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THE SUEZ CRISIS, CYPRUS AND GREEK FOREIGN POLICY, 1956.  
A VIEW FROM THE BRITISH ARCHIVES

In the year 1956, the basic principles of modern Greek foreign policy were laid down. There had been enough time since the end of the civil war for a reform of policy to be seriously considered. Simultaneously, the emergence in the governmental quarters of a new generation of persons facilitated the process: Constantinos Karamanlis, Constantinos Tsatsos, Evangelos Averoff-Tossitsas, Gheorghios Rallis and Panayiotis Papaligouras were new figures. On the other hand, the course the Cyprus dispute was taking, made such a re-examination of policy a very pressing need. The Karamanlis government had been in power from October 1955, but only after ERE's electoral victory, in February 1956, did it feel strong enough to proceed to what amounted to no less than the shaping of a new look in the country's external relations. The picture of a reform in foreign policy is clearly displayed by the comparison of the diplomatic activities of the country in 1955 and in 1956: In 1955, Greece's diplomatic activity was confined in the framework of the Greek-American relations, of the Tripartite Alliance between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia, of NATO and, of course, of the Cyprus issue. The contacts with Eastern Europe (initiated in 1953-54) concerned mainly commercial relations, did not expand to the political level and had been stagnated. A list of the 1956 contacts gives quite a different picture. Apart from the 1955 ones, there were additional fields of activities: In March, the Minister without Portfolio, Grigorios Kassimatis, visited Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. In May, President Heuss of West Germany visited Athens, a cultural convention with West Germany was signed and there were Greek-Yugoslavian (bilateral, one must note) military talks, while a Greek military mission visited Yugoslavia in the following month. In June, too, Paul and Frederica, the King and the Queen of the Hellenes, visited Paris. In July, Tito visited Greece and had talks with Karamanlis. Greece tried to put relations with Yugoslavia in a bilateral basis, abandoning the tripartite framework of the previous years. Belgrade, though, was reluctant to follow in this. In August, Greece refused to attend the Suez Conference. In the same month, Greece and Romania signed an agreement to resume diplomatic relations and another one concerning compensation

for the damage done to Greek interests during the 1940's. In summer, also, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Dmitri Shepilov, visited Athens. In September, the Greco-Egyptian cultural convention was signed. At the same time, Paul and Frederica visited Bonn while the trade agreement between the two countries was renewed in October. In October, too, another Yugoslavian military delegation visited Athens. Karamanlis and the Foreign Minister, Averoff, paid an official visit to Belgrade in December. Thus, almost all the aspects of modern Greek foreign policy are found in the diplomatic efforts of 1956: NATO membership, openings to Western Europe (which would later turn to integration in Western Europe), openings to the Arab world, and a stepping up of the pace in the restoration of relations with countries of Eastern Europe as well as the careful beginning in the extension of such relations to the political field. Unlike the case of 1974, when Greece took the initiative in all fields, in 1956 the Greek government was confined to take the initiative for some of these moves and to exploit opportunities in respect to others. Thus, the opening to the Arabs was initiated by Athens. Greece benefited from the results of a successful visit by King Paul to Yugoslavia, in September 1955, while she provided the political will to respond to Romanian approaches. Where objective reasons made an opening premature, as in the case of Bulgaria (the negotiations concerning reparations had reached a stalemate), Greece refrained from any action<sup>1</sup>.

The reason that this diplomatic reform passed greatly unnoticed was the deteriorating state of the Cyprus dispute: Only two weeks after the February election, the British deported Archbishop Makarios. Together with these moves in the field of foreign policy, thus, Greece found herself engaged in a major effort to resume negotiations with the British and to find a solution for Cyprus, safeguarding Greece's and the Greek Cypriots's interests. Simultaneously, she had to deal with the effect of the Suez crisis of that same year. The relationship, indeed interaction, of the two issues, of Cyprus and of Suez, in the critical year 1956 and the simultaneous reform of the Greek foreign policy, mainly the openings to the Arabs, is the subject of this paper.

### I. CYPRUS, SUEZ AND BRITISH POLICY

The strategic value of the Suez Canal in keeping the communications of the Empire intact does not need to be stressed here. The point, however,

1. Peake to Selwyn Lloyd 23 March 1956 PRO FO 371/123844/1, Peake to Selwyn Lloyd 7 March 1957 FO 371/130012/1.

was that after India became independent, in 1947, Britain attached an even greater importance to the Middle East than before. This region was the only important area of the world, left under exclusive British responsibility. Since the strategic responsibility for such a region was a prerequisite for the status of a world power, which Britain was anxious to retain, the Middle East had acquired an overwhelming gravity. Such gravity, indeed, that in the late 1940's, the British Chiefs of Staff (COS) pressed the Labour government to place more emphasis to the Middle Eastern than to the European defence. It must be noted that Britain's political leadership, the Prime Minister Clement Attlee among them, was receptive to such thinking. London had some outposts in the region: Aden, the Suez Base, Iraq and Jordan were the ones based on treaties. Cyprus, under British sovereignty, was the other. These were areas whose control was not expendable for London, almost at any cost. Needless to say, loss of the one outpost was only making the others vital, not only for strategic reasons, but for the very maintenance of Britain in the Concert of the world powers<sup>2</sup>.

The power of London in the region, however, was in the decline all the way since 1948, the year of the evacuation of Palestine. Other reasons, running very deep in the history of the region, such as Arab distrust of Britain because of the Arab-Israeli confrontation, played their part. The first sign of strain in the Anglo-Egyptian relations was the dispute over Sudan, in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The Iranian oil crisis of 1951-1953 was overcome, but even there the USA had managed to help their own economic interests to take over a proportion of the country's oil production, at the expense of British interests. One has to keep in mind that the US and Britain were not in agreement in all aspects of policy in respect to the Middle East, their attitudes often becoming antagonistic to one another. Very often, indeed, the British were viewing the American policy as an attempt to deprive London of its influence<sup>3</sup>.

2. Louis William Roger, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951. Arab Nationalism, the United States and Postwar Imperialism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984, Chapters I, II and III, especially pp. 205-225, dealing with Cyprus.

3. Louis William Roger, "American anti-Colonialism and the Dissolution of the British Empire", *International Affairs*, 61 (1985) pp. 395-420; Nachmani A., "'It is a Matter of Getting the Mixture Right': Britain's Post-War Relations with America in the Middle East", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18 (1983), pp. 117-137, for the extensive coverage of the perceptions of British and American policy-makers, in connection with Anglo-American relations, see Watt Donald Cameron, *Succeeding John Bull. America in Britain's place, 1900-1975*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1984, pp. 111-143, for the Sudan and the Iran affairs, see Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, pp. 632-736.

