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“No Shortcut to Freedom”

India, the UNFICYP, and the Cyprus Question, 1960-1974

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THE COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL HISTORY PROJECT WORKING PAPER SERIES

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“No Shortcut to Freedom”: India, the UNFICYP, and the Cyprus Question, 1960-1974

Swapna Kona Nayudu
Kanishkh Kanodia

This paper examines the diplomatic context and underlying causes of India’s limited participation in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus, established in 1964 and officially known as the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Drawing on extensive archival materials from the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UNARMS) in New York, the United Kingdom National Archives (UKNA) in Kew, the National Archives of India (NAI) in New Delhi, and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), the paper traces India’s position on the Cyprus question. It begins with the debates over the island’s partition in the 1950s and concludes with India’s contributions to UNFICYP through the secondment of senior military officers from 1964 to 1976.

During the Nehru era, India played a significant role in shaping early UN peacekeeping doctrines, contributing both diplomatically and through on-ground missions such as the United Nations Emergency Force I during the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the United Nations Operation in the Congo during the Congo Crisis of 1960. Yet, India’s decision not to send troops to UNFICYP, despite its strong diplomatic engagement with the Cyprus issue—both bilaterally with British, Greek Cypriot, and Turkish Cypriot officials and multilaterally at the United Nations—raises important questions. This paper investigates the reasons behind India’s reticence, situating them within the broader context of India’s evolving outlook on peacekeeping as an internationalist commitment in the post-Nehru period.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first section revisits the 1950s to analyze India’s stance on the partition of Cyprus and considers different explanations for its limited engagement with UNFICYP. It examines India’s non-aligned foreign policy, its relations with Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, and the shifts in its peacekeeping engagement around the time of Nehru’s passing in 1964. The second section

addresses the outbreak of hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in 1963, the formation and establishment of UNFICYP in 1964, and India's eventual contributions, particularly through the involvement of distinguished military personnel such as Lt. Gen. P. S. Gyani, Lt. Gen. K. S. Thimayya, and Maj. Gen. Dewan Prem Chand.¹ The conclusion synthesizes findings from this case and comments on postcolonial India's approach to peacekeeping and its influence on the evolving doctrinal thinking of the United Nations.

India's Mediatory Diplomacy and the Question of Cyprus

During the early days of the Cold War, India actively participated in several UN peacekeeping and observer missions, establishing itself as both a reliable troop contributor and a strong advocate for peacekeeping efforts.² Given India's strong support for UN peacekeeping during this period, its minimal involvement in UNFICYP is particularly striking. Yet explanations for India's limited role in UNFICYP in the existing literature on the Cyprus conflict remain sparse. Where addressed, it is usually argued that India's preoccupation with its own territorial concerns—particularly following its defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War—was the primary factor behind its non-participation.³ In addition to its ongoing border conflict with neighboring Pakistan and the unresolved status of Jammu and Kashmir, this argument suggests that external security threats from its neighbors may have made India reluctant to commit its military resources elsewhere. Another perspective points to India's negative experiences during the UN Mission in the Congo in the early 1960s, where a significant number of Indian armed forces personnel lost their lives, potentially influencing India's cautious approach to future peacekeeping deployments.⁴

¹ Indar Jit Rikhye, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and India," *India Quarterly* 41, nos. 3-4 (1985): 318.

² Including UNEF I (UN Emergency Force I) and ONUC (UN Operation in the Congo); UN Observer Missions included UNOGIL (UN Observer Group in Lebanon), UNYOM (UN Yemen Observer Mission), DOMREP (Mission of Representatives of the Secretary General in the Dominican Republic). Rikhye, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and India," 305.

³ Alan Bullion, "India and UN peacekeeping operations," *International Peacekeeping* 4, no. 1 (1997): 102.

⁴ Rebecca Rose Varghese, "Data Point | 75 years of peacekeeping: India's contribution to U.N.'s peace missions," *The Hindu*, May 30, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/data/75-years-of-peacekeeping->

While these explanations provide a contextual framework for understanding India's minimal contribution to UNFICYP, additional factors rooted in the Cyprus question itself must be considered. These include India's non-aligned politics, its pro-self-determination stance on the independence and partition of the island, and resistance from Turkey and Western powers to India's further involvement in resolving the crisis. We argue that India's non-aligned and decolonial approach to the Cyprus issue alienated Turkish, American, and British support for India by the late 1950s. By the time Cyprus gained independence in 1960, India's diplomatic position had weakened significantly, limiting its ability to exert substantive influence at the United Nations. In earlier conflicts during the 1950s—in Korea, Egypt, Hungary, Lebanon, and the Congo—there had been growing acceptance of Nehruvian non-aligned mediation. However, with Nehru's passing in 1964, the era of proactive mediatory diplomacy began to decline.

India's Diplomatic Engagement with Cyprus

Throughout the 1950s, India actively championed Cyprus's independence at the UN, strongly opposed any partition of the island between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and advocated for special safeguards for the Turkish Cypriot population.⁵

The Greek Cypriot President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios and other Greek Cypriot and Greek officials had cajoled Indian officials at several instances to take an initiative on the issue of Cyprus's independence. According to one report, the Indian Permanent Representative to the UN had been approached by the Greek representative about Cyprus, who laid out Cyprus's demand for "becoming an independent country in the Commonwealth" and asked India to use its influence in favor of their position.⁶ Other reports suggest that as early as 1958, India's Permanent

[indias-contribution-to-uns-peace-missions/article66911999.ece#:~:text=At%20its%20peak%20in%20July,killed%20due%20to%20malicious%20acts.](#)

⁵ "Note from Nehru to the Foreign Secretary titled "The Future of Cyprus," 15 July 1957, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (SWJN) Vol. 38, 750-751.

⁶ "From UK High Commissioner in India", 2 September 1957, UKNA/FO 371/130105] R/GC/10385/1 RC10385/3.

Representative to the UN, V. K. Krishna Menon, considered introducing a resolution at the UN General Assembly calling for Cyprus's complete independence.⁷

India's strong endorsement of a political settlement in Cyprus that sought immediate and complete independence without a partitioning of the island stemmed from an anxiety over Kashmir, and fears of setting a precedent for Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations, a concern not entirely lost on British and Turkish diplomats.⁸ Any endorsement of partition would have led to ideological inconsistencies with India's own stance over self-determination of ethno-religious communities vis-à-vis the preservation of the sovereignty of a nation-state.⁹ Moreover, Greek Cypriots had framed their fight for the preservation of unity of Cyprus as a struggle against colonialism and external aggression, which strongly resonated with India's own anticolonial history. Thus, India consistently advocated, in its speeches at the UN, for the protection of the sovereign, unified status of Cyprus.

