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30 August 1962 (used by kind permission, Press and Information Office, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Opposite title: Cup by Peithinos painter, Berlin, Pergamonmuseum (CVA Berlin 2, Taf. 61)

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losing sight of the overall picture of the real threat facing NATO. An unidentified American officer in Ankara maybe interjected the most reasonable advice. The Americans should finally ease off the "obsession about [the] evil of Cyprus as [a second] Cuba — we can and do live with Cuba: Cyprus has 1/10 the size [and] is not as near to Turkey or [Greece] as Russia is — anyway this trouble is a good many months off."¹⁵³

Apart from negative reactions among their own officials, the Department of State received vehement opposition to the latest schemes of Ball and Acheson from the British. Carrington and Caccia were both concerned that because of the American plans Her Majesty's Government "might even have to dissociate itself from any such development." Bruce reported on 25 August.¹⁵⁴ The FO even informed Prime Minister Douglas-Home, who agreed to send messages to Washington to indicate that the British could not go along with such planning.¹⁵⁵ By the time the message was conveyed to Ball, the warnings from the different sides had already had their effect. The Under Secretary let it be known that the Americans would not use their sixth fleet to stop Turkey from invading and that any plans for enosis without prior agreement would have to be carried out by Greece without American participation.¹⁵⁶

On the evening of 24 August Ball finally cabled that "we are thinking tentatively tonight about suggesting a relaxation of pressure both in Athens and Ankara. Quite frankly we need time to think things over since we are faced with some large decisions."¹⁵⁷ The large decisions involved an astonishing turnaround in priorities, which demonstrate just how far the Americans were willing to go, in order finally to get rid of the island as a bone of contention. It was a reaction to the more obvious indications that Greece could not be relied on for a coup because of the weakness of Papandreou's government.¹⁵⁸ Instead of working with the Greeks, the American planning for the first time turned to conspiring with Turkey against Greece and Cyprus. Explanations for the surprising twist must be sought in several events of late August.

On 25 August Nikolarezidis privately suggested to Acheson that the Turks should occupy the Karpas Peninsula without pre-arrangement with the Greeks after enosis, in order to be able to negotiate from strength. He doubted whether they could or would be opposed by the regular Greek forces and thought that the local opposition on the peninsula could be "pushed aside without brutality."¹⁵⁹ These were indeed surprising words from the official negotiator of the very country that had been afraid of any negotiations only two months earlier!

At the same time the Americans had quietly sent Lt. General Robert W. Porter, Jr., the former U.S. military representative to CENTO in Ankara, to the Turkish capital, in order to find out about the strength and influence of the Turkish military on the country's politics. During his visit, Porter was convinced by General Sunay that Turkey needed a sovereign base

153 An unidentified "Garric," as reported by Acheson to Jernegan, *Telecon*, 24.8.64; *ibid.*, [2].

154 Bruce, Embtel Lansing 926, 25.8.64; SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA, 1.

155 John O. Wright to Home, Memorandum, 25.8.64; PREM 11/4712, PRO, handwriting by Wright on the bottom of the page. The message to the State Department is: FO to Washington 10368, 25.8.64; DEFE 11/456, doc. 3605, PRO.

156 Greenhill, Washington to FO 2972, 26.8.64; DEFE 11/456, doc. 3603, PRO, 1; Hall, Deprel London 1364, 25.8.64; SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA. Although the U.S. would not participate, Greenhill speculated upon hearing the answer, she would surely be at least relieved if the Greeks went ahead with the coup anyway, as the Greek American lobby was very active to this effect and a successful bid for enosis would surely bring in many votes in the upcoming presidential elections; Greenhill, Washington to FE 2987, 26.8.64; DEFE 11/456, doc. 3604, PRO.

157 Ball (signed Rusk), Deprel Ankara 316, 24.8.64; SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2091, NARA.

158 "Our weakness was Papandreou's weakness, a garrulous, senile, windbag without power of decision or resolution," the frustrated Acheson wrote to his friend Lucius Battle; quoted in: Brinkley, *Dean Acheson*, 218.

159 Acheson, Embtel U.S. Mission Greece 473, 25.8.64; SDSNF, 1964-66; FTSCPP 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 12, NARA.

