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GREEK - TURKISH RELATIONS, ISTANBUL AND BRITISH RULE IN CYRPUS, 1954-59: SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE BRITISH PUBLIC ARCHIVE

Of the roles played by governments outside Cyprus in the quarrel over the island's future between the late summer of 1954, when it was first debated in the United Nations General Assembly, and the Lancaster House agreements of February 1959, that of Turkey remains probably the least transparent (indeed, arguably as obscure as that of General Grivas' role *inside* the island). Even assuming linguistic competence, access to the official Turkish documents of the period is out of the question. Nevertheless, much can be deduced about Turkish attitudes and calculations from documentation available in other centres. The following extracts from British Foreign Office records released under the «thirty year rule» provide insights into the shifting positions taken by the regime of Adnan Menderes, and the volatile relations between Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom which developed.

One basic aspect to the connection between Ankara and London over Cyprus may be pointed out at the start. The head of the British Foreign Office's Southern Department responsible for Greek and Turkish affairs (including Cyprus) stated early on in the dispute that «On a long view I think that what one might call the 'Turkish-political' factor may become more important [for Britain] than Her Majesty's Government's actual need for a base in Cyprus»¹. It is undoubtedly true that the politics of relations with Turkey became much more of a driving force within British policy-making than the increasingly fragile conception of Cyprus' strategic significance. What the nature of the 'Turkish-political' factor might have been can be gleaned at least in part from the material presented in this article.

1. J. Ward to F. Shattock 5 April 1956 FO371/123882, Public Record Office, United Kingdom (hereafter PRO).

The origins of Anglo-Turkish interaction over Cyprus lay in the tactics surrounding the Greek reference of the issue to the United Nations General Assembly in 1954. In particular, during the run-up to the UN session there was mounting concern in London that the Turkish Government might not give Britain firm support. On 29 March the senior official responsible for Cyprus in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned the British Ambassador that «They [Turkey] considered the Cyprus question to be an Anglo-Greek one...»². After the Athenian newspaper, *Ethnos*, had reported on 6 June that Turkey would in fact prove accommodating to Greek proposals should the matter go to New York, one of the senior officials in the southern Department noted as follows:

I am informed that the Turkish Foreign Minister has given an official promise that his Government will not actively oppose Greece's efforts to secure a favourable decision from [the] United Nation Organization's General Assembly on the question of the union of Cyprus with Greece. This does not mean, however, that Turkey will support or vote for a Greek proposal or that she considers the moment suitable for bringing the question of Cyprus before the United Nations. She will rather maintain a neutral attitude. Moreover, should the question take an acute turn during the General Assembly discussion, the Turkish delegation will try to suggest [a] means of settlement capable of easing the tension... You may think it wise to give the Turks further encouragement to keep them up to the mark. It would, of course, severely damage our position in the United Nations if the Turks were to adopt a neutral attitude on the question of considering Cyprus on the Assembly agenda³.

It is striking that in the early summer of 1954 the prospect of Turkish support, however tepid, for the Greek claim to Cyprus was something that had to be taken seriously. This must be seen in the context of Turkey's wider priorities in the period leading up to the signature of the Balkan Pact between herself, Greece and Yugoslavia. Even at this stage Turkey was not disinterested in the future of Cyprus, but she was determined to «keep in the background» and ensure that, whatever damage the United Kingdom's determination to maintain her sovereignty over Cyprus might do to Anglo-Greek relations, that it did not harm the fabric of the historic Greco-Turkish rapprochement. Conversely, in London it was felt that the Turks had no right to «hide their heads» in any Cyprus debate, especially as Turkey's ambivalence was a fatal weakness in Britain's lobbying campaign with other countries. The British Ambassador in Ankara, Sir James Bowker, reported to London on August 27 1954 respect-

2. Sir James Bowker to Foreign Office 30 March 1954 CO926/183, PRO.

3.D. Smith to R. Wilding 15 July 1954 FO371/112848 WG1081/192.

ing the mobilization of Turkish diplomacy which he had been instructed to bring about:

In the course of [an] interview yesterday to which he had summoned me, the Turkish Prime Minister referred to my representations on this subject to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and said he would like to discuss the matter himself with me in the light of action taken by the Turkish Government.

His Excellency said that Turkish representatives in all UN countries, except Greece, had been instructed to explain fully to the Government to which they were accredited, Turkey's view about the insertion of Cyprus on the UN agenda. Reports on the response to this communication were now coming in. After further discussion of the suggestions in your telegram No. 558 to Ankara, the Prime Minister finally undertook to (a) send immediate instructions to Turkish representatives in Scandinavian countries to follow up earlier representations... (b) to instruct Turkish representatives in other capitals to make further representations in cases where the response to the first approach indicated intention of the Government concerned to abstain, and try to induce them to oppose: and (c) to send a personal message to Mr. Dulles⁴.

Of these three elements, it may be said that the last was the most vital, since for the British Foreign Office using up Turkish credit in Washington rather than its own was an important consideration. British cajolements along these lines continued until early October, when it was concluded in London that the Turks were now suitably aroused over Cyprus and could be left «to make the running»⁵. A significant point arising from this sequence is that from the first the British were put in the unsatisfactory position of being supplicants for Turkish help. The leaders of the Turkish government were naturally quick to grasp the possibilities this opened up for the advancement of their own interests.

Over the ensuing months, nevertheless, Turkey remained for the most part on the sidelines of the Cyprus dispute, the focus of attention being the deterioration in relations between London and Athens and, more significantly, a worsening of the political situation in the colony itself. The outbreak of violence on the island on 1st April 1955 inevitably had the effect of defining Turkish opinions more sharply. On 19 April Michael Stewart, Bowker's deputy in Ankara, wrote to London with a description of local reactions to the outbreak of violence:

4. Her Majesty's Consul-General (Istanbul) to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 290 August 27 1954 FO317/112854 WG1081/353.

5. B. Muirhead 18 October 1954 FO371/112869 WG1981/836.

The strong Turkish press reaction to the recent outbreaks of terrorism in Cyprus, reported in our Savingram no. 19 of April 5, has continued but there is now an increasing tendency to criticise the Cyprus Government for its handling of the situation.

This tendency has not been helped by the wild and exaggerated statement made on his arrival here by Fazil Küçük, the Secretary-General of the Cyprus National Turkish Union and reported in Ankara telegrams nos. 266 and 267 of April 16. Several Turkish newspapers, including the largest in the country, HÜRRIYET, which has always maintained a close interest in Cyprus, have sent correspondents to the island to follow the situation and most of their reports have been extremely critical of the supposedly ineffectual way in which the Cyprus authorities have handled the Greek terrorism.

A fairly large section of the press is taking the line that British policy aims to set Turks and Greeks on the island at each others' throats so that the problem can be shown to the world as merely a private quarrel between the two communities. There has been no lack of news reports supporting this view: one such report claimed that Turkish houses in Cyprus had been included in a search for arms, while another referred to an event during the Coronation when a group of Turkish youths helped the police to deal with a gang of Greeks who had torn down the British flag. Instead of thanking the Turks for their help, the Cyprus Government is supposed to have claimed that the incident was proof that the problem on the island was due to enmity between the Turkish and Greek communities.

Even moderate press comment here has adopted a less favourable line than hitherto towards British policy. The vexed question of Turkish rights, including of course Evkaf, and the supposed discrimination in favour of the Cypriot Greeks have been trotted out and there has been fairly widespread support for a statement made here by Faiz Kaymak, President of the Turkish Associations in Cyprus, implying that the only hope for the Turkish community in Cyprus lay in the Government of their mother country since the colonial administration had failed to protect their rights.

Although no cases of Greek terrorism directed against Turks have been reported here, most of the press has referred to the dangerous position in which the Cypriot Turks find themselves (one paper even wrote of Greek atrocities against the Turkish community) and to the need for protection (in a more direct sense) by the Turkish Government. In another statement here Kaymak claimed that the Turks were being forced to leave their villages and take refuge in the towns because of the danger of Greek attacks against them.

A statement by the United States Ambassador in Athens to foreign press correspondents aroused comment in the Turkish press. We have so far had no report from Athens on the speech but, according to the version in the semi-official Anatolian Agency, the Ambassador was somewhat equivocal and implied that at the right time the American Government might be able to lend its

support to the Greek claim on Cyprus, but that this was impossible at the moment in view of the confused and dangerous position of the world. One writer thereupon accused the United States of having interfered in a matter concerning only Britain and Turkey and of supporting the Greek policy on Cyprus.

Throughout this violent and often garbled reaction the constant theme, of course, has been repeated emphasis that Turkey will never in any circumstances agree to the island being ceded to Greece and that she will take the necessary action in the event of any move in this direction by Britain. Although the view is still maintained that Turkey is happy as long as Britain remains on the island and guarantees the rights of the Turkish minority.

So far in all this the Turkish Government has remained aloof and has made no official pronouncement. Küçük and Kaymak have requested an audience with the Turkish Prime Minister, but this has not yet been given. (In this connection see Ankara telegram no. 267.) It is stated that the object of their visit is to see Turkish statesmen in order to obtain guarantees about the Cypriot Turkish community and directives about future policy of the Turks on the island, and we shall report further when it is concluded.

You will have seen from Ankara telegram no. 271 that the Prime Minister has now asked about the situation in the island and expressed concern about the Turkish community⁶.

It is suggestive that from this account the Turkish Government had yet remained relatively calm in its response to events in Cyprus. Nevertheless, its confidence in the effectiveness of British rule on the island was diminished, and although the Turkish leadership kept Fazıl Küçük at arm's length, it did begin to look for some means of political insurance. This took the form of an immediate demand for direct access to British thinking and decisions over Cyprus, partly to ensure that Turkish desiderata did not go by default, but also to give Turkish officials the opportunity to accurately gauge British intentions (and not least their progress against EOKA on the security front). A Foreign Office official responded as follows to the initial Turkish request to be fully consulted on Cypriot affairs:

This is a disturbing but natural development. The Turks are (a) naturally rattled by the recent disorders in Cyprus and afraid that we shall be bundled out (b) taking advantage of their position as our only and essential supporter to raise their price in terms of having an increased say

6. Michael Stewart to W. H. Young (Foreign Office), 19 April 1955 FO371/117631 RGC1081/326.

in Cyprus affairs. So far the [Turkish] Government has been restrained but they may not remain so.

Apart from restoring order in Cyprus, a need which this development underlines, we can only do our best to appease the Turks by giving them full information about our intentions, whilst continuing to make clear that we, not they, rule the island⁷.

The advantage Turkey increasingly derived from being Britain's *only* serious source of support during the Cyprus troubles of the 1950s requires emphasis. British failure to scotch EOKA during the first six months or so of its operations was also crucial in causing Turkey to meditate on what shape the succession to colonial rule might take. Although officials and ministers in London were always aware of the danger that Turkey's own claims could easily escalate if incautious encouragements were given, the logic of their own tactical embarrassments progressively forced their hand into yielding that 'consultation' with Ankara which some warned was bound to be the thin end of a very dangerous wedge.