India also supported Cypriot non-alignment, as Cyprus was one of the 25 states represented at the 1st Conference of the Heads of States of the Non-Aligned Movement and Archbishop Makarios had been one of the only European leaders in attendance at the Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung in 1955. Makarios was not only a staunch supporter of the Non-Aligned Movement, but had also firmly stated his support to India over Kashmir and other problems with Pakistan.¹⁰ Spyros Kyprianou, the Cypriot Foreign Minister in the 1960s, who succeeded Makarios as the 2nd President of Cyprus, even claimed that Cyprus "hoped that one day Pakistan would also re-join India."¹¹ When Makarios visited India in 1962 for a period of two weeks, in his welcome address, Nehru had referred to Makarios a "great political leader" and

⁷ "Outward Saving Telegram from Foreign Office to New York", 19 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

⁸ "Telegram from UK Mission New York to Foreign Office No. 1732", 29 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; "Telegram Addressed to Foreign Office", Telegram No. 1634, 4 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; "Telegram Addressed to Foreign Office", Telegram No. 1655, 7 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

⁹ On Indian sentiments regarding subcontinental history and partition, see "Telegram No. 1537 New Delhi from C.R.O", 14 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

¹⁰ "Subject: Special Despatch on Cyprus," 21 January 1967, Monthly Political Reports (Other than Annual Reports) From Beirut (Lebanon & Cyprus), NAI/ HI_1012(87) _67.

¹¹ Ibid.

a “brave and a great man.”¹² Nehru, recalling Makarios’ presence at the Bandung Conference, complemented that he was “deeply impressed by his personality.”¹³ In correspondence, India officials remarked that they had “general sympathies for the Greeks in Cypriots.”¹⁴

The Indo-British and Indo-Turkish Disputes over Cyprus

The United Kingdom, in contrast, consistently opposed the idea of complete independence for Cyprus, arguing that it would lead to “civil war” or the “permanent partition of the island.”¹⁵ Such a development would deprive Britain of its strategically vital foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean. This concern aligned Britain with the Turkish Cypriots, who were opposed to the pro-*Enosis* movement on the island.¹⁶ Instead, Britain proposed a plan to convene a conference of the concerned parties and implement a seven-year transition toward independence.

The British approach of granting colonial subjects limited self-governance rather than full independence was a familiar strategy to New Delhi. India categorically rejected this plan, stating it could not “view [it] with sympathy.”¹⁷ Indian officials argued that “in [the] Indian experience, each successive step taken by way of formalizing the separateness of different communities... proved irreversible and led inevitably to [a] next step culminating in eventual partitions.” This perspective reflected India’s broader concerns about the dangers of communal divisions, informed by its own partition experience.¹⁸ India was convinced that Britain’s plan prioritized its strategic interests in the Middle East and North Africa and would inevitably lead to

¹² “In New Delhi: In Honour of Cyprus President,” 1 November 1962, *SWJN* Vol. 79, 680-685 [Pages 680 to 684 are in Hindustani; page 685 is the English translation, reproduced here]; this view held firm in New Delhi with Indira Gandhi, India’s future Prime Minister and Nehru’s daughter, even named an avenue after Makarios in New Delhi, the Archbishop Makarios Marg, which remains today.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “Note to Commonwealth Secretary MJ Desai, FS Subimal Dutt, and Secretary General N.R. Pillai”, 26 July 1958, *SWJN* Vol. 44, 555.

¹⁵ “Cyprus Debate, New Delhi Telegram No. 1563”, 21 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; On the question of British mandates and decolonisation moves resisted by the British, see Yorgancıoğlu and Kıralp, “Turco-British relations, Cold War and reshaping the Middle East: Egypt, Greece and Cyprus (1954–1958),” 914.

¹⁷ “Inwards Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office No 1540”, 16 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; On the question of British mandates and decolonisation moves resisted by the British, see Yorgancıoğlu and Kıralp, “Turco-British relations, Cold War and reshaping the Middle East: Egypt, Greece and Cyprus (1954–1958),” 914.

partition—an outcome India firmly opposed.¹⁹ Additionally, India objected to Cyprus hosting British military bases or being forced into a defensive alliance, a stance that directly clashed with British objectives.²⁰

The divergence in views prompted the British Prime Minister to consider personally writing to Jawaharlal Nehru “to urge that Menon should be asked not to persist in the draft.”²¹ The British Commonwealth Office also urged V. K. Krishna Menon to use his “great influence to convince people that a resolution in favour of independence really [would] lead to partition.”²²

Despite these pressures, Menon drafted and circulated a resolution on the subject in late 1958, proving accurate British fears that “it is unlikely that he will refrain from muddying the waters over Cyprus unless he is kept under specific control on this issue by Nehru.”²³ Krishna Menon’s numerous pronouncements at the UN in favor of Cyprus’s independence often drew parallels with the Indian independence movement. In one such speech, he notably remarked, “there is no shortcut...to freedom.”²⁴

The resolution was subject to severe scrutiny by British diplomats, who were convinced that the draft represented Menon’s views and not views of the Indian policy apparatus as a whole.²⁵ The UK Mission in New York saw Menon’s motives as “a good

¹⁹ “Note to Krishna Menon”, 10 December 1957, *SWJN* Vol. 40, 671. Indeed, the Greeks also asked India to openly support their position on “the principle of self-determination for colonies, i.e. Cyprus”, NAI/File No. 1(22)-UN-II/57, MEA. See also “Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon”, *SWJN* Vol. 45, 758-759. The British also told that Indians they wanted eventual independence but not partition, see “Inward Telegram to C.R.O No. 1563”, 21 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

India strongly wanted to preserve the unity of Cyprus and not partition the island, see UKNA/FO371_130125.

²⁰ “Addressed to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 1603”, 29 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²¹ “Inward Telegram to C.R.O No. 1600”, undated, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²² “Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations telegram to C.R.O. No. 1563, letter addressed to Menon”, 24 November 1958, and “Telegram from Foreign Office to UK Mission New York No. 3341”, 24 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²³ “Saving Telegram from UK Mission in New York to Foreign Office”, 15 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²⁴ See “Statement in the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly”, 24 September 1954; “Statement in the First Committee of the General Assembly”, 22 February 1957; “Second statement in the First Committee of the General Assembly”, 22 February 1957; “Statement in the First Committee of the General Assembly”, 12 December 1957; “Statement in the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly”, 2 December 1958 in E.S. Reddy and A.K. Damodaran, “Decolonisation, Peace and The United Nations [Introduction],” in *Krishna Menon at the United Nations: India and the World*, eds. E.S. Reddy and A.K. Damodaran (New Delhi: Sanchar Publishing House, 1994).

