CYPRUS CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FOR UKRAINE

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The article examines the Cyprus conflict in the context of international efforts applied in order to achieve a peaceful solution of the problem and to unify the island. A brief description of the events since 1974 – from the time of the Turkish invasion – is provided. Special attention is given to the peacekeeping initiatives proposed by the United Nations – both during the Cold War era and in the post-bipolar times. The Cyprus case is an example indication of the inefficiency of modern peacekeeping tools that were used by international community.

Introduction

Russian aggression is the main threat for Ukraine's security. Designing an appropriate counter-strategy became an important task for the state. In this context, it is necessary to consider the position of the international community, to study its tools in the field of peacekeeping processes. It requires a detailed analysis of the past experience – various examples of such conflicts in different regions of the world that remain unresolved today or are already over. In this article, it is proposed to consider the context of the Cyprus conflict, which for more than 40 years remains a hotbed of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and has certain formal similarities (external aggression, creation of an unrecognized state) with the Ukrainian case, as one such example.

Origins of the Conflict and the Turkish Invasion of 1974

Cyprus for a long period of its history was a British colony. It gained independence in 1960 – but this did not bring peace to the island. Almost immediately ethnic confrontation between the Greek Cypriot majority and the Turkish Cypriot minority erupted. Over the course of 14 years, the two communities gradually disassociated themselves from each other. The conflict of low intensity was aggravated in 1974 when, as a result of a military coup, the authorities of the island were seized by supporters of its unification with Greece. Ankara reacted sharply. After an unsuccessful attempt to enlist the support of the United Kingdom – the guarantor of the neutrality of Cyprus, Turkey acted unilaterally. Turkish armed forces invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974. Despite the swift adoption of the UN Security

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1   *UN Security Council Resolution 353 of 20 July 1974,* [http://dag.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/71441/S_RES_353%281974%29-EN.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y access 23 August 2017]

Council Resolution 353[1], which called for a cease-fire, the fighting continued until 22 July. As a result, the Turks were able to gain a foothold in the bridgehead, holding a corridor from the port city of Kyrenia to Nicosia. At the same time, the Greek Cypriots captured the Turkish enclaves in the south of Cyprus.

During the end of July-first half of August 1974, attempts of peace talks in Geneva did not succeed. The fall of the military junta in Greece and formation of a democratic government changed the point of view of the international community in favour of Athens. Ankara's proposal to reorganize Cyprus according to the Swiss scenario, with the division of the state territory along the ethnic principle, did not find support among the Greeks. The Greek Cypriots insisted on the constitutional consolidation of the coexistence of two nations within the framework of a single, integral sovereign state. Under these conditions, the Turkish government initiated the second phase of the military operation. As a result of the offensive, Turkish troops occupied the north-eastern part of the island. A status quo has been formed with the creation of the line of demarcation (the so-called "Green Line"), which is maintained until today. The Turkish actions have significantly spoiled the international image of Ankara, exposing it as an aggressor and causing aggravation of relations with Europe.

Peacemaking Process in the Cyprus Problem in 1970-1990s

Solution of the Cyprus problem became one of the core issues for the international community. The situation became more complicated in February 1975, when the Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed in the north of the island. This step corresponded to the Turkish view of the problem – to create a federal state consisting of two ethnic parts. However, it was not supported by either the Greek Cypriots or the international community. The UN Security Council Resolution 367[2] condemned it.

Taking into account the ethnic nature of the confrontation, the resolution of the issue of population exchange became a specific aspect in the relations between the two opposing parties. An agreement on this was reached in Vienna on 2 August 1975, as part of the negotiation process initiated by the UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim. As a result, thousands of Greeks and Turks were forced to leave their homes and move to the south and north respectively. At the same time, this dialogue had no significant consequences for overcoming the contradictions and developing an effective plan for the unification of the island.