The continuing unrest in Cyprus over the summer of 1955 led the British Government to call a tripartite international conference to consider the Cyprus question. This was essentially the initiative of the Foreign Secretary, Harold Macmillan, who from the first favoured international action to 'smother' the Cyprus dispute. The main concern of the Turkish Government was that an 'Anglo-Turkish position' should be coordinated on an exclusive bilateral basis *before* the meeting assembled. In Britain some senior figures in the Colonial Office were highly critical of the whole conference method, with its explosive possibilities. But it was Macmillan and the Foreign Office who were in a position to give the «hare» a run. The following telegram was despatched by Harold Macmillan from Geneva to Prime Minister Eden on July 17 1955. It was composed after the Turkish Prime Minister had lodged a firm demand for 'collusion' in advance of the London Conference, but also, significantly, immediately after Macmillan had learned that the Greek Government had extended diplomatic 'feelers' of its own to Ankara:

Following from Secretary of State [for Prime Minister]:

I had certain scruples up to now about accepting Mr. Menderes's suggestions reported in your telegram No. 433, but since the Greeks are now trying to gang up with the Turks perhaps we need no longer be quite so scrupulous. While I do not think it would be wise to have any official discussion outside the ordinary diplomatic channel, I think the time has come when we might make it clear to the Turks that the Greeks are very wrong if they think we have called the conference merely to yield to their

7. R. Wilding 15 May 1955 *ibid.*

demands. This is not at all our idea. The stronger the position the Turks take at the start, the better will be the result for us and for them. Mr. Zorlu spoke to me after the N.A.T.O. meeting. Not having yet seen your telegram under reference, I did not encourage him as much as I would have done had I seen it, but I told him that some contact would be useful... Please make it clear that all this stuff about protection of minorities is quite premature. I trust that the Turks will at the conference state quite firmly what they feel to be the right solution from their point of view⁸.

It is worth remarking that as early as 1955 the possibility that Greece and Turkey might, out of the blue, come to an agreement of their own over Cyprus was something which called forth very strong British reactions. It is clear that the Turks received, in effect, an invitation, if not an explicit instruction, 'to come out fighting' at the conference against the Greeks. There was, naturally, always the danger that fighting in the conference chamber might spread beyond it. Certainly the potential usefulness of some physical expression of Turkish 'feeling' over Cyprus occurred to the British — as one foreign office official had already put it «A few riots in Ankara would do us nicely»⁹. It had also become obvious that the Greek community in Istanbul was a hostage to the Cyprus dispute. The anti-Greek riots in Istanbul which broke out on September 6 did not therefore come as a complete shock to those involved in the higher reaches of the dispute. The course of those disturbances was described in a lengthy communication from Michael Stewart at the British Embassy Residence in Istanbul to London on September 22. Since the details of the riots were not fully or accurately reported at the time, this despatch may be printed here *in extenso*:

In my unnumbered telegram of the 6th of September I reported that serious anti-Greek rioting had broken out in Istanbul that evening. I now have the honour to submit an account of the disturbances as they appear at a distance of some days. The immediate cause seems to have been a report received three or four hours earlier and published by two Istanbul papers in special evening editions that Atatürk's birthplace and the Turkish Consulate in Salonika had been attacked and blown up by Greek demonstrators. There is, however, good reason to believe that demonstrations on a very much smaller scale had been planned earlier to coincide more or less with the end of the London Conference on Cyprus. I will revert to this point later.

2. The bomb outrage in Salonika appears to have done little damage but the Turks in Istanbul and Izmir had already been worked into a state of considera-

8. Harold Macmillan (United Kingdom Delegation to Four Power Talks, Geneva) to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 5, 17 July 1955 FO371/117643 RG1081/668.

9. Wilding minute 14 September 1954 FO371/112859 WG1081/500.

ble excitement by uncompromising public statements on Cyprus made by the Turkish Foreign Minister during the London Conference and weeks of anti-Greek writing in the press, and the Salonika incident provided them with the convenient opportunity to display in a peculiarly brutal and useless way their hatred of the Greeks.

3. This Embassy's first intimation of the rioting was the sound of breaking glass and shouting at about 8 o' clock at an open-air night club immediately below the Embassy garden wall which faces the Golden Horn. It appears, however, that the demonstrations began about 6 o' clock in Taksim Square, where a large crowd, excited by the news of the outrage in Salonica, were harangued by Hikmet Bil, the present President of the «Cyprus is Turkish» Association. The Police are reported to have tried to arrest Bil, who defied them with the support of the crowd, whereupon they made no further attempt to intervene. The speeches finished, the main part of the crowd started moving down *Istiklâl Caddesi*, the main street in Pera, while others went off in the direction of *Ayazpaşa* and along the main boulevard towards *Şişli*. The attacks on shops, the destruction of goods and property and to a much more limited extent the looting, then began. This was done with a method and determination which would have done credit to any thorough-going barbarian. Groups of young men armed with clubs and crowbars and under the Turkish flag—most groups had their own standard bearer—smashed the plate-glass or where necessary battered through steel shutters and systematically ransacked the shops, threw the contents into the street and trod it underfoot or otherwise destroyed it. Both from my own observations, I went out for an hour about 8 o'clock and again towards midnight, and from what I have heard from others, neither the Police nor the garrison troops who were out in some force by 8.30, made any real attempt to restrain the rioters. Indeed the Police in the Pera district, with the exception of four mounted officers who rode aimlessly up and down the main street, armed with hunting whips, which they were careful not to use, seemed to have generally disappeared from the scene by 9 o' clock. The Italian Ambassador, however, tells me that the Police were in evidence in some parts and effective in preventing damage to Italian property.

4. The troops, who were kept in side streets or paraded up and down the main street in trucks to the accompaniment of the applause of those who could take time off from the more engrossing occupation of pillage, were useless. Neither they nor the tanks, which appeared towards ten o' clock, made any effort to intervene, nor did their presence have the slightest restraining effect on the rioters. By midnight there were probably no more than a dozen or twenty shops in the whole length of the *Istiklâl Caddesi* left intact and the street itself was carpeted with broken glass, sodden bales of cloth and wreckage of household goods and merchandise.

5. I have not had any eyewitness account of what took place in other parts of the city, but from the wreckage on the 7th of September in the *Beyazit* area,

the business centre of old Istanbul, it is clear that many minority shops were broken up. The Greek residential area of Kurtuluş in new Istanbul was badly damaged. There was also great damage done in the Greek village of Samatya towards Florya, and in other Greek centres and in the islands of the Sea of Marmara, and generally wherever there were Greek or foreign communities.

6. *The Embassy Residence and the Consulate General were in the centre of the rioting in Pera, and when it became clear that neither the Police nor the troops were willing or able to control the crowds—the solitary policeman who normally controls traffic outside our gates had disappeared some time earlier—I telephoned the Governor of Istanbul to protest against the lack of adequate protection for British lives and property and to ask for it to be provided without delay. The Governor was profuse in his assurances but in fact no sort of guard was put on the Embassy until five hours later.*

7. *I have in my telegram No. 180 already given you a preliminary summary of the damage to British persons and property, and, in accordance with your instructions, a Note was presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs last week setting out the damage so far as we know it at present, reserving the right to claim compensation and asking for police protection for British lives and property in the future. Other foreign missions have done the same for their nationals and the Italian Ambassador told me on the 20th of September that he had suggested to the Foreign Minister that the Turkish Government might make a payment in advance of formal claims to meet some of the most immediate needs of foreign nationals. I had already seen Count Pietromarchi on the 8th of September to suggest that in his capacity as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps he might make some representations to the Turkish authorities about their failure to provide adequate protection for foreign property and persons, but His Excellency was not inclined to move at that time. Since then I gather that other diplomatic representatives have been urging the same course. In this connection I have noted your Legal Adviser's opinion that the right to protest and to claim compensation can only be based on it being shown that the Turkish authorities failed to exercise due diligence. I do not, of course, know how an argument on this point would go in a Court of Law, and the Turkish Prime Minister in his speech in the National Assembly of the 12th of September was at some pains to defend the Istanbul Police. Nevertheless apart from the evidence of eyewitnesses, the Prime Minister has admitted foreknowledge of demonstrations, the Minister of the Interior, who was in Istanbul during the rioting, has resigned and the Chief of Police, the Director of Security, and three senior Generals in the Istanbul District Command have been dismissed. It strikes me therefore that the Turkish Government might have some difficulty in maintaining that the authorities had been as active in dealing with this incident as they should have been.*

8. *I now return to the events of the night of the 6th of September. It is clear, though it is naturally difficult to lay one's hand on conclusive evidence, that*

the rioting was organised well in advance. Indeed the Government have admitted as much. It broke out simultaneously all over Istanbul on the Asiatic and European side, and as far out as Therapia on the Bosphorus and the Marmara Islands. It is also fairly clear that there was some degree of Government connivance. The new Hilton Hotel, for instance, was heavily guarded by cavalry and police well before the demonstrations degenerated into rioting, and the Greek Consulate General and the Patriarchate were given effective military protection at an early stage. Hikmet Bil, the President of the «Cyprus is Turkish Association» though now under arrest, spent an hour with the Prime Minister on the evening of the 5th of September, and I am reliably informed that the Government were aware of and had agreed to an anti-Greek demonstration to be organised under the auspices of the Association. This was to be limited to street demonstrations and the breaking of a few windows. The day planned for these events was to be the 9th of September, the anniversary of the final defeat of the Greeks in Izmir, but the bomb outrage in Salonica seemed to afford a more suitable occasion. There is other evidence of the Government's foreknowledge which I will not detail here. I rather doubt whether, as Greek sources have suggested, the Salonica bomb incident was part of the plot.

9. The answer to the question of why, even with the Minister of the Interior present in Istanbul, the Turkish authorities allowed the city to be pillaged and burnt for five hours, is probably that everything depends on Monsieur Menenders in this country. The Prime Minister, or, if not the Prime Minister himself, responsible people very close to him had agreed to a demonstration. The fact that the demonstration had turned to rioting with great risk to life and property was not sufficient reason for taking action until the Prime Minister could be consulted; and the Prime Minister was on the train to Ankara and temporarily incommunicado. He was finally reached at Sapanca about 10 o' clock at night and, with the President of the Republic, returned to Istanbul immediately in a police car. At Pendik, a suburb about 20 miles outside the city, the seriousness of the situation was brought home to them when their car was stopped by a crowd shouting «Evvelâ mal, sonra can» («first property, then life»). The Prime Minister reached Istanbul about half past eleven and on his orders, endorsed by President Bayar, the Army Command who had refused to act in answer to the appeals of the Governor, without written authority started to move troops in force into the city about midnight, too late to prevent the damage and too late to have stopped the rioters, many of whom, their job done, were by then roaming aimlessly round the city ready to go home or to sleep where they were. Martial Law was imposed shortly after midnight, lifted for a few hours the following morning, and then re-imposed until the National Assembly could meet to decide its duration. Martial Law under Article 86 of the Constitution consists of the suspension or temporary restriction of the inviolability of the person, the home, the freedom of the press, correspondence, association and incorporation.