²⁵ For letter from Selwyn Lloyd trying to convince Menon that the British interim plan was meant to keep the island of Cyprus together through representative organisations and not partition it, see

deal more murky,” laced with “the idea of weakening us in the Middle East,” with a “paternalistic element in his thinking.”²⁶ Nervous about “polemics or recrimination”²⁷ at the UN debates, the British took the route of going to Nehru to convince Menon to either amend the draft or repeal it in full, as the “only way of avoiding head-on clash between India and [the] U.K. in New York.”²⁸ Krishna Menon, too, for his part, attempted reconciliatory tactics with the British, assuring them that India had successfully “pushed the Greeks off *Enosis*” and now believed that “Cyprus should achieve nationhood as a ‘united Personality’ and eventually become eligible for membership of the United Nations.”²⁹

Indian diplomacy on the Cyprus issue also placed the country at odds vis-à-vis Turkey.³⁰ Through the British, the Turkish conveyed their concerns that “India might be preparing a resolution advocating independence for Cyprus” The Turks worried that “for the Greeks independence was equivalent to *Enosis*” and that “Cyprus being *sui generis* was not susceptible to solutions which might be applicable elsewhere.”³¹ The Turks were further worried that any resolution tabled by the Indians would gain the support of other non-aligned and Afro-Asian countries. Nehru, they said, believed India could at this juncture provide a “restraining influence on those who wanted to follow more extreme courses.”³² The Turks wanted the British to discourage India

Subject File 968, VK Krishna Menon Papers, NMML; on British thinking convinced that Menon was acting on his own, see “Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office”, 16 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; “Letter from London to UK Mission in NY”, 16 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; see also “Letter from British Embassy in Ankara”, 14 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²⁶ “Personal for Secretary of State’, Telegram from UK Mission New York to Foreign Office No. 1732”, 29 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²⁷ “New Delhi Telegram No. 1563”, 21 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²⁸ “Draft Telegram to UK High Commissioner New Delhi” and repeated to the UK Delegation New York, undated, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

²⁹ “Telegram from UK Mission New York to Foreign Office No. 1723”, 29 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; “Telegram to Delhi No. 1600”, undated, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

³⁰ On this Western-Turkish alignment in thinking on Cyprus, see Cemal Yorgancıoğlu and Şevki Kırıl, “Turco-British relations, Cold War and reshaping the Middle East: Egypt, Greece and Cyprus (1954–1958),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 6 (2019): 914-931.

³¹ “Untitled document”, 13 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; “Letter from A.D.M. Ross”, 9 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

³² “Note to N.R. Pillai and Subimal Dutt - Copy sent to Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon.”, 10 November 1958, *SWJN* Vol. 45, 756-757.

from putting a resolution forward.³³ They had absolutely no faith in India sticking to a neutral position, remarking that "Indians were like journalists: if you asked them to say something, they usually said the opposite."³⁴

Indian Support for Cyprus at the United Nations

Despite British and Turkish attempts "to thwart M. Menon's designs," ultimately, an amended version of the resolution was presented to the UN General Assembly at its 13th Session that "profoundly disturbed" the British, even though Nehru stressed how earlier drafts had been modified considerably to accommodate British concerns.³⁵

In February 1959, Menon recounted the events leading to the resolution's introduction to Nehru, stating that the "Greek Foreign Minister informed the Chairman of the Indian Delegation that his Government had come to accept the position of India in this matter and wanted the Indian delegation to draft and sponsor a Resolution recommending the creation of an independent Cyprus."³⁶ India jointly introduced the Resolution, along with United Arab Republic, Ceylon, Ireland and Panama. However, in face of strong opposition from Turkey, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, the United States and several NATO member-states, the resolution was never put to vote.³⁷

Even though the resolution did not muster enough support for a vote at the UNGA, it highlighted the alignment between India and Greece, and the conflicting positions over the Cyprus issue between India and Turkey and the UK.³⁸ At a UNGA meeting held on 2 December 1958 on the situation in Cyprus, the delegates of India and Turkey publicly sparred over their assessments of the path to resolution between

³³ "Outward Saving Telegram from Foreign Office to New York", 19 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

³⁴ "Letter from A.D.M. Ross", 9 October 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

³⁵ "Telegram from A.D.M. Ross", 1 December 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355. See also "Confidential Foreign Office letter", 5 December 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355; "Outward Telegram from C.R.O No. 2258", 30 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355. On what Nehru said, see "Telegram from Delhi Acting H.C. to UK Mission in New York, 1 December 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

³⁶ See Subject File 904, VK Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

³⁷ For a copy of the draft resolution at the UN, see UNARMS/A/C.1/L.17. For correspondence on the resolution between Nehru and Menon on this, see "Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon", *SWJN* Vol. 45, 758-759; for correspondence between British officials, see UKNA/FO 371_136355.

³⁸ For the positions adopted by Greece, Turkey, and the UK vis-à-vis India, see "Letter from Menon to PM Nehru", 18 February 1959, Subject File 904, VK Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

Greek and Turkish Cypriots, with the Turkish delegate asking for “Cyprus to be left as it was” and “not to reward those who came with a bomb in one hand and the United Nations Charter in the other”³⁹ The Turkish delegate went on to compare the state of Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus to that of Muslims in India, who constituted a minority population in a majority Hindu country.⁴⁰ In a separate instance, at the 2nd Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference held in Cairo in 1964, the Turkish government viewed the section on Cyprus in the final communique of the Summit as written by India in concurrence with Greek objectives, over which the two nations had a deep fallout.⁴¹

Yet even though India had broader sympathies with the Greek position, Nehru continued to emphasize the principle of non-interference in others’ matters.⁴² There was also a great deal of misreporting on the Indian stand, and an exaggeration of the Indian support for the Greek position.⁴³ Indeed, by 1960, the British Commonwealth Office even attempted to enlist Indian help to make progress on the matter, and as Cyprus could be in the future, a Commonwealth nation, just like India, in direct contradiction to its own position the previous year, when the British were concerned that “the independence idea might make a good deal of headway and it would presumably be specially dangerous if the Indians played a leading part in promoting it.”⁴⁴

While forming the Force, UN officials were cautious in requesting contributions from nations that the involved parties would not object to, for instance

³⁹ “Question of Cyprus”, General Debate, General Assembly (731st Plenary Meeting) 1957, UNARMS/A_C-1_SR-1005-EN.

⁴⁰ India’s stance on Cyprus independence was strongly opposed by Turkey, see UKNA/ FO 371_136355.

⁴¹ Aslan, “The Evolution of Turkey’s ‘South Asia Policy’: Continuities and Ruptures in Outlook, Roles, Actors and Constraints,” 131; see also notes on this from within the NAM Summit conference of 1964, “Recalling the Declaration adopted by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cairo, on 10 October 1964, regarding the Question of Cyprus” UNARMS/S-0257-0001-08.

⁴² Ibid. See also Nehru’s reluctance to become involved in the Cyprus controversy “Message to Nehru from Makarios”, From Commonwealth Relations Office, Delhi/From UK High Commissioner in India, UKNA/FO 371/130105] R/GC/10385/1 R/GC/10385/2.

⁴³ “Indian Resolution on Cyprus at the UN; Misrepresentation in the Turkish press of remarks made by the Indian Chargé d’affaires in Ankara Mr Coelho,” UKNA/FO 371/130105 R/GC/10385/1.

