

Turkish and Greek Positions on the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A
Comparative Evaluation Through an Examination of Their Relations with
the PLO

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Arab-İsrail Çatışmasına Türkiye'nin ve Yunanistan'ın Pozisyonları: FKÖ ile
İlişkilerin incelenmesi Yoluyla Karşılaştırmalı Bir Değerlendirme

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- 2) İsrail
- 3) Yunanistan
- 4) Kıbrıs
- 5) FKÖ

- 2) İsrail
- 3) Greece
- 4) Cyprus
- 5) PLO

List of Abbreviations

- AKEL — {Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou} Progressive Party of Working People
- ALF – Arab Liberation Front
- ANO — Abu Nidal Organization
- ASALA – Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
- DOP – Declaration of Principles
- EDEK — Movement for Social Democracy
- FATAH – Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini – Palestinian Liberation Movement
- FCO — Foreign Commonwealth Office
- HAMAS – Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya – Islamic Resistance Movement
- IDF – Israel Defense Forces
- MNF – Multinational Force in Lebanon
- OIC – Organization of the Islamic Conference
- OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
- PASOK — Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement
- PKK – Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan – Kurdistan Worker’s Party
- PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization
- PNC – Palestine National Charter
- THKO – Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu – Turkish People’s Liberation Army
- THKP-C – Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi – Turkish People’s Liberation Party-Front

- UNIFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
- UN SCOP – United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
- USAF — United States Air Forces

Abstract

This thesis aims to make an analysis of the impact that PLO's special relations with Cyprus (Greek-Cypriot side mainly) and Greece had on Turkish-Israeli relations. While Turkey's policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict have been subject of scholarly interest and elaborated through different perspectives, the PLO's "intimate" relations with a number of countries with which Turkey have remained at loggerheads were not given due interest. With their geographical and historical proximity to Palestine, the two countries have remained to be supportive of the Arab cause and critical of Israeli policies in the region. The PLO's close relations with the two countries thus, strained Turkey's policy towards the organization. This thesis attempts to shed light on close relations that the PLO cultivated with Greece and Cyprus and aims to bring one of the neglected dimensions of the triangular relationship forward.

Özet

Bu tez, FKÖ'nün Kıbrıs (özellikle Kıbrıs Rum tarafı) ve Yunanistan ile olan özel ilişkilerinin, Türk-İsrail ilişkileri üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Arap-İsrail çatışmasına yönelik Türkiye'nin politikaları farklı bakış açılarıyla ve özenli bir şekilde çeşitli akademik çalışmalarda ilgilenilen bir konu olmasına rağmen, FKÖ'nün Türkiye'nin sorunlu olduğu bazı ülkelerle olan "samimi" ilişkilerine gereken önem verilmemiştir. Filistin'e coğrafi ve tarihsel yakınlıkları sonucunda, bu iki ülke Arap amacını destekleyen ve İsrail'in bölgedeki politikalarını eleştiren ülkeler olmaya devam etmişlerdir. FKÖ'nün bu iki ülke ile yakın ilişkileri olması Türkiye'nin organizasyona yönelik politikasında gerginliklere sebep olmuştur. Bu tez, FKÖ'nün Yunanistan ve Kıbrıs ile geliştirdiği yakın ilişkilere ışık tutmaya çalışmakta ve üçlü ilişkilerin ihmal edilmiş boyutlarından birini öne çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to analyze the special relationship between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) with Greece and Cyprus (the Greek-Cypriot side) and the impact of that relationship to the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel from 1964 until the early 1990s. The reason why I chose this specific period of time, it is because in 1964 the PLO was founded, while in the late 1980s after the uprising of the Palestinian people, the first Palestinian Intifada of 1987, PLO declared the establishment of the Palestinian state (1988) and the peace process between Israel and PLO started. As a result of the peace process, Israel and PLO participated in the Peace Conference in Madrid in 1991, and the two rival parties signed the Declaration of Principles (DOP) in 1993.

In my research, I make a brief examination of the literature on the relations between Turkey and Israel since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 until the early 1990s. Moreover, I examine the literature regarding the bilateral relations of Greece and Cyprus (Greek-Cypriot side) with the Arab countries and PLO. My research regarding the special relationship between Greece and Cyprus (Greek-Cypriot side) with the PLO is based on primary sources mainly articles of the Greek-Cypriot press and online articles. Furthermore, I had interviews with Greek-Cypriot politicians, who had in the past relations with the PLO and Yasser Arafat, and other Palestinian movements and personalities.

My research is divided to three parts. In the first chapter of my thesis, I make a brief analysis of the evolution of the Palestinian problem and the regional developments in the Middle East until 1979. In this context, I examine the historical background of the establishment of the Israeli state and the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel up to

1964, the establishment of the PLO and the regional developments in the Middle East until 1979. Moreover, the first chapter also analyzes the two major Arab-Israeli wars – the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 – the change in the Palestinian leadership after the Six Day War and the emergence of Palestinian nationalism, the first oil crisis, which emerged during the Yom Kippur War, the civil war in Jordan in the years 1970-1971, which had as a result the expulsion of PLO from Jordan and the transfer of its headquarters to Lebanon, the internationalization of the Palestinian movement and the peace negotiation process between Egypt and Israel.

During the course of the Six Day War the Palestinian movement due to its dependence to the Arab states did not play any role. As a result, there was a change in the Palestinian leadership and Yasser Arafat became the new leader of the organization in 1969. In that period the Palestinian movement tried to construct relations with other countries of the regional environment such as Turkey, Greece and Cyprus, while it also sought to construct relations with countries of the Eastern bloc and various liberation movements.

Moreover, the Palestinian movement did not play any role in the clashes during the Yom Kippur War. That fact came as a result of its defeat on the Jordanian civil war of 1970-1971. After the end of the civil war the defeated PLO moved its headquarters to Lebanon, where it faced new problems in the mid-1970s. Nevertheless, the Palestinian movement achieved to win regional and international recognition in the mid-1970s. On 1974 the Palestinian movement was recognized as the representative of the Palestinian people by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, while on November 1974 PLO became observer member of the UN. In 1975 the UN General Assembly passed a

resolution which equated Zionism with racism. In the same year the Palestinian movement became member of the non-Alignment movement, while in 1976 it also became member of the Arab League.