Αυτή η κατάσταση, δε είναι εύκολη
η κατάσταση της Τουρκίας
είναι απροβλεπτή

CONSPIRING WITH GREECE, BRITAIN AND TURKEY AGAINST CYPRUS

area, that the Cape Greco offer was "insulting," and that in the case of an instant enosis move by Greece, the Turkish army would move immediately, "even if it must do so against the entire world," as "Turkish honor demanded no less."¹⁶⁰

←

Turkey was deeply hurt about the American gradual abandonment of protection of Turkish interests, with the decisive change from proposing a sovereign base to the mere promotion of a fifty-year lease in the Second Acheson Plan. This was underlined by the destruction of the U.S. Pavilion at the Izmir International Trade Fair on 29 August. Although the Turkish Government offered to pay for the damage, the U.S. Consulate reported that the demonstrations were believed to have been inspired by the Turkish Government "to impress on the world, and the United States in particular, the strength of Turkish feelings" on the Cyprus question.¹⁶¹

Finally, and probably most decisively, the JCS on 5 September reemphasized that "Turkey is far more important to the national security interests of the United States than is Greece." Therefore, the JCS concluded that "[g]reater consideration should be given U.S. national security interests related to Turkey in the formulation of U.S. policy for early settlement of the Cyprus problem" and that it was essential to keep "a strong Turkey friendly to the U.S. even, as a last resort, at the risk of alienating our Greek allies."¹⁶² It cannot be claimed that this assessment encouraged the State Department officials to produce the following plan, as it had emerged after the plan had already been drafted. However, it must have been the reason for the plan's vigorous support in a meeting with the president on 8 September. It is necessary to quote what Acheson called his plan no. 4 in more detail, not only because it was one of the most critical plans produced during those weeks, but mainly because it was the only one of them discussed in detail with the president, in which it was finally entirely up to him whether it would be launched or not.

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The Fourth Acheson Plan

The Fourth Acheson Plan was cabled to Under Secretary Ball on 26 August.¹⁶³ Its postulate was, Acheson started his outline, that "nothing that happens to Cyprus is unbearable; only war between or permanent estrangement of Greece or Turkey from [the] West is disastrous." As "facts underlying [the] plan" he set down three lessons he had learned in Geneva during the previous eight weeks:

26
Αυγούστου

1. Any agreement at present between Greece and Turkey on a Cyprus solution is wholly impossible
2. Papandrou is weak, garrulous, vacillating, cunning but stupid, hence duplicitous and unreliable
3. Inonu, probably, cannot fur[th]er restrain the army in case of abuse of Turkish Cypriots, but probably can guide its physical response to political provocation.

«είναι»

As a first step, the Greek army in Cyprus and the National Guard should be brought under the control of a strong man, such as Defense Minister Garoufalas, "with the help of the King — and, perhaps, also of the CIA and the U.S. Army." Then, the blockade of the Turkish

160 Porter (via Hare) to Ball, Embtel Ankara 384, 25.8.64: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA, 2.
 161 As reported by Rowan to Johnson, Memorandum: "Weekly Report," 1.9.64: Declassified Documents, doc. 1985 1932, 1.
 162 All quotations in: General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the JCS, to McNamara, Memorandum: "US Policy toward Turkey/Greece in the Cyprus Dispute," 5.9.64: SDSNF, 1964-66, FTSCPF 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 12, NARA, 2-3.
 163 The following is based on: Acheson, Embtel U.S. Mission Geneva 486, 26.8.64: *ibid.*

Εδώ, ο ίδιος η αξία, οδύνη και οι αποφασίσεις που γίνονται
εξαρτώνται από τον ίδιο, δε υπάρχουν άλλοι ο
έναντι απροβλεπτό

Cypriots could be ended, Acheson thought, and the rightful rotation of the Turkish contingent on the island, that the Greek Cypriots were currently opposing, could be accomplished. "If this requires a showdown with Makarios, by all means let's have a showdown." Acheson sarcastically remarked. After all, "Papandreu is inca[pa]ble of carrying out this step. Harry [La-bouisse]'s long report of his talk with him yesterday shows what a scatterbrained fool he is."