⁴⁴ “Cyprus: Transmit Copy of Letter to the Colonial Office about Information for India and Pakistan,” UKNA/FO 371/123865/RGC1081/59; On Cyprus joining the commonwealth, see “Letter from Menon to Arthur Lal”, 14 August 1957, Subject File 959, VK Krishna Menon papers, NMML; on “dangerous Indians”, see “Telegram Addressed to UK Mission New York No. 3139”, 13 November 1958, UKNA/File FO 371/136355.

initially only inviting Commonwealth nations, whose presence on the island was preferred by Cyprus.⁴⁵ The opacity in the Indian position on the issue of the independence of Cyprus had fractured relations with Turkey and Britain, and seems to have severely undercut possible Indian involvement in the UNFICYP. The very neutrality that had made India a leading peacekeeping nation in international crises in the 1950s was called into question in Cyprus, altering ways in which India would have ordinarily contributed to the UNFICYP.

“The Most Unmilitary Military Activity”⁴⁶

On 21 December 1963, hostilities erupted between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus. In response, the British government, as the island’s former colonial power, urged Greece and Turkey to form a joint peacekeeping force to quell the violence.⁴⁷ The primary cause of the unrest lay in disagreements between the two communities regarding the implementation of the Republic of Cyprus’s 1960 constitution, adopted when the island gained independence from Britain. At the time, the population of Cyprus was roughly 78-percent Greek Cypriot and 18-percent Turkish Cypriot. The Greek Cypriots sought the island’s unification with Greece through a movement known as *Enosis*, while the Turkish Cypriots aimed to secure greater minority rights or partition the island.⁴⁸ The proposed joint peacekeeping force between Greece and Turkey never materialized due to irreconcilable differences between the two nations.

As a result, Britain assumed the role of the sole guarantor of peace on the island. Yet geopolitical dynamics were complicated by Britain’s strained relationship with Greece during the Suez Crisis. Greece opposed British actions in the region, leaving the two nations on opposite sides of the issue. Unable to effectively restore order, the British proposed deploying NATO peacekeepers to maintain stability.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ UNARMS/S-0869-0001-01-00001, 5.

⁴⁶ Galo Plaza’s phrase, UNARMS/S-0081-0004-04.

⁴⁷ Jan Asmussen, “United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),” in *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, eds. Joachim A. Koops et. al. (online edn: Oxford Academic, 2014), 199.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Michael Carver, *Out of Step: Memoirs of a Field Marshal* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), 315; On the failure of the London Conference, see “From Alec Douglas-Home: Commonwealth Crises”, 29 January 1964, *SWJN* Vol. 85, 355.

Proposals for Peacekeeping Forces

The proposal for a NATO-led peacekeeping force was firmly opposed by the President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, a Greek Cypriot. Makarios was concerned that, as a NATO member and an ally of Western powers, Turkey would use such a force to bolster the position of Turkish Cypriots. He feared this could allow Turkey to establish a stronger and more permanent military presence on the island, tipping the balance of power in its favor.⁵⁰

While firmly rejecting the idea of a NATO-led peacekeeping force, Makarios expressed support for a UN-led initiative. He had already signaled his willingness to accept a peacekeeping force composed of troops from Commonwealth nations or non-aligned states.⁵¹ Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots opposed the internationalization of the issue at the United Nations. They were concerned that Makarios, as a Greek Cypriot leader, enjoyed strong support from non-aligned and Afro-Asian countries at the UN—nations with which Turkey had limited influence due to its close alignment with Western-led alliances.⁵² The Turkish Cypriots recognized that bringing the issue to the United Nations would likely diminish their influence over the resolution's outcome. This was because non-aligned and Afro-Asian countries, which made up a significant portion of UN membership, were largely supportive of Makarios. Makarios had cultivated strong ties with these nations, and Cyprus had joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), participating in its inaugural Conference of Heads of State or Government in Belgrade in September 1961.⁵³ The Non-Aligned Movement countries supported Makarios' position because he championed the principles of non-interference and respect for sovereignty in Cypriot affairs, while also criticizing Western colonial influence in his country.⁵⁴ Britain and the United States were

⁵⁰ Alim, "Turkey between the Third World and the West: Consequences of Failing to Strike the Right Balance (1961–1965)," 292.

⁵¹ Alan James, "Reluctant Heroes: Assembling the United Nations Cyprus Force, 1964." *International Journal* 53, no. 4 (1998): 735-736.

⁵² Alim, "Turkey between the Third World and the West: Consequences of Failing to Strike the Right Balance (1961–1965)," 292.

⁵³ 1st Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, Belgrade, Serbia, 6 September 1961, <http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official Document/1st Summit FD Belgrade Declaration 1961.pdf>

⁵⁴ Şevki Kıralp, "Defending Cyprus in the Early Postcolonial Era: Makarios, NATO, USSR and the NAM (1964–1967)," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 21, no. 4 (2019): 370-71.

reluctant to internationalize the issue through the United Nations, fearing it would open the door to Soviet influence in the region.⁵⁵ The United States and Turkey had advocated for the inclusion of Pakistani troops in any peacekeeping force, as Pakistan was a close ally and shared strategic ties with them. However, Makarios opposed the idea, arguing that the shared faith between Pakistani troops and the Turkish Cypriots could compromise neutrality.⁵⁶ Ultimately, Makarios' stance prevailed, and the concept of a UN-led peacekeeping force gained traction, leading to the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

The Formation of UNFICYP

In late 1963, ethnic tensions between the majority Greek Cypriots and the minority Turkish Cypriots erupted in violence and open fighting on the island, prompting intervention from the UN Security Council.⁵⁷ This outbreak of violence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus in December 1963 has been described as a "civil war" by scholars, one that became internationalized in 1964 with wide debates at the UN.⁵⁸ A conference was held in London in January 1964 to reach a solution but failed to bring about a settlement, "since neither side [had] moved substantially from its initial position."⁵⁹ By February 1964, tensions were rising between Greek and Turk Cypriots.⁶⁰ The UNSC passed Resolution 186 in March 1964, built on a compromise between the Greek and Turkish positions and establishing the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. The resolution also appointed a UN mediator to negotiate a peace settlement between the conflicting parties.⁶¹

UN peacekeeping at the time rested on the principle of attaining the consent of the parties involved. Thus, the political preferences of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom were essential for not only the dispatchment of a force, but also the composition of such a force. In the early months of 1964, before the UNSC passed

⁵⁵ Asmussen, "United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)," 199.

⁵⁶ James, "Reluctant Heroes: Assembling the United Nations Cyprus Force, 1964," 735-736.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 733.

⁵⁸ Asmussen, "United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)," 199.

⁵⁹ "From Alec Douglas-Home: Commonwealth Crises," 29 January 1964, *SWJN* Vol. 85, 355.

⁶⁰ "To Alec Douglas-Home: Commonwealth Crises," 4 February 1964, *SWJN* Vol. 85, 246.

⁶¹ For details of the establishment of the UNFICYP, see Margot Tudor, "Reputation on the (Green) Line: Revisiting the 'Plaza Moment' in United Nations Peacekeeping Practice, 1964–1966," *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 2 (March 17, 2021): 228.

