:10-3:45pm (Document 131), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976*.

¹⁹⁵ Intelligence Memorandum: Cyprus, Situation Report Number 2 (as of 1230 EDT), Central Intelligence Agency, August 14, 1974, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger-Scowcroft Office Files, 1969-1977, Box 8, Cyprus 37.

The Greek military leaders, according to a CIA intelligence memorandum, preferred to “die fighting” the Turks rather than suffer any further military humiliation.¹⁹⁶ Ecevit, in the hours after the military operation launched, stated that Turkey had no intention of taking the entire island, only the “fair share” that should be under the control of the Turkish Cypriots.¹⁹⁷ He also stated that Turkey was open to negotiating the precise details of the territory the Turkish Cypriots wanted and that the Turks were prepared to “work out the details at the conference table.”¹⁹⁸ It is important to note here, however, that this is a very easy position to espouse while occupying a clear military upper-hand and in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the peace conference in Geneva, which can partly be explained by Turkey’s prior refusal to consider any significant compromises to its demands.

The August 15 Washington Special Actions Group meeting further emphasized the Americans’ desire to avoid alienating Turkey due to the country’s geopolitical significance to the United States’ broader goals and interests in the region. Kissinger noted that the Greeks would have to give up their military efforts “sooner or later” and that the best solution would be for the Turks to give up ten percent of the thirty percent of the island they had occupied.¹⁹⁹ The group was concerned about the way the United Nations was handling the situation, with Kissinger stating that “the Turks can give us trouble in the next Middle East war. We have to be careful not to get too far separated from the Turks. Do the Turks in New York know we are holding back? Do they know we are not leading any crusade?”²⁰⁰ Even in the days after the August 14 invasion, Kissinger remained preoccupied with maintaining a largely neutral position and especially focused on not alienating Turkey, as he had already identified that of the two NATO members, Turkey was more important to the United States than Greece. As the tides of international opinion shifted and it became clear that Turkey had no legal right under the Treaty of Guarantee for its August 14 invasion, Kissinger continued

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 15, 1974, 4:30pm (Document 133), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

to caution his colleagues that the Americans “must not show excessive eagerness and not now tilt toward Greece and lose the Turks.”²⁰¹ The prospect of two NATO members engaged in all-out war with each other using American-supplied weapons and American-trained military forces was one that Washington was keen to avoid. Maintaining a neutral position as much as possible between Athens and Ankara was a good method of hopefully avoiding antagonizing either side and avoiding a drawn out war in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In a conversation with Ford and bipartisan Congressional leaders on August 20, Kissinger briefed the group on the events that had unfolded on Cyprus over the past month. Kissinger explained that the Americans had “kept in the background so as not to look like we were the policemen for every civil war” and assured the attendants that “a war was stopped.”²⁰² Notably, this was the first time Kissinger had articulated a potential concern about international perceptions of the United States and the role it played in the Cyprus conflict. In 1975, however, the Congressional Pike Committee found that the Cyprus crisis constituted an intelligence failure which, when considering the short and long term consequences, “may have been the most damaging intelligence performance in recent years.”²⁰³ Despite this strong statement, the report did not offer any substantial evidence as to the factors which made the Cyprus crisis such a damaging intelligence failure beyond the fact that there existed evidence which suggested a Greek-orchestrated coup which the State Department chose not to act on. Nor did the Committee offer any justification for why the United States should have intervened in the crisis in the first place—the United States had no legal obligation to ensure Cypriot stability and in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine philosophy, Kissinger acted to protect American interests with as little direct involvement as was feasible. There were no tangible benefits to the United States of increased American involvement in a complicated ethnic conflict where the two main parties were both already NATO members and American allies.

²⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 16, 1974, 6:50pm (Document 136), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

²⁰² Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, August 20, 1974, 8:30am (Document 142), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973-1976.*

²⁰³ *CLA: The Pike Report*, 162-163.