Certain success was achieved only in early 1977. The leaders of the communities – Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktas – met in Nicosia and signed an agreement confirming their vision of a unified Cyprus in the form of a federal state. However, further negotiations were deadlocked. The parties had different views on the format of the federal arrangement. The Turks saw it as an alliance of two ethnically divided parts of a federation. The Greeks defended the principle of coexistence of ethnic groups within the subjects of the federation (undoubtedly – with the dominance of one of them in each part of the country). Ankara was not satisfied with the negotiations, and in 1983, the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed, which has been recognized only by Turkey. The

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[2]   *UN Security Council Resolution 367 of 12 March 1975,* [http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/367 access 23 August 2017]

UN Security Council condemned these actions as well in resolutions 541[3] and 550[4].

However, negotiations over the possible integration of the two parts of Cyprus did not stop. In the mid-1980s, they were characterized by both successes and failures. On the one hand, the call of the United Nations to withdraw the occupation forces from the island caused Turkey's indignation. On the other hand, development of a solution in the practical format continued. The initiative to exchange part of the occupied territory, to withdraw the Turkish troops, and to have 40% representation in the central organs of the unified state met support from the Turkish representatives. However, the Greeks did not like this form of interaction, which was seen as essentially confederative. New meetings of the communities' leaders in 1985, 1988, and 1990 did not bring significant results. The Draft Framework Agreement[5] and Set of Ideas[6], which were proposed by UN Secretary-General Javier de Cuellar, remained unfulfilled initiatives.

Contradictions between the Greeks and the Turks in Cyprus acquired another painful point when the Greek Cypriots stated their desire to integrate into the EU. However, North Cyprus stressed that it would not be possible before the completion of the process of the European integration of Turkey, which had already been initiated. The EU did not listen to this wish. The result was a deepening diplomatic confrontation over the creation of a customs union of the Turkish Republic and its unrecognized satellite. Attempts by the new UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to resolve the dispute in the first half of the 1990s were also unsuccessful. The Turkish side was not ready to make concessions. In the mid-1990s, the peacekeeping processes were increasingly stalled. The anti-Turkish decisions of the European Court regarding the actions of Ankara in Cyprus and the clashes in the buffer zone, resulting in human casualties, had aggravated the situation even further.

The Development and Failure of the Annan Plan

At the turn of the 21st century, the United Nations proposed a complex vision for the settlement of the Cyprus problem. On the eve of a new wave of enlargement of the European Union, which was supposed to affect Cyprus, an attempt was made to unite the two parts of the island. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus Didier Pfirter developed the corresponding plan.

According to the latest version of the plan, it was supposed to reach a compromise by creating a unified Cyprus federal state – the United Republic of Cyprus. It was supposed to consist of two parts – the Greek and Turkish states (each with its own constitution), but united by federal government structures. It was intended to take the Swiss model as an example. The main governing element of the state system was to become the Presidential Council, consisting of nine people. The national composition of the council was clearly determined by the percentage ratio of the Greek and Turkish population of the island in the proportion of 2 to 1. Among the members of the council, the president and

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3   *UN Security Council Resolution 541 of 18 November 1983,* [https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/453/99/IMG/NR045399.pdf?OpenElement access 23 August 2017]

4   *UN Security Council Resolution 550 of 11 May 1984,* [https://undocs.org/S/RES/550(1984) access 23 August 2017]

5   *Draft Framework Agreement on Cyprus Presented by the Secretary-General on 29 March 1986,* "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (for the period 10 December 1985–11 June 1986)", pp. 13-17.