Turkey from its side, during the two major Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 remained neutral, while on the diplomatic level the Turkish state supported the Arab states. That fact came as a result of its need of the Arab support regarding the Cyprus issue. Moreover, its economic problems especially in the mid-1970s and its oil needs forced the Turkish authorities to support the Arab states in the diplomatic level. Furthermore, the fact that Turkey was isolated in the West after the Cyprus crisis of 1974 forced the Turkish state to reexamine its policies and made a rapprochement towards the Arab states. As a result, Turkey voted in favor of the resolution which equated Zionism with racism in 1975 and recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

Moreover, Turkey taking advantage of Egypt's isolation in the Arab world, as a result of its peace negotiation process with Israel in the late 1970s tried to improve its relations with the Arab states. In this context Turkey gave its permission to PLO to open a representative office in Ankara in 1979 and downgraded its representation to Israel as a result of the annexation of Jerusalem by the Israeli state. Nevertheless, even the fact that the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel were in a low level, their economic, military and intelligence cooperation continued as in the past.

However, regional developments since the early 1980s influenced once again the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel. The second chapter of my thesis analyzes the regional developments since the early 1980s. In this context I make an analysis of the

Lebanese civil war which begun in 1975 and lasted until 1990, the ensuing Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Palestinian uprising-Intifada within the occupied territories, which led to the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and to the peace negotiation process between the Palestinian movement and Israel. Moreover, the second chapter examines the relations between Turkey and Israel since the early 1980s and PLO's policies concerning Turkish national interests.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was criticized by the Turkish public opinion and the bilateral relations of the two countries were in a very low level in the early 1980s. However, Turkey did not cut off its bilateral relations with Israel and since the mid-1980s the bilateral relations of the two countries were improving once again until the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. The Turkish public opinion admired the young Palestinian protestors and criticized the Israeli measures against the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, since the declaration of the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and the beginning of the peace negotiation process between Israel and PLO Turkey felt free to improve its relations with Israel.

PLO's relations with Turkey were not in good terms, however. That fact came as a result of PLO's policies regarding Turkish national interests, and its relations with radical and separatist movements. Chapter two ends with an analysis of PLO's relations with those radical and separatist movements such as THKO, ASALA, and PKK, and its impact on the bilateral relations of Turkey and PLO. Furthermore, another obstacle on the bilateral relations of Turkey with the Arab states and PLO was their no reactions against the expulsion of Muslim Turks from Bulgaria. In 1989, the Bulgarian authorities decided to expel the Turkish community and neither the Arab states nor PLO supported Turkey.

That fact had a crucial impact on Turkey's relations with the PLO and the Arab states. Moreover, PLO's relations with Greece and Cyprus – mainly the Greek-Cypriot leadership – presented another obstacle on PLO's relations with Turkey.

In the third chapter of my dissertation I make a brief examination of the historical background of the relations between Greece and Cyprus (the Greek-Cypriot side) with the Arab states in general and with PLO in particular. In this context, I examine Greece's and Cyprus' policies during the Arab-Israeli wars, and their bilateral relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel. Greece was among the countries which voted against the partition plan of Palestine and during the Arab-Israeli wars sided with the Arab states. Greece's negative vote for the partition of Palestine came as a result of the presence of Greek minorities in various Arab countries.

Furthermore, Greece adopted a pro-Arab policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict as a result of its need for support in regards with the Cyprus issue. Another reason which guided Greece to support the Arab states and the Palestinian movement was its need for Arab oil and its economic problems especially in the 1970s. The policies of the Greek state had a negative impact on the bilateral relations of Greece and Israel, and even the fact that Greece recognized the state of Israel – de facto - it refused to upgrade its diplomatic relations with the Israeli state. As a result of the peace negotiation process between PLO and Israel, Greece recognized the Israeli state de jure in 1990 and appointed an ambassador to Israel.

Moreover, we can observe that even the fact that Cyprus established diplomatic relations with Israel their relations were in a very low level, while Greek-Cypriots' relations with the Arab states and PLO were very warm. That fact dissatisfied the Turkish

authorities and made them suspicious against the Palestinian movement, while Israel was also frustrated by the policies of the Greek-Cypriot side. During the Arab-Israeli wars the Greek-Cypriot side supported the Arab states and PLO, as a result of the warm relations between then President of Cyprus Makarios with then President of Egypt Nasser, and the special relationship between the Greek-Cypriot politicians – especially those of the left and socialist parties - with leading figures of the Palestinian movement. Furthermore, during the Cyprus crisis of 1974 the Arab states and the PLO supported Greece and the Greek-Cypriot side disappointing Turkey.

After the Cyprus crisis of 1974 the Arab states and PLO continued to support the Greek-Cypriot side, a fact that had a crucial impact on their relations with Turkey. Moreover, the Greek-Cypriot side gave support to the Palestinians and to the PLO during that period, while its relations with the Israeli state were in a very low level. Moreover, in the course of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Greek-Cypriots gave economic assistance and moral support to the Palestinian people. Besides, when the Palestinian uprising – Intifada began in the occupied territories in 1987, Greek-Cypriot politicians and civilian people supported the Palestinian people, while they condemned the Israeli oppressive measures. Moreover, the Greek-Cypriot side recognized the Palestinian state which was established in 1988. And as a result of the peace negotiation process, the Greek-Cypriot side improved its relations with Israel and in 1994 opened an embassy in Israel, without abandoning its pro-Arab policy, however.

This dissertation attempts to analyze the special relationship between the Palestinian movement with Greece and Cyprus (Greek-Cypriot side) and the impact of that special relationship to the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel. Many researchers

in the past analyzed the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel and Turkey's attitude regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. However, this thesis aims to examine PLO's policies regarding Turkey's national interests, and the impact of the relations of PLO with Greece and the Greek-Cypriot side on the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel. It is very important to understand how PLO's special relationship with these countries influenced the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel, and Turkey's attitude towards the Palestinian movement.

Chapter 1: The establishment of the PLO and the Turkish-Israeli relations, 1964-1979

Introduction to chapter

The first chapter examines the evolution of the Palestinian problem, the establishment of the PLO in 1964 and the international and regional changes which influenced the relations between the three parties, Turkey, Israel, and PLO until 1979. Regional changes such as the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War and the ensuing oil crisis, the Cyprus crisis of 1974 and the peace process between Egypt and Israel in the late 1970s had a decisive impact on the trilateral relations.

The first chapter is divided to three parts. The first part looks over the development of the Palestinian issue, the establishment of the Palestinian movement and its development from an Arab controlled organization to an independent national liberation movement. The first part examines the period since the partition plan of Palestine in 1947, the establishment of the PLO in 1964, the Six Day War of 1967, the results of the Six Day War and the change in PLO's leadership in 1969.

