

UNFICYP MISSION AND ARMED FORCES OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract: *UN for years enters into Cyprus conflict and use military power as one of the means for peace solutions of conflict. Slovak Republic participates in this process by military contingent which is, at this time, the biggest one from Slovakia in international crisis management military forces. Despite the large efforts and numerous attempts, peace-making process on the island is failing and UNFICYP is still necessary as well as participation of Slovak Armed Forces.* □

Keywords: Cyprus, UNFICYP, peacekeeping

Introduction

On the island of Cyprus, there are dominating contradictions, which have deep historical roots with significant internal and external cultural and demographic influences. Orthodox Christians and Greek Cypriots on the one side, and Muslims and Turkish Cypriots on the other side enter into a dispute. All this is happening in the background of interests of the strongest world powers to control the island. The participants of the conflict in spite of a large number of peace initiatives and peace plans of the UN cannot agree on a common political governance and coexistence.

1. The reason of formation the mission UNFICYP

1.1. The background of the conflict

Great Britain gained domination over the island in 1878 by signing the agreement with the Ottoman Empire. Greek-Cypriot population (at about 80%) expected that after the period of British domination, the unification of the island with Greece - the idea of “*enosis*” will follow. However, such idea has never been acceptable for the Turkish Cypriot minority (less than 20%)

and in its councils; the idea of island’s division and separation of both communities – the idea of “*takşim*” was gradually created.

In the 50s, originally the anti-colonial resistance grew into ethnic violence while at the Greek Cypriot side operated EOKA (in translation: National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) and at the Turkish Cypriot side has been created TMT (in translation: Turkish Resistance Organization). Both Cypriot communities have attacked each other while both conducted separately uprising against the British. The mutual struggle (destruction and killing) was daily agenda. [1]

The British have realized that the colonial status of the island is not sustainable. Surprisingly, the compromise, which none of the side wanted, has been made. The Republic of Cyprus was established with effect from 16th August 1960.

The inter-ethnic conflict has not been resolved by the existence of the Republic of Cyprus. The majority of Greek Cypriots made has felt corrupted and thoughts on *enosis* did not disappear. They felt to be

damaged and humiliated by the competencies which were acquired by Turkish Cypriots and they suspected them of trying to transform the unitary state to the federation.

The Cypriot constitutional crisis has turned into a radical armed conflict just before the end of 1963. An armed fight between the two communities had outgrown into a brutal ethnic war characterized by mutual killing, capturing hostages, many villagers escaping from their homes and continual street fighting in big cities. [2]

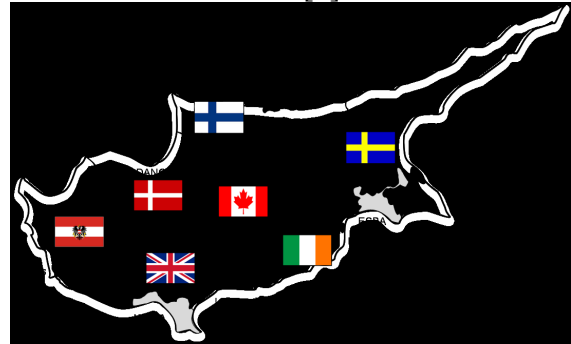
1.2. UNFICYP establishment and operation

The Secretary-General of the United Nations after the agreement of all interested parties has appointed in 17th January 1964 LtGen Prem Singh Gyani (India) as his personal representative and the evolution observer of the situations on the island. The original mandate set by the end of February was later extended to the end of March 1964.

After failing in all previous attempts to restore peace on the island, representatives of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Cyprus (President Makarios) asked on 15th February 1964 for immediate action by the UN Security Council (UNSC). In 4th March 1964 UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 186 with the opinion; the situation in Cyprus may threaten international peace and security and hence in order to keep the peace, the creation of UNFICYP (The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) was recommended.