6   *UN Security Council Resolution 789 of 25 November 1992,* [http://www.law.gov.cy/Law/lawoffice.nsf/0/61532046D-C1283ACC225742B003BA117/$file/Resolution%20789%20_1992_.pdf access 23 August 2017]

vice president of the unified state were to be elected, each of them representing a separate ethnic community. Legislative power was to be concentrated in the hands of a bicameral parliament. In the upper chamber, equal representation of the two communities was emphasized. The lower chamber was to be divided based on the ethnic proportion of the population. The judiciary power was to be concentrated in the hands of the Supreme Court, whose members were an equal number of representatives of the Greek and Turkish communities, as well as three foreign experts[7]. It was also proposed to ensure the right of return for displaced refugees who were forced to leave their homes after the division of Cyprus. The territory of the Turkish part of the island had to be reduced – from 37%, which is currently occupied the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, to 28.5%[8]. It was intended to preserve the Greek and Turkish military presence on the island.

The provisions of the Annan Plan were put to a referendum that took place in both parts of Cyprus on 24 April 2004. It showed the public's keen interest in this issue – the turnout of the population was 89% in the Greek part of the island and 87% in the Turkish part. At the same time, it demonstrated striking differences in relation to this initiative between the Greeks and the Turks. The Greek population of the island and their political leaders initially opposed the proposed conditions. They stressed that that they were the real victims of the 1974 invasion. The proposed compromise did not satisfy their desire to

get rid of the invaders. On the contrary, it legalized many of Ankara's achievements, preserving the Turkish military presence on the island. The proposed ethnic division of public authorities also did not suit the Greek Cypriots. In their opinion, the proportions of the Annan Plan did not correspond to the real figures and the influence of the Turkish population. As a result, the majority of voters – nearly 76% – rejected the UN initiative[9]. In the Turkish part of the island, opinions were divided. Official propaganda represented the need for a compromise to end the international isolation of Northern Cyprus. The long-standing leader of Turkish Cypriots Rauf Denktas, as well as Turkish nationalist forces (the "Grey Wolves" movement), spoke against the peace initiative. On the contrary, Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mehmet Ali Talat expressed support for the plan. Official Ankara also supported this initiative. This position was dictated by the desire to settle disputes in the relations with the EU in the context of intensification of the Turkish European integration policy. As a result, nearly 65% of the participants of the referendum voted for its adoption[10].

Peacekeeping Talks after 2004

In the 21st century, both parties repeatedly expressed their commitment to the basic principles of peaceful settlement. However, real steps in this area were not undertaken. An essential role in this was played by the irreconcilable position of President of the Republic of Cyprus T. Papadopoulos. The situation altered only after the change of

7   *The Annan Plan for Cyprus,* [http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/Annan_Plan_Text.html access 23 August 2017]

8   *The Annan Plan for Cyprus,* [http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/Annan_Plan_Text.html access 23 August 2017]

9   *Referendums in Cyprus, Parliamentary questions by Ioannis Marinos (PPE-DE) to the European Commission,* European Parliament, 2004, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2004-1444+0+-DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=hr access 23 August 2017]

10 *Referendums in Cyprus, Parliamentary Questions by Ioannis Marinos (PPE-DE) to the European Commission,* European Parliament, 2004, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2004-1444+0+-DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=hr access 23 August 2017]

power in the south of the island. A new impetus in the negotiation process was provided by President of the Republic of Cyprus D. Christofias, who initiated direct talks on this issue between the leaders of

both communities of the island in September 2008. The subjects of negotiations were six main areas: management and distribution of power; the questions of membership in the EU; the economy; the property of the Greek Cypriots in the occupied territories; territorial issues; security and guarantees[11].

At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, the situation in Cyprus was somewhat paradoxical. A rather active negotiation process, in which UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was involved, was not accompanied by significant changes and compromises in the most important issues. According to analysts[12], the achievement of agreement between the parties is quite problematic given the existing serious disagreements. Negotiations on the Cyprus settlement reached an impasse in May 2012 during the preparation of the Republic of Cyprus for the presidency in the EU, which was strongly opposed by Turkey and the leaders of the Turkish Cypriots. The financial crisis postponed the negotiations. In 2014, leaders of the two communities issued a joint declaration, which stressed the unacceptability of the existing status quo; willingness to meet at the negotiating table; commitment to an idea of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, created by the Greek and Turkish parts with their own constitutions; the need to achieve a comprehensive solution to all disputes[13]. However, the real prospects of unification are still far from accomplishment.