The Committee had been tasked with investigating the process of American intelligence gathering and foreign affairs decision-making during recent crises, including Cyprus.²⁰⁴ Alongside the Church Committee and the Rockefeller Commission, the Pike Committee was the result of a broader Congressional effort to evaluate the power of the executive branch (including specifically the power wielded by Henry Kissinger) in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal.²⁰⁵ As part of the process, the committee subpoenaed Thomas Boyatt's official dissent memo, which he had written in August 1974 after a series of messages sent through regular cable channels within the State Department were not acted on by his superiors.²⁰⁶ In his memo, Boyatt states out that the pre-crisis status quo on Cyprus was "infinitely better for US interests than the present situation," and that because of the "overriding USG interest on preventing Cyprus from causing a Greco/Turk confrontation, we should have made greater efforts to preserve the status quo before the crisis."²⁰⁷ Boyatt went on to explain that the "present crisis could have been prevented," that "Turkish intervention on Cyprus could have been prevented," and that the American handling of the crisis brought with it "real problems" which the United States government would need to address in order to prevent further conflict and threats to American interests.²⁰⁸ Boyatt's memo did not prompt any significant change in American policy, although Kissinger thanked him for his efforts and candor by removing from the Cyprus desk at the State Department altogether.²⁰⁹ Experts on Cyprus and Cypriot affairs broadly agree that Kissinger was "willfully ignorant of the area's complex political dynamic."²¹⁰ Despite this, the United States experienced no significant negative effects as a result of its response to the crisis. The accounts of those directly involved suggest that Kissinger was willfully uninformed about the nuances and complexities of the

²⁰⁴ Hannah Gurman, "The Other Plumbers Unit: The Dissent Channel of the U.S. State Department," *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 2 (2011): 331.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 338.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 331.

²⁰⁷ US Department of State, "Critique of the Substantive Handling of the Cyprus Crisis from Boyatt to Kissinger," Dissent Channel Message, August 9, 1974, Department of State Records, Records of Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco, Record Group 59, National Archives.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Boyatt, Presentation at the Foreign Service Institute, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, 6.

²¹⁰ Gurman, "The Other Plumbers Unit," 332.

crisis and yet, both Greece and Turkey remained in NATO and the region, while tense, did not destabilize to the point that it threatened American interests.

The Pike Committee's report does not comment on the different approaches required within the larger foreign policy apparatus of the Secretary of State compared to regional experts like Thomas Boyatt. Boyatt was responsible for reviewing evidence and keeping abreast of Cypriot affairs and developments, which would allow him to make appropriate recommendations to his superiors. His expertise in local affairs, local players, and the ways in which historical events were perceived in the region were all essential to his understanding of the 1974 Cyprus crisis and led him to write his dissent memo. Kissinger, on the other hand, as the Secretary of State, was responsible for enacting the entirety of the American foreign policy agenda worldwide. Particularly given the transition to Ford's presidency and Ford's minimal foreign policy experience, Kissinger was largely regarded as the central architect of American foreign affairs during this period. He could not possibly have the type of specific regional knowledge that officials like Boyatt did—instead, his job was to look at available evidence, consider the overarching geopolitical landscape and make the best decision possible to further American interests. Cyprus was not, and never had been, a priority for the United States and using the Nixon Doctrine-era Pax Americana model as a framework, it made no sense to commit significant American resources to a problem where the United States had nothing to gain and might not even be able to make a positive difference. It is important to note that neither Kissinger's colleagues nor the Pike Committee can say with any certainty that had the United States adopted a different approach that it would have made any significant positive difference in the outcome of the crisis. However, even more important, is that Kissinger did not articulate any of these thoughts during the crisis. His decision-making process was guided almost entirely by his desire to move past the crisis and deprioritize Cyprus on the foreign policy agenda as quickly as possible. It is possible to read success into the final result of the American policy of non-intervention, but that success cannot be attributed to Kissinger's intentional decision-making.