The UN Security Council has recommended validity of the mandate for three months. The assumption of staying on the island only three months as a result of permanent complications has not been attained. The UNFICYP forces with various modifications of mandate and various changes in the structure have remained in Cyprus until today. The mandate of

UNFICYP was originally defined: "... in the interest of preserving international peace and security, to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and return to normal conditions". [8]



Picture 1 UNFICYP forces in 1972 [4]

At the beginning, UNFICYP contingents were deployed on the whole territory of the island with the aim to correspond with the administrative organization of the island as much as possible. For the purpose of more favourable utilization of available UNFICYP forces, many movements and changes of responsibility were realized in the following period. UNFICYP forces were trying more appropriate cover, in particular, of the new areas of tension. All the efforts of UNFICYP have been implemented impartially, in order not to influence the attitude of communities in the opposition.

The period 1964 - 1974 was characterized by efforts of the Greek community to annex the island to Greece, and therewith associated violent activities between the two communities. During ten years, the situation resulted in a severe political crisis. President Makarios openly reoriented its policy to "unlimited independence" for Cyprus and thereby negated the idea of enosis. It has outraged, in particular, nationalist forces in Greece and the Greek Cypriot community. [5] The response was a coup realized 15th July 1974 (codenamed as "Operation Aphrodite").

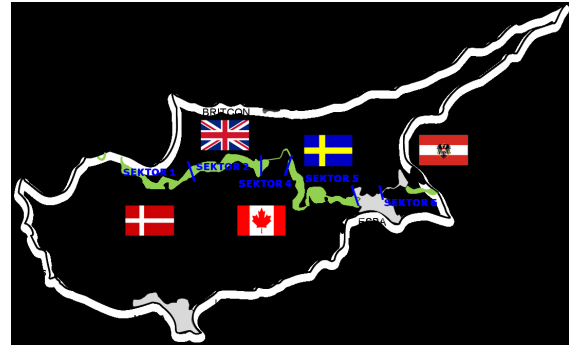
Turkey viewed the coup as an act which aim was *enosis*, controlled by the military regime in Athens. It was convinced that Turkey had to act because the situation will not be perceived as an internal matter of Cyprus, but as the Greek violation of agreements made in London and Zürich. The Turkish government has launched 20th July 1974 an extensive biphasic military operation codenamed "Operation Attila". Turkey identified actions as the peacekeeping operation that was not directed against the Greek Cypriot population, but to defend the Turkish Cypriots and the whole The Republic of Cyprus. UNFICYP forces have been confronted with the diametrically different situation. The tasks of UNFICYP have been conceived in relation to the armed conflict opposing communities in Cyprus, and not in relation to hostile military actions.

The Greek Cypriot side, after the consolidation of the situation, continued in the governance of the country on a similar basis as it was before the Turkish intervention, but only in the southern part of the island. The Turkish Cypriot side solved the situation in the northern part of the island independently of the political situation in the southern part. In 1975 declared the creation of the own state - The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (TFSC) and later in 1983 established The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). No country, except Turkey, officially recognize until today mentioned republic as the legitimate authority in the northern part of the island.

1.3. UNFICYP after the Turkish intervention

After the negotiations on the ceasefire, UNFICYP units inspected the front lines between deployed enemy forces. There was determined so called "Ceasefire line" (CFL) that provided for a so-called "Status Quo". This is the basis for determining the violation to the ceasefire agreement.

The territory between the positions of the Turkish and Greek units was defined as the UN Buffer Zone, which has been declared as the neutral zone under the full control of UNFICYP. It is also called as the "Green Line" and it represents 180 km long area, covering 3% of the island.



Picture 2 UNFICYP forces in 1985 [4]

After the Turkish intervention in 1974, the role of UNFICYP was adapted to existing situations and the operational area was divided into six sectors (Sector 1, Sector 2, Sector 4 Sector 5 Sector 6 and UNPA). In the following years, there were conducted various reorganizational and dispositional adjustments, reallocation into four sectors and then from 1993 to the three sectors. Checking of the buffer zone and monitoring of the status quo was realized primarily by pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle or air (helicopter) patrolling.

