

CHAPTER VI

THE QUESTION OF CYPRUS

During 1958 the question of Cyprus was brought to the attention of the United Nations in various communications from Greece and Turkey and was again discussed by the General Assembly at its thirteenth session.

On 13 June 1958, Greece informed the Security Council by letter of the grave situation created by recent events in Cyprus. The British authorities, it was stated, had not been able to prevent the attacks by the Turkish minority against the Greek population of the island. Nor had they been able to protect the Greek population against these attacks.

On the same day, in a letter to the Secretary-General, Turkey claimed that the activities of EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters), which were endangering the security

of the Turkish community in Cyprus, were designed to secure the annexation of Cyprus to Greece.

Further letters on the subject were sent to the Security Council by Turkey on 16 and 24 June and by Greece on 19 June.

CONSIDERATION BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 15 August 1958, Greece asked that the question of Cyprus be included in the agenda of the General Assembly's thirteenth session. On 28 September the Assembly decided to include the item in its agenda and referred it to the First (Political and Security) Committee.

In an explanatory memorandum of 12 September, Greece stated that the United King-

dom had systematically avoided direct negotiations with the Cypriots despite the hopes expressed by the Assembly during its eleventh session in 1956. The British Government should also have taken into consideration a proposal for applying the right of self-determination to the population of Cyprus which had, during the Assembly's twelfth session in 1957, fallen short of the necessary two-thirds majority by only five votes.

The Greek Government, reflecting the position of 80 per cent of the population of Cyprus, had indicated that pending the application of the right of self-determination, the only acceptable temporary solution was that provided for in Article 73, paragraph b, of the United Nations Charter: the establishment and development of genuine and democratic self-government.

Meanwhile, the memorandum continued, the United Kingdom had proposed a plan for administrative and governmental separation between the 80 per cent Greek majority of the population and the 17 per cent Turkish minority, with the participation of representatives of the Greek and Turkish Governments. The plan was rejected by the Cypriots as undemocratic, and as one intended to prolong British rule, under a condominium in which the Turkish minority would serve as a "guise and tool" to bring about partition.

In the meantime, the memorandum stated, the Turkish minority had suddenly initiated a premeditated and organized violent action against Cypriot life and property, timed to coincide with the announcement of the British plan. There had been threats of direct military intervention from Turkey. Thousands of Greek Cypriots were held in concentration camps. Any attempt to enforce the British plan could lead to developments the repercussions of which might imperil peace and security in the whole area. The Greek Government hoped therefore that the Assembly would take appropriate action to remove all foreign threats and interference, and to assist the Cypriots in realizing their legitimate claims.

On 28 September 1958, the General Assembly decided to place the question of Cyprus on its agenda, and referred it to the First Committee, where it was considered between 25 November and 4 December 1958.

In connexion with the inscription of the item on the Assembly's agenda, the United Kingdom submitted, on 3 November 1958, a White Paper entitled *Discussion on Cyprus in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: September-October 1958*. On 26 November, Greece submitted legal opinions on the question by Professors Alejandro Alvarez and Maurice Bourquin.

At the outset of its debate the First Committee had before it three draft resolutions submitted by Greece, by Turkey and by the United Kingdom, respectively.

By the Greek proposal, the Assembly would: (1) invite the United Kingdom to assist the Cypriots towards instituting independence, following a period of genuine and democratic self-government, with adequate guarantees for the protection of the Turkish minority and its participation in the administration of Cyprus; and (2) would decide to set up a five-member good offices committee to co-operate with all concerned to implement the resolution and report to the Assembly.

By the Turkish proposal, based on the consideration that neither of the two peoples should be placed under the rule of the other, the Assembly would call upon all concerned to refrain from supporting or encouraging violence in Cyprus and from using radio broadcasts and other media of communication to harm peaceful relations on the island. It would also recommend that the three Governments directly concerned resume and continue efforts aimed at a friendly solution based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination, according to the particular circumstances of Cyprus and its peoples.

By the United Kingdom draft, the Assembly would ask the United Kingdom to continue its efforts, by means of international negotiations and by administrative measures in the island itself, to find a solution acceptable to all parties concerned and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and would ask the other parties to co-operate to that end. The Assembly would also call upon all concerned to do their best to end terrorism and violence in Cyprus.