Placing so much importance to Cyprus, thus, was not so much the result of economic considerations (oil), but of political-strategic ones: To maintain the prestige of a superpower. It is no coincidence that every intention in London to consider giving even an implicit recognition of the right of self-determination of the Cypriots, or a promise to Greece that Britain would discuss its future status at a later date, was blocked by the Chiefs of Staff (COS). In the late 1940's, the Foreign Office considered the implementation of such a policy and the military came forward against it. In spring 1955, the Colonial Office was in favour of bringing self-determination into the picture, but, again, it was the COS who brushed it aside. The fact that a military body of policy, not, say, an economic one, was the champion of British sovereignty, shows that it were the strategic, not the economic, considerations that were seen as more pressing. Nor is it a coincidence that the COS abandoned their inflexibility and agreed to consider that a change of status was possible in the foreseeable future, only when the former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir John Harding, was the Governor of the island and, in spring 1956, pressed hard for a self-determination plan to be pursued. On the other hand and as far as Cyprus's strategic importance is concerned, a few other points need to be mentioned: The island was useless as a Base for a strategic reserve, since it had no deep-water ports. Indeed, for the invasion of Egypt, in autumn 1956, the British troops were transported from Malta. However, Cyprus was an excellent Base for the air force, both for operations in the Middle East as for raids against the Soviet Union. The Colonial Office was considering the building of a deep-water port, which was not ready at the time of the Suez crisis<sup>4</sup>.

If the strategic considerations were an important factor in British attitudes to Cyprus, the political ones played an equally significant part. London, seeing its power in the region declining, found a reliable ally in the most stable (if not the only stable) country of the Middle East: Turkey. Ankara, in February 1955, played a major role in the making of the Baghdad Pact, one of the most important British assets in the region. In July, Pakistan and in September, Iran acceded to the initial bilateral Turkish-Iraqi Treaty. Britain had joined on April 4, only three days after the beginning of EOKA's action in Cyprus, and, in this sense, EOKA's emergence was badly timed. The Pact, in the end, proved to be a failure: It aroused Egyptian and Syrian suspicion and was never joined by another Arab country apart from Iraq, nor did it secure American

4. Extract from COS (55) 48 3 May 1955 FO 371/117634/385, extract from COS (56) 56 5 June 1956 FO 371/123894/1116, CO 223 and 224.

support. However, in 1955-56, London regarded it as an important vehicle for the maintenance of the British influence in the region. In turn, Turkey became the Pact's cornerstone. Consequently, Ankara's friendship became indispensable for Britain, exactly at a time when the Greek Cypriot struggle took its dynamic turn. Thus, the insistence of Athens that Britain would receive a Base in Cyprus and one in Greece was not considered seriously in London: Even if Britain considered that a Base in Cyprus would have covered her strategic needs, (which anyway she did not), such a settlement would not cover her political ones, as London needed a Middle Eastern ally, a role Greece could not play. References to Turkey's role in British thinking for Cyprus were continuous. For example, on May 5 1956, the Deputy Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, John Guthrie Ward, noted that "on long a view, I think that the "Turkish political" factor may become much more important than H[er] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]'s material need for a base in Cyprus. As Turkish friendship really is essential to retaining any position in the Middle East, we can hardly throw it away just to be quit of our troubles in Cyprus. And as Kirkpatrick [the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office] always points out, the quickest way of killing NATO (...) is to get out of Cyprus and start a Greco-Turkish war". London had noted the Turkish concern about Cyprus. Thus, in their June 1956 decision, in which they reluctantly agreed to examine the possibilities of a future British withdrawal from Cyprus, the COS insisted in the absolute importance of "carrying Turkey with us in any change which may be contemplated and so secure that her adherence to the Baghdad Pact is not affected". After this, London prepared a scheme, whereby the Cypriots would be allowed to exercise the right of self-determination after 10 years. The British, though, following the advice of the COS, included in this a build-in Turkish veto: The plebiscite would not take place prior to a British-Greek-Turkish Treaty on Cyprus's defence. The plebiscite, therefore, would be dependent on Turkey's agreement. London put this proposal to Ankara (not to Athens), and dropped the plan, after the strong Turkish opposition to it. Ankara's importance was rated high in London in the year of the Suez crisis<sup>5</sup>.

5. For the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact and Turkey's role in it, see Reid Brian Holden, "The "Nothern Tier" and the Baghdad Pact", in Young John W. (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, 1951-1955*, Leicester University Press, 1988, pp. 159-179. FO minute (Young) 6 June 1956 FO 371/123894/1112, PRO CAB 128/29 41st Conclusions 12 June 1956, Bowker (Ankara) to FO 22 June 1956 FO 371/123901/1425, extract from COS (56) 56 5 June 1956 FO 371/123894/1116.

It was in such difficult, for Britain, circumstances, that the Canal crisis occurred: The British had a base in the Canal area, according to the 1936 agreement with Egypt. In 1936, British presence was a counter-balance for the Italian expansion to Eastern Africa, but the Italian defeat in the war removed the cause of Egyptian anxieties and left the way open for the Egyptian nationalism to develop. The duration of the relevant Treaty was 20 years. Thus, it would have to be renewed before 1956. The overthrow of King Faruq, in 1952, by the nationalists, led by Colonel Neguib, made clear that the most Britain could hope was to limit the damages. This, the Churchill government achieved in 1954, when Sir Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, concluded with Colonel Nasser, who had replaced Neguib, a Treaty, whereby Britain would withdraw from the Canal by 1956, but for a period of seven years she would have the right to re-activate the Base, in case of an attack against certain Arab states or Turkey. The agreement, though, had an unfortunate reception in Britain, where some Conservative Deputies attacked the government, for selling the Base out. These rebels became known as the "Suez group"<sup>6</sup>.

When referring to the "Suez rebels", it is essential to have in mind that the famous "never" position was declared on the very day of the announcement of the start of the Suez negotiations, on 28 July 1954. The Minister of State for the Colonies, Henry Hopkinson, replying to a question about Cyprus, in the House of Commons, stressed that "it has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent". The interaction between the two regions, Cyprus and Suez, becomes even more obvious when having in mind the timing of this statement. As stressed in the beginning, loss of the one position, Suez, only made the other indispensable (It is essential to note that in late 1952, Britain decided to move her Middle Eastern Headquarters to Cyprus, in the case of a withdrawal from Egypt). At the same time, the fact that Britain had been forced out of Suez, created a further implication for the Greek Cypriot cause: London would no longer be willing to base its Middle Eastern position on leased Bases, which depended on the good relations with the host country. More so, if the host country was seen as politically unstable—and Greece, having had a fierce civil war only five years before, was seen as such<sup>7</sup>.