Conclusion

The Cyprus crisis prompted significant international and domestic attention and commentary regarding the United States' response and handling of the crisis. As a superpower, other states paid attention to American foreign policy developments, even in regions not considered vital to most of the rest of the world, with Cyprus being a prime example. On August 17, 1974, the Indian Ambassador to Italy sent a telegram to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs relaying his interpretation of the general Italian response to the Cyprus crisis, with a particular focus on Kissinger's role. Ambassador Pant explained that

Italians feel that Kissinger may be brilliant and deserving a Nobel Peace Prize [*sic*] dealing with "macrocosmic" conflicts but that he is lost when dealing with "microcosmic" ones such as in Cyprus. This is the more charitable view. The other one is that Kissinger only does what is in the interest of America which he equates with 'world peace.' Interests of other countries to him and to America, many Italians feel, are not part of the pattern of peace that has to be slowly, painstakingly constructed bit by bit...Kissinger has no patience or time for 'small countries,' or when vital American interests are not challenged.²¹¹

Pant's observation of the Cyprus crisis as a micro rather than macro crisis is an astute one. Unlike other Cold War crises and conflicts, like the Cuban Missile Crisis, Suez Canal Crisis, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, the Cyprus crisis did not have potentially catastrophic geopolitical or nuclear ramifications and, despite prior Soviet interest, was not going to turn into a proxy conflict like Korea and Vietnam. The Cyprus crisis certainly had significant consequences for Greece and Turkey, as well as both ethnic Cypriot populations, but in an international geopolitical sense, it was a relatively minor crisis. By the time of the Cyprus crisis, the United States had already begun the slow process of extricating itself from Vietnam and reducing its overall direct intervention in international conflicts. Kissinger advocated for the United States to be more discerning in choosing when and where to pursue American intervention. Focusing less on solidifying alliances with smaller states and pursuing development-type projects abroad would allow the United States to prioritize its own national security interests. Cyprus, despite being in the geostrategic Eastern Mediterranean region, was simply not an essential component to the American foreign policy

²¹¹ Telegram No. ROM/101/1/73 Indian Ambassador to Italy to Ministry of External Affairs, August 17, 1974, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Subject File No. 26, Papers of A. B. Pant, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, accessed through the Cold War International History Project: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123468>.

agenda and thus, the crisis should not be allocated resources, whether financial, military, or diplomatic, as if it were.

In his memoirs, Kissinger devoted an entire chapter to the Cyprus crisis. He repeatedly emphasized the US objectives of keeping Greece and Turkey in NATO, and more broadly, stabilizing the region. He also admitted, with the benefit of nearly twenty-five years of hindsight, that the United States government had at least partly misunderstood the nature of the crisis, noting that “not having any previous experience with ethnic conflict, we failed to understand that we had less influence on the parties in Cyprus than in the Middle East. The parties in the Middle East, though exploiting the superpower rivalries, were at the same time constrained by them. In Cyprus, the adversaries accepted no such constraints.”²¹² The United States identified that Greece and Turkey remaining in NATO and a stable Eastern Mediterranean region were critical to Washington’s overall geopolitical goals and objectives. In order to accomplish those two main goals, the United States did not need to insert itself into the Greek-Turkish-Cypriot dispute and find a long-term solution for a longstanding ethnic conflict which so happened to be taking place between two NATO members near an important buffer zone between the Soviet Union and American oil interests. All the United States needed, at the end of the day, was a reasonably stable Greek-Turkish relationship and a type of new status quo on Cyprus that would, ideally, prevent future crises. The United States had been clear all along that it had minimal interest in Cyprus itself beyond its preexisting interests with Greece and Turkey, and certainly had no strong preferences for resolving a Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot ethnic conflict.

While the crisis was defused after Turkey’s August 14 military operation and subsequent occupation of the northern third of Cyprus, the dispute has continued to cause problems among the Greeks, Turks, and Cypriots. In September 1974, the Turkish Cypriots declared an Autonomous Turkish Cypriot Administration and a year later, the northern region of Cyprus declared itself the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus.²¹³ When, after Makarios’ death, Spyros Kyprianou became the new President of Cyprus, the Turkish

²¹² Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 224.

²¹³ Daria Isachenko, *The Making of Informal States: Statebuilding in Northern Cyprus and Transnistria* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 44.