Resolution 186 sanctioning the creation of the UNFICYP, UN Secretary-General U Thant reached out to the permanent missions of multiple nations, requesting voluntary troop and financial contributions for the force. The force was initially authorized for a period of three months. Multiple correspondences exist between U Thant, the Office of the Secretary General, and Under-Secretary General of the UN with the missions of Austria, Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, discussing the specifics of voluntary contribution for the force. The Secretary General also reached out to Ceylon and Philippines for support, who declined the requests on account of financial considerations. Notably absent are any communications with the Indian Mission, barring a few letters requesting high-ranking military officers, even though a military assessment sent by Maj. Gen. I. J. Rikhye, an Indian military advisor to the UN Secretary-General on 21 February 1964, noted that the UN “must sound the following countries for troops in the order given: India, Sweden, Ireland and Brazil.”⁶²

The initial force formed after these consultations was composed of Canadian, Finnish, Swedish, Irish, and British troops with eventual contributions from Denmark through volunteers and Austria through the establishment of a field hospital. At this point, India’s contribution to the UNFICYP was limited to a few Indian military personnel serving in the headquarters in Nicosia and the provision of medical supplies as humanitarian aid.⁶³ As studies of the conflict have previously noted, at the time of the formation of the UNFICYP, the British were reluctant to have a British general lead the force given the country’s interests on the island, yet few foreign officers had the military expertise and the international stature of leading such a force at the time.⁶⁴

India’s Leadership Role in UNFICYP

The Secretary General was in favor of appointing Lt. Gen. Prem Singh Gyani as first commander of the UNFICYP. An Indian military commander, Gyani had previously commanded UN forces in the Gaza Strip and was already in Cyprus as personal

⁶² However, it seems that the request was never made to the Indian Mission in New York; see UNARMS/S-0869-0001-01-00001, 6.

⁶³ Bullion, “India and UN peacekeeping operations,” 102.

⁶⁴ James, “Reluctant Heroes: Assembling the United Nations Cyprus Force, 1964,” 749-750.

representative of the Secretary General.⁶⁵ When Gyani was unable to arrive in Nicosia in early March, the British soldiers refused to be put under a Brazilian commander. They fell under the command of the UN only once Gyani arrived in Nicosia on 26 March 1964 as the First Commander of the UNFICYP.⁶⁶

Gyani was acceptable to British soldiers, who constituted the largest share of the Force, since he had grown up in the British-run Indian army and had attended the Imperial Defence College in London.⁶⁷ The appointment of Gyani as commander was met with some opposition from the Turks, but they eventually acquiesced when the British agreed to this appointment.⁶⁸ The Americans received reports of the Turkish opposition to Gyani's appointment, and a purported stance taken by Gyani that as a minority, Turks should give in to the majority Greek view, but these reports were dismissed as inaccurate in light of the successes achieved by Gyani in effecting a peaceful ceasefire in the Paphos area, even before his official appointment as Force Commander, when he had been the Secretary General's nominee on the island.⁶⁹

Lt. Gen. P. S. Gyani then travelled to and back from the UN headquarters and took command of the UNFICYP in March 1964.⁷⁰ The British flag was lowered on 26 March 1964, and on the following day, the UN flag was hoisted at Nicosia. Gyani said the objectives of the mission were "to prevent recurrence of fighting and help Government of Cyprus in tasks of returning to normalcy, re-establishing freedom of movement and communications and services...."⁷¹ Gyani also explicitly stated that the "UNFICYP was not concerned with political problems in Cyprus but would make every

⁶⁵ "Gyani Heads Cyprus Force," 7 March 1964, *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/03/07/archives/gyani-heads-cyprus-force.html>; "Man In the News; Intellectual Soldier; Prem Singh Gyani," 18 January 1964, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/01/18/archives/man-in-the-news-intellectual-soldier-prem-singh-gyani.html>; For a note from the Secretary-General to Under Secretary-General Ralph Bunche discussing briefing the first Force Commander and their functions, see UNARMS/S-0370-0015-09.

⁶⁶ For the process of putting British troops under their own General Carver, then the Brazilian in the absence of Gyani but eventually Gyani, see Carver, *Out of Step*, 316-323; see also UNARMS/S-0081-0004-02, 16.

⁶⁷ James, "Reluctant Heroes: Assembling the United Nations Cyprus Force, 1964," 750.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 749-750.

⁶⁹ "Telegram From the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, Ankara", 10 March 1964, *Foreign Relations of The United States (FRUS)*, 1964-1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 24.

⁷⁰ Before his departure back to Nicosia, Gyani was briefed by UN Undersecretary for Special Political Affairs, Ralph Bunche on 21 March, in line with a memo issued by the Secretary-General; for the memo, see UNARMS/S-0370-0015-09, 2; on 26 March, Gyani arrives in Cyprus and takes command of the UNFICYP, giving a speech and a press conference, see UNARMS/S-0081-0004-02, 16.

⁷¹ UNARMS/S-0081-0004-02 [Normal telegram shorthand has been transcribed to add punctuation.]

effort to prevent violence by anticipating problems, initiating negotiations and using [the] moral force of world organization.”⁷²

A British Deputy Commander, Maj. Gen. Michael Carver, served as Gyani’s second-in-command.⁷³ Gyani emphasized the continuing but changed role of the British forces as essential, saying, “The fact that General Carver and part of the United Kingdom troops are continuing to work in the force makes me all the more confident of success.”⁷⁴

In April 1964, the CIVPOL, which was formed as part of the UNFICYP to act as liaison between Greek and Turkish police forces, and as a facilitator for Greek and Turkish Cypriots residing on either side, also became operational. On 28 May 1964, a day after the passing of Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister and global statesman, all flags in Cyprus were flown at half-mast as a mark of respect and the President of Cyprus declared the day a public holiday and day of mourning, indicating close ties between Cyprus and India.⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the Americans considered themselves as having “close relations with Gyani.”⁷⁶ They also expected that Gyani exercise “broad flexibility in interpreting force directive” and that if the UN force was circumscribed in the manner laid out in UN resolutions, “this would practically give Greek Cypriots carte blanche to bring Turk Cypriot community to its knees since they enjoy such numerical superiority.”⁷⁷ There was considerable pressure at this time on Gyani to ensure the UNFICYP exercised “greater initiative” and to seek assistance if it needed “more equipment to increase mobility and cope with situation.”⁷⁸ The question of a political adviser was also broached at the time to assist and embolden Gyani in his tasks.⁷⁹

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Asmussen, “United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),” 197-213.

⁷⁴ See UNARMS/S-0081-0004-02 [Normal telegram shorthand has been transcribed to add punctuation.]

⁷⁵ See UNARMS/S-0081-0004-03.

⁷⁶ For how the Americans thought they had “close relations with Gyani”, see “Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey”, Washington, 11 April 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 32.

⁷⁷ “Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the United Nations”, Washington, 14 April 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 33.