6. Ovendale Ritchie, "Egypt and the Suez Base Agreement", in Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-155.

7. *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 531 [504-514] 28 July 1954, FO minute (Thomson) 11 Apr. 1956 FO 371/123882/725.

The troubles for Britain, still, did not end with the conclusion of the agreement. Nasser tried to proceed with his plans for the building of the Aswan Dam, hoping that it would help his country's economic development. The USA, Britain and the International Monetary Fund were to provide much of the finance needed. When Nasser, however, purchased arms from Czechoslovakia, the loans were withdrawn. The Egyptian leader, then, in July 1956, nationalised the Suez Canal, in order to use its benefits to build the Dam. Nasser did not say that he would violate International Law, which imposed that the Canal should be open to navigation. Yet, Britain, already facing strains in the region (General Glubb's dismissal, in March, which resulted to the loss of Jordan for the British and the breakdown of the Makarios-Harding negotiations on Cyprus being the latest ones), chose to interpret this as hostile action. Especially Eden, now Prime Minister, was extremely angry at Nasser's attitude. France did the same (Paris believed that Nasser helped the rebellion against the French in Algeria). The USA, however, was anxious to prevent the use of force. In the American attitude, traditional dislike of Colonialism and the fact that 1956 was a year of Presidential elections, played a great role. The Western powers withdrew their pilots from the Canal (without them, the Canal would be closed and Nasser's action would have resulted to the violation of the Suez Convention of 1888, which imposed that the Canal should be open to navigation). A Conference was called at London, in August, to consider the issue. Greece, a country with a strong merchant fleet, was invited as well<sup>8</sup>.

## II. GREECE'S CYPRUS POLICY, SUMMER 1956

In summer 1956, the Greek government was engaged in an effort to resume negotiations on Cyprus with the British on a bilateral basis (leaving Ankara out of the talks). In March, the British had deported Archbishop Makarios to the Seychelles. An effort by the Greek Foreign Minister, Spyros Theotokis, to free the Ethnarch had failed. Theotokis had asked the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to persuade London to resume negotiations with Makarios and, in May, had spoken to the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, on these lines. He was not successful and he was replaced after the insistence of the Greek Cypriots that he was not resolute enough in his determination to pursue their case. The accusations against

8. Lamb Richard, *The Failure of the Eden Government*, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1987, pp. 183-197.

Theotokis were repeated by the Opposition. The Greek Parliament debated on this issue twice, in spring, and there even was a motion of no confidence against the government. Karamanlis, initially, refused to replace the Foreign Minister, but later gave in to the pressure and accepted his resignation, on the grounds that his co-operation with the Ethnarchy was no longer possible. It is certain, now, that the Foreign Minister was indeed replaced because of the bad state of the relations between him and the Ethnarchy. Yet, for the British, it did not appear like this then. It seemed as if the government could not resist the Ethnarchy's interference in the formulation of foreign policy and this was an unfortunate impression. The new Foreign Minister, Evangelos Averoff-Tossitsas, tried, in early June, to sound the British, by expressing the Greek anxiety to reach a temporary settlement: It would be enough to define the mechanism for the application of self-determination for Cyprus, without setting any time-limit for this application. Averoff spoke on these lines to "Le Monde", to "Corriere della Sera" and to the British Councillor in Paris, Patrick Reilly. At the same time, the Greeks were trying to find ways to deal with the Turkish factor, which had been greatly reinforced both by the deportation and by the British difficulties in the region. The Greek idea was to prove to the British that Enosis was not incompatible to Turkish interests, which Athens would not neglect. (Anyway, Greece was not in a position to neglect these interests. If she did so, the British would not agree to Enosis) Greece, though, would negotiate on a bilateral basis, with Britain only-not with Turkey. Athens was also concerned about the fate of another part of Hellenism, the Christian minority in Istanbul and the position of the Oecumenical Patriarchate. In September 1955, riots, organised by the Turkish government, had taken place against the Greek community in Turkey and, since then, the Turks were hinting that if Ankara felt that Cyprus would become Greek, the fate of the minority would be quite unfortunate<sup>9</sup>.

The Greek government considered how the British anxiety about the Turkish factor would be overcome, on June 12, at a meeting which was recorded by the Head of the Cyprus Directory of the Foreign Ministry, Gheorgios Seferiades, in his diary. Karamanlis, Averoff, Constantinos Tsatsos (the Minister for the Prime Minister), Seferiades and the Permanent Under-

9. FO minute (Shuckburgh) 4 May 1956 FO 371/123887/889, Record (Selwyn Lloyd-Theotokis) 6 May 1956 FO 371/123887/868. FO minute (Ward) 2 Feb. 1956 FO 371/123868/178, Averoff-Tossitsas Evangelos, *Istoria Khamenon Efkaion, Kypriko 1950-1963* (History of Lost Opportunities, The Cyprus Question 1950-1963), volume I, Hestia, Athens 1982, pp. 122-125.



Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Pericles Skeferis, were present. Then, the Greek plan was put to London through the Labour MP, Philip Noel Baker. Karamanlis told Noel Baker that Britain had broken the Makarios-Harding negotiations off before he even had the chance to form his government. After that, he could not risk another British "no", so he would prefer to take no initiative. Yet, the Greek Prime Minister continued, he was anxious to reach a settlement safeguarding Greek, Cypriot, British and Turkish interests. He had fought the February election on loyalty to the Alliance, but if Greece were to remain in NATO, a speedy settlement of the dispute was needed. He would prefer an agreement to be negotiated "by 2-3 people, without the bureaucracies brought in". He would not even need to consult Makarios, as the Archbishop would agree to anything the Greek government agreed. Noel Baker, when submitting these points to Eden, added that Karamanlis was prepared to hold elections if disagreements with the Opposition occurred and that he was confident that he would win a great majority. Karamanlis, Noel Baker continued, was anxious to concentrate to his government's real task, that of raising the standard of living in his country. The Labour MP noted to Eden that Greek Foreign Ministry officials had told him that Greece would accept a settlement in the following lines: A period of self-government, with a Greek Cypriot elected majority in the Assembly. The Ministers would be responsible to the Governor, who would also be in charge of foreign affairs and defence for the whole of the period of self-government and for internal security for one year. On self-determination, there would be no discussion for three to five years. After this period, the NATO Council would decide the date of its application either by plebiscite, or by "parliamentary process". This date could not be less than 5 or more than 8 years. Britain, thus would retain the whole of Cyprus for a period of 8 to 13 years. After this, she would retain a Base in Cyprus and she would receive another one in Greece. Two or three free ports would be established in Cyprus for the trade between the island and Turkey to go on without passing through Greek customs. These ports would be under international administration, of NATO, or of the United Nations. (One has to note the Greek care not to give any territorial rights to Turkey, as would have happened, perhaps, if these ports were to be under joint Greek-Turkish administration). There would be effective minority guarantees for the Turkish Cypriots: They would not serve in the Greek Army, they could opt for double nationality, and would have an agreed proportion in the civil service. A right of appeal to an international juridical body could be established for minority matters. A Minister in the interim government of 13 years would be Turk. There would be a degree of demilitarization of Cyprus.