Cypriots refused to recognize him as anything other than “the leader of the Greek Cypriot community and the head of the Greek Cypriot administration.”²¹⁴ After nearly a decade of conferences, peace talks, and United Nations resolutions, all of which failed to adequately resolve the situation in a manner which the involved parties deemed satisfactory, the Turkish Cypriots took matters decisively into their own hands in an attempt to ensure their status and independence from the Greek Cypriot community.

During the Cold War, Cyprus developed ties with the Non-Aligned Movement. Makarios, for example, cultivated relations with leading figures of the movement, such as Josip Broz Tito from Yugoslavia and Abdul Gamal Nasser from Egypt.²¹⁵ Unlike its major neighbours, Greece and Turkey, Cyprus still, to date, has not joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Makarios had favoured a non-aligned foreign policy orientation from the beginning of Cyprus’ postcolonial years and in September 1961, he attended the Belgrade Conference and committed Cyprus to the Non-Aligned Movement.²¹⁶ Cyprus, under Kyprianou’s leadership, continued to engage with Non-Aligned states and much to the Turkish Cypriot community’s displeasure, maintained an active presence at gatherings such as the Non-Aligned meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1976, the Universal Postal Union Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1979, and the Non-Aligned summit in Havana, Cuba in 1979.²¹⁷ The Turkish Cypriot community, meanwhile, was eager to continue to assert itself in increasingly official ways and on November 15, 1983, announced its new status as an independent state, separate from the Republic of Cyprus.²¹⁸ Days later, the United Nations Security Council noted that the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was “legally invalid,” would “contribute to a worsening of the situation in Cyprus,” and called upon all States to not “recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus.”²¹⁹ To date, the only country

²¹⁴ Rauf Raif Denktaş, *The Cyprus Triangle* (London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1988), 86.

²¹⁵ James Ker-Lindsay, “Europe’s Eastern Outpost: The Republic of Cyprus and the Middle East,” *The Round Table* 97, no. 397 (2008): 537.

²¹⁶ Şevki Kıralp, “Defending Cyprus in the Early Postcolonial Era: Makarios, NATO, USSR and the NAM (1964-1967),” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 21, no. 4 (2019): 369.

²¹⁷ Denktaş, *The Cyprus Triangle*, 107.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

²¹⁹ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 541 (1983), adopted at the 2500th meeting on 18 November 1983.

to recognize the TRNC is Turkey. In a 2005 interview, Denktaş dismissed the TRNC's status as an unrecognized state, noting that it is officially recognized by Turkey and that there is no issue with its self-declared independence as "every state is self-proclaimed."²²⁰

Turkey's relations with Cyprus, and the TRNC, continue to impact its foreign relations today. In the decades following the end of the Cold War, the Cyprus question has become more complicated for Turkey. Turkey's post-Cold War shift in priorities included a determination to gain membership into the European Union. However, the Cyprus issue, and continued Turkish recognition of the TRNC, has been an obstacle preventing Turkey's membership. The desire to be accepted into the European Union, which, similar to its inclusion in NATO in 1952, represents both practical concerns as well as more psychological and identity driven ones. The European Union certainly would provide tangible economic benefits to Turkey, but it would also offer yet another symbolic sign of acceptance by the West and an acknowledgement of Turkey's status as a Western-oriented state. If Turkey's recognition of the TRNC continued to be an obstacle to European Union membership, supporting the TRNC could increasingly be seen in Ankara as a geopolitical liability, despite the longstanding relationship with the Turkish Cypriot population.

While Cyprus remains unofficially partitioned and tensions remain between the ethnic populations that call it home, there have been no additional Cyprus crises since the summer of 1974. After the three individual crises that occurred in rapid succession between 1964 and 1974, the United States has had no additional significant involvement in Cypriot affairs. Despite the strain that the 1974 crisis put on US-Greek and US-Turkish relations, both states remain in NATO to this day and at no point was the Eastern Mediterranean region destabilized to the point of encouraging Soviet intervention. While the Pike Committee members and various American policymakers and diplomats felt strongly that the United States ignored vital evidence and did not act decisively to contain the Cyprus crisis, the United States suffered no significant negative effects as a result of its Cyprus policy. Cyprus demonstrated what post-Vietnamization

²²⁰ Isachenko, *The Making of Informal States*, 9.

crisis response could look like—the United States, led by Kissinger, kept a close eye on the crisis but chose not to commit American resources in an attempt to solve a foreign ethnic conflict.