⁷⁸ “Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the United Nations”, Washington, 28 April 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 36.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Thus arrived the first UN mediator in the Cyprus conflict, Finnish diplomat and politician, Sakari Tuomioja, who served in Cyprus from April 1964 to August 1964, when he unexpectedly died of a brain hemorrhage while discharging his duties. By May 1964, Gyani, Tuomioja, and Makarios were already finding it challenging to work "in spirit of cooperation and in atmosphere of peace and tranquility."⁸⁰ Tuomioja "expressed pessimism" in being able to give Gyani "at least some moral support."⁸¹ Gyani had expected both parties to the conflict to respect the blue berets, but between April and June 1964, the situation on the island deteriorated further and on 27 June 1964, the mandate of the UNFICYP was extended for a further three months.⁸² The extension coincided with the departure of Lt. Gen. Gyani who had asked to be relieved of his duties and had requested that his replacement be an Indian general⁸³. Other than containing minor clashes, the force was unable to prevent a build up by Greek Cypriots in the form of a National Guard, and an impending Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The US stepped in and asked Turkey to reconsider its proposed actions in light of its membership of NATO and NATO's obligation to protect Turkey were it to start what would in effect have been a proxy war with the Soviet Union.⁸⁴

With member states such as Denmark and Sweden withdrawing their contingents from the UNFICYP, and others such as Canada threatening to follow suit, Lt. Gen. Gyani handed over charge of the UNFICYP to Lt. Gen. K. S. Thimayya,⁸⁵ who arrived in Nicosia in early July,⁸⁶ just as Gyani was giving his last press conference.⁸⁷ Lt. Gen. Gyani had not enjoyed to confidence of his second-in-command, Maj. Gen. Carver, who remembers Gyani in his autobiography as "an idealistic man, very pleasant to work with" but one that "tended to get worried, to give way under pressure and find some temporary compromise," someone who "lacked a basic

⁸⁰ "Telegram From the Embassy in Cyprus to the Department of State", Nicosia, 4 May 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 38.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸² In his memoirs, Carver is unsympathetic to Gyani's leadership style, calling him "idealistic" and lacking in a "basic toughness". Carver, *Out of Step*, 324. On the extension of the mandate, see Carver, *Out of Step*, 335.

⁸³ UNARMS/S-0081-0004-03, 4.

⁸⁴ Asmussen, "United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)," 197-213.

⁸⁵ "Force Commander," United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, accessed 22 November 2023, <https://unficyp.unmissions.org/force-commander>.

⁸⁶ See UNARMS/S-0081-0004-03, 3.

⁸⁷ See UNARMS/S-0081-0004-04, 15.

toughness.”⁸⁸ Carver quotes Makarios as exclaiming, “I don’t understand Gyani...he should be a poet, not a general!”⁸⁹

The Arrival of Lt. Gen. Thimayya

This purported issue was resolved with the arrival of Lt. Gen. Thimayya. Thimayya had previously been part of complex early Cold War missions such as in the Korean War repatriation commission, and therefore, also had enormous experience in the handling of peacekeeping missions.⁹⁰ Thimayya had received briefings on the assignment in Cyprus, including a welcome from Louis Mountbatten, British Chief of Defence Staff, a long-time acquaintance of his, who expressed pleasure at British troops being under the command of such an able general. “This is a key appointment for the British as you can well imagine and I can assure you there is no General that the British Forces would sooner serve under than yourself. No one is more delighted at this appointment than...” [continues in handwritten sign-off], “your old friend, Mountbatten of Burma.”⁹¹ The Americans, too, considered Thimayya’s appointment a favorable development, going so far as to refer to him as “a new asset.”⁹² On his part, even before his departure for Cyprus, Thimayya had skirted the political issues of the conflict by refusing an audience with the Turkish Ambassador in New Delhi and assuring the UN Secretary General of his commitment to keeping the UNFICYP apolitical.⁹³

On arriving in Nicosia, Thimayya immediately complained that the UNFICYP was becoming an object of “ridicule.”⁹⁴ When briefed, Thimayya is believed to have remarked, “Why don’t we just let them have a go at each other?” much to the

⁸⁸ Carver, *Out of Step*, 324.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ This is probably why Gyani had asked for him for correspondence between the two, see Subject File 31, KS Thimayya Papers, NMML.

⁹¹ On the briefings received by Thimayya, see Subject File 31, KS Thimayya papers, NMML; On the correspondence between him and Mountbatten, see Letter dated 22 June 1964 from Mountbatten, Chief of Defence Staff, UK to Thimayya, and Letter dated 27 June 1964 from Thimayya to Mountbatten, in Subject File 31, KS Thimayya papers, NMML.

⁹² “Subject: Cyprus Situation and Greek-Turkish Relations,” Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, 22 June 1964, *FRUS* 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 72.

⁹³ For correspondence between the Turkish Ambassador to India and Thimayya, declining the former’s invitation to see the latter before his departure for Cyprus, see “Letter from Thimayya to Seyfullah Esin, Turkish Ambassador”, New Delhi, 27 June 1964, Subject File No. 31, KS Thimayya papers, NMML; on Correspondence with U Thant, see UNARMS/S-0869-0001-17-00001.

⁹⁴ James, *Keeping the Peace*, 146; also quoted in Asmussen, “United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),” 201.

amusement of the British troops, who regarded him as a "realistic, amusing rock of common sense among us."⁹⁵ To the press, he gave a statement regarding reinforcements for the UNFICYP, emphasizing "the moral presence of the force that was accomplishing the task" while declining to comment on the endurance of the ceasefire amongst conflicting parties, saying he might be an Indian, but he was "not a Yogi."⁹⁶ Galo Plaza arrived alongside Thimayya to handle the political aspects of the job while Thimayya was focused on the military.⁹⁷ By August 1964, the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that Thimayya's efforts were entirely focused on achieving a ceasefire, in which he seemed to have met with some degree of success.⁹⁸

The Americans, recognizing that Thimayya was "exerting every energy to achieve effective cease fire," decided to "support his efforts actively in every appropriate way."⁹⁹ Thimayya earned the admiration of the Turkish Government too, for his "ability and diligent efforts."¹⁰⁰ In subsequent disagreements between Galo Plaza, and Thimayya, the Turks supported Thimayya and agreed in subsequent Cypriot elections that the Turkish rotation be supervised by him.¹⁰¹ The Greeks began to oppose what they perceived as this favoritism from Thimayya and the UNFICYP towards the Turks because of "their underdog status."¹⁰² The year came to a close with two momentous developments for UNFICYP – first, Thimayya passed away in mid-December; second, Galo Plaza resigned as the UN mediator, with no replacement

⁹⁵ Carver, *Out of Step*, 337.

⁹⁶ See UNARMS/S-0081-0004-04.