An amnesty for the EOKA fighters would also be required. It is clear that, by then, Greece was going as far as she felt possible to satisfy Turkish needs. It may well be said that these Greek thoughts presented a far better chance to settle the dispute than the British June 1956 plan, mentioned above: The British were prepared to give Ankara a veto on self-determination but no economic guarantee. The Greeks were prepared to give economic privileges, but not a Turkish veto. As for specific parts of the Greek approach, the thinking of self-government was the same to that Makarios had put forward in his negotiations with Harding, except in two points: Firstly, the Greek government did not ask for the establishment of a parliamentary democracy. Secondly, it was setting a short time limit for the transfer of internal security to the responsibility of Cypriot Ministers. As for the reference to NATO, it must be noted that the decision, required by it, was not *whether* self-determination would be applied: Its application would be part of the agreement. NATO would decide *when* this application would take place. On the other hand, Karamanlis's remarks to the Labour MP offer valuable opportunities to trace Greek anxieties of that time: Firstly, the search for national security in the framework of the Atlantic Alliance: It was the first time in the history of the Greek state that it participated in an alliance together with great powers. This alliance offered a territorial guarantee. Greece, it should be remembered, did not have an alliance with a great power even during the first or the second world wars. Secondly, the anxiety to solve the country's most permanent problem: economic development. This, indeed, is not the only occasion that Karamanlis made clear his conviction that dealing with the economy and improving the standard of living would contribute to overcome many of the country's difficulties, the political ones included. Finally, one has to note that despite the importance Greece attached to NATO, Karamanlis did not hesitate to imply, indirectly, that the continuation of the dispute might put Greek participation in it at stake. This kind of remarks seem to have been born out of genuine anxiety of Athens, but they were used as threats as well. They were repeated on other occasions. The British were not impressed by them, but the Americans seemed much more worried<sup>10</sup>.

When, however, Noel Baker communicated the plan to the British government, London had already put its own proposal, mentioned before, to Ankara and it was rejected (Greece did not know about this because the British

10. Seferis Ghiorgos, *Meres 1951-1956*, Ikaros, Athens, 1986, pp. 222-224; Philip Noel-Baker to Eden 20 June 1956 PRO CO 926/551/730, for Greek threats about the effect of the Cyprus question to Greek participation in NATO, see Roberts (Belgrade) to Young 11 Sep. 1956 FO 371/123860/12 or/and FO minute (Kirkpatrick) 6 Sep. 1956, FO 371/123925/2026.

scheme was not put to her). Furthermore, the Suez rebels were becoming restless about the government's intentions for Cyprus and the British Cabinet felt the need to commit the Lord Privy Seal, R. A. Butler, one of the leading personalities of the Conservative Party and number two in the seniority of governmental post, to ease their anxiety. Britain would not consider another Enosis proposal at that point. Thus, the Greek presentation, which, anyway, was not made through the normal diplomatic channels, did not impress London. Athens put a similar Enosis proposal again in July, through the Greek-American businessman Spyros Scouras, who wanted to mediate in the Cyprus dispute. This time the Greeks added that the NATO Council would decide the limitations of Greek troops in Cyprus. The British, again, refused to consider an Enosis proposal. Furthermore, the British Ambassador in Athens, Sir Charles Peake, noting that the Greek government was committed to Enosis, had insisted that it was "hostage-to-the-extremists" and that it could not be trusted. This view, influenced by the intensification of the Cyprus dispute, was wrong, as the Greek Opposition was badly split, after the February election, when united, it did not win a majority in the Parliament, although it secured more votes in the ballot. (After February, it had become clear that the Centre would not again present an electoral coalition with the Left). Therefore, the government's position could not be challenged. Wrong or not, this view of Peake's influenced the British attitude throughout 1956<sup>11</sup>.

By the time the Greek government received the invitation to attend the Suez Conference, it had decided to press the leader of the EOKA, Gheorghios Grivas, to announce a truce in Cyprus. Athens was extremely anxious about the fate of the Istanbul Greeks and about the further strengthening of Turkey in the dispute. London had ignored two Greek approaches. A truce in the island might change the British attitude. A new Greek Consul General, Anghelos Vlachos, was sent in Nicosia, with Karamanlis's personal orders to establish contact with Grivas and to make arrangements for a truce<sup>12</sup>.

### III. GREECE, THE ARAB STATES AND THE CONFERENCE

The Suez crisis placed Greece in a very pressing, as well as multidimen-

11. PRO CAB 128/30 46th Conclusions 28 June 1956, Chancery (Athens) to FO 26 June 1956 FO 286/1360, Peake to FO 9 Apr. 1956 FO 371/123884/769, Peake to FO 12 Apr. 1956 FO 371/123882/722.

