

The Turkish Invasion of Cyprus of 20 July 1974 and Its Diplomatic Preparation



The Turkish Invasion of Cyprus on July 20, 1974, was a pivotal event in the history of the island nation. This article delves into the intricate diplomatic preparations that preceded the invasion, examining the motivations, negotiations, and international reactions that shaped this critical turning point.

Historical Background

Cyprus, strategically located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, has a complex history marked by foreign occupation and ethnic tensions. The island was under Ottoman rule for centuries before being ceded to British rule in 1878. Following World War II, a movement for independence gained momentum among Greek Cypriots, who constituted around 77% of the population.



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However, opposition to independence arose from Turkish Cypriots, who feared marginalization in a Greek-dominated state. This led to violent clashes and the eventual partition of the island in 1960, with Greek Cypriots controlling the southern two-thirds and Turkish Cypriots the northern third.

Diplomatic Preparations

In the years leading up to the invasion, tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots escalated. The Greek Cypriot government, led by Archbishop Makarios III, sought to consolidate its control over the island and limit Turkish Cypriot autonomy.

Turkey, meanwhile, was concerned about the potential for a Greek Cypriot-led takeover of the entire island. Ankara feared that Cyprus could become a strategic outpost for Greece, which was then under a military dictatorship.



Diplomatic negotiations between Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus failed to resolve the simmering tensions. In the months before the invasion, Turkey began amassing troops and equipment along its border with Cyprus.

The Invasion

On July 20, 1974, Turkey launched a full-scale invasion of Cyprus. The Turkish military quickly seized control of the northern third of the island, including the major port city of Kyrenia. The invasion sparked widespread

panic and displacement, with hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots fleeing their homes.



The invasion triggered international condemnation, including from the United Nations Security Council, which demanded an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Turkish forces. However, Turkey refused to withdraw, citing the need to protect Turkish Cypriots.

Diplomatic Aftermath

In the aftermath of the invasion, diplomatic efforts intensified to find a solution to the Cyprus crisis. The United Nations brokered negotiations between Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, but these proved unsuccessful.

The international community imposed sanctions on Turkey, but Ankara remained steadfast in its refusal to withdraw its troops. The island remained divided, with the Turkish-controlled north declaring independence in 1983 as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).



Long-Term Consequences

The Turkish Invasion of Cyprus had profound and long-lasting consequences for the island and the region. The division of Cyprus created a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of people displaced and separated from their loved ones.

The invasion also heightened tensions between Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies. The island's division remains a source of instability in the eastern Mediterranean, with ongoing negotiations and international efforts to find a lasting solution.

The Turkish Invasion of Cyprus of 20 July 1974 was a watershed moment in the history of the island. The diplomatic preparations that preceded the invasion were complex and involved multiple actors with conflicting interests.

The consequences of the invasion have been far-reaching, including the ongoing division of Cyprus, heightened regional tensions, and a humanitarian crisis that continues to affect the lives of Cypriots today. Understanding the diplomatic history of the invasion is crucial for comprehending the challenges facing the island and the international community's efforts to find a lasting solution.

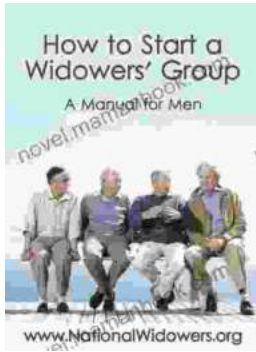


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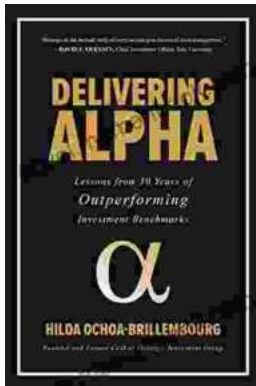
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