2. UNFICYP at present

2.1. Present structure of UNFICYP

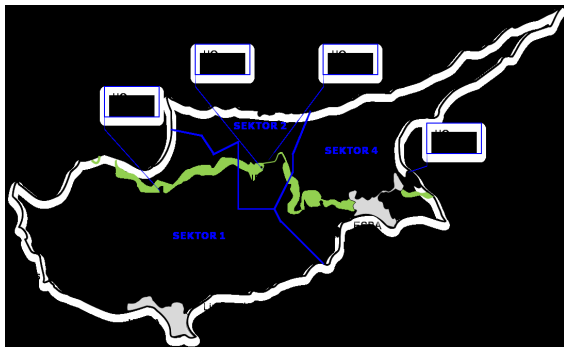
Currently operates in UNFICYP personnel from 13 countries (Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Hungary, Paraguay, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom). Overall, it is made up of 1145 people. 996 of this number are uniformed (military and police) personnel and 149 civilian members. It consists of four components: [8]

- - The Military,
- - UN Civilian Police (UNPOL),
- - The Civil Affairs Branch,
- - Administration,

(Supporting the various components).

Highest representative of UNFICYP is Chief of Mission, Lisa M. Bутtenheim from the United States, who also acts as Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Cyprus. The commander of the military component of UNFICYP – Force Commander is major general Kristin Lund from Norway. [8]

Currently, UNFICYP deployed approximately 950 troops in the yearly (resp. semi-annual) rotating basis. The largest contributors of military personnel are Argentina, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, and Hungary. The Buffer Zone is divided into three sectors: Sector 1, Sector 2 and Sector 4.



Picture 3 UNFICYP forces at present [4]

The military component also includes other units (Military Observer Liaison Officers, The Mobile Force Reserve, UNFLIGH, UN Force Military Police Unit, Force Engineers), which are mainly deployed at UNFICYP headquarters in Nicosia and work for all sectors.

UNPOL became part of UNFICYP from 14. 04. 1964 with a mission to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order in the Buffer Zone, and thus, promote The Military and The Civil Affairs Branch. It does not replace the local police, but its competence includes the arrest and detention of persons. UNPOL headquarters is dislocated in the area of UNPA in Nicosia and its eight police stations are located in the Buffer Zone. □

The Civil Affairs Branch was founded

in 1998 as a result of the constant increase of problems related to civilian activities in the Buffer Zone.

2.2. Present tasks of UNFICYP

After Turkish intervention in 1974, UN Security Council adopted a series of resolutions, which extended the original mandate of UNFICYP. The extension is primarily related to the scope of peacekeeping activities in order to maintain international peace and security. Tasks include three areas aimed at [8]: □

- Prevent a recurrence of fighting,
- Contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order,
- Contribute to a return to normal conditions.

The main task of UNFICYP is to prevent a recurrence of fighting. This includes checking compliance with the Status Quo. The main emphasis is currently placed on flexible mobile, pedestrian and air (helicopter) patrolling. Reducing the number of peacekeepers is compensated by so-called “Concentration of Mobility”. Integrity ensuring of Buffer Zone prevents the escalation of tensions, the outbreak of demonstrations and renewal of armed conflict.

Some parts of Buffer Zone, so-called “Civil Use Areas”, are made available. They are generally used for agriculture and farming purposes. Civilians can enter into some selected areas without restrictions; to enter some particularly sensitive areas it is necessary to have a special permission from UNFICYP.

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Cyprus, or more precisely Chief of Mission, is also acting as a Deputy Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General. UNFICYP is an important player in the support of peace processes. It ensures the stable conditions for the negotiations processes.