12. Vlachos Anghelos S., *Mia Fora ke Ena Kero Enas Diplomatis (50 Kyverniseis), Tomos D, Genikos Proxenos* (Once Upon a Time a Diplomat (50 governments), volume IV, Consul General), Hestia, Athens 1986, pp. 233-235.

sional dilemma. The relations between Athens and the Arabs were improving: Immediately after the February elections, the Karamanlis government made approaches to Egypt (the most important Arab country, the one, indeed, claiming Arab leadership), Syria and Lebanon. There were many reasons for this move: the Cyprus issue, trade and the deteriorating position of the Greek community in Egypt. In mid-March, the Minister without Portofolio, Grigorios Kassimatis was sent for a tour in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut, which the British watched with interest. While in Egypt, in a Press Conference, Kassimatis stated that the Greek government wanted to strengthen ties with Cairo. He also said that Greece was free to pursue an independent policy, despite her NATO membership. Yet, he made clear that Athens would not withdraw from the Alliance (the issue was debated in Greece, in late 1955) and that a Belgrade-Athens-Cairo-New Delhi axis was inconceivable. Nasser promised Egyptian support for Cyprus and limited himself to saying that the Greeks of Egypt were treated on an equal footing with the Egyptians. At the same time, in Damascus, the Syrians, under pressure from the Turkish Ambassador not to identify themselves too closely with Greece, informed the British that they would take a new line. They said that they were in agreement with Nasser that since Britain was determined to stay in the region, it would be better for Egypt and Syria if Britain stayed in Cyprus, rather than in Suez, or Jordan. The Foreign Office was not convinced that this was the Syrian attitude. Instead, a Foreign Office minute on, March 27, expressed the understanding that the Syrian position on Cyprus changed, because Damascus was afraid of Turkey and because the Syrians themselves had territorial ambitions in regard to Cyprus. It is not clear whether Greece had any knowledge of a possible re-examination of the policies of these two countries, which, up to then, supported the Cypriot cause. It is clear, though, that this visit to Damascus removed the prospects of any such change. The Greek Minister, in a press conference, announced that the Syrian officials had given him promise of support over Cyprus. He also stressed the Greek position that the Cyprus issue was one between Greece and Britain—not Turkey. He, furthermore, reminded that Greece had supported the Arabs in the 1948 war with Israel and that “so far” she had not recognised Israel *de jure*. (In this respect, one has to keep in mind that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which was under Greek influence, was found in a difficult position after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, when its site and its property were found in different sides of the border. Greece had to deal with this situation too). After the visit there were signs of improvement in the relations between the two countries. Later in the year,

the British considered that the rumours that King Paul would visit Damascus, agreed with the general tendency<sup>13</sup>.

By summer, there was more progress in the Greek-Arab relations. The British Chargé in Athens, Anthony Lambert, (Peake had returned to London for health reasons), reported on it in early July. In a despatch to the Head of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office, William Hilary Young, Lambert noted that Greece was at pains to cultivate good relations with Egypt and other Arab states. After Kassimatis's tour, the Greek government sponsored a Conference of the Chambers of Commerce of Athens and of some Arab countries. The Chargé underlined that the Egyptian Ambassador in Athens attended its opening session. Karamanlis and Papaligouras, the Minister of Commerce, received the Arab delegates after the Conference, while the President of the Federation of the Arab Chambers of Commerce sent a warm message to the Greek government, after the event. Greece had also announced that she would participate to the Damascus Trade Fair. Lambert explained the Greek willingness to approach the Arabs, by "the weakening of Greece's loyalties to the West, consequent upon the strains of last year". However, he mentioned that, although a part of the Opposition and of the Press had asked for an alignment with Cairo as an alternative to NATO, the government had remarked that Greece attached great importance to Egyptian friendship, but did not overrate its value. The Chargé stressed the emotional sympathy between Athens and Cairo, because of their anticolonial policies. However, he regarded that there was little space for an improvement of trade relations between them: The principal Greek interest was for the fate of the Greek community in Egypt. Indeed, Averoff, in his memoirs, stressed that the position of the Greek community was dominant in the thinking of the Greek government during the Canal crisis. Athens understood that the days of the Greek community were limited, but it was also anxious to smoothen their withdrawal from Egypt<sup>14</sup>.

Thus, the Greek government found itself in a difficult cross-road. The Western powers, Greece's allies, were asking for her participation in the Suez Conference. So did her economic interests: A country with a developing merchant fleet had an interest to side with the maritime powers in this dispute

13. Trevelyan (Cairo) to FO 22 March 1956 FO 371/123880/627, Gardener (Damascus) to FO 26 March 1956 FO 371/123880/637, Gardener to FO 28 Mar. 1956 FO 371/123880/646, FO minute (Thomson) 27 March 1956 FO 371/123880/637, for the position of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem see Vlachos, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-125 (Vlachos had been Consul General in Jerusalem before going to Cyprus).

14. Lambert to Young 4 July 1956 FO 371/123852/1, Averoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-138.

One should note that the United States, which finally confronted Britain and France in November, had every interest in the success of the Conference. Its success would mean that an embarrassing crisis in the Middle East might be avoided. This, in turn, was more important, since it was an election year and President Eisenhower was running on a peace platform. Therefore, in summer 1956, the differences between London and Washington had not yet developed. Quite the opposite, both countries agreed that the Conference should be held. Thus, the US threw her weight with the Greeks in favour of their participation. Dulles sent a personal message to Karamanlis asking for Greek participation. This way, the Greek dilemma had been clearly defined: Athens counted much on American support in regard to Cyprus. Equally, there was always the possibility that a refusal to attend would make the Greek government appear far too pro-Nasserite in British eyes. Being seen by London to side with Nasser, the principal British foe, in a region of principal British interests, might endanger the Greek claim for Enosis: London was not likely to give Cyprus to a friend of one of its worst enemies. The Foreign Office, in fact, had already watched carefully Greek assurances to Arabs that Athens would not permit the use of a British Base in a Greek Cyprus against them. On the other hand, Greece could not risk endangering the Alexandria Greeks, or Arab support in the United Nations<sup>15</sup>.

In early August, Lambert reported that the Greek government appeared divided on whether to accept or not the invitation. Averoff seemed to be in favour of acceptance. On August 8, Averoff expressed to Lambert the Greek anxiety not to appear pro-Nasserite and delivered the Greek answer: Athens suggested that the Conference should be delayed, clearly an effort to avoid a refusal. On the following day, Lambert pressed the Foreign Minister asking for Greece's participation. Otherwise, he said, Greece would be seen as "being lined up with Nasser, if not worse". Averoff replied that to attend the Conference and vote against an important Resolution would be worse than not attending at all. Lambert, reporting the conversation, made his disappointment about the Greek attitude clear, but also expressed his belief that Athens would, in the end, participate. At the same time, as Lambert reported, the French and the Americans were exercising strong pressure on the Greeks to accept. On the 10th, Averoff asked the *Chargé* whether in case of Greek participation, he would have direct talks with Selwyn Lloyd on Cyprus (It must

15. FO minute (Thomson) 21 March 1956 FO 371/123879/582, FO minute (Thomson) 4 Apr. 1956 FO 371/123880/650, Lambert to FO 6 Aug. 1956 PRO PREM-11/1380.

be remembered that the truce was being arranged in Cyprus. A direct approach to the British seemed to appeal to Athens). However, on the 11th, the Greek government declined the invitation, despite the American and British pressure. On August 11, Averoff stressed to Lambert that the protection of the Greek community in Egypt was the main reason for this. The Chargé, loyal to the hostage-to-the-extremists thesis, reported to London that the Greek response was influenced by internal political difficulties. Years later, Selwyn Lloyd, in his memoirs, mentioned that the fate of the Greek community was the reason of the Greek refusal: "Greece was wise not to come". In 1956, however, the refusal only provoked British anger. At the same time, Athens, at Egypt's request, did not withdraw the Greek pilots from Suez, contributing, in this way, to the failure of the maritime powers to put Nasser in the wrong, by closing the Canal<sup>16</sup>.