Moreover, the second part deals with the regional and international crises such as the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the oil crisis which erupted in the mid-1970s. This part also analyzes the results of those crises and the policies which Turkey adopted in the course of those crises. Certainly, Turkey's policies during and in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and the oil crisis, had a crucial impact on its bilateral relations with Israel and PLO. The second part of chapter one ends with an analysis of the internationalization of the PLO, which during the mid-1970s was recognized by various countries as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In our case, Turkey too recognized the Palestinian organization as the representative of the Palestinian people in 1975, an act which dissatisfied the Israeli authorities. In this context, I examine the diplomatic relations of PLO with countries beyond the Middle East, such as countries of the Eastern bloc, non-aligned countries and various national liberation movements. Turkey's relations with PLO and PLO's policies concerning Turkey's national interests will be analyzed in chapter two. PLO's relations with both Greece and Cyprus (in the case of Cyprus I make an analysis of the relations between PLO and the Greek-Cypriot community, political parties and individuals) will be analyzed in chapter three.

Furthermore, part three looks over the peace negotiation process between Egypt and Israel and the subsequent Camp David Accords of 1978 between the two countries. The Camp David Accords had as a result the sign of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979, a treaty which was denounced by the Arab states and PLO. Turkey taking advantage of the new situation in the Middle East made a rapprochement towards the Arab states and PLO. The third part of chapter one ends with an analysis of PLO's and Arab states' reactions against Egypt's decision to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

1. The first years of the Organization

1.1. Evolution of the Palestinian Problem

Until the end of the Second World War, the territory of Palestine was a British colony and in that territory were living both Jewish and Arab Palestinians. Even before the end of the Second World War, there were clashes between the Jewish and Arab Palestinians. For that reason, it was difficult to construct a homogeneous nation state after the end of the British Mandatory rule in that area. As the situation became worst in

Palestine Great Britain asked from the newly established UN to mediate in order to find a solution to the Palestine question (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 3).

The UN decided to create a committee to solve the problem, the UN SCOP in which 11 countries had to deal with the Palestine question. After the end of several meetings, (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 4-5):

The majority of the committee members recommended that Palestine be partitioned into an Arab and a Jewish state, with special international status for the city of Jerusalem under the administrative authority of the United Nations. The three entities were to be linked in an economic union. The minority plan called for an independent federated structure comprising an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem as the capital of the federation.

As a result, in 1947 the United Nations adopted the Resolution 181 (II), by which the area of Palestine was divided into two states, one Arab state, and one Jewish state, "... with minor changes...as proposed by the majority..." (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 7) There were of course reactions towards and against the partition plan, (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 9):

The Jewish Agency accepted the resolution despite its dissatisfaction over such matters as Jewish emigration from Europe and the territorial limits set on the proposed Jewish state. The plan was not accepted by the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states on the ground that it violated the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which granted people the right to decide their own destiny.

Greece and Turkey were among the countries which voted against the partition plan of Palestine. Turkey voted against the plan out of concerns that the partition will lead to outbreak of inter-communal strife which might trigger large scale regional war.

Another reason which concerned Ankara for the partition was the possibility of the emergence of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, 116).

In the case of Greece, due to the presence of Greek minorities in various Arab countries, Greece could not vote in favor of the partition plan of Palestine and voted against the plan satisfying the Arab states. Thus, we can say that the Greek decision to vote against the partition plan, had nothing to do with anti-Semitic feelings of the Greek politicians, but came as a result of the need to ensure the presence and protection of the rights of the Greek minorities in the Arab countries (Abadi, 2000, 42).

After the resolution for the partition of Palestine was approved, clashes started between the Arab Palestinians and the Jewish, in Palestine. Between 16 of April to 14 of May 1948 the United Nations General Assembly had a meeting regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a result, the Security Council called the rival parties to terminate the clashes (17 of April), while on the 23rd of April the Security Council decided to create the Truce Commission which had the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire agreement (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 9).

Afterwards, on 14th of May 1948 the British left Palestine. Moreover, after the declaration of the independence of the Israeli state (May 14, 1948), the Arab states refused to recognize it and made an invasion to the, according to Resolution 181, Arab part of Palestine. On the one hand, Israel taking advantage of the differing interests among the Arab states won the war and extended its territory. On the other hand, the Egyptian and Jordanian armies took under their control Gaza Strip and West Bank respectively. Clashes between the Arab countries and Israel began again on October 1948 and lasted until March 1949. During the fighting Israel annexed areas of the proposed

Arab state. After UN mediation, the Arab states signed armistice agreements with Israel until the mid-1949 (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 10):

The Arab countries, however, did not accept the existence of a Jewish state in the territory of Palestine and they claimed that their struggle will continue until the state of Israel cease to exist. In contrast to the Arab states, Turkey, even the fact that it voted against the partition of Palestine in 1947, recognized the state of Israel in 1949 and established diplomatic relations with the aforementioned country. Greece too, recognized the state of Israel in 1949 only de facto, and "...refused to consider de jure recognition" (Abadi, 2000, 42). As in the case of Turkey, Greece did not intend to improve its relations with Israel.

Turkey tried to have a balance in its bilateral relations with Israel and the Arab countries in order to secure its interests in the Middle East. The relations between the two countries became official with the exchange of legations in 1950, but Turkey did not intend to improve the relations to the ambassadorial level (Gauze, 2011, 27). Thus, we can say that Turkey during the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed to be neutral.

1.2. Turkish-Israeli relations 1949-1964

We can observe that in the period after the Israeli independence, due to the fact that left parties and organizations had power in Israel (mainly in the early 1950s), Turkey had some suspicions against Israel and its professed neutrality in the early years of the Cold War (Robins, 1991, 75). Turkey was suspicious against Israel's neutral policies and it feared that the balance of power in the Middle East could dramatically change, if the Soviet Union brought under its sphere of influence the Jewish state. According to

Nachmani: “In the Turkish view, Israel’s neutrality served as a camouflage for a deep-rooted communism” (1987, 6-7).

Those suspicions, however, were declined to zero when the government of Israel gave support to the Western bloc during the Korean War. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the two countries improved their relations and signed economic and military agreements. During that period the two countries not only concluded trade and cultural agreements, but they initiated discussions concerning the improvement of their diplomatic relations (Liel, 2001, 203).

To the contrary, when Turkey signed the Baghdad Pact in 1955 with Iraq, Pakistan, Great Britain and Iran, the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel remained confined to the diplomatic framework. According to Robins (1991, 76-7):

In drawing Iraq into this alliance, Turkey was obliged to offer a number of foreign policy concessions, principally at the expense of Israel. These included a refusal to issue a declaration of support for Israeli sovereignty and territorial integrity, and an addendum to the pact saying that the articles relating to military assistance at times of crisis would be valid within the context of, and indeed were specifically related to the Palestinian problem.