10. The first acts of the Government on the 7th of September were to recall the National Assembly for the 12th of September and subsequently to announce the re-imposition of Martial Law, a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. (later reduced from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. and now from midnight to 4 a.m.), and to promise full compensation for the victims. All unofficial telegraphic correspondence abroad was prohibited for some days. A large number of arrests, the present figures vary between three and four thousand, were also made. President Bayar, accompanied by the Prime Minister and the Governor of the city, who seems to have come fairly well out of the whole business, toured the city in the morning and made suitable and no doubt perfectly sincere speeches of regret and condemnation. By the afternoon gangs of workmen were clearing up the wreckage and in two or three days, except for the ubiquity of troops, gaping windows and broken shop fronts and a shortage of certain foodstuffs, Istanbul was getting itself back into some sort of shape to receive the Delegates for the International Bank and Monetary Fund Conference. There must, however, have been a good many Turks in those days, including the Prime Minister, who wished the Conference and the Delegates the other side of the Atlantic.

11. Simultaneously with these happenings in Istanbul serious rioting was taking place in Izmir and demonstrations which, but for the effective action of the Governor, might have degenerated into rioting, in Ankara. The pattern of events in Izmir was much the same as in Istanbul though the riots were on a smaller scale and more obviously limited to anti-Greek attacks. First, demonstrations and then synchronised rioting throughout the city. The Greek Consulate, the Greek Pavilion at the Izmir Fair, the principal Greek Church and a number of Greek business and private houses were attacked, burnt or broken up. The security forces were largely inactive or ineffective, though troops prevented the complete destruction of the British Information Office, which was nevertheless damaged by the mob seeking the flat of a Greek doctor on the floor above. The mob also tried to reach the Greeks reported aboard the British ships, the m.v. «Brescia» and the s.s. «Livorno», but failed and did only minor damage. The police did not interfere but eventually troops intervened. One of the most serious incidents in its political implications was the attack on the residences of six Greek Officers attached to the NATO Headquarters, during which a Colonel and his wife were cut and bruised. The Greek Consul-General, his family and staff were unmolested. Her Majesty's Consular Representatives in Trabzon and Iskenderun report that all was quiet in those two cities.

12. The Government's explanation for these happenings was given by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister at the extraordinary session of the National Assembly on the 12th of September. A full summary of this was sent in my telegram No. 652 from Ankara. Briefly the demonstrations, of which the Government had foreknowledge, were the spontaneous expression of national feeling inflamed by the report of the intended massacre of Turkish

Cypriots on the 28th of August (for the spreading of which incidentally the Turkish Government was solely responsible), and concern for their Cypriot brothers. The police and armed forces were understandably affected by the same «psychosis» which accounted for their hesitation and relative ineffectiveness. But beyond the natural and to some extent legitimate activities of students and the like, there were dark forces, Red agents and ill-disposed individuals, who had momentarily succeeded in capitalising the feelings of the country and had brought disgrace and material disaster.

13. *To blame the rioting on Red agents seems too easy and not very convincing when we have been told by the Turkish Government for years past that such few Communists as there might be in Turkey were incapable of effective action. It is only fair to add here that this was also the Embassy's independent view. Even the Turkish security authorities say that only sixty or seventy out of the total number of arrests are Communists. But if it was not the Communists, who was it? It is reasonable to argue, as do some Turks, that part of the damage was done either by the poor in violent protest against the exorbitant cost of living, or by straightforward hooligans such as exist in every town. But these people, even if they added to the destruction, could not have organised it. The most obvious alternative to the Communists is the «Cyprus is Turkish Association». This Association may have been responsible for much of the planning, for the systematic identification of Greek property, the organization of taxis for the demonstrators, the despatch of roving bands to the outlying Greek colonies and the transport to Istanbul of gangs from the provinces. It may also have been responsible for the instructions which must have been given to spare life, since only isolated cases of injury to persons have been reported. I do not, however, believe that the Association can be held responsible for the wave of methodical destruction which followed the early demonstrations, nor for the wholesale ransacking and burning of Greek churches and schools, the widespread desecration of the Şişli cemetery, nor the attacks on the property of minorities other than Greek.*

14. *Another possibility is the local organization of the Democrat Party itself. There is fairly reliable evidence that local Democrat Party representatives were amongst the leaders of the rioting in various parts of Istanbul, notably in the Marmara Islands, and it has been argued that only the Democrat Party had the political organization in the country capable of demonstrations on the scale that occurred. This is true, but I myself do not believe that the Party, as distinct from individual members, can be held to be consciously responsible for more than the opening stages. If this is so, we are still left with the question of who was. I do not know that we shall ever get an answer since whatever the conclusion of the official enquiry, the full report will probably never be published. But on the whole I am inclined to think that the work of destruction was led and carried out by extreme nationalists, to whom groups of trouble-makers, hooligans and anyone with a grudge against authority or riches attached themselves.*

15. *It is clear from the manner in which Monsieur Menderes spoke to the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the latter called on him on the 16th of September that the Turkish Government are most seriously concerned and fearful of further developments of the same kind. They have put Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir under Martial Law for six months and intend to subject workers' and students' associations to severe investigation and repression. In addition to the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of State particularly responsible for students' and refugees' affairs has resigned; a number of other Ministers have been moved to less immediately responsible appointments and the purge of the Security Services continues. Coming on top of the economic crisis and the absolute refusal at present of the United States Government to consider further financial aid to Turkey for any other than strictly military purposes, the position of the Government, and Monsieur Menderes personally, is far weaker than it has been since the Democrat Party first took office in 1950.*

16. *The international consequences of the riots are probably equally serious to Turkey. Turco-Greek relations are very seriously damaged. A telegram from the United Kingdom Delegation at New York suggests that the Turks are not going to find much sympathy at the United Nations if Cyprus has to be debated, and Her Majesty's Ambassador at Belgrade has reported that the Yugoslavs are highly critical. These reactions, as Sir Pierson Dixon has remarked, are not altogether fair since up to a fortnight ago it was the Greeks who were almost wholly responsible for the trouble. The memories of the Armenian atrocities, however, and similar episodes in Turkish history die hard, and, while the Istanbul and Izmir riots may have been mild compared to what we read of in North Africa or what is liable to happen at almost any time in the Middle East, I have met very few foreigners, resident or visitors, of whom there were hundreds in Instabul during the last ten days, who do not regard the riots as disgraceful and as irrefutable evidence that Turkey has many, many years to go before she can fairly claim to stand as an equal with the West.*

17. *I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Athens, Belgrade and Washington, to the Governor of Cyprus and to the Head of the British Middle East Office¹⁰.*

Undoubtedly the anti-Greek riots, whilst consciously planned in some aspects, got out of control, but then one does not plan such things without knowing that some degree of control will be lost. At bottom, the underlying purpose of the outbreak was to prove the 'seriousness' of Turkish involvement in the future of Cyprus (just as EOKA's bombs had been designed to prove the

10. Michael Stewart to Harold Macmillan 22 September 1955 FO371/117711 RG10344/50.

seriousness of the *Enosis* claim). To responsible officials in London the 'grim story' related in Stewart's communication bore out the allegation from Greek sources that Prime Minister Menderes in Ankara «knew all about the business». There was in this affair, too, a more general anti-Western vein deriving from considerations wholly unrelated to Cyprus, principally Turkish dissatisfaction with the amount of aid they were receiving from the United States. In fact, as Stewart's account at points implies, whilst the riots were aimed against Greeks and Greece in the first instance, they were also a warning to other countries as well, above all the United Kingdom. Although many Britons found this revelation of Turkish tactics repellent, it is suggestive that in some quarters there was an implicit 'understanding' of the violence which had been resorted to. An example came when Lord Ismay, the Secretary-General of N.A.T.O., stated in an official meeting that the riots which had occurred in one member country aimed at the nationals of another member was «the biggest blow which had been inflicted so far on the prestige and ideals of N.A.T.O.», a view which Prime Minister Eden was quick to rebut as «an exaggeration»¹¹. Curiously, it seemed for some while to fortify the British position to be held to ransom by Turkish actions.

From the autumn of 1955 the chief focus of the Cyprus problem shifted to the negotiations between the new military Governor, Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, and Archbishop Makarios. But meanwhile the Turkish Government, like its Greek counterpart, faced internal political difficulties of its own. On 20 December 1955 Ambassador Bowker reported on the recent exchanges in the Grand National Assembly during which Ismet Inonu had attacked Prime Minister Menderes both for being responsible for the Istanbul riots and although, (of course, there was a contradiction here) for having subsequently agreed to the ceremonial raising of the Greek flag in Izmir (an act carried out on October 24 under considerable American pressure as a compensation to Greek 'honour'). Bowker's despatch stated:

Kasim Kufrevi, one of the leaders of the new Freedom Party, and formerly a prominent member of the Democratic Party, also referred to the House of Commons debate and the apparent progress in the direction of self-determination [for Cyprus] and demanded that the [Turkish] Government should make their position clear. He said the reference to Cyprus in the Government's programme remained vague.

In his reply M. Menderes, after refuting the accusations of his complicity in the riots and justifying the Izmir ceremony as a normal way of making amends among civilized nations, said that but for M. Inonu's weakness in dealing with the Dodecanese after the war the question of Cyprus would not have assumed its present importance. I report these exchanges

11. Anthony Eden note PREM11/1068.

principally for the record since it is clear that whatever misgivings the Democratic Party Parliamentary Group may have on M. Menderes's recent handling of Turco-Greek relations, the riots and other matters connected with the question of Cyprus, his attitude on the two points of immediate interest in regard to the future of the island, self-determination and self-government, have the support of almost the whole [Turkish] Assembly.

At the same time the raising of the ban on publicity on Cyprus following the abolition of martial law in Ankara and Izmir has already to some extent led to menacing comment on Cypriot affairs (and Greece). The effect of this may well be to give M. Menderes less room for manoeuvre, even in the unlikely event that he should wish to do so¹².

It is worth noting from this extract that the charges relating to the Istanbul riots for which, among other things, both Menderes and Foreign Minister Zorlu were to be hanged following the 1960 Turkish revolution, were already being exploited by Inonu and the Opposition alongside other internal dissatisfactions. During the course of 1955 economic conditions in Turkey had taken a definite turn for the worse. The fractures which were later to break the regime first became visible at this time, and one effect was to make the Government a hostage to its own success on the narrow, but highly emotional, pivot of the Cyprus question.

