

The Turkish Invasion of Cyprus: A Historical Recount and Diplomatic Prelude

On the fateful morning of July 20, 1974, the island nation of Cyprus found itself at the precipice of an unprecedented crisis. The Turkish military launched a full-scale invasion, forever altering the course of the island's history. This article delves into the complex historical context and diplomatic maneuvering that led to this momentous event, examining the motivations, strategies, and consequences of the Turkish invasion.

Historical Background: A Divided Island

Cyprus, a picturesque Mediterranean island located just south of Turkey, has a rich and tumultuous history. It has been ruled by a multitude of empires over the centuries, leaving a diverse cultural heritage. However, the island's modern history has been marred by ethnic tensions between the majority Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriot minority.



THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS OF 20 JULY 1974 AND ITS DIPLOMATIC PREPARATION AFTER THE GREEK COUP AGAINST MAKARIOS THROUGH USA CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 425 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 13 pages
Lending	: Enabled



Following Cyprus' independence from British rule in 1960, a power-sharing agreement was established to accommodate both communities. However, deep-seated mistrust and unresolved grievances persisted, leading to intercommunal violence and political instability. The situation deteriorated further in 1963, and the island was effectively partitioned into Greek and Turkish Cypriot zones, with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) deployed to maintain a fragile peace.

Diplomatic Maneuvers and Escalating Tensions

In the years leading up to the invasion, diplomatic efforts to resolve the Cyprus conflict proved unsuccessful. Both Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders pursued their own agendas, often with the support of their respective patron states - Greece and Turkey.

Greece, seeking to promote its "enosis" policy of uniting Cyprus with Greece, supported the Greek Cypriot government led by Archbishop Makarios III. Turkey, on the other hand, fearing the loss of its strategic interests in Cyprus, backed the Turkish Cypriot community and its leaders, most notably Rauf Denktash.

External actors also played a significant role in the escalating tensions. The United States, concerned about the potential for regional instability, attempted to mediate a settlement but failed to bridge the divide between the warring parties. The Soviet Union, seeking to expand its influence in the Mediterranean, provided support to the Greek Cypriots and fueled anti-Western sentiment on the island.

The Coup and the Invasion

The catalyst for the Turkish invasion occurred on July 15, 1974, when a military coup d'état orchestrated by the Greek military junta overthrew the Makarios government. The coup aimed to establish a pro-enosis regime in Cyprus, a move that Turkey saw as a direct threat to its interests.

Two days later, on July 20, Turkey launched a full-scale invasion of Cyprus under the pretext of protecting the Turkish Cypriot community. The invasion force, consisting of over 40,000 troops, was met with weak resistance from the Greek Cypriot National Guard.

Course of the Conflict

The Turkish invasion unfolded in two phases. In the first phase, Turkish troops quickly captured the northern part of the island, including the major port city of Kyrenia. The second phase, initiated on August 14, saw Turkey expand its control to over 36% of the island's territory, including the strategic town of Famagusta.

The invasion resulted in widespread human suffering, with thousands of casualties and hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots displaced from their homes. The conflict also caused significant damage to the island's infrastructure, economy, and cultural heritage.

International Reactions and Diplomatic Efforts

The Turkish invasion drew swift condemnation from the international community. The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 357, demanding an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus. However, Turkey ignored the resolution and consolidated its control over the occupied territories.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis resumed in 1975 with the convening of the Geneva Conference. The conference, attended by Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, failed to reach a comprehensive settlement. However, it did lead to the establishment of the United Nations buffer zone, separating the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Consequences and Legacy of the Invasion

The Turkish invasion had a profound impact on Cyprus and the wider region. It resulted in the de facto partition of the island, with the Turkish Cypriots establishing a breakaway state in the north in 1983. The division of Cyprus has been a source of ongoing conflict and instability, with the island remaining divided to this day.

The invasion also strained relations between Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies. The two countries have maintained hostile relations over the Cyprus issue, and it remains a significant obstacle to regional cooperation.

The diplomatic efforts to resolve the Cyprus conflict have been ongoing for decades but have yet to yield a lasting solution. The presence of Turkish troops in northern Cyprus and the ongoing division of the island remain major challenges to peace and stability in the region.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus of July 20, 1974, was a pivotal event in the history of the island and the wider Eastern Mediterranean. It was the culmination of years of diplomatic maneuvering, escalating tensions, and unresolved historical grievances. The invasion resulted in widespread human suffering, the division of the island, and ongoing conflict that continues to this day.

Understanding the historical context, diplomatic preparations, and consequences of the Turkish invasion is crucial for comprehending the complexities of the Cyprus conflict and the challenges facing the international community in resolving it.







THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS OF 20 JULY 1974 AND ITS DIPLOMATIC PREPARATION AFTER THE GREEK COUP AGAINST MAKARIOS THROUGH USA CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 425 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 13 pages
Lending : Enabled



Unveiling the Enchanting Emerald Isle: A Literary Journey Through Lonely Planet's Ireland Travel Guide

A Tapestry of Breathtaking Landscapes Prepare to be captivated by Ireland's stunning natural beauty, as Lonely Planet's guide transports you to a realm...



The Nomadic Journey of America's Most Famous Document

A Declaration of Independence On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, a document that...