To date, there are two approaches to the solution of the Cyprus conflict. The first provides the idea of a unification of both parts of the island in a single state. It is the focus of the international community. The second approach involves the legalization of the existing status quo and the continued development of the two independent states in Cyprus. Today this idea is popular in Turkish circles in an environment where the deterioration of relations with the European Union eliminates the need for compromises for Ankara. It should be noted that the long history of divided life reduced the popularity of the idea of unification among the inhabitants of Cyprus – they have become accustomed to the situation and do not believe in the prospects of change[14].

11 B.I. Gumeniuk, *Ukrainsko-Kiprski Vidnosyny: Dvadsyat Rokiv Dynamichnoho Rozvytku (Ukrainian-Cyprus Relations: Twenty Years of Dynamic Development),* "Scientific Bulletin of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine", 2014, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 7.

12 B.I. Gumeniuk, *Ukrainsko-Kiprski Vidnosyny: Dvadsyat Rokiv Dynamichnoho Rozvytku (Ukrainian-Cyprus Relations: Twenty Years of Dynamic Development),* "Scientific Bulletin of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine", 2014, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 8.

13 *Joint Declaration: Final Version as Agreed Between the Two Leaders,* "Cyprus Mail Online", 11 February 2014, [http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/02/11/joint-declaration-final-version-as-agreed-between-the-two-leaders/ access 23 August 2017]

14 *Why the Majority Want Partition,* "Cyprus Mail Online", 5 February 2017, [http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/02/05/majority-want-partition/ access 23 August 2017]

Cyprus Case as an Example of the Ineffectiveness of International Peacekeeping Tools

The current status quo in Cyprus is not a solution of the conflict. International efforts were unsuccessful and have not found due recognition. Long truce and the mediation efforts of international organizations allowed the creation of an effective buffer zone between the parties in order to cease hostilities. However, the more than 40-year period of reconciliation attempts did not bring the positions of the parties closer.

The failure of the Annan Plan is not merely an example of how international efforts towards a peaceful resolution of a conflict have failed. The nature of the proposed initiatives itself clearly demonstrates the inability of international institutions to facilitate the settlement of a frozen conflict. The proposed compromise was characterized by a number of controversial moments. One of them was equating the rights of the aggressor and the victim. Whatever were the circumstances, Turkey initiated a direct, armed invasion in a sovereign territory in 1974. This provoked a split of an independent state; it led to the expulsion of the Greek Cypriots from their native homes. However, the Annan Plan suggested building relationships between the communities with a kind of a blank slate, offering reciprocal concessions. Not surprisingly, for Greeks, it seemed unacceptable – from their point of view, only they made concessions in relation to the positions of the parties that had existed before 1974. The Turks only legalized some parts of their illegal acquisitions. Legalization of the Turkish settlers who have moved to the island since 1974 and were considered by the Greek Cypriots as illegal migrants was also controversial.

We should note that many of these problems are already observed in the occupied Ukrainian territories. Mostly it is about a flow of Russian immigrants who come to Crimea and Donbas. Over time, this issue will be updated, and its resolution will become more complicated. As a result, the freezing of the conflict will only serve to complicate the situation and to make restoration of the pre-war status quo impossible.

We define the main contradiction between the positions of the victims of aggression and the international peacekeeping institutions in the framework of a settlement, which is typical for both Cyprus and Ukraine. The former seeks to restore its sovereignty over the lost territories, to cancel the effects of foreign intervention. For the latter, the main objective will always be a cessation of hostilities, the freezing of the conflict with a view to a subsequent development of a peaceful solution. However, such a freezing is always contrary to the interests of the victim. The longer it goes on, the harder it is to ensure the return to the pre-war balance of power. Too many factors affect the situation in this case. In the end, the victims face a situation when the international community – which condemned and continues to condemn the aggression – offers such a plan of action that means giving up a certain share of sovereignty over the lost territories in exchange for the return (very often – only formal) of the unified state. In those terms, both the Annan Plan and Western initiatives for Donbas can be described.