Athens had sided with Nasser and this, for London, could hardly be taken as anything else than a hostile act. On the 13th, Young minuted that Greece's refusal was due to the government's fear of offending Egypt. It was, he noted, a valuable commentary on the Greek claim that Cyprus, in Greek hands, would have been of greater value to Britain than under British sovereignty. "If Greece is not even prepared to attend a Conference because of the offense which might be given to Egypt, how much less could she be expected to agree to British use of Cyprus for military purposes contrary to Egyptian policy?" The British bitterness was also expressed in a letter from the Chargé in Cairo, T. W. Carrews, to Lambert, on September 16: "There has been much mutual back-scratching between Egyptians and Greeks over the Cyprus and the Suez issues". He also noted that Greek efforts to approach Cairo had met with Egyptian response. He pointed to Nasser's interview to the pro-government daily, "Kathimerini", and to the Greek-Egyptian cultural agreement signed on September 4, less than a month after the Greek refusal to attend the Conference. Carrews also mentioned the favourable impression created in Egypt by the continuation of the service of the Greek pilots, all of whom were decorated by the Egyptian government. He, however, pointed out that the Greek community of Egypt was still in a difficult position, many of its members leaving either for Greece, or (the younger ones) for Australia or South

16. Lambert to FO 8 Aug. 1956 PREM-11/1380, Lambert to Young 9 Aug. 1956 FO 371/123916/1798, Lambert to FO 10 and 11 Aug. 1956 PREM-11/1380. Most of the Athens telegrams about Greek participation in the Conference can be found in the Prime Minister's papers. This is an indication about the importance London attached to the Conference and to the Greek reluctance to attend. Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez, 1956-A Persona! Account*, Jonathan Cape, London 1978, p. 107.

America. The departure of the British had resulted to loss of jobs for many Europeans. He claimed that "kind words" was only "cold comfort" to the Greek community. One has to note the tendency of the British diplomat to avoid considering the fate of the community without even that Greco-Egyptian rapprochement<sup>17</sup>.

The peak of Britain's bitterness for the Greek attitude was a report by Lambert, on August 29. He insisted that the Greek refusal made an overall examination of Greek foreign policy necessary. Indeed, his report was addressed to Selwyn Lloyd himself and it is contained in a file under the title "Greek foreign policy". Lambert considered the US interest in Greece "fragile". Even the Greeks, he insisted, regarded it impermanent. (It is not clear to whom he referred. Certainly the government did not think that US interest was fragile). Apart from the Greek-American friendship, Lambert remarked that "Greece's loyalty to NATO is now reduced to little more than lip service". He also noted that Greece would be willing to exchange the Greco-Turkish-Yugoslavian Alliance (of 1953-54) with a bilateral treaty with Belgrade, which was seen in London as damaging for the interests of NATO in the region. The *Chargé* expressed the fear that the continuation of the Cyprus dispute opened Greece to Soviet penetration. He mentioned her increasing contacts with Eastern European countries and the visit to Athens of the Soviet Foreign Minister in June. Lambert suggested that Britain should keep firm with the Greeks in regard to Cyprus. It is worth noting that he expressed these thoughts only one month after moderate Greek proposals on Cyprus had been communicated to London. (However, they were proposals on the basis of Enosis, which made them unacceptable for Britain). If not anything else, Lambert sent his report just nine days after Grivas had announced a truce in Cyprus, which was a Greek attempt to find common ground with Britain and work for a solution. The truce had been accompanied by many Greek efforts to convince the British that they were behind the move. Averoff himself, on August 19, had hinted to Lambert as much, indirectly, but clearly enough. The *Chargé*, though, had again put forward the hostage-to-the-extremists thesis: He reported that the Greek government knew nothing about the truce and that Averoff's approach was made simply because the Greeks did not want to be left out of a settlement. In the end, the British allowed themselves to believe that the EOKA had been defeated. They ignored the Greek approaches and responded to the truce by offering terms of surrender for its

17. FO minute (Young) 13 Aug. 1956 FO 371/123917/1810, Carrews (Cairo) to Lambert 26 Sep. 1956 FO 371/123852/2.



members. EOKA resumed its action after this. It must be noted that Vlachos (who had been called to Athens to confer with Karamanlis and Averoff about EOKA's response), had requested Grivas not to answer before his return from Greece. Grivas, though, ignored this<sup>18</sup>.

#### IV. THE AFTERMATH: CYPRUS AND THE INVASION OF EGYPT

On September 20, Lambert sent a another report to Selwyn Lloyd. This time, he stressed that Karamanlis was suspicious of the British and that there was a strong feeling in favour of neutralism in the country. The Chargé painted a gloomy picture of the situation in Greece. In October, after Karamanlis sent a personal message to Dulles, the Greeks succeeded to provoke a semi-official US mediation. Julius Holmes, a personal Advisor to Dulles on NATO issues, undertook to mediate, secretly, in the dispute. Athens put a self-determination proposal, similar to the July one, without any mention of free ports. It was rejected by London, because it disregarded the Turkish interests, "which, it is common ground, are of fundamental importance". This Greek proposal, moreover, is significant from another point of view as well: The one concerning the claim of Turkish sources, later, that Averoff had proposed partition of Cyprus to the Turkish Ambassador in Athens, Settar Iksel. We, now, have Averoff's account of the conversation, published in Professor Xydis's book, from which it is clear that the Greek Foreign Minister had made clear to Iksel that Athens was opposed to partition. The Greek proposal during the Holmes mission provides for a further proof that Averoff's account is accurate. The Averoff-Iksel conversation took place on October 6. The Greek proposal was given to the British, by the Americans, on October 8. Thus, it had been given by the Greeks to Holmes before the conversation in question (and it had been decided even before handing it to him). Therefore, it is an additional proof that the Greek line was one of Enosis. The irony was that since the Holmes negotiation was a secret one, the public simply did not know about the mediation, which, initially, was undertaken without Ankara's knowledge. (The British, indeed, were anxious to make clear to Turkey that they did not like this US move). As far as the Holmes negotiation is concerned, some other points, concerning Suez, should be covered. London agreed to consider this American mediation in September. Evidently, Athens hoped