Moreover, during the Suez crisis the Turkish government decided to decrease its diplomatic representation to Israel to the lowest - legation level. That decision appeared to have come as a result of the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula (Robins, 1991, 77). However, the Turkish authorities informed the Israeli side that the recall of the Turkish ambassador “was not a hostile act toward Israel, but an effort to save the Baghdad Pact” (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, 145).

Afterwards, the relations between the two countries were improving once again. As Bengio (2004, 33) indicates, “In 1958 Israel and Turkey forged a top secret alliance known as "the peripheral alliance" or "Phantom Pact"”, by which they had secret military and intelligence cooperation.

However, global and regional crises which threatened Turkish national interests had a crucial impact on its bilateral relations with Israel and the Arab states. Crises such as the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the inception of the Cyprus crisis in 1963 and the clashes between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots which lasted until mid-1964, challenged Turkey’s position in the Western bloc, and influenced Turkey’s relations with the two rival parties.

The Cuban missile crisis came as a result of Soviet Union’s intentions to install nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962. From the installation date until the end of the crisis, the leaders of the two superpowers had a debate, which could have end up with a superpower war between USA and Soviet Union. Finally, the Cuban missile crisis ended with an agreement between the rival parties. The Turkish authorities dissatisfied with the deal between USA and Soviet Union, because Turkish national interests were not taken into account by the US government. In the words of Nachmani (2003, 14):

It appeared to Ankara that the United States was ignoring Turkey’s security: in an apparent quid pro quo deal with Moscow, Washington agreed to remove its Jupiter missiles from its bases on Turkish territory. In return, Moscow had to remove its offensive weapons from Cuba.

Furthermore, the Cyprus crisis began in 1963 when the President of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios, proposed constitutional changes, which were not accepted by the Turkish-Cypriot community. During the course of the crisis Turkey was isolated in the

West and made a rapprochement towards the Arab states, in order to gain their support, without any success however. To the contrary, the Arab states supported the Greek-Cypriots, while some of the Arab states (mainly Egypt and Syria) provided the Greek-Cypriot side with weapons (Nachmani, 2003, 14).

Thus, Turkey understood the importance of a rapprochement with the Arab states. And when the PLO was established (in 1964), Turkey found it difficult to give support to Israel or to upgrade its diplomatic relations with that country.

1.3. Establishment of the PLO

The PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was established in 1964 during the first Arab summit, which was held in Cairo. In its first years PLO was under the total control of the Arab states, mainly Egypt. It has been asserted, that the PLO was established by the Arab states, mainly Egypt with two objectives. The first objective was to include the organization into the Arab League, while the second objective was, by controlling the Palestinian movement, to forestall any Palestinian activity against Israel, which could lead to another conflict between the Arab states and Israel (Hassassian, 1997, 75):

However, PLO since its establishment had the structure of an independent state, even the fact that it was an organization and not a state. It had a constitution – its National Charter - executive committee, legislative assembly, “government” departments, army, audited budget, and internal statutes (Rubin, 1994, 2). And according to Sayigh (1997, 29):

The PLO defined itself as the Palestinian “entity”, the embodiment of Palestinian nationalism, and at the same time was formed very much in the image of prevalent Arab state structures, especially Nassir’s Egypt.

In that period, Fatah, which was founded by Yasser Arafat in 1959, was competing with the PLO for the leadership over the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. PLO and Fatah had as their main goal the destruction of the state of Israel and the liberation of Palestine. In order to achieve their national goals both organizations agreed that they had to count on the Arab states. However, PLO and Fatah had different points of view regarding the role of the Palestinian national movement.

On the one hand, the first leader of the PLO Ahmad Shukeiri assumed that the Arab states would liberate Palestine without any military activities of the Palestinian movement. On the other hand, the leader of Fatah Yasser Arafat was convinced that Palestinian guerrilla attacks would force the Arab states to go to war with Israel (Rubin, 1994, 9).

Thus, we can assume that one of the main reasons for the establishment of the PLO by the Arab states was not the need to organize a Palestinian liberation movement, which could bring the liberation of the whole area of Palestine. The reason was the fact that the Arab states realized the emergence of a group of people with a high sense of nationalism, who desired to continue the war against Israel until the total liberation of Palestine (Sahliyah, 1997, 16). In order to control those people, the Arab states, had to control their national liberation movement.

However, due to the fact that the Arab states were competing between each other for the leadership of the Arab world, each Arab country desired to have under its control the newly established national movement. It has been argued (Hassassian, 1997, 75) that, “The Palestinians established the PLO in 1964, against a background of inter-Arab rivalries”. For that reason, there were established guerrilla groups which were supported

and/or controlled by other Arab states such as Syria and Iraq. Syria and Iraq had under their control the al-Saiqa, which means “storm” in Arabic, and Arab Liberation Front (ALF) respectively (Sahliyeh, 1997, 15).

Moreover, the Arab states could not risk falling into another bloody war against Israel as a consequence of the guerrilla attacks of the Palestinian military groups. For that reason, the Arab states preferred to control the PLO, in order to secure their interests in the Middle East. Thus, the PLO during its first years was deeply depended to the Arab states. Nevertheless, the Six Day War of 1967 had a tremendous impact on the structure of the organization and transformed it from an Arab-controlled organization to an independent national liberation movement.

1.4. The Six Day War of 1967

The tensions between the state of Israel and the Arab states, mainly Egypt, were high and a new war between the two rival parties was more than evident. As Reich (2004, 127) puts into words “The casus belli of the announced closure of the Strait of Tiran led to an Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt”. The Straits of Tiran connect the Gulf of Aqaba with the Red Sea and was very important for Israel’s national interests in the Middle East.

For that reason, the Israeli government felt threatened when the government of Egypt decided to close the Straits of Tiran for Israeli shipping (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 338). In that period the Egyptian government was pressured by other countries, mainly the Western ones, to open the Straits. Turkey, even the fact that it was member of the Western bloc it supported the Egyptian position, adopting a different policy from its Western allies, during the course of the crisis. As Robins (1991, p.78) points out:

Turkey displayed understanding of the Egyptian position and refused to join with the group of 'maritime powers' demanding the reopening of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping.

Adding to this, Turkey did not give its permission to the US to use the base in Incirlik to extend support to Israel during the course of the Six Day War (Bengio, 2004, 74). And as Nachmani (1987, 69-70) observes, "...Turkey abandoning its professed neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict expressed its solidarity with the Arab states in their conflict with Israel".