Difference of the Cyprus Problem from the Ukrainian Crisis

A distinctive feature of the Cyprus problem is a national-ethnic factor. Despite a rather cosmopolitan nature of the Ottoman Empire, the conflict between the Greeks and the Turks has rich historical background. Throughout the 20th century, it was radicalized under the influence of the armed conflict (Greco-Turkish War, or the Turkish War of Independence), the mutual exchange of populations, and pogroms. As a result, Cyprus has become another arena for such a confrontation between the two nations,

to which it is impossible to turn a blind eye. On the contrary, the relations of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples are without a conflict framework on the personal level. Infringement of the rights of the Ukrainians by the Russian state has always been associated with imperial Moscow's policy towards its colonies. In Ukraine, preconditions and manifestations of an ethnic conflict with Russia are absent.

In this context, it is worth considering the factors and events that accompanied the implementation of Turkey's and Russia's aggressive actions in relation to Cyprus and Ukraine respectively. Indeed some parallels can be made. In both cases, there was a change of power in the states that became victims of aggression. In both cases, invasion was justified by a desire to protect compatriots from hostile actions. However, Turkish actions – despite their illegality – seem more reasonable. Escape of President Yanukovych from Ukraine has little similarity with the military coup that took place in 1974 in Cyprus. Ethnic conflict on the island occurred in reality, not only was created in the propaganda rhetoric (as it was in the case of Crimea and Donbas). Furthermore, there was a danger of losing the independence of Cyprus. Under these circumstances, Ankara had reasons to worry about the well-being of the Turkish population of the island.

An important element of the Cyprus issue is the presence of the British military bases on the island. They serve as a deterrent to a possible escalation of the conflict. On the other hand, their presence defines the importance of the resolution of the crisis for Western actors. For London, and to some extent – for Washington, it concerns the guarantees of preservation of their military presence in the strategically important region. It becomes particularly relevant today, when the metamorphoses of Turkish politicians make the southern flank of the transatlantic partnership less reliable.

Another important difference between the Ukrainian and Cypriot cases is the geopolitical weight of the aggressors. Turkey, despite its strategic position, glorious history, economic success, political influence, and claims to regional leadership, remains a state of moderate strength. Undoubtedly, its military power is absolutely superior to the potential of Cyprus, and it eliminates the factor of the Greek support. However, in any case, Ankara is a minor player compared to Russia. On the contrary, Ukraine is suffering from the aggression of a nuclear state, a UN Security Council permanent member, which claims to superpower status and the title of the world centre of power. This radically changes the context of international negotiations under the peace process, taking them to a qualitatively new level.

Conclusions

An analysis of the Cyprus confrontation and international efforts to resolve it clearly demonstrates the complexity of conflict settlement in a frozen stage. The cessation of hostilities is an undoubted success for

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the international community, which clearly saves lives of people. However, years of negotiations in various formats concerning the conditions of unification of the two parts of the island only lead to one thing – they alienate the real prospect of returning to the united Cyprus. Moreover, in these circumstances, the need for such unification – except for the question of image and credibility – is becoming less important

and popular for the parties to the conflict. Thus, we should learn a clear lesson – the demarcation line, buffer zones, and even the presence of peacekeepers can help save lives, but these will hardly assist in the restoration of the Ukrainian sovereignty over the occupied territories.

In addition, the example of Cyprus shows that the existing international tools of conflict settlement are not always effective. Endless negotiations and harmonization of conditions do not bring a solution. Considering this, we must clearly understand that we cannot count on such a course if we really want to return the occupied part of Donbas and Crimea.

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