The Cyprus crisis was not purely a geopolitical Cold War conflict. While its location in the Eastern Mediterranean meant it drew superpower attention, particularly amidst Cold War concerns, it was not a conflict which could be easily defused using traditional Cold War tactics. Turkey's response to the 1974 crisis was shaped considerably by what its leadership considered to be previous losses, particularly in the case of the 1964 crisis. The Johnson letter was seen within Turkey as a significant source of national humiliation and was a factor in the subsequent rise of anti-Americanism in the country.²²¹ This prior humiliation fueled the Turkish leaders' desire to force the creation of a federative system on the island and helps to explain their unwillingness to concede or compromise with Greece, the United Kingdom, or the United States. The feeling in the Turkish government was that it would either achieve a "federative state and win, or get something else and appear to lose" as it had in 1964.²²² Even if Ecevit had, for example, wanted to pursue negotiations and felt personally willing to compromise to reach a diplomatic solution to the conflict, his hands were nearly tied by pressure from the public, the press, and the opposition parties who were all calling for military action.²²³

Ecevit was also faced with the legacy of İsmet İnönü and Süleyman Demirel, who had, in the eyes of the public, bowed to American pressure and aligned Turkish policy to suit American interests during the 1964 and 1967 Cyprus crises, respectively. British officials had earlier identified that one of the primary factors motivating Turkey's Cyprus policy was the "government's need to out-shine their predecessors in their own public's eyes."²²⁴ Assuming that assessment to be accurate, Turkey only had two reasonable ways forward. Turkey could attempt to force Greece and the Greek Cypriots to agree to a new constitution based entirely on Turkey's vision. The challenges in both rounds of peace talks in Geneva demonstrate that this

²²¹ Fiona Adamson, "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2001): 286.

²²² Cable from Fyjis-Walker, February 15, 1974, FCO 9/1949, British National Archives, London, England.

²²³ Adamson, "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy," 288.

²²⁴ Cable to Goodison, February 26, 1974, FCO 9/1949, British National Archives, London, England.

was likely a nearly impossible task, as the Greeks and Greek Cypriots were almost as unwilling to compromise as the Turks. A forced diplomatic victory was a long-shot at best and with each passing day of negotiations proving more and more challenging and a successful resolution less and less likely, there was only one other reasonable option—using the Turkish military to achieve Turkey’s territorial goals for the Turkish Cypriot community by force.

The Greeks also applied pressure. As the Turkish delegation was preparing to leave for the second conference in Geneva, they received reports that the Greek military were laying mines near the cease-fire lines. Güneş, the Turkish Foreign Minister, described the situation as the Greeks “trying to transform the Turkish army into an open-air military museum.”²²⁵ If Turkey was unwilling to experience humiliation at the hands of American diplomats for what it considered a third time relating to Cyprus, the government certainly would be unwilling to capitulate to the Greek military. A year prior to the crisis, in 1973, Bayülken, then the Foreign Minister, had stated that if the situation on Cyprus “became a threat to the security or rights of the Turkish Cypriot community, Turkey was ready and determined to take action to eliminate that threat” and emphasized that “our Cyprus policy has been established for years. Governments change, but the Cyprus policy remains unchanged.”²²⁶ Neither Athens nor Ankara would likely have been persuaded to agree to a settlement due to the type of Cold War concerns that the United States had—the actual and perceived strength and stability of NATO might have been a key American concern, but the Greeks and Turks were focused on much deeper and more complex issues. American diplomatic pressure was unlikely to succeed due to Greece and Turkey each being equally unwilling to negotiate in good faith with each other. An American military response could, in the worst case scenario, commit American troops to yet another foreign conflict and still potentially result in no discernable long-term solutions.

Turkey was indisputably responding and reacting to the Greek orchestrated coup which attempted to install Sampson as the new Cypriot President. However, the coup also afforded the Turks an opportunity

²²⁵ Birand, *30 Hot Days*, 80.