The Six Day War began on June 5, 1967, when the air forces of Israel made an attack first to the Egyptian air forces and after to those of Syria and Jordan. Israel destroyed the majority of the Egyptian air planes on the ground. Afterwards due to its complete air control the Israeli army achieved to crush the Egyptian forces and moved eastwards of the Suez Canal. Finally, Egypt and Israel signed an armistice agreement on the 9th of June (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 338-9).

After it signed the agreement with Egypt, Israel turned on the frontline with Syria and Jordan. Israel continued advancing its forces and occupied the West Bank and the Golan Heights in a few days. In the end, Israel signed a cease-fire agreement with Syria on 11 of June (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 339).

The Six Day War ended with the defeat of the Arab states and the occupation by the Israeli forces of the entire Palestine, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria (Rubin, 1994, 13). After the sides agreed to a cease-fire the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution 242. Turkey and Greece were among the countries which voted in favor of the Resolution 242, which according to Bengio (2004, 74), "demanded Israel's withdrawal

from the territories it had occupied during the fighting, in return for secure borders”. Moreover, the Resolution 242 called the rival parties (Rubin, 1994, 14) “{to} achieve a just settlement of the refugee problem”.

Turkey, even the fact that it supported the Arab states during the Six Day War, understood how important the Arab states and Israel were for its national interests. For that reason, Turkey, even the fact that it did not break or freeze its diplomatic relations with Israel, tried to upgrade its bilateral relations with the Arab states and gave support to them in the international forums and organizations (Liel, 2001, 191).

1.4.1 PLO's role in the course of the Six Day War

The leadership of the PLO was criticized for its policies during the Six Day War and its dependence to the Arab states. During the Six Day War, the PLO and Fatah did not play any role in the fighting. On the one hand, the lack of independence of the newly founded organization made it difficult to take an active role in the course of the Six Day War. On the other hand, the lack of material resources made the PLO unavailable to take a serious action against the Israeli forces.

The most dramatic consequence of the Six Day War for the Palestinian people was the fact that they became once again refugees, and were forced to leave their fatherland. Moreover, there were Palestinians, who remained in the occupied territories and suffered the Israeli oppression measures against them (Hassassian, 1997, 75). Mainly the refugees, but also those who remained in the occupied territories influenced the PLO and had a crucial impact on its transformation, and to the rise of Palestinian nationalism. After the 1967 defeat, Arab nationalism was replaced by Palestinian nationalism

(Sahliyeh, 1997, 11) and from 1969 onwards PLO tried to be as more independent as possible.

Of course, it was not easy to avoid the Arab states because Palestinian guerrilla groups within PLO were under the control or influenced by the Arab states. On the one hand, PLO's policies were influenced by the rivalries between the Arab states, and we can take into account that the Arab states had a great impact on it (Hassassian, 1997, 75). On the other hand, the rivalries between the Arab states and their control over some guerrilla groups had as a result clashes between the guerrilla groups within PLO. Especially in the 1970s the rivalry between the guerrilla groups had crucial consequences for the PLO, and resulted to the split of the organization in the 1980s.

1.5. Transformation of the PLO and the emergence of Palestinian Nationalism

After the Six Day War defeat, the Palestinians understood that they had to rely on their own power to achieve their national goals. As a result, PLO's structure changed thoroughly and the Palestinian movement was transformed into a national liberation movement, which acted on behalf of the Palestinian people, and in which many Palestinian militant groups participated (Sela, 1997, viii).

In the aftermath of the Six Day War defeat, Palestinian nationalism was rising among the masses, especially to those people who were displaced from their homeland. Besides, due to the fact that the PLO did not play any role during the Six Day War, it was criticized by the other armed groups for its dependence to the Arab states. For that reason, the change in PLO's leadership was obvious.

That change came after the end of the fourth PNC meeting which took place in Cairo in 1968, when Yasser Arafat's Fatah, in coordination with other Palestinian groups, achieved to bring under its control the Palestinian movement, while Yasser Arafat became the leader of PLO in February 1969 (Rubin, 1994, 19). Since 1969 PLO transformed itself to a national liberation movement and tried to construct warm relations with various liberation movements and many other countries.

1.5.1 The role of the refugees in the transformation of PLO

The refugees had a crucial impact on the transformation of the PLO from an Arab instrument to a national organization. Those people were expelled by force from their homeland and the majority of them became refugees for a second time in their life. On the one hand, the displaced Palestinians, frustrated by the Arab weakness to liberate Palestine, understood since that period, that they had to count on their own power to achieve their national goal. On the other hand, the hostile environment which the Palestinian refugees faced in the host Arab countries raised the Palestinian nationalism among the masses (Sahliyah, 1997, 9).

Moreover, another important reason for the rise of Palestinian nationalism outside and within the occupied territories was the policies of the Israeli state against the Palestinians who remained in the occupied territories. Furthermore, the Israeli authorities did not prevent any Jewish "extremist" attacks against the holy places of Islam within the occupied territories, especially those to Hebron and Jerusalem (Sahliyah, 1997, 9-10). Those attacks angered the Palestinians, the refugees and those who remained in the occupied territories blaming the Jewish state and asking for its destruction.

Thus, the guerrilla groups within PLO found prosperous ground to advance their policies and to influence to the point they could the Palestinian people. For that reason, the groups which were taking part in the Executive Committee of the PLO did not accept the Resolution 242, Israel's right to exist and expressed their desire to continue the struggle until the total liberation of Palestine and the destruction of the state of Israel. After their expulsion from Palestine, a number of refugees went to the Arab and Gulf states, where they found employment and the opportunity for a better life. Those people gave economic support to the PLO in the form of taxes, which were collected by the host countries. It was in this context that the Palestinian refugees tried to influence the leadership of the PLO. And by their economic assistance to the organization, they pressured the guerrilla groups within the organization to not accept any diplomatic solution, which would not bring the total liberation of Palestine and the return of all refugees back to their homes.

As a result, the guerrilla groups within PLO and PLO's leadership denied any diplomatic settlement with Israel, or any chance of establishing a "mini state" in West Bank and Gaza Strip (Sayigh, 1997, 28), claiming that their struggle would continue until the total liberation of Palestine and the destruction of the state of Israel. However, the civil war in Jordan between the Jordanian army and PLO, a new Arab-Israeli war, the Yom Kippur War of 1973, and the peace negotiation process between Egypt and Israel in the very late 1970s, challenged PLO's policies and resulted to the transformation of the organization's National Charter.

2. The regional and international developments in the 1970s

2.1 The Yom Kippur War of 1973

Even before the Yom Kippur War started, there were clashes between Egyptian and Israeli soldiers in the frontlines between the two countries, mainly in the Suez Canal. During that period Palestinians too committed guerrilla attacks from Jordan against Israeli targets and the state of Israel reacted to those attacks with reprisals to both Jordan and Egypt (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 342). Ergo, the tensions were high between the rival parties and the signs of a new war in the Middle East were more than evident. According to Sayigh (1997, 30), “The Yom Kippur War of 1973, had been waged with the aim of revitalizing the peace process...”