When all of this would be accomplished, "in a very indirect and secret way, help the Turkish army to develop, as their own idea, a new military strategy designed to outsmart everyone including [the] US G[overnment]." After a coup by Makarios for total independence or "after a coup by Greece and Cyprus for enosis, the Turkish army should move, with the use of as little MAP equipment as possible, to "pinch off the Karpas Peninsula" and "occupy what they really need [...]."¹⁶⁴ After some conciliatory statements designed to indicate to the Greeks that they intended not to move further, the Turks could then negotiate from strength. Acheson had reason to believe, that if the Turkish army intervened without warning, the UN force in Cyprus would be able to cooperate by separating the ethnic communities, and would thus help to avoid bloodshed. This belief went back to a scheme that had been worked out between the British and UNFICYP Commander Thimayya, on the initiative by the Americans, in mid-July. It provided for a withdrawal of UNFICYP from the invasion areas in the case of a Turkish intervention and a positioning of the force along the Green Line in order to keep the warring factions apart.¹⁶⁵

The plan was presented to President Johnson in one of his famous Tuesday luncheons, which were gradually replacing the NSC meetings.¹⁶⁶ Ball and Acheson, who had by then returned to Washington, summarized their conviction to the President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, as well as McGeorge Bundy, that "the only solution now would be a *fait accompli* in which the Turks would move to occupy the Karpas peninsula, triggering an instant enosis under Greek leadership, with a consequent supersession of Makarios."¹⁶⁷ "[W]ith luck, bloodshed would be limited," Acheson assured Johnson. Bundy inquired what would trigger the Turkish action, to which Acheson answered that "nearly everything would serve," as the Greek Cypriot provocations were well known. He tried to convince the president that "we must expect a resort to action in one way or another" anyway, "and that the choice [before him] was whether it should be messy and destructive or controlled and eventually productive, in accordance with a plan." Furthermore, Acheson stated, the Turkish military leaders had already assured him that they would do their best to execute it with a minimum use of American weapons [...]. Ball joined in that the Greeks could not be warned, because they were likely to leak it to Makarios again. As to the British, Acheson remarked that whereas Butler would be troubled by such a plan, because of the status of Cyprus as a Commonwealth state, Lord Mountbatten, the Chief of the Defence Staff, "would be friendly" and that "the British bases would be protected under this plan."

¹⁶⁴ All quotations: *ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁵ Whereas the first UNFICYP Commander, Gyasi, had refused to go along with this contingency planning, fearing that it would leak out and cooperation with the Turks would be discovered, the new commander, Thimayya, was engaged in full-scale planning: Belcher, *Embiel Nicosia* 53, 15.7.64; SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 23-8 CYP, box 2087, NARA, 1-2. See also: Lord Haretech, Washington to FO 2505, 10.7.64; DEFE 11/454, doc. 1187, PRO, 2.

¹⁶⁶ For a discussion of Johnson's consulting machinery see: Humphrey, David C. "NSC Meetings during the Johnson Presidency." *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 1 (1994): 29-45.

¹⁶⁷ The following is based on: McG. Bundy, Memorandum for the Record, 8.9.64; NSP, Files of McGeorge Bundy, box 19, doc. 51a, LBJ-Library. This memorandum is also printed in Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War*, 186-187.

It was finally up to the president to decide. The plan had attractions, as well as obvious risks. If it worked it would solve the problem that had several times nearly produced an intra-NATO war and seemed certain to do so again. On the other hand, the plan, in Brands' words, "smacked of the seizure of the Sudetenland in 1938 and the division of Poland in 1939."¹⁶⁸ If something went wrong with its implementation, the backlash at the upcoming presidential election was possible. Although Johnson was tempted to finally be rid of the Cyprus problem by getting rid of Cyprus as a state, domestic considerations eventually prevailed. Even though he asked McNamara for a Joint Staff study on possible Greek reactions and instructed Ball to prepare a more detailed staff study of the entire plan, Johnson already remarked at this meeting that "the next two months were not a good season for another war [...]."¹⁶⁹ The president was already much too tormented by the escalation in Vietnam to contemplate acquiescing to another risky showdown. However, he left open the option of delaying the plan until after the presidential elections.