⁹⁷ Ibid.: Archbishop Makarios was thinking by 1964 of adopting ideas from the non-aligned conference held in Cairo's final communiqué into a UN resolution - see "The Appointment of Galo Plaza as Mediator in Cyprus; and subsequent events," 8 September 1964 to 16 December 1965, UKNA/DO 220/121 also see "The Appointment of Galo Plaza as Mediator in Cyprus; and subsequent events," 27 December 1965, UKNA/DO 220/122. Both files sort of talk about all the controversies; resignation owing to pressure from Turkey, etc.

⁹⁸ "Telegram From the Embassy in Cyprus to the Department of State", Nicosia, 7 August 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 107.

⁹⁹ "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey", Washington, 7 August 1964, *FRUS*, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 108.

¹⁰⁰ "Telegram From the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State", Ankara, 8 August 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 110.

¹⁰¹ "Telegram From the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State", Ankara, 17 September 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 158; on Turkish rotation, see Telegram from the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, Athens, 16 February 1965, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 177.

¹⁰² "Telegram From the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State", Athens, 21 March 1965, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 183.

in sight.¹⁰³ Lt. Gen. Thimayya was remembered by the President of Cyprus as having “a personality which radiated sincerity, kindness and goodwill” and exclaiming that his memory would always remain in Cyprus.¹⁰⁴ The Vice-President eulogized Thimayya as “a man of great integrity and wisdom, of justice and equanimity, enlivened by an excellent sense of humor with which he endeared himself to everyone he knew.”¹⁰⁵

Two years later, by the end of 1967, the UN Secretary General had suggested to the Greek, Turkish, and Cyprus governments the enlargement of the mandate of the force “so as to give it broader functions in regard to the realization of quiet and peace in Cyprus, including supervision of disarmament” after a crisis erupted in November that threatened to bring Greece and Turkey to war.¹⁰⁶ Under UNSC Resolution 244 (1967), the UNFICYP was given an enlarged mandate to include supervision of disarmament and arrangements to safeguard internal security.¹⁰⁷

By December 1969, the third Indian general arrived on the scene, for a longer stint than his predecessors. With a UNSC resolution approving the extension of the stationing of UNFICYP forces in Cyprus, Secretary General U Thant announced the appointment of a new Force Commander.¹⁰⁸ On 20 December 1969, Maj. Gen. Prem Chand took command of the UNFICYP, and held the post until December 1976, through a very crucial period for the UNFICYP, including the overseeing of the de facto partition of the island into two distinct territories in 1974.¹⁰⁹ The Secretary General recalled on the occasion of this appointment that Maj. Gen. Prem Chand had previously “served the United Nations with great distinction in the United Nations Operation in the Congo as the General Officer Commanding the Katanga Area,” a

¹⁰³ “Force Commander,” United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, accessed 22 November 2023, <https://unficyp.unmissions.org/force-commander>.

¹⁰⁴ “Statement issued by the President of Cyprus, 18 December 1965, Statements and condolences on death of Thimayya”, Subject File 33, KS Thimayya Papers, NMML.

¹⁰⁵ “Vice-President De F Kuchuk’s Message of Condolences on the Death of General Thimayya,” 18 December 1965, Subject File 33, KS Thimayya Papers, NMML.

¹⁰⁶ Asmussen, “United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),” 201.

¹⁰⁷ Kiralp, “Defending Cyprus in the Early Postcolonial Era: Makarios, NATO, USSR and the NAM (1964–1967),” 367-386. India continued to support the UNFICYP mandate, as evidenced by Chagla’s remarks on a UN draft resolution – letter dated 27 June 1967 titled “Renewal of UNFICYP Mandate”, see UKNA/FCO 27_103.

¹⁰⁸ “Note by the Secretary General”, UNARMS/S-0869-0001-14-00001-2.

¹⁰⁹ James, “UN Force in Cyprus”, 484

secessionist area overrun by mercenaries, brought to order under his leadership.¹¹⁰ Prem Chand continued with the apolitical stance adopted by Gyani and Thimayya, refusing to let UNFICYP troops participate in political activities even if they were unrelated to the question of Cyprus.¹¹¹

Evolution of UNFICYP's Mandate

During Chand's tenure as Force Commander (between 1969 and 1976), the year 1974 proved to be a critical juncture for the conflict in Cyprus. In July of that year, a coup d'état by the Greek Cypriot National Guard against President Makarios forced the Security Council to pass Resolution 353 (1974) which urged Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace and constitutional government in Cyprus.¹¹² A follow-up Resolution 354 (1974) demanded that the parties comply immediately with the demand to stop fighting and the first Geneva conference was held soon after, ending in the Geneva Declaration, which provided for a ceasefire, establishment of a security zone at the limit of the areas occupied by the Turkish armed forces, and the evacuation of all Turkish enclaves occupied by Greek or Greek Cypriot forces. After that, a new round of talks was envisaged in order to restore peace and re-establish constitutional government.¹¹³ A second Geneva Conference was held in August 1974, following the passing of Resolution 355 (1974) by the UNSC. These developments expanded the scope and responsibilities of the UNFICYP in an unprecedented way. Previously, the UNFICYP's major role and mandate was to observe and report, arrange local ceasefires, and minimize loss to life and property, and evacuation of foreign nationals. After the ceasefire, the UNFICYP was responsible for monitoring troop deployments on both sides, maintenance of the status-quo; in the in the buffer zone, monitoring of the ceasefire, facilitation of activities across the ceasefire line; humanitarian assistance throughout the island; liaison with Green and Turkish Cypriot police; and the cooperation with UNHCR and UNDP.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ "Note by the Secretary General", UNARMS/S-0869-0001-14-00001-2; Letter from U Thant to Prem Chand and Reply from Prem Chand New York, 28 May 1971, UNARMS/S-0309-0009-09.

¹¹¹ From Prem Chand to Ralph Bunche discussing a political protest march in Israel and the participation of UNFICYP troops, see UNARMS/S-1070-0023-01.

¹¹² Asmussen, "United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)," 202-203.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 198.

Prem Chand oversaw all these new developments and was promoted by the Indian Army to the rank of Lieutenant-General.¹¹⁵ Admired for the role he had played, Prem Chand remained in this capacity for the next two years, until he was replaced as Force Commander in December 1976.¹¹⁶

Conclusion

In the period following Nehru's death in 1964, and the successive extensions of the UN mandate for peacekeeping in Cyprus, both in 1964 and in 1967, New Delhi kept a close eye on goings-on in the island nation.¹¹⁷ Monthly political reports from the Indian Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, made observations regarding Turkey's changing attitudes towards NATO, Cypriot courting of Afro-Asian and NAM leaders and Cypriot support for Arab nationalism.¹¹⁸ The Non-Aligned Movement's and Makarios's cause for Cyprus had many overlaps, not least an appeal to respect the sovereignty of decolonized states, and non-interference in their internal matters.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ UN officials congratulating Prem Chand, see UNARMS/S-1070-0022-04, 8; UNARMS/S-1070-0022-04.