Thus, we can say that the Yom Kippur War came as a result of the need for both parties for stability in the region, a stability which could end the conflicts between the rival parties. There were, however, two other reasons which lead to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. The first one was the territorial losses of the Arab states during the Six Day War, while the second one was their desire to challenge the military superiority of Israel by initiating a new war against it. The Arab states lost territories during the Six Day War, and they desired to regain those territories back.

Moreover, Israel’s military superiority was unchallengeable since the Six Day War and the Arab states had the ambition to challenge Israel’s military supremacy in order to change the balance of power in the Middle East to their favor. The Yom Kippur War began when the Egyptian and Syrian armies made a simultaneous attack against Israel. The Egyptian army made an invasion on 6 of October 1973 through the Suez

Canal to the Sinai Peninsula, while the Syrian army made an attack against the Israeli forces on the Golan Heights. (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 375)

In the first days of the conflict the Egyptian and the Syrian armies had succeeded to take under their control some of the areas which they lost during the Six Day War of 1967. Israel, however, achieved to stop the advancement of the Egyptian and Syrian armies and gained back some of the lost territories. During the course of the Yom Kippur War, the Arab countries members of the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) decided to decrease their oil production, until the Israeli government terminated its occupation of the Arab lands (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 376).

That decision had a result the emergence of the first oil crisis, which had crucial consequences for the global economy and forced USA and Soviet Union to intervene in order to find a solution to the conflict. With the involvement of the two superpowers, USA and Soviet Union, the rival parties signed a cease-fire agreement on 22 of October. During the course of the Yom Kippur War, however, both USA and Soviet Union gave military assistance to Israel and Egypt-Syria respectively.

Before the sign of the cease-fire between the rival parties, the leaders of USA and Soviet Union had a meeting in Moscow regarding the Yom Kippur War and the emerging oil crisis. The superpowers agreed for a settlement which they proposed in the form of a Resolution at the UN Security Council, the Resolution 338. As a result, (The Question of Palestine and the United Nations, 2008, 18):

On 22 October, the Security Council adopted resolution 338, which reaffirmed the principles of resolution 242 and called for negotiations aimed at 'a just and durable peace in the Middle East'. The ceasefire call was later confirmed in resolution 339 of 23

October, and the Secretary-General was requested to dispatch United Nations observers immediately

Moreover, according to Reich (2004, 127), "...the outcome of the war made initial military disengagements between Israel and Egypt (1974) and Israel and Syria (1974) necessary and possible". Since that time, the rival parties began a negotiation process with the aim to achieve a diplomatic solution to the problem.

During the course of the Yom Kippur War, we can observe that Turkey and Greece supported the Arab states. Both countries had economic and political reasons which guided them to support the Arab side during and in the aftermath of the conflict. In the case of Turkey, we can observe that during the 1970s and even before the emergence of the oil crisis, the country had to deal with economic problems and domestic instability. The emergence of the oil crisis had crucial consequences for the Turkish economy and forced the Turkish government to reorient its policies in the Middle East.

Another reason which guided Turkey to support the Arab states was its need for support in the UN General Assembly regarding the Cyprus issue. As a consequence of the oil crisis and its eventual diplomatic isolation in the West after its intervention in Cyprus in 1974, Turkey understood the importance of a new approach towards the Arab states. Hence, we observe that since the beginning of the Yom Kippur War and the emergence of the oil crisis, Turkey adopted a pro-Arab policy chiefly in the course of the United Nations General Assembly's Resolutions voting in favor of the Arab states.

The same was the case for Greece. Greece was in the need of Arab support concerning its dispute with Turkey over Cyprus and its need for oil supplies. The presence of minorities of Greek origin within the Arab countries made the situation even more difficult for Greece to adopt a pro-Israeli policy in the course of the Yom Kippur

War. (More information for Greece's position in the course of the Yom Kippur War will be given in chapter three.) Thus, someone can easily understand that, the conflicting interests of both countries in Cyprus and the economic problems which had to deal with in the mid-1970s obliged both of them to support the Arab position in the course of the Yom Kippur War.

2.1.1 PLO's role in the course of the Yom Kippur War

As it was the case in the Six Day War of 1967, PLO did not play any role in the clashes during the Yom Kippur War. In that period, PLO was still trying to overcome the fatal blows it received in the course of the Black September in Jordan and to redeploy its armed wing in Lebanon where its new headquarters was moved to.

The civil war in Jordan, or the war between the Jordanian army and PLO, came as a result of the rivalries between the King of Jordan Husein and PLO over the control of the refugee camps within the Jordanian territory. As Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 362) underline:

By 1970 the commandos {of the PLO} were operating independently of the King's authority, establishing their own administrative networks in the refugee camps, conducting raids into Israel that provoked the usual Israeli reprisals, and generally behaving as though their organizations were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Jordanian state.

Those raids against Israel and the independence which the guerrilla groups enjoyed within the refugee camps challenged King Hussein's authority. Even more, due to the guerrilla attacks, Israel could probably invade Jordan causing another war between Jordan and Israel. As a consequence, the tensions between King Hussein and PLO were high due to King Hussein's desire to control not only the refugee camps, but also the

PLO and its leadership. The clashes between the Palestinians and the Jordanian army started on 15th of September 1970 and lasted until 25th of September when a cease-fire agreement was signed between King Hussein and the leader of PLO Arafat.

During the course of the civil war, approximately 3000 Palestinians died, and even the fact that the cease-fire agreement was signed on September the clashes restarted and lasted until July 1971. Afterwards, PLO moved its headquarters to Lebanon, and from there the Palestinian movement continued its guerrilla attacks against Israel. In the mid-1970s however, as a result of domestic instability in Lebanon and to the civil war between the religious communities, in the course of which PLO took military action against Christian militias, the organization faced new problems.

The ensuing Israeli invasion of 1982 had crucial consequences for the PLO and its leadership, which lost its main base of operations against Israeli. The peace process between Israel and Egypt in the very late 1970s was another challenge for PLO's leadership over the Palestinian's struggle for the liberation of Palestine and the destruction of the state of Israel. As a result of the regional developments, PLO began transforming its policies, and started considering the idea of a two state solution (Sayigh, 1997, 30).