²²⁶ Cable from Harrison, February 13, 1973, FCO 9/1697, British National Archives, London, England.

to right what they considered to be foreign policy wrongs of the past, defend the minority ethnic Turkish population, and prevent Greece from gaining a stronger foothold on the island, which would likely have shifted the regional balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. The coup on July 15 “gave Turkey a long-sought opportunity to land troops in Cyprus to restore the rights of the Turkish Cypriot minority and deny the island to Greece. The resulting occupation of the northern third of Cyprus had the almost hysterical support of the entire Turkish nation.”²²⁷ Kissinger failed to account for the nuanced reasons for Turkey’s decision to invade and occupy the island and it is clear that maintaining the stability of NATO was not a priority for either Greece or Turkey. Constantine Karamanlis, the Greek Prime Minister as of July 24, 1974, later wrote to the British Prime Minister that he felt strongly that Turkey’s goal was never to “protect the island’s Turkish minority but to implement Turkey’s expansionist and imperialist plans.”²²⁸ Turkey seized an opportunity to achieve several goals at once, and caught the upper echelon of American decision-makers by surprise.

Kissinger’s overarching concern throughout the Cyprus crisis in 1974 was to prevent the collapse of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean, keep both Greece and Turkey in the alliance, and maintain the alliance’s overall strength and stability. Cyprus was a consideration only because Greece and Turkey were concerned with the island and that tension could potentially destabilize the region and therefore threaten American and NATO interests. While the dispute between Greece and Turkey regarding Cyprus was not solved, the boiling point of the crisis settled down to a degree where it was no longer an imminent concern to the United States or NATO. The details of a Cypriot resolution and any potential constitutional amendments were not line items on Kissinger’s foreign policy agenda. Once the apex of the crisis blew over and a Greek-Turkish war in a sensitive geopolitical region was no longer a distinct possibility, the top American policymakers moved on to other pressing concerns and Cyprus was no longer a regular topic of conversation in Washington Special Actions Group meetings.

²²⁷ Turkey 1974 Annual Review Submitted by Sir Horace Phillips, FCO 9/2339, British National Archives, London, England.

²²⁸ Letter from Karamanlis to Harold Wilson, August 29, 1974, PREM 16/21, British National Archives, London, England.

To date, the TRNC remains a self-declared and unrecognized state in the northern third of Cyprus. The entire island has been under a United Nations peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) continuously since 1964. UNFICYP maintains and patrols a buffer zone between the TRNC's self-declared state and the rest of Cyprus. On July 29, 2021, the United Nations Security Council voted to extend UNFICYP's mandate for another six months through January 31, 2022.²²⁹ The Cyprus situation shares some parallels, albeit on a much smaller and less geopolitically significant scale, with Korea, as both are longstanding, unresolved conflicts which were never technically resolved, only temporarily paused and halted even decades later.

Ultimately, the American response to the crisis in 1974 was successful. The conflict did have regional consequences for all three involved countries, but there were no significant or long-lasting geopolitical ramifications. From an American perspective, the response achieved all of its goals. However, this is a case of indifference unintentionally paying off for the United States and leading policymakers to choose the best course of action—in this case, non-intervention—even if it was not necessarily for the best reasons. Kissinger's policy creation appears to be led by his disinterest and relative indifference to Cypriot affairs. Ironically, it may have been this level of ignorance and disinterest which allowed the United States to mount what was objectively a successful response to the conflict. It is unlikely that an interventionist response from the Americans would have had any significant positive impact on the conflict resolution process. However, given the American propensity for intervention in regional and domestic conflicts abroad, it is likely that an American intervention in Cyprus could have been disastrous. The fact that Kissinger cared so little about Cyprus itself played a role in his preference to sit back, watch the conflict unfold, and commit to only minimal American diplomatic action to try to defuse the apex of the crisis.

²²⁹ "Meetings Coverage: Security Council Extends Mandate of Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus until 31 January," United Nations Security Council SC/14589, July 29, 2021: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14589.doc.htm>.

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