General Assembly 1 (GA1)

Drafting a blueprint for the withdrawal of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in comprehension with Cypriotic-Turkish peace talks

Research Report

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Forum:	*General Assembly 1 (GA1)*
Issue:	*Drafting a blueprint for the withdrawal of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in comprehension with Cypriotic-Turkish peace talks*
Position:	*Deputy Chair*

Introduction

Due to Cyprus's geographical location it has an extended history of conflict. With the country finally gaining its independence in 1960, it has since then been split in half with a Turkish Cypriotic side, a Greek-Cypriotic side and a buffer zone down the middle to separate disputes. In 1964, the UN assigned a task force, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), to restore and maintain peace within Cyprus and the buffer zone. Since then, the UNFICYP has managed to alleviate some tension and hatred between the two sides of the island, even aiding Cyprus in becoming a member of the European Union (EU).

As the UNFICYP mission has been going on successfully for over nearly half a century now, it is time to begin retrieving the troops. We must now start drafting a blueprint for the withdrawal of the UNFICYP in comprehension with Cypriotic-Turkish peace talks. Essentially, planning out the final acts of the UNFICYP in Cyprus in order to ensure sustained peace after the troops are removed as well as the safe extraction of troops from Cyprus. Today, we must be especially careful in withdrawing the UNFICYP. Especially, taking into account the recent aftermath of the sudden withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan which within a matter of weeks resulted in the near complete reoccupation of government controlled territories by the Taliban. The withdrawal of the UNFICYP is not only dangerous for the maintaining of the rights of the people, but can also be catastrophic for the international peace, security, and stability that we have been trying to ensure for the past decades. Therefore, it is clear that measures must be taken in order to ensure that conflict does not arise once the UNFICYP departs. Especially, after over half a century of devoting resources to maintaining and ensuring peace.

Definition of Key Terms

De facto: Means something which is practically applied but not required by law or formally guaranteed. A de facto landmark can be something which has been developed without legislation or even against it. [1]

General Overview

Due to Cyprus's strategic location in the eastern Mediterranean Sea it has seen over the course of the past centuries its fair share of war and upheaval. It was under Ottoman rule up until 1878 when it was traded to Britain for protection from the Russians. Under British rule from

[1] "De Facto." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 16 Aug. 2021, el.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_facto.

1878 to 1914 it was a British protectorate, a unilaterally annexed military occupation from 1914 to 1925 and from 1925 to 1960 a Crown colony.[2] Ultimately, just four years after Cyprus gained its independence in 1960, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) tried to disseminate the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots by passing Security Council Resolution 186: The Cyprus Question. This resolution called for the cessation of hostilities and, with the consent of the Government of Cyprus, the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Force to prevent the recurrence of violence. The resolution also called upon the UN Secretary-General to appoint a mediator to promote a peaceful solution and an agreed settlement of the problem confronting Cyprus.[3] Therefore, in 1964 a peacekeeping force was established called the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) with the aim to promote a maintenance of law and order and return the situation to normalcy. Having established relative peace on the island UNFICYP's mission was expanding until in 1974 a military coup aimed at uniting Cyprus with Greece triggered a takeover of the northern part of the island by the Turkish army. Families were ripped apart as a result of the invasion, which resulted in a large number of individuals being displaced. Thousands of people also went missing as a result of the unrest. With the country now physically divided it became a UNFICYP role to manage the ceasefire line in the absence of an actual peace treaty between the two sides.

As all UN peacekeeping operations the UNFICYP was tasked with four basic goals:

- Conflict prevention, which includes diplomatic measures that aim to keep interstate or intrastate tensions from escalating to violent conflicts;
- Peace-making, that addresses conflicts in progress, and through diplomatic actions there are attempts to bring the hostile parties to a negotiated agreement;
- Peace Enforcement, referring to the application of coercive measures such as military force, in order to stop on-going conflicts or tensions, that require authorization of the Security Council
- Peace Building, which aims to the minimization of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, by strengthening national capacities of conflict management and by laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

⇦ Political map of Cyprus

[2] "British Cyprus." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Cyprus.

[3] "Security Council RESOLUTION 186: The Cyprus Question | UN Peacemaker." United Nations, United Nations, peacemaker.un.org/cyprus-resolution186.

The Buffer Zone ("Green Line")

The buffer zone is island-wide, 183 kilometers from east to west, and acts as a separating barrier between the two sides. However, the width of the buffer zone itself varies greatly throughout, as well as the type of terrain that UNFICYP needs to monitor between the opposing forces. Large tracts of mountainous country must be patrolled daily in order to control the tracks and try to maintain the buffer zone in the condition it was and try to prevent it from deteriorating any further. In addition, despite being a de facto buffer zone dividing two armies that have never signed an official ceasefire, over 15,000 people live and work there. Promoting normal activities within the buffer zone has been actively encouraged by UNFICYP as a way of maintaining peace on the island. This has been further helped through the clearance of land mines by the Mine Action Center in Cyprus, a program supported by UNFICYP. It began in 2004 attempting to clear the buffer zone of all the minefields. Between 2004 and 2011, the Mine Action Centre cleared 27,000 mines – 18,000 of which were anti-personnel mines – from the buffer zone and released 11 sq. km. of land as being safe.[4] In addition this land has been determined as arable land and farmers can now utilise it as a means of helping boost their respective economy.