Probably the fact that the September riots put Turkish policy under something of a cloud in terms of 'world opinion' meant that Turkish responses to the Harding-Makarios talks in Cyprus from October 1955 onwards were more muted than they might otherwise have been. Nevertheless, Turkey's stance in this phase was to insist that any British 'offer' did not go beyond what had been previously tabled at the London Conference. The episode of the internal Cypriot negotiations witnessed a further intensification of Ankara's 'surveillance' of British policy. The flavour of this may be conveyed by a Foreign Office minute recording the remarks of the Turkish Ambassador to Britain when he visited the department on 1 February 1956:

The Ambassador thought that the latest interview between the Governor and Makarios had succeeded in putting the latter up against the wall. It was most important that he should not be allowed to escape from having to define his position towards the [constitutional] formula and having to state that he was prepared to cooperate and to repudiate violence...

The Ambassador said that he was very apprehensive of further reprisals in Turkey against the Greek population there. He had been told by people who should know that if any serious anti-Turkish incident or

12. Sir James Bowker to Harold Macmillan 20 December 1955 FO 371/117679 RG1081/1736.

*development occurred there was a risk of a massacre of Greeks at Istanbul which would make the riots of last September mere child's play*¹³.

Since what might be interpreted as an anti-Turkish development could be extremely broad, such warnings were not to be taken lightly, especially as the reiteration of 'more riots in Istanbul' became a sort of code for a Greco-Turkish war. Turkish pressure was not in itself the key factor in the deportation of Archbishop Makarios to the Seychelles on March 9. But afterwards any move by the British to rekindle negotiations on a constitution, *even had they wished to do so*, was made more improbable by having to run the gauntlet of Turkish opposition. This was the case with the June 1956 proposals which would have introduced a measure of self-government and (crucially in terms of Greek Cypriot opinion) fixed a time-limit for deciding, under N.A.T.O. arbitration, the final status of the island. Bowker described the Turkish Foreign Minister's hostile response when presented with a rough draft of this scheme, and drew the following conclusion:

*I fear... that the Turks are pathological on the subject of self-determination and will adamantly refuse to see merits in any plan which fixes a date for it, however hedged around by conditions and safeguards. My impression is... that if it is finally decided to fix a date for the possible application of self-determination it will have to be done without the agreement (or even the acquiescence) of the Turkish Government and probably with serious effects on Anglo-Turkish relations and a further exacerbation of relations between Turkey and Greece*¹⁴.

As Bowker afterwards summarized matters, the new British plan had «brought back with a rush all the suppressed doubts and misgivings which they [the Turks] felt during the negotiations with Makarios and a feeling that they will now have to go it alone». «Going it alone» was an ominous possibility, and as such calculations had now to be made as to the prospects for some unilateral military action by Turkey over Cyprus. The following extract is a précis of the judgements on this vital matter which was supplied to the British Foreign Office from their Ankara Embassy.

TURKISH MILITARY ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE CYPRUS QUESTION

The Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has officially denied Greek allegations that Turkish officers are being sent to Cyprus and that Turkish troops are being trained for commando operations against Cyprus. Sir James Bowker

13. J. G. Ward minute, 2 February 1956, FO371/123868 RG1081/178.

14. Sir James Bowker Telegram No. 478 to Foreign Office 18 June 1956 FO371/123899.

reports that he has no concrete evidence of any Turkish troop movements connected with the Cyprus issue.

2. Turkish military action in connection with the Cyprus question can be considered under three heads:

- (a) an invasion of Cyprus while British troops are still there;
- (b) an invasion of Cyprus in the absence of British troops;
- (c) action against Greek territory in Thrace or the Aegean.

An Invasion of Cyprus while British Troops are still there.

3. Sir Sames Bowker excludes this possibility. Even if Cyprus became Greek, a Turkish invasion would be a remote eventuality if Britain retained a base there.

Turkish Invasion of Cyprus in the absence of British Troops.

4. Sir James Bowker does not comment on this. But he points out that the Turks would have ample resources for an unopposed landing. He records that the Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff hinted that Turkey would take military action if Cyprus were ceded to Greece or there was a settlement unsatisfactory to Turkey. The Turkish Ambassador in Washington has hinted the same thing publicly.

Turkish Action against Greek Territory in Thrace or in the Aegean.

5. From the purely military point of view this would be easier than an invasion of Cyprus. Sir James Bowker thinks that the Turks might indulge in sabre-rattling demonstrations, but he doubts whether these would be followed up by invasion. It should be added however that the Turks have frequently referred to the ill-treatment of the Turkish minorities in Western Thrace and in some of the Aegean islands. Moreover it was the Treaty of Lausanne which gave Greece the title deeds to these territories, and the Turks have frequently said that if the Lausanne settlement in respect of Cyprus is altered, other parts of the same settlement should also be altered¹⁵.

After the blocking of the plan of June/July 1956, the focus of a possible political settlement shifted to the work of the Constitutional Commissioner, Lord Radcliffe. Concern at the Turkish attitude to Radcliffe's prospective conclusions led Sir James Bowker to draw up a broad analysis of 'The Turkish attitude on Cyprus'. This is one of the most authoritative assessments of its kind in the official British records, and is therefore worth recording here in full:

THE TURKISH ATTITUDE ON CYPRUS

To those responsible for dealing with Cyprus, one of the aspects of the

15. J. A. Thompson minute 24 June 1956 FO371/123906 RG1081/1482.

problem which often exasperates is the seemingly unhelpful and negative attitude of Turkey towards any suggestion for a settlement. To them, it is natural to wonder whether every proper effort is being made to bring the Turks to a more reasonable frame of mind, and to convince them of the need of a settlement and the advantages, from their own point of view, for Turkey's essential interests. It may, therefore, be useful to attempt to summarise shortly the Turkish attitude to the Cyprus question and, in particular, its two most important aspects, namely self-government and self-determination.

2. To understand the Turkish attitude over Cyprus, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the issue revives acutely the bitter memories of the Turco-Greek war of the early twenties, resulting from the Greek occupation of Smyrna (Smyrna) and invasion of Anatolia. Though the Greeks were then driven from the mainland of Asia Minor, Turkey was obliged to accept, in the Lausanne Settlement, the retention by Greece of a number of islands adjoining the Turkish Aegean coast. This string of Greek-held coastal islands was extended further by the transfer to Greece of the Dodecanese after the Second World War. Turkey is absolutely determined that this process shall not be extended any further and that in no circumstances shall Cyprus pass to Greece (the fact that the Turkish Secretary-General has recently referred to the possibility of partition does not invalidate this). This is the fundamental consideration in her attitude to the Cyprus issue, presented to the world under the argument that owing to the special historical, geo-political and strategic circumstances of the case the principle of self-determination is not applicable.

3. For these reasons, Turkey's attitude to any suggestions about Cyprus is determined by the extent to which they are likely to lead to Enosis, i.e. Greek annexation.

4. As regards the internal administration of Cyprus, Turkey does not oppose the principle of an advance towards self-government. She insists, however, that a Constitution should contain absolute safeguards against eventual domination of Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriots and should not be merely a transitional stage towards Enosis. The main safeguard which she at present demands for the Turkish Cypriots is equal representation with the Greek Cypriots. There are indications that she realises this to be unobtainable and that she would be prepared to consider other alternatives when the time came. But meanwhile she insists that any discussion of a Constitution, before terrorism has been brought to an end and law and order re-established, will simply play into the hands of those Greek Cypriots and Greeks who regard a Constitution as a stepping stone to Greek annexation.

5. With the intention of ensuring that the Constitution should be given a fair run and not used merely as a preliminary step towards Enosis, the proposals put forward by Her Majesty's Government last June aimed at putting the question of self-determination into cold storage by providing that there should be no discussion of it for ten years. This provision made no impression what-

ever on the Turks, who maintained that the idea was wholly impracticable and unrealistic. They pointed out (I) that to fix a definite date when self-determination might be applicable was a further retreat from Her Majesty's Government's previous attitude that self-determination could not be applied in the foreseeable future, and (II) that as soon as such a date was fixed, however long or short a period, the Greeks, regardless of any undertakings to the contrary, would inevitably bend all their efforts to advancing the date when self-determination should be considered and to whittling away whatever further safeguards had been applied to its application: in other words, that whatever conditions were attached to the consideration of self-determination would not be respected and that the only result of such an agreement would be that the Greeks would consolidate the ground won in order to advance further towards the realisation of their aims. All attempts to impress on the Turks the ingeniously contrived network of safeguards for Turkish interests contained in the proposals merely evoked the response that in practice the whole network would prove no more substantial than a cobweb. They based their scepticism on this score on the unscrupulousness with which the Cypriot Ethnarchy and the Greek Government had followed their aims since the London Conference, the course of the negotiations with Archbishop Makarios and the repeated failure of the Greek Government to make any attempt to check the extremists.

6. It has been suggested that in our discussions with the Turks further emphasis should be given to the concern shown throughout by Her Majesty's Government for Turkish interests, to the point even of consulting Turkey about their July proposals and dropping them out of deference to Turkish objections, and that we should urge that it is up to Turkey now to make some contribution towards solving this intractable question. The Turkish response to such a line is to draw a comparison between Turkey's record over the Cyprus problem and that of Greece — to compare Greek insistence on pressing a claim to British territory at a moment of international tension and Greek support of terrorist activities in the Island with Turkey's acceptance of the status quo, and to compare the systematic Greek exploitation of the Cyprus issue to undermine Britain's position in the Middle East with Turkey's unwavering support of British policy in the area. The Turks point out, moreover, that it is unreasonable to expect Turkey to accept proposals devised to meet what they regard as wholly unjustified Greek claims and containing, as they think, dangerous threats to Turkey's national interests; that by yielding to Greek pressure to «do something about Cyprus», Her Majesty's Government are forcing Turkey into a negative attitude, and that if any progress is to be made the first essential is that the Greeks, who alone are responsible for bringing the issue to a head, should show their good faith by withdrawing their support of terrorism and renouncing their annexationist claims.

7. The core of the problem is the extreme difficulty of devising proposals for solving Greece's present demands over Cyprus which both give some satis-

faction to the Greeks and offer what the Turks can be induced to regard as something of real advantage to themselves. The argument that Turkey owes it to her British ally to adopt a more helpful attitude to a problem which is costing the latter so much blood and treasure would, no doubt, evoke the reply that the problem is, on Britain's own insistence, a British responsibility. Such a reply might well be accompanied by the thought that the problem would never have been allowed to arise if Turkey had been allowed to retain her former possession of the Island. In addition, the Turks would probably repeat their offer (included in their reply to the July proposals) to consider with Her Majesty's Government ways in which Turkey might co-operate with Britain in the Island. A repetition of this same offer would probably also be their reply to any insistence on the difficulties which the Cyprus Government were having in dealing with the terrorists.

8. It has been suggested that, if the Turks cannot be brought to accept proposals on their absolute merit, it might be pointed out to them that in the event of a change of British Government they will inevitably be presented with something far less favourable. The likely reply to such an argument is that so long as Britain has a Government which is resolved to maintain her position in Cyprus, Turkey will continue to give it her unwavering support and co-operation. If, however, the present British Government, or its successor, decided, as a result of pressure from one direction or another, or of internal difficulties in Cyprus, to adopt a course which in Turkey's view was tantamount to abandoning its responsibility in the Island, then Turkey would be obliged to re-consider her attitude and take such steps as might be appropriate to meet what would be an entirely new situation. (This in fact is the line which Monsieur Zorlu took at the London Conference last September.) The Turks are hard-headed Asiatics and they would mean what they said.