During the debate in the First Committee, the three States directly concerned further outlined their positions.

The Greek representative held that the United

Kingdom was turning the Cyprus question into a power conflict and, like Turkey, was endeavouring to bring about partition. Although, by the Treaty of Lausanne signed by Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom in 1923, Turkey had renounced its claim to any right or title over Cyprus as also to any power or jurisdiction over the nationals of territories situated outside its frontiers, the United Kingdom had first invented the Turkish factor as a means to prolong its own domination over the island. Then the Turkish Government had claimed the right of self-determination for the Turkish minority which it alleged to be a separate community in Cyprus. The Turkish minority was thus being used as an instrument of territorial aggrandizement, for Turkey was seeking the partition of Cyprus not between the Greek majority and Turkish minority, but between Greece and Turkey.

The United Kingdom had camouflaged the Turkish thesis in the Macmillan plan which entailed continuing Cyprus as a colony for seven years, to be succeeded by a condominium of three. A minority of 17 per cent would have its own chamber of representatives, and two Governments, in addition to the United Kingdom, would share in a function which belonged to the people of Cyprus alone.

In an effort to find a solution acceptable to all, Greece had accepted modifications to the plan, aimed at the establishment of a temporary régime without prejudging the future of Cyprus, proposed by the Secretary-General of NATO. But the other two Governments had rejected the modified plan.

A compromise solution was proposed instead by Archbishop Makarios: the independence of Cyprus, after a period of genuine and democratic self-government.

The United Kingdom representative asserted that the Cyprus issue was more than a colonial one and involved, besides the two communities in Cyprus, three separate countries. Bases in Cyprus also played a necessary role in two defensive alliances, but they would not complicate the problem, since Greece and Turkey were allies of the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom policy was in conformity with a General Assembly resolution (1013(XI)) of 26 February 1957 (which expressed a desire for a peaceful, democratic and just solution in

accord with United Nations Charter purposes and principles and hoped for negotiations to this end). This was evident from the measures of leniency taken since February 1957 toward Archbishop Makarios and the EOKA terrorist organization. Unfortunately, after periods of precarious peace, terrorist activities had been resumed against members of the Greek community, the security forces, and British civilians.

It was only after exchanges between the three Governments directly concerned and discussions involving the two Cypriot communities had failed to provide a basis for an immediate and permanent settlement, that a new policy, constituting an interim solution, had been formulated and announced by the United Kingdom's Prime Minister on 18 June 1958.

The dominant principle of that policy was that of partnership between the two Cypriot communities and the three Governments concerned. The Cypriots would have a liberal constitution giving them self-government. A separate Chamber for each of the two communities would have final legislative authority on its own communal affairs. Internal administration other than communal affairs and internal security would be managed by a single council presided over by the Governor. Representatives of the Greek and Turkish Governments in the Council would have the right of recourse to an impartial tribunal against any legislation they considered discriminatory. The international status of the island would remain unchanged for seven years. External affairs, defence and internal security would be reserved to the Governor, acting after consultation with the representatives of the two other Governments. After the expiration of that period, for the beginning of which no date had been fixed, the parties could put forward any proposals concerning the island's ultimate future. This had not been prejudged, nor was granting communal autonomy intended to bring about partition.

In June 1958, the details of the new policy had been made known to the members of the North Atlantic Council. Unfortunately, the Greek Government had rejected it and refused to continue the negotiations. The White Paper outlining the course taken by the NATO negotiations showed that the United Kingdom had been most anxious to arrive at an agreement which would enable a conference to be held.

Despite many setbacks, some progress had been made in the pacification of Cyprus. There had been less of the pressure by Greece and Turkey for their respective extreme demands. The Assembly should not jeopardize these trends by decisions such as endorsement of independence for Cyprus now which, in the absence of general agreement, would result in civil war, partition and, perhaps, international conflict. Furthermore, independence might in practice prove to be not a concession, but rather a covert means of achieving the union of Cyprus with Greece.

The Turkish representative also contended that the present Greek proposal for independence of Cyprus masked the desire to annex the island. Cyprus, he said, had been a part of Turkey for almost 400 years, contained a large Turkish community, was important to Turkey's security and had never in its history belonged to Greece. Greece's claim to Cyprus represented the last phase in a campaign to control Turkey's communications with the Mediterranean.