As it was, the radical Fourth Acheson Plan was never put into action. Johnson probably did not even have to issue the final decision himself, as circumstances rendered the scheme impractical. Not only did signals from Moscow indicate that Cyprus was not getting the support it desired after all, thus taking some heat out of the Cyprus problem again. Also, Makarios obviously launched a "peace offensive" against the Turkish community at the right moment, intended to earn him international support at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

The Acheson mission thus came to an end in early September. He had returned from Geneva via London after a plausible explanation had finally been found for his departure with the Medal of Freedom Ceremony in Washington.¹⁷⁰ In this vein he denied the journalists' assertion upon his arrival at Dulles International Airport that the Geneva talks had broken down and instead called the dissolution a "recess."¹⁷¹ However, he knew that there was nothing more for him to do. In his obvious frustrated mood he especially lashed out at Makarios, calling him "a man of low cunning" and "a political priest with considerable gifts of demagoguery and ruthlessness."¹⁷² Nor was he happy about the Greek stance. He told Butler and Sandys in London that he had "sought to bring home to the Greeks their responsibility for Cyprus developments," once again demonstrating his *realpolitik* approach, in which there was no place for the independent Cypriot nation, as long as it did not develop according to American wishes.¹⁷³ Thus, he further conveyed to the British that he would not mind if UNFICYP left the island, as the Greek troops would then at least be forced to take on the responsibility and implement enosis.¹⁷⁴

George Ball, in the meantime, chose to deceive himself by telling everybody, in this instance French Ambassador Hervé Alphand, that the Acheson negotiations "had actually

168 Brands, *The Waters of Globalism*, 81-82.

169 McG. Bundy Memorandum for the Record, 8.9.64 NSP, Files of McGeorge Bundy, box 19, doc. 51a, LIIU-Library, 2; Hart, *Two NATO Allies at the Threshold of War*, 187. Specifically, President Johnson did not want to jeopardize the votes of the substantial Greek-American community, of the support of which he was assured in mid-October: Paul, *A Study in Ethnic Group Political Behaviour*, 161.

170 Ball to Acheson, Deptel London 1394, 26.8.64: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA.

171 Brinkley, *Dean Acheson*, 218.

172 Acheson via Bruce, Embtel London 1090, 3.9.64: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA, 1; Acheson, quotation from a speech to the Chicago War Association entitled "Cyprus: The Anatomy of the Problem," 24.3.65, transmitted in a summary by Rusk, Deptel Nicom 623, 27.3.65: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2096, NARA.

173 Report of the conversation with the British by Acheson via Bruce, Embtel London 1090, 3.9.64: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA, 2.

174 Only the British version of the discussion mentions this: Butler to Home, Minute, 3.9.64: DÉPE 11/457, doc. 3722, PKO, 2.

come very close to acceptance by Greece and Turkey."¹⁷⁵ As a reason for this assessment, he stated that Greece had initially accepted and Turkey had indicated the possibility of acceptance if the base were granted to her in perpetuity. Either Ball still did not grasp that the question of sovereignty was the crucial point on which the whole scheme was bound to fail, or he simply chose to present himself internationally in the best light by claiming that the plans — which he had helped to prepare during the previous half year — came closer to success than was true. There is thus no justification to the often-heard claim by United States officials that they had been very close to an agreement, if only Makarios had not leaked the plans and if only Papandreou had not been so weak.¹⁷⁶ Not surprisingly, Ball tried to project the Acheson negotiations as a success in his memoirs, citing as proof the fact that a war between Greece and Turkey did not materialize.¹⁷⁷ Even if this had been the only American aim, which in fact it was not, the episode could not have been termed successful. To the objective analyst it seems rather that war was averted because he, Under Secretary Ball, together with his colleague Dean Acheson, had been pulled back from their dangerous adventures with the third and fourth Acheson (and Ball) plans at the last minute, by the relaxation of tension on the island and by President Johnson's fear of a political backlash in the November elections! Dean Acheson himself was rather more honest, upon a later reflection, when he stated in a speech in 1965 that "[o]n the whole, the story [meaning the American handling of the Cyprus crises in 1964] is not the brightest chapter in the diplomacy of the West."¹⁷⁸