9. Finally, it should be pointed out that there is no difference of opinion among the political parties in Turkey about Cyprus, which is regarded by all as an issue of vital national importance.

10. It will be seen from the foregoing that the real difficulty of dealing with the Turks over Cyprus is that we and they approach the problem from different points of view and the arguments which to us seem reasonable and convincing are regarded by them as inapplicable to the basic realities of the problem. When asked what they regard as the proper way of dealing with the problem, their reply is that we should maintain the firm policy of suppressing terrorism in the Island, which is already showing important dividends, and meet pressure from any quarter for a further move by explaining all that has already been attempted towards a settlement and the reasons of its failure, and insisting that what now is required is that the Greek Government should use its influence to bring terrorism to an end and so re-establish conditions in the Island in which it will be possible to tackle the question of constitutional progress.

11. While all are agreed that every effort should continue to be made to get

*the Turks to agree to whatever proposals Her Majesty's Government may wish to put forward about Cyprus, the foregoing is intended to expose some of the difficulties encountered in trying to induce them to accept arguments intended to appeal to their reason.*¹⁶

Fundamentally the difference of approach between Britain and Turkey, conflated though they often seemed to others, sprang from the former's assumption that *some* expression had to be given —however mangled or qualified— to conventional self-determination in Cyprus. Notably, however, Bowker did not draw from his own analysis the lesson that, since the Turkish position was so resistant to reasonable argument, the only course was to go ahead without them. This reflected the pattern of British prejudice over the Cyprus question, and to some extent also their wider interests in Middle Eastern diplomacy.

During the summer and autumn of 1956 partition began to move to the forefront, though who first put the idea into whose mind is not a matter to be gone into here. For the Turks the advantage of the partition demand was that it could be presented (at least to non-Greeks) as a credible basis for compromise, and because it provided an anchor against moving further down the 'slippery slope' towards *Enosis* which Turkey always feared the Greeks were successfully pushing the British (with some help from the United States). In short, partition was a guarantee that the Turkish interest would not be overridden. Recognition of this guarantee as a concomitant of self-determination emerged as the Turkish 'price' for refraining from outright criticism during the unveiling of the Radcliffe Report. This 'price' was clarified during the visit by the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, to Ankara in mid-December 1956. A Foreign Office minute on 17 December, after noting that the Minister's visit to Athens had gone badly, continued:

The meeting with M. Menderes [in Ankara] went very well. The Turks were as skillful as the Greeks were clumsy. What stood out most clearly was that the Turks had decided that, since H.M.G. are committed to self-determination, the only solution is partition, and the sooner the better. They will agree that it cannot be put into force immediately, but they would like to see H.M.G. committed to partition now by something that will, if possible, bind their successors. They fear that a [British] Labour Government would give all Cyprus to Greece. The point was made very delicately, but quite unmistakably.

The Turks understand that HMG must go through with the Radcliffe exercise, but they do not like it and regard it as academic...

16. Memorandum by Sir James Bowker 17 October 1956 FO371/123931 RG1081/2226.

Assuming that Ministers agree to proceed with the Radcliffe proposals and the [House of Commons] statement on December 19, the only point for immediate decision is... the draft of the statement, and especially the change [in wording] which the Turks ask for...¹⁷.

The Turkish amendment to the draft of the imminent statement on Cyprus by the British Colonial Secretary was designed to put the partition option in a 'positive' light. The Cabinet in London authorized a wording designed to meet this Turkish demand. That the fateful parliamentary announcement of 19 December 1956 bringing partition into the 'light of day' was done not only under pressure from Ankara, but in something very close to the terms specified by the Turkish Government, is obviously a fact of some significance. It constituted the achievement of a major Turkish goal in securing practical leverage over the making of British policy. *By the same token, should the British ever try to get off the partition hook that had now been set, the Turks were likely to lay all delicacy aside.*

The Radcliffe exercise did indeed prove academic. Meanwhile, however, the continuing exile of Archbishop Makarios had become an albatross around the British neck. Even most of those privy to the original action in London and Nicosia recognized it as having been a mistake. The Archbishop's release on April 6 1957 nevertheless was bound to anger Ankara. During the summer of 1957 Turkish disillusionment with British policy intensified. Coming on top of the Suez shock, the decision on Makarios confirmed fears that British sovereignty in Cyprus should be discounted as a reliable factor. Indications that 'neutral' parties — above all, the Americans and the Secretary-General of N.A.-T.O., Paul-Henri Spaak — were latching onto Cypriot 'independence' as a compromise solution also began to worry the Turks. On August 30 1957 Bowker analyzed the state of Turkish feeling at this point with particular reference to the Turkish Government's likely reactions to an outcome which might not reflect its optimal hopes:

I have read with interest Roger Allen's comments in his letter (1081/810/57) of July 5 on the possibility of Greek military action against Turkey in the event of a solution of the Cyprus problem unfavourable to Greece being imposed on the Greek Government; and I should like to offer some comments on possible Turkish reactions to the reverse state of affairs — a solution unfavourable to Turkey.

2. It is necessary to start from the assumption that there is hardly a Turk alive who would not be delighted to have another crack at the Greeks. Equally all Turks are convinced that they would have no difficulty in inflicting a

17. Memorandum by D. P. Reilly 17 December 1956 FO371/123941 RG1081/2523.

military defeat on Greece as crushing as the defeat in the War of Independence. Moreover, Turkish public opinion has by now reached a fairly generally inflamed state over Cyprus. It is in fact virtually the only aspect of Turkish foreign policy which is followed closely by all sections of the population including even the peasants in the remotest areas. Objective discussion of Cyprus is almost impossible and passions (more anti-Greek than pro-Turkish community in Cyprus) are quickly aroused.

3. *There is little doubt in my mind that if the final solution for Cyprus was ENOSIS or if the Island was simply abandoned by Her Majesty's Government, the Turkish Government would immediately move troops into Cyprus even if this led to general Turko-Greek hostilities on the mainland; and that no regard would be taken of protestations from Turkey's allies including the Americans.*

4. *These two «solutions» are, however, extremely unlikely and the real point of this letter is to assess Turkish reactions in the event of their having to swallow a solution unfavourable to Turkey but excluding the extreme solutions mentioned above; e.g. independence, autonomy leading to a plebiscite or any other «compromise» solution acceptable to the Greek Government, but clearly unacceptable to the Turks. (I assume that any such solution would provide for the continued presence of British troops in the Island at least for the time being.)*

5. *In the event I think that any Turkish Government led by Monsieur Menderes or for that matter any other foreseeable Turkish Government would do their best to curb popular enthusiasm to have it out with the Greeks on the ground. The Turkish Government are too dependent on the Americans and too committed to their membership of NATO and the various other European «clubs», to risk all in such a cause.*

6. *Nevertheless the possibility exists that the Government might be forced to give in to popular pressure probably through the medium of the armed forces. This would either mean the Government acting in collusion with the Army after succumbing to pressure or the resignation of the Government in favour of a temporary military Government on the grounds of «national emergency». In this context it is relevant to quote an extract from a letter I wrote to Shattock at the Political Office with the Middle East Forces in August 1956 (my letter 1201/8/56G of August 29, 1956) in connexion with a questionnaire sent to my Military Attaché: «Nevertheless taking into account the high prestige and popularity of the Army and the fact that Atatürk's example is behind them, I consider that the Army would be capable of a military coup or of forcing the Government to accept its view on a political question in a national crisis. The Army's loyalty is probably more to itself—and to what the Generals might think are the highest interests of the nation—than to the State... It would be difficult to say in what circumstances the Army might move on its own initiative... but it is too sweeping to say «only in the event of Communists seizing power».*

7. In such circumstances popular pressure through the military leaders would probably be for one of the three following courses of action or at the worst for all three at once:—

- (1) Military intervention in Cyprus itself.
- (2) Military action against some of the smaller off-shore islands belonging to Greece.
- (3) Military action against Greece itself.

Although all three of these possibilities would be eminently acceptable emotionally to the Turks, prudence would probably dictate to military leaders in the last resort that it would be better to avoid either coming into collision with British troops (in Cyprus) or the complete and irrevocable breach with NATO and the West which would probably result from an attack on Greece itself. They might, however, consider that they could get away with (2) above as a first step; that it would effectively satisfy the popular demand for action against Greece; and that it would also serve as a cogent warning of the possible further consequences if the unfavourable decision over Cyprus was not reversed.

8. All this is however pure speculation and in the event I think it is unlikely that anything of the kind would happen. Popular feeling could hardly become articulate in such a direction except through the medium of the armed forces; and as far as I can see there are at present no high ranking officers of the calibre and with the wide popular following of, say, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak or General Kâzım Karabekir who would be likely to lead such a movement. So long as Monsieur Menderes is in power he will probably also be in full control; and for all his capriciousness and unpredictability he would know very well how disastrous for Turkey the consequences of violent external action would be. He is a past master at conditioning Turkish public opinion to new circumstances and he would probably be able to satisfy whatever pressure there might be by some gesture such as a demand for the total revision of the Treaty of Lausanne, accompanied no doubt with dark warnings of the possibility of military action.

9. However, even assuming that he stopped short of actual military intervention in Cyprus or war with Greece he might consider it necessary to open the safety valve sufficiently to dissipate the main head of steam in Turkish public opinion. The possibility of another series of riots against the Greek populations of Istanbul and Izmir on the lines of the September, 1955 riots but possibly not confined only to damaging property could not therefore be discounted. Or he might well expel from Turkey all citizens of Greek nationality, including of course the Patriarchate, and sequester their property regardless of the likelihood of retaliation against the Turks in Western Thrace. I consider that actions on these lines would be the most likely consequences since they would to a certain extent satisfy public opinion and would enable the Turkish Government to bow temporarily before the popular storm without irrevocable

*damage being done to their foreign policy — the excuse of intolerable provocation and the absolute denial of governmental complicity (if there were riots) would immediately be forthcoming*¹⁸.

Paradoxically, however, once the Turks began to lose faith in the British, and fear the arbitration of others outside the area, they began to see advantages in striking a deal directly with Greece. This logic, reviving the attractions of Greco-Turkish rapprochement, was also connected with the wider crisis in the Middle East during the Summer of 1957 revolving around a hostile Syria. In fact under these conditions there were detectible certain tendencies which, after many ups and downs, were to feed into the Zurich and London accords of early 1959. Michael Stewart, for example, writing to the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, from Ankara on September 6 1957 stated that whilst «it is almost 100% certain that the Turkish Government would never willingly accept independence for Cyprus... I believe that they might be induced to accept a solution which gave them the substance of partition, i.e. a physical stake in the Island without partition itself»¹⁹.