Having first answered the Greek claim with the claim that if the status of Cyprus was to be altered the island should revert to Turkish sovereignty, Turkey had agreed, since 1955, to the partition of the island as a compromise. But the two communities in Cyprus had different national aspirations, and they were in every way distinct and self-contained. If the principle of self-determination was to be applied, it must be applied to both communities but not under the pressure of violence.

Turkey had decided to co-operate in the United Kingdom system of partnership rule for seven years, even though the plan did not appeal to Turkish public opinion.

If independence was to be considered in the case of Cyprus, it had to be on the basis of the various stages envisaged in Articles 73 and 74 of the United Nations Charter and with due attention to the fact that a settlement involved a modification of the Treaty of Lausanne which had recognized Turkey's stake in the future of the island. Turkey's aim was a reconciliation of the points of view of the three countries and an agreement from which they would emerge as friends.

Australia, Canada, Ceylon, China, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France, the Federation

of Malaya, the Netherlands and others believed that the United Nations should not intervene unless requested to do so by all the parties concerned and that it should refrain from advocating any particular solution. Agreement should be reached between the parties through negotiation unhampered by any specific recommendations. Belgium and the United States were among those who felt that the United Nations was not the proper place to seek a solution to the Cyprus dispute. Portugal doubted even the propriety of a debate on the question as it was not providing any constructive solution.

Other Members, including India, Nepal, Tunisia and the United Arab Republic, argued that it was not enough for the United Nations merely to urge negotiations; it should go further and make specific recommendations to the parties concerned. The Greek representative contended that the argument that all the United Nations could do was recommend negotiations on the matter was tantamount to subscribing to the thesis that the United Nations was completely ineffective. The Assembly, he said, had an obligation to lay down a basis on which negotiations should take place. Saudi Arabia and the USSR stressed particularly that the Cyprus question was a matter for the United Nations rather than for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Guatemala and Ireland, among others, supported the Greek position and argued that Cyprus be granted independence in accordance with the wishes of the majority of Cypriots, after the necessary period of preparation, and with appropriate provision for the Turkish minority.

Czechoslovakia, Romania, the USSR, Yugoslavia and others also supported the Greek position and held that the main task was to abolish the colonial régime in Cyprus. The representatives of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic recalled particularly that Cyprus had served as a base for military operations against Arab countries.

Iran felt that an immediate attempt to establish an independent state in Cyprus would only heighten present tensions there, as there were two different and separate communities in the island, each wishing to preserve its individuality.

Pakistan was one of several Members which endorsed the "partnership" plan put forward by the United Kingdom.

Several representatives noted that the views of the parties had begun to move closer together. Thus, Greece had abandoned its insistence on enosis (union with Greece) in favour of independence; and Turkey was not expected to remain unyielding on the question of partition.

Several draft resolutions were put forward during the debate in the hope of facilitating agreement between the parties.

Colombia, which believed that the question should be settled within the United Nations, proposed, among other things, that the Secretary-General should set up an observation group to promote negotiations on the Cyprus question and, if appropriate, to act as a good offices committee.

Iran submitted a text, later revised, by which the Assembly would urge that a conference be held between the three Governments concerned and Cypriot representatives, with the assistance if desired of Governments and personalities acceptable to the three Governments, to discuss not only interim arrangements for the administration of Cyprus but also a final solution to the Cyprus question. By the preamble of the draft text the Assembly would endorse the development of self-government and free institutions in accordance with the Charter, to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Cypriots.

A third draft resolution was put forward by Ceylon, Haiti, Iceland, India, Ireland, Nepal, Panama, Sudan and the United Arab Republic, later joined by Ethiopia. By this text, as later revised, the Assembly would: (1) urge the cessation of violence in Cyprus; (2) call for effective provisions for the protection of legitimate minority interests; (3) ask the United Kingdom to continue negotiations with the aim of promoting self-government for Cyprus and preserving its integrity; and (4) call on all Member States to co-operate and to respect the integrity and self-government of Cyprus when fully attained.

Belgium proposed that the Assembly should (1) call on all concerned to end terrorism in Cyprus and (2) recommend that they resume and continue their efforts to reach a friendly solution.