That a war would have materialized, had the coup plans been implemented, was probable. Not only would either Greece or Turkey have been out-tricked by the latest plans and would have been likely to defend their honor, but those Cypriots who were against enosis *cum* concessions would likewise have been prepared to defend their independence. The coup would not have been a surprise, as rumors had circulated for weeks, culminating in banner headlines of three of the four Nicosia newspapers on 26 August, proclaiming that a NATO inspired coup was being planned, including the "arrest of Makarios — his isolation or perhaps physical extermination."¹⁷⁹

In the meantime, the American "conspirators" had received a scolding from their Ambassador in Nicosia. Taylor Belcher had become increasingly vexed during the previous weeks about the fact, that there was obviously some important planning going on in Washington, on which he was not being informed. In an angry letter to GTI Director Katherine Bracken he complained on 24 August that the situation, in which he had to be informed on the Acheson Plans by the Cypriots, was clearly embarrassing to say the least.¹⁸⁰ Now that he had finally been put into the picture by those against whom the schemes had been planned, he sarcastically remarked that "[t]here is just a faint possibility that we might have been able to point out that certain facets of the [second Acheson] plan were so obviously unacceptable, that to put them forward would only bring on an automatic rejection of the good parts." Belcher

175 Memcon between Ball and Alphan: "Cyprus," 11.9.64. SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2093, NARA, I. Another example is: Memcon between Ball and Belgian Ambassador Baron Louis Scheyven: "Cyprus," 22.9.64. *ibid.*, I.
 176 One of the first claims of near success was transmitted to President Johnson as early as 10 August. Johnson to McG. Bundy, Telcon, 10.8.64. RTTC, Tape WH6408.16, PNO 8, citation no. 4855, LBJ-Library.
 177 Ball, *The Fast Has Another Pattern*, 359.
 178 Acheson, quotation from a speech to the Chicago Bar Association entitled "Cyprus: The Anatomy of the Problem," 24.3.65, quoted in: Adams/Cottrell, *Cyprus between East and West*, 75.
 179 Translation of newspaper quotations by Robert R. Schott, First Secretary of the Embassy, Airgram from Nicosia A-53: "Coup Rumors," 27.8.64. SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 15-1 CYP, box 2077, NARA, I.
 180 The following is based on: Belcher to Bracken, Letter, 24.8.64. SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2091, NARA.

!!!
 (Faint handwritten notes in red ink, including the word "Faint" and a large bracketed phrase: "Faint: Xapropoi and Siphon...")

concluded: "I don't believe it is a realistic approach to the solution of a problem to ignore the existence of the Embassy most directly in contact with those who must be sold the proposed solution." However, at the time he wrote this letter, the Department of State still chose to leave Belcher in the dark, as the most critical final plans were only then being exchanged between Ball and Acheson. It is therefore no surprise that Belcher ended his letter with the sentence: "The silence from the Department continues to be deafening." Just to indicate how upset he was, he added in handwriting: "p.s. you should have seen the first draft of this!"

When Belcher still did not receive a satisfactory explanation, he suggested on 3 September that he come back for consultation, in order to contribute to the planning and "to clear up certain misunderstandings which appear to have arisen between myself and the rest of the Country Team on the one hand, and the Department on the other."¹⁸¹ However, the Ambassador to Cyprus was only asked to return to Washington on consultation after the critical Fourth Acheson Plan had been presented to President Johnson. A similar call was simultaneously issued to Ambassadors Labouisse in Athens and Hare in Ankara, as there were some crucial decisions to take.¹⁸² At the time it was not yet certain, whether the decisions would go in the direction of a dramatic escalation, or whether a new era of moderation in United States policy towards Cyprus would ring in. Fortunately, the officials chose the latter.

181 Belcher to Hracken, Letter, 3/9/64: SDSNF, 1964-66, POL 27 CYP, box 2092, NARA.

182 Rusk to Johnson, Memorandum: "Items for Evening Reading," 9/9/64: Lot 74D164, Entry 3049, President's Evening Reading Reports, 1964-1974, box 1, NARA.