18. Lambert to Selwyn Lloyd 29 Aug. 1956 FO 371/123850/1, Lambert to FO 19 Aug. 1956 FO 371/123918/1825, Eden to Harding 18 Aug. 1956 FO 371/123918/1838, Vlachos, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-282.

that USA's prestige and power would make it difficult for Britain to reject out of hand a proposal put forward during Washington's mediation. This, however, might have been the case for any other period of post war history. Not for autumn 1956, when the Suez crisis came to a head and the famous "special relationship" between Britain and the US at its lowest ebb. The Eisenhower administration had warned Britain to avoid a war crisis in Suez, especially before the American Presidential elections, in November. Despite this, the Eden government decided to go ahead challenging Nasser by force. On October 22, Britain, France and Israel, in secret, examined the possibility of military action against Cairo. Eden allowed himself to agree to such an action. It began with an Israeli attack on Egypt, in late October. Britain, then, claimed that the 1954 Base agreement with Egypt gave her the right to interfere, reactivate the Base and separate the Israeli and the Egyptian forces. Thus, the 1954 agreement finally became the vehicle of the Franco-British military intervention, which started in the first days of November, less than a week before the US election. This, also, shows the extent to which Britain was willing to defy American advice. The intervention failed, mainly because of the US reaction. However, if the British, in the time in question, were prepared to ignore US advice in respect of Suez, to an extent, indeed, that might undermine Eisenhower's re-election prospects, they were, of course, much more prepared to ignore this advice in respect to Cyprus. This was one of the reasons the Holmes mediation led nowhere. On October 9, having received the Greek proposal put in the framework of the Holmes mission, Eden minuted: "I am bewildered with this Holmes negotiations (...) I do not understand on what grounds the Americans are in this special position. It could not be by virtue of the help they have given us over Suez". On the 22nd, Young expressed the opinion that the State Department was "sold out to the Greeks". Thus, the Suez crisis appeared once more in the Cyprus issue, this time undermining the prospects of a solution. Athens, however, could not have detected the course things would take. The British-American rift of November could not have been foreseen by anyone. It was as unexpected as the timing of the intervention of London and Paris in Egypt. The affair culminated within some days. Simultaneously with the Anglo-French invasion in Egypt, the Soviet Army crushed the Hungarian revolt<sup>19</sup>.

19. On the invasion of Egypt see, among others, Warner Geoffrey, "Collusion" and the Suez Crisis of 1956", *International Affairs*, 55 (1979) pp. 226-239; Adamthwaite Anthony, "Suez Revisited", in Dockrill Michael and Young John W. (ed.), *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56*, Macmillan, London 1989, pp. 225-245; Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-279; on Cyprus

Since June, Athens had put suggestions of how the Cyprus issue could be settled, twice. When this failed, Greece tried to make an opening to London with the August truce. When the British refused to believe Greek assurances that this was a Greek effort to facilitate a settlement, Athens managed to play a last card, by convincing the Americans to undertake a mediation. This was a good option for Greece, but it did not work because of reasons beyond her control. There was nothing more she could do. She had tried four times and had been rebuffed. She, then, could only wait for the British offer of self-government for Cyprus, on which Lord Radcliffe had been working. By that time, though, Ankara had started pressing the British for partition of the island. In December 1956, the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, presented the Radcliffe proposals, accompanying them with a statement that when self-determination would come about, this right would be given to the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots separately. Thus, the most likely alternative for the British withdrawal became partition—not Enosis. Lennox-Boyd had visited Athens and Ankara to present the plan. He had assured the Turkish Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, that Britain had “no intention of presenting the Turks with a united Cyprus in foreign hands offering a threat to the southern ports of Turkey”. The decision to refer to partition was influenced by the difficulties Britain faced at Suez, but not from the failure of her intervention. Indeed, the move of London towards this option had started before the invasion. Still, the 19 December statement was an unprecedented strengthening of Ankara in the Cyprus dispute, a development Greece had made every effort to prevent with her 1956 approaches. Britain, however, promised to Turkey partition in the case of a change of the status quo. It was a promise, based, significantly, on the very right of self-determination. From then on, such a Greek claim could lead to partition, not to Enosis. The Greek claim for Enosis through self-determination had virtually been blocked. The Radcliffe proposals were rejected out of hand, by Greece (despite strong American pressure to accept them), because of the provision for partition. Vlachos, from Nicosia, reported that the Lennox-Boyd statement was “black-mail”: The Cypriots would have to choose either the continuation of British rule, or a change of status and partition. The Consul General expressed his

developments see Lambert to Selwyn Lloyd 20 Sep. 1956 CO 926/450/41, Selwyn Lloyd to Nutting 8 Oct. 1956 FO 371/123928/2172, PM's personal minute 9 Oct. 1956 FO 371/123928 2172, Young to Salt 23 Oct. 1956 FO 371/123929/2185, FO to Bowker 28 Oct. 1956 FO 371/123933/2295; Xydis Stephen G., *Cyprus: Conflict and Conciliation, 1954-1958*, The Ohio State University Press, Columbus Ohio 1967, pp. 87-89.

fear that the British had planted the seeds of a Greco-Turkish conflict over Cyprus. The next years proved him absolutely right<sup>20</sup>.