PLO's leadership understood that the Arab states, especially Egypt, were ignoring the organization, and that they were ready to make the appropriate steps towards a diplomatic settlement with Israel, which could bring peace in the Middle East. The negotiation process challenged the PLO, which figured out that the Arab states, ignoring the national interests of the Palestinian people and their representative, could sign a peace agreement with Israel. As Sayigh (1997, 30-1) defines:

During this period the PLO pursued three main, practical objectives: to ensure its physical self-defense in Lebanon, to safeguard its political gains and enhance its diplomatic status, and to induce the United States to place the establishment of a Palestinian state on the negotiating agenda. Toward the latter two ends, the exiled leadership in Beirut saw the Palestinians of the occupied territories as a major ally in the quest to assert the legitimacy and political predominance of the PLO.

2.2 The Internationalization of the PLO and the impact on the Trilateral

Relations

PLO, since its establishment in 1964 and until its transformation after the Six Day War of 1967, was under the influence and/or control of the Arab states. Moreover, PLO tried to construct relations with other liberation movements around the world, and since its transformation it adopted a flexible and an independent policy. The ant colonial national movements around the world had a great influence on the transformation of PLO's policies.

During the 1960s and the 1970s many countries gained their independence from the colonialist countries through the armed struggle. The national liberation movements around the world, focusing on their national identity and their right of self determination influenced the guerrilla groups within the PLO and PLO's leadership. PLO tried to adopt the way by which those national liberation movements gained their independence from their colonialist rulers. As Sahliyah (1997, 11) expresses:

The presence of transnational networks, actors, and groups furnished the Palestinians with numerous resources and opportunities. The Algerians' attainment of their independence in 1962 through the strategy of national liberation warfare gave the Palestinians an alternative to the Arab collective approach.

Moreover, the national liberation movements and other countries, especially the non-aligned ones, and countries of the Eastern bloc gave military and moral support to the Palestinian movement. For those reasons, the leadership of the PLO understood that the opportunities to achieve their national goals were much more if they act as an independent national liberation movement rather than if they continued, as in the past, to be dependent on the Arab states.

As a result, PLO gained legitimacy within the Palestinian people, who saw the organization as the only way to liberate their homeland from Israel. In the words of Sahliyeh (1997, 12), “Such multifaceted support sharply increased Palestinian activism and gave the political leaders the space and opportunity to mobilize their followers”. This opinion is true, due to the fact that Palestinians’ moral was crashed after the Six Day War. Those people, who lost their homeland and became once again refugees, understood that the Arab states were not able or not willing to liberate Palestine.

To the contrary, when PLO transformed its policies and initiated guerrilla attacks against Israel challenging its authority within the occupied territories their moral was raising. Those activities also increased the faith of the Palestinian people who came to realize, that they could achieve the liberation of Palestine relying on themselves and not to any Arab state, or other external factors. And as Sayigh (1997, 27) points out, “Military action confirmed that the Palestinians, to themselves above all, were active participants in shaping their own destiny, rather than passive victims”. From PLO’s perspective, their struggle for the total liberation of Palestine was in the context of the struggle of various national liberation movements around the world to gain their independence from their colonialist rulers (Sahliyeh, 1997, 16).

It was in this context, that PLO cultivated warm relations with national liberation and radical movements. As a result, PLO backed many radical and national movements and members of those organizations received training in PLO camps, mainly at those in Lebanon. During that period, Palestinian guerrilla groups, in order to draw international attention to the Palestinian issue, committed attacks against Israeli and pro-Israeli targets in various European cities and even within Israel (Becker, 1984, 192). There were several attacks by Palestinian guerrillas, chiefly in the 1970s, such as kidnappings, airline hijackings and assassinations of Israeli or pro-Israeli politicians and individuals (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 363).

One of those attacks was the Munich massacre (1972) during which members of a Palestinian group called “Black September”, took eleven members of the national Olympic team of Israel as hostages. According to Hadawi (1979, 189), “The Munich incident began as an act of kidnapping to obtain the release of Palestinians who were languishing in Israeli prisons without trial”. In the end, the eleven hostages were killed by the kidnapers and the Palestinian guerrillas were killed during the rescue operation, with the exception of two Palestinians, who were arrested and charged for the kidnapping and murder of the Israeli athletes.

The Israeli authorities in reprisal to those attacks made air strikes against targets in Lebanon and Jordan, while the Israeli intelligence services carry out activities against Palestinian leading figures in various European cities and in the Lebanese capital, Beirut (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 363). Many other attacks such as air plain hijackings and kidnappings were accomplished in the 1970s and 1980s by Palestinian guerrilla groups and Israel responded to those attacks with reprisals. In some cases, members of foreign

radical and separatist movements, which received training in PLO camps, took part to those attacks.

However, due to the fact the Arab states desired to have the Palestinian movement under their custody, they did not give their permission to the guerrilla groups to accomplish guerrilla attacks against Israel from their territories. As Sela (1997, ix) defines:

Arab states, both individually and collectively, had continually sought to covert the Palestinian resistance into an internationally recognized national movement with limited territorial goals based on the UN Security Council Resolution 242.

Notably, during the 1970s and 1980s their desire to control PLO resulted to conflicts between PLO and the Arab states. In the 1970s and the 1980s, PLO had to deal with the civil war in Jordan and Lebanon, and in the aftermath of those civil wars, PLO lost its headquarters in both countries. The civil war in Jordan, which started on September 1970 and lasted until July 1971, had a great impact on PLO. The most critical point for the organization, however, was the Lebanese civil war (1975) and the eventual Israeli invasion of that country (1982), which had as a result PLO's defeat and its exodus from Lebanon.

Nevertheless, the Arab states, despite oppositions over its independency and legitimacy, recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people in the mid-1970s. Afterwards the international community despite pressures from USA and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

2.2.1 Regional and International Recognition of the PLO

After the end of the civil war in Jordan, the defeated PLO moved its headquarters to Lebanon from which it sought to continue its guerrilla attacks against Israel. However,

the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the ensuing peace negotiation process between Israel and Egypt challenged PLO's legitimacy as the representative of the Palestinian people.

The leadership of the PLO understood that the Arab states, avoiding the Palestinian movement and the national interests of the Palestinian people, were ready to achieve a peace settlement with the state of Israel. According to Muslih (1997, 39), "Both Egypt and Syria had already accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242 and had entered into disengagement – of – forces agreements with Israel". It was from this point onwards, that PLO transformed its policies and adopted a more flexible diplomatic position, without abandoning however the armed struggle.