¹¹⁶ "Force Commander," United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, accessed 22 November 2023, <https://unficyp.unmissions.org/force-commander>; For admiration of his work, see UNARMS/S-0309-0005-04, 1; From Urquhart to Prem Chand – "We should like to take this opportunity to express our great admiration for your patience, effectiveness and impartiality over the incredibly difficult circumstances of recent weeks" – see UNARMS/S-0309-0006-07.

¹¹⁷ See NAI/HI_1012(87)_67, containing the following - "Monthly Report on Cyprus, February 1967", 4 March 1967, From Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report for March on Cyprus", April 7, 1967, From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Cyprus and the Military Coup D'Etat in Greece" May 1, 1967, From Amb Khub Chand (Ambassador of India to Lebanon) to FS CS Jha; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for April, 1967", May 8, 1967, From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for May, 1967", June 12, 1967, From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for July, 1967", August 3, 1967, From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for August, 1967", September 1, 1967, From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for October, 1967", November 3, 1967, From K Srinivasan (Acting High Commissioner), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for November 1967", December 8, 1967, From K Srinivasan (Acting High Commissioner), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS; "Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for December, 1967", January 2, 1968, From K Srinivasan (Acting High Commissioner), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS.

¹¹⁸ "Subject: Special Despatch on Cyprus", From Amb Khub Chand (Ambassador of India to Lebanon) to FS CS Jha; "Monthly Political Reports (Other than Annual Reports) From Beirut (Lebanon & Cyprus)", 21 January 1967; "From K Srinivasan (Chargé D'Affaires) to Secretary (EA-II) - Monthly Report for January 1967", 11 February 1967, "From K Srinivasan (First Secretary), Embassy of India, Beirut to FS - Monthly Political Report on Cyprus for June, 1967", July 4, 1967; On NATO solidarity suffering, see "From Amb Khub Chand (Ambassador of India to Lebanon) to FS CS Jha - The Cyprus Situation", July 31, 1967, NAI/HI_1012(87) 67.

¹¹⁹ Kiralp, "Defending Cyprus in the Early Postcolonial Era: Makarios, NATO, USSR and the NAM (1964–1967)," 367-386.

The US viewed this coalescing of Cypriot, NAM, and Afro-Asian solidarities as dangerous, lest it give Greek Cypriots a feeling of "victory" in this conflict.¹²⁰ Yet, there was an even larger alignment at play here – one between the UN, in the form of peacekeeping and non-alignment, which in essence, were both similarly built on the core principles of non-interference and neutrality.

The peacekeeping missions of the Cold War era, under which UNFICYP falls, were considered to be the "traditional" missions, as they were based on three core principles: consent of the host state or states, impartiality of forces and the defensive use of force.¹²¹ These three principles of the traditional form of peacekeeping missions were constitutionally derived from Chapter VI of the UN Charter which concerns the UNSC with peaceful settlement of disputes, and Chapter IV, which concerns the recommendatory powers of the UNGA.¹²² Peacekeeping missions, thus, were fundamental in making and remaking sovereignty in the era of decolonization, because they related to how the international organization used a legal instrument to police the internal affairs of a state, and intervene in territorial dispute without any violation of sovereignty.¹²³ India recognized the value of this mechanism, in the broader terms of doctrinal thinking on peacekeeping but also on the Cyprus Mission specifically.¹²⁴ This continued into the 1970s, when during the discussion of Resolution 343 in December 1973, the Indian representative said that the force had "done good work."¹²⁵ Even after 1974, when the UNFICYP took on a broader mandate which included the maintenance of a buffer zone between the Greek and Turkish forces, engagement in humanitarian activities, support for the good offices mission of Secretary-General, India showed its support for the mission.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation", Washington, 24 September 1965, SUBJECT: Cyprus, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, Volume XVI, Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, 207.

¹²¹ Nigel White, "Peacekeeping and International Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 44.

¹²² White, "Peacekeeping and International Law," 44.

¹²³ Tudor, "Reputation on the (Green) Line," 228.

¹²⁴ Montgomery Blah, "India's Stance and Renewed Commitment to UN Peacekeeping," *Strategic Analysis* 41, no. 3 (March 17, 2017): 258, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2017.1295605>.

¹²⁵ U.N. SCOR, 28th Sess., 1759th mtg., U.N. Doc. S/PV.1759, 14, December 1973, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/300/91/PDF/NL730091.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹²⁶ See "Annual Report from Beirut & Nicosia for the year 1975." Dated 19 August 1976, NAI/HI_1011_75_76;

India was also doubtful of any change in the rules of the underlying norms of peacekeeping and showed skepticism towards stationing the forces as a way of prolonging the conflict or maintaining the status quo of division of the island.¹²⁷ The Indian position was made clear in June 1978 during a discussion of Resolution 430, when the Indian delegate said, “If the stalemate should be of a permanent character, there is no valid reason, in our opinion, for indefinitely continuing the stationing of a United Nations Force in Cyprus at enormous cost.”¹²⁸

In the end, India did not want the UNFICYP to become a substitute for political settlement – a stand India took consistently over two decades. From the 1950s, when Indian diplomacy agitated for Cyprus’s independence from British rule, to the 1960s, when Indian military officers became actively involved in the establishment and running of the UNFICYP to the 1970s when India welcomed Cyprus into multiple solidarity networks while advising caution against mistaking a peacekeeping mission for a political institution, these three phases illustrate India’s contribution to mitigating the crisis in Cyprus.

Indian diplomatic overtures failed to translate into troop contributions to the peacekeeping mission, yet despite the lack of troops on ground, India had an impact on UNFICYP through the presence of its military generals. In the end, the experience of the crisis in Cyprus along with other security threats in its immediate neighborhood represent a watershed moment in India’s until-then ascending primacy in peacekeeping. The Cyprus issue introduced the concept that Indian non-alignment did not always render it neutral in the eyes of the host countries, or in the eyes of factions within the host countries. Decolonization did not always lead to straightforward independence, and the Indian experience of anticolonial struggle and postcolonial state-building was not always reflected across other new nation-states. Thus, in its treatment of international crises, it now seemed inevitable that India rely on more than its non-aligned stature. Of course, India continued to be a major contributor to

“Annual Report from Beirut & Nicosia for the year 1974.”, undated, NAI/HI_1011_75_75; “Assistance to Cyprus through the UN Commissioner for Refugees.” Undated, NAI/_UI_251_47_76; See also NAI/UI_352_43_81.

¹²⁷ U.N. SCOR, 28th Sess., 1759th mtg., U.N. Doc. S/PV.1759, 14 December 1973, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/300/91/PDF/NL730091.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹²⁸ U.N. SCOR, 33rd Sess., 2081th mtg., U.N. Doc. S/PV.2081 16 June 1978), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/800/39/PDF/NL780039.pdf?OpenElement>.

UN peacekeeping, and continues to remain so, but under the premiership of subsequent prime ministers, India never again placed as much emphasis on a combination of mediation and peacekeeping as it did right up to then. Thus, Cyprus proved pivotal to Indian foreign policy because it fundamentally altered the way in which India handled its internationalist commitments, and indeed, its international relations.

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