Another key role played by UNFICYP is to facilitate communications between the two sides and often to negotiate measures that reduce tension along the buffer zone, which has undoubtedly prevented thousands of small incidents from escalating into major hostilities. They are those that please in the middle of the buffer zone and will deal with any situation that may arise there from a civilian point of view.

Steps taken towards the eventual extraction of the UNFICYP

The UN is ultimately striving for an agreement which will eventually lead to an extensive drawback of troops. Hopefully, resulting in an improvement of the security and environment as a result of that. An example of the UN drawing back slightly with positive consequences was when the UNFICYP successfully negotiated an agreement in 1989 where troops from both sides successfully left a number of observation posts unmanned within the buffer zone. Recently an agreement has been reached between the two sides to determine a joint communication room in Nicosia overseen by UNFICYP. There, representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities can exchange information on known criminals and coordinate efforts to catch them as they recognize that crime has no nationality, no religion and no borders.

The impact of improving relations within Cyprus

Economic Impact

Cyprus is surrounded by important countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, and Greece, all of which are affected in some way by the situation in Cyprus where there has yet to be an effective compromise within the member state. The current situation of the economy, on the other hand, has improved since the invasion, with Cyprus currently serving as a major investment hub. Cyprus has already attracted investment from Russia and other eastern European countries due to its tourist and manufacturing potential.

Cyprus also has extensive arable land within all three zones of the country (including the buffer zone), as well as great potential to act as a hub for maritime trade due to its

[4] "Towards a Mine-Free Cyprus." UNFICYP, 4 Apr. 2016, unficyp.unmissions.org/towards-mine-free-cyprus-0.

geographical location. Both of which would provide great development for the economy once overcoming the conflict in organising such large scale operations that would possibly require transcending zones.

Social Impact

The fierce national pride and identity on either side of Cyprus will remain an issue that could cultivate conflict. Due to peoples ancestors being killed whilst trying to occupy or protect land

Major Parties Involved

People's Republic of China
The Cyprus-China Business Association is a joint commercial venture between China and Cyprus that intends to strengthen trade and investment ties. In terms of political relations, China and Cyprus have occupied a moderate position and have maintained a close partnership. Meanwhile, China's concerns about Taiwan and Taiwanese independence are mirrored in the Cyprus issue. Beijing would resist any precedent that suggests Taiwanese separatism is legal. Therefore, China has strongly backed the Greek Cypriots, owing to China's desire that all international diplomacy emphasize the rule of international law and the indivisibility of each Member State.

Russia
Cyprus and Russia have excellent relations. Due to its simple entry criteria and limited financial control, Cyprus has long been favored by Russians for tourism and investment. This makes it particularly enticing to wealthy Russians looking for a method to transfer money and, in some cases, their national identity to the West by purchasing Cypriotic citizenships. This may raise problems with Moscow, but they have so far been well managed.

United States of America (USA)
Under prior United Nations Secretary Generals, the US was a big backer of peace initiatives. However, when former President Donald Trump announced that the US would not attempt to mediate in 2017, that support appeared to have shifted. The United States' top aim is to cut funding on peacekeeping and reduce the UN's role in international diplomacy. If other member states, such as Turkey, can be persuaded to take a more active role, Washington may be willing to cooperate.

European Union
The Republic of Cyprus in the South is the only side of Cyprus that is a member of the European Union (EU). In turn Turkey and the northern section of the island are not members of the European Union. This provides Cyprus with veto power over EU efforts and limits other EU Member States flexibility. The EU is in desperate need of a resolution to the conflict. It needs great connections with both Greece and Turkey, but getting over Nicosia's opposition is a challenge.

Non-Aligned Movement
Cyprus was a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the UN's largest voting group, which includes nearly all of Africa's, Asia's, and Latin America's former colonial powers. When it entered the EU, it consequently departed the NAM. Cyprus is attempting to serve as a link between the two, however, growing Turkish influence inhibits the country's capacity to persuade, particularly, African and Asian countries. Other NAM member states, which have

had severe border clashes and lost territory due to conquest, sympathize with the Greek Cypriots' situation.

Timeline of Events

1571-1878	Cyprus under Ottoman Rule
1878	Ottoman Empire trades Cyprus to Britain for protection against possible Russian aggression
1878-1960	British rule over Cyprus
1960	Cyprus gains its independence from Britain
1963	Intercommunal fighting breaks out between Greek and Turkish Cypriots
1964	UNFICYP established under UNSC Resolution 186 to prevent a recurrence of fighting
1974	Turkey launches two military operations and captures ~37% of the island, splitting the island in half
2004	Cyprus joins the European Union
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Possible Solutions

While the ideal scenario would be for both sides to concede and reach a concrete agreement in which both can live communally, it is far too optimistic as a solution. It is also far too unrealistic to ask for Turkey's withdrawal from Cyprus, as this proposition would either be faced with a lot of resistance or a very unnecessary high price for the UN. It appears to be the case that only cautious and extensive negotiations including matters such as economic subsidies, cultural rights, or a broader resolution of Greek-Turkish problems have a chance of posing a feasible solution.

The establishment of an unbiased governing body to handle conflict between both sides so that it can be handled lawfully and without conflict.

Furthermore, raising awareness for its implications and effects is extremely important, especially when we're referring to uneducated, or poorly educated societies, like those of many countries globally.

In terms of peace and settlement, progress is being made, and reunification talks are underway. Although Cyprus is still divided, there is a lot of optimism and hope there.

The only way Cyprus can reunify is if Turkey cooperates.

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