The Situation in Cyprus

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Historical Overview

In 1955, the Cypriot National Guard challenged British rule over the island of Cyprus, this challenge would eventually lead to the complete release of the British control and mandate over Cyprus. The goal? To establish a non-aligned, independent state made up of Armenians, Maronites, Latins, Greek Cypriots and Turks. It was the hope that within the following years, a joint effort made up of the Greek Cypriots and the Turks would have a joint ruling in presidency, and in their overall unification to maintain peace between the different ethnicities. By 1963, almost nine years after the establishment of the new state of Cyprus with its constitution established in 1958, there was little to no agreement between the Cypriots and the Turks. Archbishop Makarios, the first president of Cyprus, put forward a plan known as the Thirteen-Point Proposal. It would amend the 1958 Constitution detailing how the government would be represented by the Turks and the Cypriots.

After two years of peace, and days after the Turkish rejection of the Thirteen Point Proposal, an event that would be known as “Bloody Christmas” would take place. On the 21st of December, 1963, Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities in Nicosia erupted into violence. Days later, over 364 Turkish Cypriots and 174 Greek Cypriots were killed. The Greek Cypriots then forced displacement of over

25,000 Turkish Cypriots across the island in response. At the same time this was happening, the Cypriot government collapsed, to which the Greek Cypriots believe that the Turks left and established their own government in the North of the Island supported by Turkey. The Turkish Cypriots believe they were forced out.

On the 4th of March 1964, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 186, with the Establishment of a United Nations Peace Keeping force known as the, United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus, or UNFICYP led by the Joint True Force, the fighting was halted between the north and south of Cyprus. It was then decided by the Secretary-General of the United Nations that a member of the UN be designated from that day forward as a mediator for all peace talks. During these peace talks, it was suggested that the island could be unified through enosis (the irredentist movement to unite Cyprus with Greece). The Turks refused this on the grounds that it would be inappropriate for a UN official to suggest such a thing. The United States suggested an ulterior plan. The US suggested that the island be unified with Greece and that a permanent military base be established on the island under the control of the Turkish state. Minority rites would then be granted to the Turkish Cypriots. Archbishop Makarios ultimately refused this plan because "giving land to the Turks would ruin the full intention of enosis."

Finally, the situation in Cyprus is highly volatile. Many would believe it's a lost cause but many in the UN believe there is a chance for peace and ultimately unification. It is the hope of the delegates in the Security Council who are being represented to take extreme caution with this event, for any wrong move could bring disaster.