

NSC BRIEFING  
BACKGROUND

2 February 1960

CYPRUS

- I. Deadlock continues in British-Cypriot negotiations; informal conversations continue.
  - A. Primary issue is extent and administration of British military bases to be retained on Cyprus after independence.
  - B. Another dispute involves Cypriot demand that British pay "rent" of 3 million sterling for British presence.
  - C. Many other issues, including facilities to be provided British outside Base areas, were largely resolved during recent talks.
- II. British are taking firm position on extent of bases. Claim that defense requirements make further concessions impossible. Are willing to delegate--but not transfer--most of civil administration over base areas to Cypriots.
  - A. Cyprus agreement of February 1959 provided that Britain retain sovereignty over two military bases--army base near Dhekelia and air base near Akrotiri--and would have certain rights in other parts of island; e.g., use of roads, ports, existing small military installations, etc. Boundaries of bases were not drawn, however.
  - B. British are insisting on bases covering about 120 square miles. Intend to keep 20,000 troops on island. British have made some concessions on other issues. Have offered to give Cypriots 8 million sterling over next five years but object in principle--as well as to amount demanded--to paying "rent."
  - D. British claim Greek and Turkish governments and Turkish Cypriots are willing to accept present British demands.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

- III. Archbishop Makarios insists on restricting British sovereignty to about 40 square miles and the transfer--not delegation--of civil administration over area to Cypriots.
- A. Both Communists and extreme nationalists on Cyprus and General Grivas in Athens have warned Makarios against concessions on size of bases.
  - B. Further concessions by Makarios would weaken his position and possibly splinter his moderate party to the advantage of both the Communists and far right before the first parliamentary elections on Cyprus.
  - C. One possible benefit from conference was its contribution to apparently growing collaboration of Greek and Turkish Cypriots.
- IV. Eventually an agreement appears almost certain but it must be reached by 7 February if independence is to be granted by 19 March--the new target date. Otherwise independence will be postponed for at least another 2 months.
- A. Spirit of good-will demonstrated throughout conference despite disagreements. All sides appear anxious for settlement.
    - 1. British have only skeleton administrative staff remaining on Cyprus.
    - 2. Cypriots desire take over government as soon as possible and present delay has caused disillusionment among people on island.
    - 3. Further postponement of independence could have serious effect on communal relations.
    - 4. British victory on bases issue would be hollow if present Cypriot leadership is so weakened that it is followed by government hostile to both British and Western interests.