3. Armed Forces of Slovak Republic in UNFICYP

Slovak Republic accepted a verbal note of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in March 2001 with the offer to participate in UNFICYP. [7]

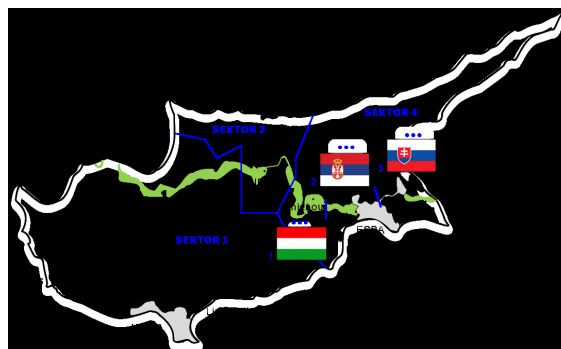
The Government (No. 353/2001) and subsequently the Parliament (No. 1372/2001) authorized resolutions as a basis to deploy the first Slovak unit (max. 280 troops) in UNFICYP. It was realized in May and June 2001. The mandate set out operational tasks fulfilled in the eastern part of the island - in sectors 4.

Lieutenant-Colonel Milan Kováč, as the first Slovak commander, took command of Sector 4 on 18. 06. 2001 at 18:00 in Famagusta during the official ceremony, thereby the Slovak Republic becomes so-called "Lead nation".

Sector 4 passed into the operational responsibility of Slovak-Hungarian contingent. The headquarters of Sector 4 was situated in the Camp General Stefanik - CGS in Famagusta. Sector 4 included 3 companies – 1st company/Hungarian, 2nd and 3rd company/Slovak.

In 2005, UNFICYP adopted a new concept of mission "UNFICYP Force 860 Concept of Operation". The adoption of this concept was the basis for unit's restructuring and reducing the number (Slovaks max. 210 troops). From this moment in Sector 4 one Hungarian and two Slovak platoons operated.

In 2011, the number of Slovak troop was reduced (Slovaks max. 159). One Slovak platoon was replaced by Serb platoon. 98 Slovak soldiers served in Sector 4, the rest at Headquarters in Nicosia. [6]



Picture 4 UNFICYP forces in sector 4 [4]

3.1. Sector 4 at present

The Sector 4 is situated in the eastern part of the island on an area of approximately 110 km². It starts on the border with the Sector 2 east of the capital Nicosia and ends on the east coast. It also includes the British Sovereign Base Areas of Dhekelia, which is located between the villages of Pyla and Strovilia. Mentioned area is outside the scope of UNFICYP. Headquarters of the Sector 4 (in CGS) is dislocated in the historical city of Famagusta.

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Monitoring of the area of responsibility is realized by the company, which consists of company headquarters and three platoons. Company headquarters is located in CGS in Famagusta. Some squads of the platoons are deployed in CGS in Famagusta and others directly in the buffer zone on the Patrol Base – PB and the Observation Posts – OP. [3]

3.2. Slovak contribution at UNFICYP Headquarters

Slovak troops are active in the

structures at the UNFICYP Headquarters (Military Public Information Officer, Force Photographer, etc.) and indirectly subordinated units (The Mobile Force Reserve, UN Force Military Police Unit, and Force Engineers).

37 Slovak troops are permanently assigned in Force Engineer HQ Unit, which is a key element for engineer support of the UNFICYP Headquarters and all sectors. It is dislocated in the Slovak camp (Camp Tattry) in the area of UNFICYP Headquarters in Nicosia.

It realizes the construction of new, maintenance or reconstruction of used accommodation, catering, administrative and logistics facilities, and also roads and facilities in the buffer zone used for patrolling.

Conclusions

The Cyprus problem is still developing. The ethnic polarization of the Cypriot society, critical years 1963 - 1964, 1967 and culminated crisis in the year 1974 strongly influenced the life on the island. Using of military forces in 1974 took only few days, while ways out of the impasse were not found even after 40 years.

The tension between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community is persists. Cyprus remains one of the most powerful, long-term conflicts in the world and UNFICYP is still necessary. The long year presence of Armed forces of Slovak republic contributes to the ambition of UN in the solution of this complicated conflict. □

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