A physical stake in the island was the abiding aim of Turkish policy from the summer of 1957 onwards. That such a stake might be gained short of actual partition provided the potential scope for 'give' in Turkish policy. The question was when and how this 'give' might become practical. By now the Turks did not trust the British to negotiate on their behalf. As such, they were highly suspicious of the fresh change of direction in British policy with the resignation of Sir John Harding as Governor of Cyprus and his replacement by Sir Hugh Foot in October 1957. One of the chief British problems was to find some means of packaging the ensuing Foot Plan so as to make it acceptable to Turkey. To meet this need the bait of a Turkish military base was dangled tantalizingly in front of Ankara's nose, since such a base would in effect operate as a guarantee of partition when the moment for a 'final solution' to the island's status eventually arrived. The tentative suggestion of a base was one of the difficulties which bedevilled the talks which the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, had in Ankara at the end of January 1958 (although the recent Turkish-Cypriot riots in Nicosia, suppressed by British Security Forces, also entered into the now very jaundiced reckoning). Here is an extract from the final session of those talks attended not only by Selwyn Lloyd and his Turkish counterpart, Fatin Zorlu, but also by Prime Minister Menderes:

M. Menderes said that he had been kept informed of the talks between the Secretary of State and M. Zorlu. He earnestly desired to come to an

18. Sir James Bowker to J. M. Addis 30 August 1957 FO371/130098 RGC1034/121.

19. Michael Stewart to J. M. Addis (Foreign Office) 6 September 1957 FO371/130098 RG10344/123.

understanding in the tradition of Anglo-Turkish friendship. There were, however, important differences between the Turkish and British positions.

M. Zorlu said that he would explain the main points of difference... The first point of divergence was the form of political development in Cyprus. The Turkish Government did not understand the meaning of the word 'communal', which the Secretary of State had used at the previous meeting. It was important that the word 'federal' or 'federative' should appear in the [new] British statement...

M. Zorlu said that the second point of divergence between the British and Turkish positions was the question of a Turkish base. It was very important for Turkey to have a base in Cyprus immediately. Indeed, this was the essential preliminary to any further progress. The Turkish Government had a far greater interest in the island than any other Government. They could admit that the Greek Government also had an interest, but if this was stated it must be made clear that the Turkish interest was greater. The Turkish Government could not contemplate that other countries, even though they were in N.A.T.O. or the Baghdad Pact, should have a direct interest in Cyprus, though if the Americans wanted a base he would see no objection to that²⁰.

Zorlu rejected any reference to 'communal' since it smacked of that minority status for Turkish Cypriots which Ankara held to be wholly inadequate. More significantly, however, the omission here by Zorlu of any recognition of British interest in the island, if only as the current sovereign power, was a quite studied threat, indeed a calculated insult, to the British Foreign Secretary. There was also the sinister sub-text that if Turkey so excluded British rights, it was but a short step to making trouble for her by stirring up the Turkish-Cypriots to violence (which she was, anyway, self-evidently doing). In these circumstances the key to British policy was a fresh assessment that the Turks (and Turkey) represented a greater threat to continued British rule on the island than EOKA (largely because of the reliance of the Internal Security machine on the Turkish community). Again, given the bias built into British policy, far from leading to the conclusion that the time had therefore come to tack to the Greek side, this assessment meant that henceforth the dominant British motive was to win back Turkish friendship. To do this, of course, one had to know what it was Turkey was really after. Was her optimal demand, for example, partition, or full rendition of the island — a return, that is, to 1878? Sir James Bowker in Ankara was instructed to address himself to this crucial imponderable. He replied as follows on March 18 1958:

20. Bowker Telegram No. 225 to Foreign Office 30 January 1958 FO371/136330 RG10344/31.

Please refer to your letter No. RGC 10344/G of March 13 in which you put some questions about the Turkish Government's position on Cyprus, with particular reference to their demand for partition.

2. I think the Turkish Government came to adopt their demand for partition and nothing but partition as a final solution as the result of Nuri Birgi, when he was Secretary General, having convinced Monsieur Menderes that partition offered the only practical way of settling the question which would give some satisfaction to both Greece and Turkey and also be final. Michael Stewart recalls Birgi saying in the autumn of 1956 that though partition was not an ideal solution, it would meet at least two out of three Turkish requirements, i.e. protection of the Turkish community and her security needs, but not her historical, i.e. territorial claims, and would provide a basis for the resumption of normal Turco-Greek relations. On these grounds the Turkish Government claim that, in demanding partition they are being both realistic and accommodating. Monsieur Zorlu maintains, as he told the Secretary of State during the Ankara talks, and as he has told me before, that he did his best to dissuade Monsieur Menderes from adopting this attitude, his view being that the Turkish answer to Greece's undisguised aim of Enosis should be (no doubt for tactical reasons) to demand rendition. The decision to go all out for partition having once been taken, the Government's colours were nailed increasingly firmly to the public mast, particularly during and after the General Election.

3. I believe, then, that the Turkish Government's demand for partition is genuinely intended to be their final demand and not a tactical manoeuvre or a disguised demand for rendition. I believe, too, that they are sincere in arguing that the drawing of one more, and final, frontier line between Turkey and Greece in this region, would enable the two countries to restore their friendly relations. Their basic conviction is that where Turkey has a physical land frontier with Greece, the latter will never dare seriously to attack what the Turks regard as their national interests. Although the Turkish Government have constantly kept alive Turkish complaints about the treatment of the Turkish community in Western Thrace, they do this, I am pretty sure, not because they are really concerned over the lot of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, but in order to keep a rod in pickle for use as required against the Greek minority in Istanbul, and latterly also, of course, to support their case over Cyprus. So I think they genuinely believe that as soon as a line were drawn in Cyprus, on one side of which Turkey would be in sovereign control, the Greeks would no longer dare to make any further trouble for Turkey, or for the Turkish community, in the rest of the Island. I think also that, on the basis of this same idea, they genuinely believe that it would suffice to draw the line without at the same time carrying out any significant exchange of population. They are confident that once the line were drawn they would have little trouble in looking after their own national interests and that the Turkish

Cypriots on the Greek side of the line would be assured of reasonable minority rights.

4. *Of course the Turkish Government have so far studiously refrained from saying where they think the line should be drawn. On this point they would no doubt set their sights high (as they appear to be doing now on the question of a base) with the prospect probably of lowering them a bit in the course of hard negotiations.*

5. *Incidentally, as recorded in paragraph 3 of Foreign Office despatch No. 73 (RGC 1192/11/G) of March 3, Monsieur Zorlu instructed Birgi to tell the Secretary of State that he was «under terrible pressure». I think it is probably true that he is under some pressure. I think that as a result of his talks with the Secretary of State he may well have imagined, and told the Prime Minister and members of the Democrat Party Parliamentary Group, that he had brought Her Majesty's Government to the point of making some dazzling concession (in the form of a base) to Turkey and that they may now be asking him when this concession is going to materialise (see paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 441). In this context it is necessary to remember that Monsieur Zorlu has no popular position in this country and is generally disliked by most of the Democrat Party; success is therefore necessary for him if he is to keep his present position. Secondly, partition for Cyprus has now become a national slogan and it is quite possible that a large number of Democrat Party Deputies might threaten to desert if they thought that the Government were preparing to give way on this particular solution. If the number of these were added to the other Deputies who were dissatisfied with the Government's economic or other policies, there might be desertions from the Democrat Party members on sufficiently large a scale to threaten Government's majority. To some extent therefore Monsieur Zorlu is telling the truth when he speaks of being under pressure, though I doubt whether it is yet «terrible» and of course whatever pressure there is is partly his own fault.*

6. *Though I am sure that a base now would be regarded by the Turks as a tremendously valuable bird in the hand, and possibly induce them to be less vociferous about partition, the fact that they have committed themselves so fully to partition, which of course is criticised by the Opposition as an undue concession, will continue to make it very hard for them specifically and publicly to withdraw from it unless they can demonstrate that they have got something equivalent (e.g. a base which in size amounts to the same thing) or possibly better (e.g. an equal share with the Greeks in the administration of the whole Island)²¹.*

The nub of the Macmillan Plan which took shape after early March 1958

21. Sir James Bowker to J. M. Addis (Foreign Office) 18 March 1958 FO371/136332 RG10344/110.

was to secure Turkish compliance through *de facto*, or 'administrative', partition, whilst having enough elements of 'self-government' so as to secure eventual Greek agreement (though almost certainly not before the threat of out-right partition worked its harsh magic on both Athens and the Greek Cypriots themselves). By now, however, the Turks had the British on the run, and there was a natural temptation to make the most of it and only relent when they were sure of their quarry. The public announcement of the plan (many elements of which later found their way into the Lancaster House settlement) took place against the background of severe communal disorders in Cyprus, beginning on 8 June. Bowker reported on 20 June regarding these vital phases from the vantage-point of Ankara in the following very full terms:

The Turkish Government's handling of the Cyprus question over the last few weeks has afforded an instructive demonstration of Turkish political methods and diplomatic tactics.

2. *To give the background it is necessary to go back to your talks in Ankara in January when Monsieur Zorlu, true to the Turkish characteristic of mistaking inches for ell, chose to believe, and no doubt gave Monsieur Menderes to understand, that a Turkish base in the Island was to all intents and purposes «in the bag». The widespread feeling of bitterness and suspicion which followed the dissipation of this illusion, which I have little doubt was to some extent based on a genuine misunderstanding, was I fear further intensified by the proposal that the Turkish Government might consider releasing Her Majesty's Government from their undertaking that self-determination should when the time came, be applied to both communities in Cyprus in exchange for a base in the early future, and again when the Turkish Government were told of Her Majesty's Government's intention to make a statement of policy on Cyprus which would be announced a month in advance but not communicated at once to the Turkish Government. Explanations of the reasons which made this procedure and time-table necessary —namely the formation of the new Greek Government, the British Parliamentary recess and Opposition pressure for a debate— fell on deaf ears, and the Turkish Government, no doubt genuinely fearful, despite reaffirmation received to the contrary, that Her Majesty's Government's statement would contain provisions, e.g. for self-government, which in view of all that had gone before they would have to reject, decided to exploit the period between the preliminary and substantive statements in an all-out campaign in favour of partition, to which they had already committed themselves publicly as the only practical solution. That something of this kind was in their minds was made fairly clear to me by Monsieur Zorlu at a reception on the 25th of May. I told him on that occasion that I was personally confident that when the time came to communicate the plan to the Turkish Government they would not see in it anything to cause them great concern, though, as he might well imagine, it would not be a declaration of partition. Zorlu's reply*

was to ask why, in that case, Her Majesty's Government should make any statement at all. I explained again the reasons why at this juncture Her Majesty's Government were obliged to announce their policy and said I hoped that the Turkish Government would do everything they could to keep the Turkish public and the Turkish Cypriots calm until the statement was made. Monsieur Zorlu thereupon indicated that if, despite the Turkish Government's objections, Her Majesty's Government decided to go ahead with their intended statement, the Turkish Government would make things difficult.

3. From that moment the Turkish authorities not only did nothing effective to restrain excited speculation, but by every indirect means encouraged a massive popular outburst in favour of partition. The press, including those papers associated with the Government, was given free rein to indulge in a campaign of vituperation of Britain and British policy over Cyprus which excelled even their earlier impressive records. All the favourite incidents of the past, especially those relating to Britain's policy and behaviour in the First World War and after, were trotted out in more than usually colourful disguises to illustrate Britain's ineradicable slipperiness and continuing favouritism of Greece. At a series of press conferences and monster meetings in Istanbul and other towns, held under elaborate security precautions, Dr. Küçük and Mr. Denktaş the leaders of the Turkish Cypriot community in Cyprus, flanked by placards bearing such slogans as «Partition of Death», «Britain Beware» and the swinging effigies of Makarios, vied with the leaders of student and youth organisations in speeches of the most inflammatory content. Repeated requests that the Turkish Government should use their influence to keep things calm evoked the bland reply that the Government were in fact doing all they could in that direction —witness their studiously moderate official statements— but that public speculation and anxiety over Her Majesty's Government's coming statement was so intense that it would explode with perilous results unless reasonable safety valves were provided. Meanwhile, no doubt as an essential part of the plan, all this violent pother was continuously relayed by Ankara Radio both to the home public and to the Turkish Cypriot community in Cyprus.

4. Reports received by the Government that the Turkish Cypriots were planning trouble were given scant attention when communicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and when, three days later, on the 7th/8th of June, the Turkish riots took place, the Turkish Government angrily complained of the danger to the Turkish communities in the villages from events for which the Greeks and the Cyprus Government were held to be wholly to blame. Reports which have since been published in the foreign press and news agencies, particularly those emanating from the Reuter correspondent in Nicosia, that the trouble was the work of the Turkish Cypriots, have caused much righteous indignation.

5. By this means, when the time came to communicate to the Turkish

Government the substance of Her Majesty's Government's plan on the 10th of June, an atmosphere of crisis had been established which left little hope that the plan would receive the calm and serious study for which Mr. Macmillan especially asked in his message to Mr. Menderes. There can be little doubt that the Turkish Government had made up their minds to reject the plan before even it was communicated to them. I believe that, in the event, they found that it was a good deal more favourable than they had anticipated, and indeed offered some substantial advantages to Turkey. But by that time they had set in train their great bid for partition and believing, presumably, that a little more of the same medicine would in the end produce a situation in which partition would be generally recognised as the only possible solution, the intention to reject the plan was upheld, though the more than usually futile content of their aide-mémoire and of Mr. Menderes's reply to Mr. Macmillan's message bore evidence of the difficulty which they must have had in formulating justifiable reasons for their decision. This was specially illustrated by the play made in the aide-mémoire of the fact that the plan made no mention of Mr. Lennox-Boyd's statement of the 19th of December 1956, when Mr. Zorlu himself had admitted in a press conference held two days before that a reaffirmation of the principle enunciated in that message had been received a few days previously.

6. *The fact that the period during which this drama was played out coincided with a major internal political crisis in which Mr. Menderes was under severe criticism from his party on account of the increasingly grave economic situation, probably made the Government more than ever glad to be able to divert public attention to a national issue.*

I think, too, that it probably made Monsieur Menderes, who seems to have been considerably exhausted by the internal conflict, more inclined than he might otherwise have been to leave the direction of Cyprus policy in the hands of his trusted lieutenant, Monsieur Zorlu. I had hoped that as a result of Mr. Macmillan's personal message, and the message which my United States colleague subsequently conveyed from the United States Government, Monsieur Menderes might even at that late hour be induced to take the necessary initiative to put the issue into its proper perspective. This hope proved vain and Monsieur Zorlu kept the reins.

7. *In this savage game of make-believe, Monsieur Zorlu added some sombre touches of his own technique. At nearly all my interviews with him during this period his attitude was blustering and violent and on the occasion when I was summoned at midnight to receive complaints over the alleged failure of the Cypriot authorities to keep order and protect Turkish Cypriots, his anger, or display of anger, at the beginning of the interview was such that he was incapable of coherent speech. He also took the occasion of his interview with Mr. Randolph Churchill to say that he thought that I was partly to blame for the present situation in that I was personally prejudiced and failed to understand the Turkish position.*

8. My NATO colleagues, and others, were used by Monsieur Zorlu as further instruments for spreading the Turkish gospel, and told on every occasion that presented itself of the Turkish Government's dire forebodings of the results of Britain's present Cyprus policy. After I had communicated the plan to the Turkish Government both the German and American Ambassadors were instructed by their Governments to urge the Turkish Government to give the British plan careful thought. My United States colleague followed this up later with a personal message from President Eisenhower to Monsieur Menderes. None of these approaches had any apparent effect.

9. When, at the request of Monsieur Spaak and the NATO Council, Her Majesty's Government agreed to postpone their statement in Parliament for 48 hours, my United States, German, Canadian, Norwegian, French and Netherlands colleagues were instructed to urge moderation on the Turkish Government and my Italian colleague, on his own initiative, drew Monsieur Zorlu's attention to the great advantages which the British plan offered to Turkey. In some cases the representations strayed somewhat from the intent of Her Majesty's Government in agreeing to postpone their statement, particularly in the case of my United States colleague, who somewhat inadvertently spoke of Her Majesty's Government's readiness to 'negotiate' on the basis of their plan, while my German colleague, whether on his own initiative or instructions, seems to have taken the line that while the German Government had no views either for or against the plan, there might be advantage in an early tripartite conference. In justice to my United States colleague, it must be said that when he saw Monsieur Zorlu on a later occasion he explained firmly why Her Majesty's Government had in his judgement to make their intended declaration. The Turkish Government's attitude in general to those approaches was to resent what they pretended to see as an attempt to bring pressure to bear on Turkey. As a further indication of Turkish innate susceptibilities where their own dignity is concerned, Monsieur Zorlu complained to my Norwegian colleague that Her Majesty's Government, according to him, had negotiated their plan with the United States Government before submitting it to Turkey, thus employing tactics which he described as reminiscent of the Nineteenth century. I had an opportunity of categorically denying the truth of this allegation when Monsieur Zorlu mentioned it to me later.

10. The culmination here of the exercise in the NATO Council was Monsieur Zorlu's communication reported in my telegram No. 936, in which the Turkish Government, after putting several glosses of their own on the Council's deliberations, expressed their readiness to attend a tripartite conference in which the British plan would be accepted as a basis for discussion alongside a Turkish plan for partition and, if necessary, also a plan submitted by Greece, and asking that if this were agreed Her Majesty's Government should refrain from divulging the British plan when their statement was made in Parliament. At the time of signing this despatch it remains to be seen whether this seeming-

ly: characteristic Turkish move was a final attempt to dissuade Her Majesty's Government from announcing their plan and to revert to the position obtaining some months ago where Turkey could confidently look forward to a Greek refusal to attend a conference and thereafter reiterate her demand for bilateral negotiations with the United Kingdom on partition, or whether the reference in the Turkish communication to the possibility of reconciling the British plan with the Turkish thesis of partition was an indication that the Turkish Government were at last beginning to understand the advantages of the British plan from Turkey's point of view and were searching for a face-saving means of modifying their first abrupt rejection of it.

11. Meanwhile the last act in the presentation of the Turkish case for partition had been played out two days before when the Grand National Assembly adopted unanimously a resolution giving the Turkish account of recent events in Cyprus and containing a message to be communicated to the Parliaments of the world.

12. It may be asked to what extent the Turkish Government have had the country behind them in their Cyprus policy and the methods employed over the last weeks to carry it out. I think there is no doubt that the methods employed have been successful in exciting and impressing large sections of the urban population, especially the youth, who have had access to the radio or attended the various mass meetings. I believe also that Mr. Zorlu has succeeded in getting his policy accepted and supported by the Democrat Party. The Opposition, while generally accepting partition, probably have doubts about the methods employed to bring it about, and I have learnt on good authority that at the closed session of the Grand National Assembly at which the Cyprus resolution referred to in the preceding paragraph was adopted, the original draft was considerably modified as a result of Mr. Inonu's firm intervention, which received general support from the Democrat Party deputies. I have no doubt that thinking and responsible members of the public, particularly among the business, professional and academic communities, know perfectly well that the excitement of the last few days has been artificially stimulated by the Government and assume that this has been done to divert attention from Turkey's present economic difficulties, which are of much closer concern to them than Cyprus. The bulk of the agricultural population is unlikely to have been much affected. I have no doubt that when the Government choose to relax pressure the excitement will die down. I am of course not in a position to say how serious and lasting the effect of the recent agitation has been on the Turkish community in Cyprus.

13. The lesson to be drawn from this sad chapter of events is that the present Turkish régime will go to any lengths to get what they want as long as they think there is a chance of getting it²².

22. Sir James Bowker to Selwyn Lloyd 20 June 1958 FO371/136338 RG10344.

The last sentence of this despatch provides the key to understanding the course of Turkish diplomacy over Cyprus during the following months. British hopes that everybody (including 'neutral' N.A.T.O allies) could be bounced into accepting the Macmillan Plan having been frustrated, a prolonged (and in Cyprus often bloody) tangle prevailed in which the British dilemma was to 'fine-tune' the plan sufficiently to meet Greek needs whilst struggling to regain Turkey's genuine cooperation. One highlight in this sequence was the visit of the British Prime Minister to Ankara in early August 1958. The following telegram from Macmillan to the Foreign Secretary back in London conveys the tension of this occasion and the Turkish views with which he was confronted:

Following from the Prime Minister to the Foreign Secretary.

I am just leaving Ankara for Cyprus.

We finished our business with the Turks last night after three meetings, all of them short and only one of them pleasant — the last.

2. On Saturday night, at a working dinner party given by Menderes, I explained that I had been to Athens and was now in a position to tell Menderes, as I had promised him in London, what impression I had formed of the Greek Government's attitude to the British plan. Menderes confirmed that the Turkish Government liked our plan as a whole. They expected us to put it into effect as it stood, and in any case were not interested in the views of the Greek Government. After some argument about what passed between us in London, however, Menderes invited me to state the Greek position. Accordingly, I said that the Greeks accepted the need for a period of peace and agreed that there should be a provisional arrangement for the next seven years. They liked a good deal of the plan itself, but they saw difficulties about the four points (see my telegram from Athens). I was very grateful to Menderes for accepting the plan as it stood. I suggested that he should tell me in the morning what he thought of the Greek points and give me some indication of their relative importance from the Turkish aspect.

3. On Sunday morning we ran into rough weather. The Turks were at their most suspicious. Zorlu was rude and truculent. Before I could enumerate the Greek points he interrupted to say that he wanted the same number of Turks on the Governor's Council as Greeks; and partition to be added to partnership as the final solution. He said that any modification would upset the «economy» of the plan. The Turkish Government could not therefore support it if it were modified in any way. Not only that, but he must say now that the plan was quite inadequate. He would give me a memorandum in the afternoon to show what the Turkish Government now considered themselves entitled to ask for.