The Iranian draft was acceptable to Turkey and the United Kingdom. Greece proposed some amendments to it. These were in part revised on the basis of proposals by Turkey, whereupon Greece said it would not support the amended Iranian text. Greece was prepared to support the 10-power draft, even though it considered it a compromise text based on another compromise text. This draft, however, was acceptable neither to Turkey nor the United Kingdom.

Several attempts to reach agreement on a generally acceptable text were made, particularly by the representatives of Mexico and Peru, but no such text was formally proposed.

On 4 December 1958, the Committee decided to give priority in the voting to the revised Iranian draft resolution and the Greek amendments and Turkish sub-amendments thereto.

The Iranian revised draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 31 to 2, with 28 abstentions.

The Colombian draft resolution, accepted by Greece, failed of adoption by a roll-call vote of 17 in favour, 17 against, with 47 abstentions.

The Belgian draft resolution was rejected in the Committee by a roll-call vote of 11 to 22, with 48 abstentions.

The other draft resolutions were not pressed to a vote.

At a plenary meeting of the Assembly on 5 December 1958, the representative of Mexico, hoping for unanimous approval, submitted a text negotiated with all the parties directly concerned whereby the Assembly would express its confidence that continued efforts would be made by the parties to reach a peaceful, democratic, and just solution in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

This text was adopted without objection by the Assembly as resolution 1287(XIII).

DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

- S/4025. Letter of 13 June 1958 from representative of Greece.
 S/4026, S/4028. Letters of 13 and 16 June 1958 from representative of Turkey.
 S/4033. Letter of 19 June 1958 from representative of Greece.
 S/4035. Letter of 24 June 1958 from representative of Turkey.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY—13TH SESSION

Plenary Meetings 756, 758, 769, 782.

General Committee, meeting 117.

First Committee, meetings 996-1010.

A/3874 and Add.1. Letters of 15 August and 12 September 1958 from permanent representative of Greece requesting inclusion in agenda of 13th Assembly session of item entitled, "The question of Cyprus".

A/C.1/811. Letter of 3 November 1958 from permanent representative of United Kingdom.

A/C.1/814. Letter of 26 November 1958 from permanent representative of Greece

A/C.1/L.221. United Kingdom draft resolution.

A/C.1/L.222. Greece draft resolution.

A/C.1/L.223. Turkey draft resolution.

A/C.1/L.225. Colombia draft resolution, rejected by First Committee on 4 December 1958, meeting 1010, by roll-call vote of 17 to 17, with 47 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Greece, Haiti, Mexico, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Byelorussian SSR, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Turkey, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, United States, Uruguay.

A/C.1/L.226 and Rev.1, 2. Iran draft resolution and revisions, as amended by Greece and Turkey, adopted by First Committee on 4 December 1958, meeting 1010, by roll-call vote of 31 to 22, with 28 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Federation of Malaya, France, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Laos, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Para-

guay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Against: Albania, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Byelorussian SSR, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Nepal, Panama, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia. Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Union of South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela.

A/C.1/L.228 and Add.1 and Rev.1. Ceylon, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iceland, India, Ireland, Nepal, Panama, Sudan, United Arab Republic draft resolution and revision.

A/C.1/L.229. Belgium draft resolution, rejected by First Committee on 4 December 1958, meeting 1010, by roll-call vote of 11 to 22, with 48 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Australia, Austria, Canada, Cuba, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom.

Against: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian SSR, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Morocco, Nepal, Panama, Poland, Romania, Turkey, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia. Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Union of South Africa, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

A/C.1/L.230. Greece amendments to Iran revised draft resolution, A/C.1/L.226/Rev.2.

A/C.1/L.231. Turkey sub-amendments to Greece amendments, A/C.1/L.230.

A/4029 and Corr.1 and Add.1. Report of First Committee.

A/L.252. Mexico draft resolution.

RESOLUTION 1287(XIII), as submitted by Mexico, A/L.252, adopted by Assembly, without objection, on 5 December 1958, meeting 782.

"The General Assembly,

"Having considered the question of Cyprus,

"Recalling its resolution 1013(XI) of 26 February 1957,

"Expresses its confidence that continued efforts will be made by the parties to reach a peaceful, democratic and just solution in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations."