

Measures to prepare the reunification of Northern and Southern Cyprus:

1. Description of the problem:

50 years after the declaration of independence in 1960 a settlement of the Cyprus conflict has not been achieved. After the liberation from the Ottoman rule in the early 20's of the 19th century the ideal of a unification of the island and Greece first germinated among the Greek Cypriots, growing even louder after the British took administrative control over Cyprus following the resolutions of the congress of Berlin in 1878.

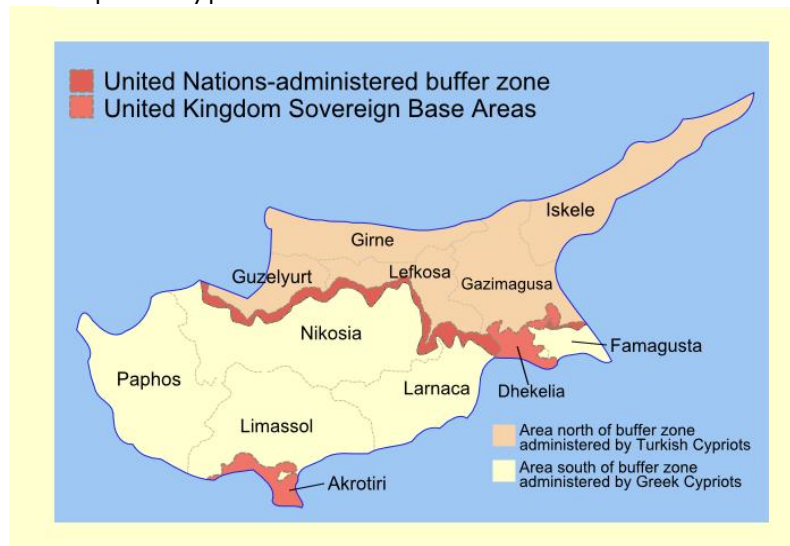
Then in 1925 the island of Cyprus became a British colony until the year 1960. Two opposing ideas concerning the future organisation of the island developed during this colonial past. The aim of the Greek population still was the "enosis", which describes the mentioned striving to unify Cyprus with the Greek motherland. The Turkish goal, however, was called "taksim". It means as much as "partition" in Turkish. Several riots and attacks on the local government forced the Britons to repress the different struggles by military force.

Finally in 1960 after the Zurich and London Agreement in 1959 for the constitution of Cyprus an independent state was established on August 16, 1960.

This compromise meant that the nations of Britain, Greece and Turkey would preserve peace and provide the independence of the island. Britain maintained influence by keeping some military bases such as the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area. Furthermore the constitution stipulated the president to be a Greek Cypriot the vice president to be Turkish. Due to this government's lack of ability to act new riots and fights occurred among the Cypriots until the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was formed in 1964 and a buffer zone was set up.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus led to the establishment of the United Nations Buffer Zone in Cyprus and had severe impacts on the population. Many were killed and displaced as a result.

A map of Cyprus and the different zones:



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/96/Cyprus_districts_named.png

As a response to the coup d'etat of the Greek politician Nicos Sampson in 1974 the Turkish launched another offensive on July the 20th 1974. A cease-fire was enacted three days later.

Regarding the failure of all negotiations for the past years and anger about a UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of all forces from Cyprus the Turkish Cypriots founded the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on November the 15th, 1983 and unilaterally declared its independence. It has never been recognised by any state except Turkey until today and the Security Council soon passed the resolution no.541 stating clearly that these actions will not be accepted. Several other efforts towards a final settlement failed.

Nevertheless the conditions started to change with the beginning of the negotiations for EU memberships for the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey in 1997 and 1999. Although the pressure on both nations as well as on Greece increased the outcome of new debates could be disregarded.

The last considerable attempt of the United Nations to provide an adequate solution was the Annan Plan for Cyprus put to a referendum on April the 24th, 2004.

The Republic of Cyprus would change into the United Cyprus Republic consisting of two component states with different parliaments. On the federal level there would be established a bicameral parliament. Contentious issues were the questions of conquered territory during the Turkish invasion and the compensation of its loss as well as the demilitarisation of the island. Beside the United Kingdom the United States and the Turkish government were in favour of the plan. The nation of Greece remained neutral.

The outcome of the referendum was the failure of the Annan Plan. Although the Turkish Cypriots voted nearly with a two thirds majority in favour of it, 75.83% of the Greek Cypriots were against it.

Until today a solution doesn't seem to be within the bounds of probability. Through the elections in the Republic of Cyprus in 2008 where Dimitris Christofias, candidate of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), who wanted to restart talks on reunification, won new hopes arose. A first result was the reopening of the Ledra Street in Nicosia. It was cut into two parts since the first riots in 1960 started the partition of the island.

The current Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon visited Cyprus to start a discussion on the reunification on the island in February this year. The international community would appreciate a final settlement still this year.

2. Definition of key terms

Enosis:

Enosis is the name of a nationalist movement of Greek Cypriots willing to incorporate the island into Greece. Later on it was combined with the anti-colonial movement in the British Empire after the second World War.

Taksim:

As explained "taksim" is Turkish and means "partition". It describes the early political aims of the Turkish community to divide the island of Cyprus into two independent states.

UNFICYP:

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus was set up in 1964 to preserve peace between both communities. It is the longest peacekeeping mission, running 46 years until now. One of their main objectives was to secure the buffer zone, also described as "the Green Line". It extends 180 kilometres across the island.

Progressive Party of Working People:

It is a communist party which wants an independent and demilitarized island of Cyprus as well as its organization as a federal state. Their attitude towards the Turkish community is rather sympathetic.

3. Background/ general information:

In 1960 the population was composed of the Greek Cypriots as the main ethnic group with 78% of the population and Turkish Cypriots with 18%. The Turkish population owned approximately 10% of the land at that time.

Today the estimated population is 750.000 inhabitants who live on 9,250 square kilometres and the leading religions are the Greek Orthodox Church (78%) and the Islam (18%).

4. Timeline of key events

1925 -- Cyprus becomes a colony under the control of the British Empire.

1930 -- Beginning of the "enosis" movement and occurrence of first violent riots.

1959 -- The Zürich and London Agreement as basis for the constitution of Cyprus between Turkey, Greece, the United Kingdom and Cypriot community leaders.

1960 -- Independence of the Republic of Cyprus from Britain.

1964 -- Deployment of the UN peacekeeping forces and set up of the buffer zone.

1974 -- Coup d'etat in the Republic of Cyprus by Nicos Sampson and Turkish invasion as response.

1983 -- Foundation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

2004 -- Referendum of the Annan Plan

2008 -- After the presidential election in Cyprus Dimitris Christofias becomes president.

2008 -- Opening of the Ledra Street.

5. Relevant treaties, UN resolutions and actions taken:

All UN resolutions concerning the conflict of Cyprus can be found here:

<http://www.un.int/cyprus/resolut.htm>

The Annan Plan can be found here:

<http://www.tcea.org.uk/Annan-Plan-For-Cyprus-Settlement.htm>

6. Positions of major countries involved:

The positions of the United Nations and its member states concerning this issues remains the same. There is now a convergence between Turkey and Greece noticeable.

7. Useful Sources and Links:

Wikipedia:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Cyprus
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_casualties_and_displacements_during_the_Cyprus_conflict
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus_dispute#Constitutional_breakdown_and_intercommunal_talks.2C_1960-74

The foreign affairs report of the British parliament:

- <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmffaff/113/11302.htm>

Homepage of the UNFICYP:

- http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/dmlcitizen_en/dmlcitizen_en?OpenDocument

Homepage of the UNFICYP:

- http://www.unficyp.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1&tt=graphic&lang=11

Homepage of the Progressive Party Of The Working People:

- http://www.akel.org.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1&lang=13

Homepage of the Greek ministry of foreign affairs:

- <http://www.mfa.gr/www.mfa.gr/en-US>

Homepage of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs:

- <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/default.en.mfa>

Newspaper article:

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/cyprus/7132887/UN-urges-Cyprus-leaders-to-push-for-peace-deal.html>