4. Leaving aside the bluster, Zorlu's case was rational enough. He said that there were two methods: either negotiation or a «policy for action». He thought that we had decided on the latter. If that were so, Her Majesty's Government knew the views of the Turkish Government and presumably those of the Greek

Government, and it was for them to make up their minds. There was nothing to discuss. If, on the other hand, we wanted negotiation, then there must be a tripartite meeting and we had better know here and now what the Turkish Government would want by way of improvements to the plan to offset concessions which we apparently meant to make to the Greeks.

5. *It was depressing to find that Zorlu, and even Menderes, were unwilling to discuss the Greek points objectively and without commitment, let alone respond to a friendly suggestion that in the world situation now facing us it would be in Turkey's interest if, by means of a slight adjustment of the plan which we had said all along was no more than an outline, we could obtain, if not the whole-hearted cooperation, at least a tolerable degree of practical cooperation from the Greeks. But at least neither Menderes nor Zorlu withdrew their offer to give us full support if we put the plan into effect as it stood. I therefore decided to adjourn before matters got any worse, although there was still more than an hour until lunch.*

6. *We all met at the President of the Republic's for lunch, but there was no business. I think the President said that he hoped that I would be pleased with the result of my visit.*

7. *In the interval before our last meeting, we reflected on what the Turks had said in the morning. It seemed to us what the Turks chiefly feared was that we would interpret any readiness to discuss points as amounting to a concession and that we would then go back with a new position to the Greeks, who would then raise further objections. The Turks, who maintained that they had already been pushed back to please the Greeks from annexation to partition then from partition to partnership, would next have to give up even partnership. On the other hand, the Ambassador feels that the Turks really want the plan and want to revert to full cooperation with us in all details. It was probable therefore, if we made it clear that we were still on the «policy for action» and that above all that we would not go back to the Greeks, there was a reasonable chance that we could end on a happier note.*

8. *When we resumed therefore at 4.30 p.m., I told Menderes and Zorlu that I thought that we now fully understood each other. If we put the plan into operation as it stood Turkey would give us full support. There was no question of negotiation on the plan and no need for discussion on this or that possible modification. Zorlu's memorandum was then distributed (text in my immediately following telegram), I said that this [grp. undec. ? document] as a whole seemed to go beyond the scope of a provisional seven-year arrangement and was therefore largely irrelevant to our present purpose. The first two paragraphs had a direct bearing on the plan and I would take them into consideration along with the Greek observations on the plan. For the rest, I quoted what was said in the memorandum, but of course I could not agree with it.*

9. *In order to bring the meeting to a close I said that I was now in full possession of the views of both the Turkish and Greek Governments. As regards the Turkish Government, they would give us full support if we put the*

plan into effect as it stood: if we introduced modifications they were under no obligations to support us. I would now return to London and decide my course of action, after which I would have a communication to make to both Governments. On this note we broke up in a very friendly atmosphere.

10. In the course of the evening when I entertained Menderes and Zorlu to dinner, we took the opportunity at various levels to assure the Turks that it had never been our intention to go back to the Greeks; the Turkish Ministers were affable; an anodyne communiqué was agreed; typically, Menderes eliminated a small barb which Zorlu had tried to insert in it. There were sundry expressions of desire for full cooperation with us and some indications that they were really keen on the plan.

11. The decision before us now is whether to go ahead with the plan as it stands or to take a chance on introducing some slight modification which might soften the blow to the Greeks without causing the Turks to run out. I shall think this over on the way home and consult the Cabinet tomorrow morning. However we decide, I think we must act within a matter of days²³.

In the light of this interlude a senior Foreign Office official minuted:

The visit's two main successes are (a) that it has reintroduced a note of confidence into Anglo-Turkish relations and (b) that it has enabled us to announce certain minor pro-Greek modifications of our plan without... forfeiting Turkish goodwill. On the other hand, the very fact that the Turks seem to have welcomed our revised plan whilst the Greeks have completely rejected it, suggests that we have still not struck quite the right balance; the sign of the perfect compromise would be that its publication evoked from both sides a mild but not fatal hostility²⁴.

In fact Turkish suspicions of the Macmillan Plan were a variant of their Greek counterparts: that it was nothing more than a clever ruse by the British to stay in control of the whole island, even at the risk of a new war in Asia Minor. In fact it was, in part, because Athens and Ankara shared this insight that eventually there crystallized the process leading to the Greco-Turkish accord at Zurich in February. Turkish actions at this time have also to be understood in relation to anxiety that the British, having used them as a convenient proxy for so long, would at the crucial moment veer off in another direction and leave them in the lurch. Turkish violence (verbal and otherwise) was a message that the British had better think twice before contemplating such a gambit. Nevertheless, buffeted by regional instability underlined by the coup in Iraq, the Turkish Government came to accept that the new British plan

23. Harold Macmillan to Selwyn Lloyd 11 August 1958 FO371/136340 RGC10344/279.

24. Minute by R. Wade-Gery 20 August 1958 FO371/136340 RG10344/292.

offered them the essence of their ambitions. This essence lay above all in its provision for a Turkish (as well as a Greek) Government Representative on the island with a role in the government of Cyprus. When the Turkish Ambassador visited the Foreign Office in London on 23 September 1958 he raised the issue of the Turkish Representative's personal security in a suggestive manner (there was, of course, a real chance of assassination when the latter arrived on the island). The British official who received the Ambassador afterwards minuted:

I interposed to say that the responsibility for protection of the Representative's person and his official premises would of course rest with the Cyprus authorities. I also put it to the Ambassador quite personally that any visible attempt by the Turkish Representative to organize security measures of his own would give rise to comment and would not... be in the Turkish Government's own interest. Nevertheless, M. Birgi... urged that we should allow the Representative... to have some protection of his own. After some discussion in the course of which I pointed out as tactfully as I could the desirability of avoiding anything ostentatious, I said that I did not think there would be any difficulty about the Representative having some kind of discreet escort... M. Birgi seemed to regard all this as quite satisfactory, though I am not sure he was not hankering after something more in the nature of a bodyguard since he more than once... made gestures suggestive of outriders with lances²⁵.

These gestures must have been picturesque to watch. Yet the image of a Turkish mounted guard in the streets of Nicosia, with full ceremonial honours, did conjure up Ankara's basic goal through these events: a re-entry into the life and government of the island, either as sole ruler or (more realistically) in tandem with other interested parties.

From the feverish talk of a Greco-Turkish war in September-October 1958 there emerged the first signs of rapprochement in the Zorlu-Averoff exchanges at the UN in December, the carefully prepared meeting of the two Prime Ministers in Zurich on 10-11th February, and the various signatures at London's Lancaster House on 19th February 1959. This is not a story the detailed development of which can be followed from British records. The British Government knew nothing concrete of the Zurich talks till after their conclusion. Indeed, from the start of this turnaround the word used by British officials to describe growing Greco-Turkish agreement was 'miracle', which in itself indicated just how nonplussed they were as to its motives. They were also to some extent frightened by it, since there was a possibility that British interests might get ignored in the unexpected rush to settlement. Very strikingly, it was intervention by M. Zorlu which saved the lives of the convicted EOKA prisoners due

25. A.D.M. Ross 23 September 1958 FO371/136293 RGC10111/14.

to be hanged in Nicosia at the end of December 1958²⁶. There could be no more poignant testimony to the altered configuration of affairs.

But although the British records only provide a very fragmentary picture of this climactic sequence, the key considerations at work can be 'read between the lines'. When Michael Stewart went to see Zorlu in the Turkish Foreign Ministry on January 23, for example, and received a briefing on exchanges between Athens and Ankara, Zorlu stated that «a form of condominium by the 'back-door' was the objective ...but we had to be careful not to frighten the Greeks...»²⁷. This was, indeed, the heart of the matter (which is why to judge the final Cyprus independence constitution in the same conventional terms as, say, that of Kenya or some British Caribbean colony entering upon statehood, is to miss the point). In the event Lancaster House gave the Turks the nub of their demand for a renewed status in Cypriot affairs.

After Lancaster House there was continuing puzzlement in British circles concerning the rapidity with which things had unfolded. One senior official noted on 20 March «my own view is that there has been very little change in the essentials of the Turkish position over the past two years, but that the important change of front on the part of the Greeks and the Greek Cypriots needs analysis and explanation»²⁸. This perhaps underestimates the degree to which, in the context of regional anxieties and domestic tensions in the final months of 1958, Menderes and Zorlu were themselves shaken by the possibility that, far from surrendering to pressure as the British predicted, the full implementation of the Macmillan Plan might drive Greece into war. It also leaves out of account the internal fragility of the Turkish regime. But if Turkish tactics changed very radically, their aims stayed the same, whereas events —and fear—undoubtedly drove Greeks and Greek Cypriots into 'a change of substance'. Later problems arose, at least in part, from the determination of Archbishop Makarios to claw back the advantage after independence which had been lost in the preceding period. No 'nationalist' leader in the age of decolonization was likely to have done otherwise, had they been in the same esoteric position.

In terms of Greco-Turkish relations, the dispute over Cyprus in the 1950s seemed at first to have had a happy ending. Between 7th and 12th May 1959 Prime Minister Karamanlis and Foreign Minister Averoff made a historic visit to the Turkish capital. As the new British Ambassador in Ankara, Sir Bernard Burrows, wrote in his despatch on this event, to anyone who remembered the riots in Istanbul and Izmir in 1955, or the 'Partition or Death' meetings held all over Turkey in the summer of 1958, «the sight of Ankara and Istanbul festooned with Greek flags, and the spectacle of the visiting ministers driving down

26. See material in FO371/144593 RG1015/19.

27. Michael Stewart Telegram No. 146 to Foreign Office FO371/144639 RGC1073/8.

28. J. M. Addis minute 20 March 1959 FO371/144643 RGC1073/1.

streets lined by waving Turkish school-children, had an air of marked incongruity»²⁹. As Burrows went on to remark, «informed and educated Turks had in many ways grown weary at the constant crisis over Cyprus»³⁰, and welcomed this symbol of its liquidation. What—at least in the towns and cities, as well as the garrisons, of Turkey—they also looked forward to, however, was the liquidation of a régime for whom the Cyprus issue had been part and parcel of a rural and to some extent religious backlash in Turkish politics after the Democratic Party first came to power in 1950. Turkey, more than Greece, may be said to have ‘won’ the tussle over Cyprus between 1954 and 1959, but at least Karamanlis and Averoff lived to tell the tale at length. Adnan Menderes and Fatin Zorlu were soon to share a more dismal fate³¹.

29. Sir Bernard Burrows to Selwyn Lloyd 21 May 1959 FO371/144527.

30. *Ibid.*

31. At the climax of the Yasiáda Trials in Turkey during 1961 when it seemed death penalties were the likely outcome for some of the leading defendants, the British Government intervened on several occasions to save the life of Menderes, on the grounds that he had been such a close ally of the Cyprus question. British efforts to save Zorlu were less evident. See material in FO371/160791.