The British attitude towards Greece and the Suez crisis was resumed by Peake, in the annual review for 1956. On March 7 1957, the Ambassador sent his report to Selwyn Lloyd, who continued to be Foreign Secretary, after Harold Macmillan replaced Eden, in January 1957. Peake noted that throughout 1956, Greece had shown a dislike of Britain: From refusing to participate in NATO exercises, to the interception of B.E.A. aircraft by the Royal Hellenic Air Force. The Greek government had closed many British Institutes in the country. Even personal relationships with Greek officials had cooled (social contact had always been a factor facilitating British influence in Greece). The government had decided to nationalise two large British companies in Greece: The Piraeus Electricity Company and the Cable and Wireless (this, one must note, was in line with Karamanlis's task to develop the country economically. In the economic field, Peake stressed that Greece had made progress in that year). Athens had rejected immediately the Radcliffe proposals and had tried to extract more US aid and US political support over Cyprus. Relations with the other Western states had deteriorated (in this, Peake would prove wrong: the relations with Western European countries improved markedly in 1956 and continued improving in the following years). The gap between Greece and Turkey, Peake continued, was wider than any time before. The country, though, had remained in NATO. As for Suez, "The Middle Eastern crisis in summer of 1956, demonstrated as clearly perhaps as anything the frailty of Greece's links with the West. Although by reason of her position as a maritime power, the interests of Greece in the Suez Canal are similar to those of other ship-owning states, Her Majesty's Government invitation to Greece to participate in the Suez Conference in London was refused; and Greece has since made it clear that her sympathies lie with Nasser. Indeed, during the Russian suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, Greek propaganda held to the view that there was little to choose between the Russians and the British both in Suez and in Cyprus"<sup>21</sup>.

20. Stewart (Ankara) to FO 12 Oct. 1956 FO 371/123930/2207 and 2211, Lennox-Boyd (Athens) to Eden 15 Dec. 1956 FO 371/123939/2470, Record (Lennox-Boyd, Menderes) 16 Dec. 1956 FO 371/123942/2554, Peake to FO 16 Dec. 1956 FO 371/123939/2481; Averoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158; Vlachos, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-315.

21. Peake to Selwyn Lloyd 7 March 1956 FO 371/130013/1.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the Greek foreign policy, as well as its most important issue, Cyprus, were not confined in the narrow framework of Greece's needs. It had to do with many other aspects of the international scene, many of whom lay beyond the boundaries of a country of South Eastern Europe, struggling to achieve Enosis with a part of the nation, as well as economic development and national security for the very first time in her history. The main principle in the country's foreign policy was the need to secure the much needed national security. All the more, since security would facilitate economic development, which also was one of the primary aims. NATO membership, thus, was regarded indispensable: It was the first time in her history that Greece participated in an alliance along with the strongest western states, an alliance which offered a territorial guarantee. Greece had spent twenty out of the century's first fifty years being engaged in wars, while in the rest thirty years she had to cope with poverty (intensified by the need to accomodate the 1922 refugees and, after that, by the need to deal with the devastation caused by the war against the Axis and by the civil war). A solution in these two issues, security and poverty, was urgently needed. At the same time, Greece made some first overtures to Western Europe. This was also needed for economic development. However, her commitment in the Cypriot cause and her anxiety to safeguard other parts of the nation (in Turkey and in the Middle East) created needs which had to be dealt with: The Greco-Turkish relations were in ruins after the 1955 riots and this, of course, created a further problem of security. The fact that Turkey was a NATO member complicated things even further. Greece searched for a solution for this in better relations with Tito's Yugoslavia, while she also tried to find a satisfactory solution for the Cyprus issue (something more easily said than done, having in mind the British priorities). She carefully, in the middle of the cold war, started to smoothen political, not only commercial, relations with Eastern European countries and she tried to approach the Arabs for reasons affecting more than one of the above considerations. In all these efforts, the need to promote the Cypriot cause was predominant (indeed, Peake, in the 1956 annual review, was distressed to see that Cyprus was dominant in the Greek thinking). These Greek aims, thus, were even less easy to achieve in the difficult period in question. The Suez crisis offers many opportunities for someone to trace the Greek difficulties of that time.

In regard to Cyprus, some things have to be stressed: The motives behind the British attitude were Turkey's importance for British policy in the Middle

East and the increasing difficulties for London in the region, difficulties which culminated in the Suez crisis. The loss of the Suez Base was all-important in regard to Cyprus. The thesis, therefore, that Britain tried to appease Ankara, because Turkey pursued an independent policy, whereas Greece was always "secure" to the West, is wrong. Quite the opposite, it is clear from the British archives, that it was Turkey (the Baghdad Pact ally) which was seen as much more loyal an ally than Greece. According to the British, Greece only paid "lip service" to NATO. Greece was Nasser's friend (it really is difficult to imagine anything which would embarrass Britain more than this). Greece was ready to develop relations with Eastern Europe. Greece was placing appeals on Cyprus, against Britain, at the United Nations, at the Council of Europe, at UNESCO (on Cypriot education). Greece continued her broadcasts to Cyprus. Greece was trying to use US support in regard to Cyprus. Most of all, the Greek government was not only committed to Enosis, but "hostage-to-the-extremists" as well. Karamanlis was seen as anti-British. Hardly the picture of a secure ally.

After Makarios's deportation, Athens tried to bring London back to the negotiating table. In order to convince the British that Turkish interests were not necessarily incompatible with Enosis, Greece was prepared to give not only extensive minority rights to the Turkish Cypriots, but economic advantages to Turkey as well. She was even prepared to accept limitations to stationing troops in a Greek Cyprus. Thus, it is not true that Athens ignored the Turkish role in the dispute in 1956. Finally, her hope that an American mediation would help the Enosis cause did not materialize, again because of developments which had to do with the Suez crisis. Greece's efforts failed and in December, with partition entering the scene, Turkey was found in an extremely strong position.

Athens, simultaneously, made openings to the Arabs, mainly Egypt. Egypt was not only posing as the leader of the Arab world (whose support was needed for Cyprus), but also was the host of a Greek community facing strains. The Suez Conference invitation placed Greece in a sharp dilemma: How to safeguard the Alexandrian Greeks, without undermining the prospects of Enosis by identifying herself too closely with Nasser. The government, thus, was caught in a cross-fire: Greece felt that she could not risk the fate of the Greeks in Egypt, or Arab support for Cyprus in the UN. She declined the invitation, despite the US pressure.

The above show the degree of complication in the Cyprus issue as well as in the reform of the country's foreign policy in the 1950's. When political loyalties, economic interests, the interests of different parts of Hellenism (and

one must not forget the Istanbul Greeks and the Patriarchate in this respect), as well as the Greco-Turkish relations were brought in the scene, time and time again, together with the dangerous environment of the cold war (whose Greece had been the first battleground) and the Middle Eastern crisis, the options were anything but clear cut. Very often, Athens's anxiety was not how to make the best benefit (many times this was impossible or unpredictable). The Greek anxiety was how to limit the damages in some aspects, together with promoting national interests in some others. This, exactly, was the case of the Suez crisis.

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