During the discussions in the course of the twelfth PNC meeting, which was held in Cairo in 1974, there was a change in its program without abandoning the Palestinian national aspirations, however. After the end of the meeting, the PNC adopted a new program which guided PLO's policies. This ten point program came as a result of the new realities in the Middle East, with which the PLO had to deal with since the mid-1970s. In the words of Muslih (1997, 39):

...PLO adopted a program that broke away from the previous programs envisioned a totally liberated Palestine as a secular democratic state shared by all citizens, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. They also stressed armed struggle as the favored means for achieving this goal. Moreover, they rejected the idea of a Palestinian 'mini-state' in the West Bank and Gaza.

We can observe, however, that the PNC did not reject the idea for a diplomatic settlement, which could solve the Palestinian problem. And as Hassasian (1997, 82) observes, "From the twelfth PNC on, the concept of "armed struggle" became secondary to political diplomacy, but it was never ruled out as an option". The new PNC program

had as a result regional and international recognition of the PLO. First within the OIC – Organization of Islamic Conference - and afterwards within the UN General Assembly PLO won recognition, despite reactions from Jordan at first in the context of the OIC, and USA and Israel in the context of the UN General Assembly.

During the meetings of the OIC the Arab countries recognized the Palestinian movement as the exclusive representative of the Palestinian people, while a month later the leader of PLO Yasser Arafat made a speech in front of the UN General Assembly (McDowall 1990, 33). Moreover, PLO achieved to gain international recognition and as Hadawi (1979, 200), points out on 25th of November 1974 PLO became observer member of the UN:

with the right 'to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly; in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly; and in the session and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of other organs of the UN.

A year later, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution by which it equated Zionism with racism. Furthermore, in 1975 PLO became full member of the non-alignment countries and in 1976 of the Arab League (Rubin, 1994, 47). Furthermore, the Palestinian movement achieved to establish diplomatic relations with countries of the Western bloc and third world countries, while PLO leading figures had contacts with Israeli groups and individuals (Muslih, 1997, 42).

Moreover, there were reports that PLO had close contacts with the communist party of Israel in 1977. According to those reports (First meeting between PLO and the Communist party of Israel, Haravgi newspaper 6 May 1977, Greek 8):

the meeting (which was held in Prague), came as a result of the PNC's decisions, according to which PLO would establish close contacts and meetings with the democratic and progressive parties within Israel in order to construct stable and constructive relations between the two parties.

However, the peace process between Egypt and Israel in the late 1970s, which began with the initiative of the US president Jimmy Carter and was finalized with the sign of the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the peace treaty in 1979 between the two countries, threatened PLO's legitimacy as the representative of the Palestinian people. PLO and the other Arab countries criticized Egypt's decision to sign a peace agreement with Israel and expressed their anger against the Egyptian government by putting economic sanctions against Egypt, and by expelling that country from the Arab League.

3. The Peace Negotiation Process between Egypt and Israel

As I mentioned before, after the end of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 the rival parties signed disengagement treaties. Those treaties had a decisive impact on the peace process between the rival parties, Israel and the Arab states. As Morris (2001, 444) points out:

The two Israel-Egypt disengagement agreements (known as Sinai I and Sinai II) paved the way, again with the help of American mediation, for the process that culminated in the signing of the peace treaty in 1979.

The negotiation process however, at first for the disengagement agreements, and afterwards for the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel became a hard debate, due to conflicting interests between the two countries. Even more, both parties were ready to abandon the negotiation process if their demands were not taken into account by the other side. Egypt, for instance, desired to regain back the territories which it lost during the Six Day War of 1967, especially the Sinai Peninsula, which had a great significance for

Egypt's national interests. On the other hand, Israel longed for retaining its control over the Sinai, or at least, to retain the settlements in the area.

Moreover, both Egypt and Israel met oppositions against their decision to begin a negotiation process. In the case, of Egypt the other Arab states harshly criticized Egypt's decision to negotiate with the state of Israel. According to Morris (2001, 445), "The front-line Arab states all rejected one-on-one, separate negotiations, each fearing that its neighbor would strike a separate deal with Israel, weakening its own bargaining position". There were also many opponents to the negotiation process within Egypt.

In the case of Israel, the pressure came within the country, especially among the nationalist movements and the settlers in the occupied territories. The elections of 1977 and the new government under Menachem Begin administration, who was much more hard liner in comparison with the former Prime Minister Golda Meir (Lesch, 2001, 42), had crucial impact on the policies of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

Anwar Sadat, who desired a peaceful settlement to the confrontation with Israel, understood that the new government of Israel could present unacceptable proposals during the negotiation process. Even more, the government of Israel could not accept to participate in the negotiation process. For that reason, the Egyptian government had to make a gesture, by which it could convince the Israeli side for its readiness to sign a peace agreement. As a result, the Egyptian President decided to pay an official visit to Israel in November 1977, a visit which was the first official visit by an Arab leader (Lesch, 2001, 43).

The Egyptian President made an announcement in front of the Egyptian National Assembly in 9 of November 1977, saying that he was ready to fly to Jerusalem to meet

with the Prime Minister of Israel Menachem Begin (Morris, 2001, 449). Many Arab countries criticized the decision of the Egyptian President, and opposed to any diplomatic settlement with the state of Israel. However, President Sadat visited Jerusalem and made a speech in front of the Israeli parliament. During his speech in front of the Israeli parliament – Knesset, Sadat asserted that he paid an official visit to Israel to discuss with the Prime Minister of Israel the Palestinian issue, and not to sign a bilateral agreement with the Israeli state (Morris, 2001, p.452).

The leaders of the two countries exchanged thoughts about the peace negotiation process, and both expressed their desire for peace in the Middle East, a peace which could be achieved through diplomacy. That meeting drew US' attention to the area, and made the US government to understand the significance of a permanent peace and stability in the Middle East, for US interests in that area. The fact that both parties were ready to make the appropriate steps towards peace had as a result the initiative of the US president Jimmy Carter.

Secret meetings between Egyptian and Israeli officials were accomplished immediate after the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem. However, the Cairo conference which was held in 1977 as part of the negotiation process did not have any success. There were several reasons for that. On the one hand, we can observe that the representatives of Israel, USA and the UN representative were not ministers, while Egypt objected Israel's demands and vice versa. On the other hand, the other Arab states did not participate in the conference, showing their opposition against any peace settlement with the Israeli state (Morris, 2001, 456).

However, Begin made a trip to Egypt during which he had discussions with Sadat and expressed his plan for a peaceful settlement, which, however, was not accepted by the government of Egypt. Moreover, due to the construction of new Israeli settlements in the Sinai Peninsula, the negotiations were in a deadlock, and both parties did not desire to abandon their demands. It was at that time, when the US President Jimmy Carter intervened and invited the leaders of the two countries for a meeting at Camp David, in an effort to give his assistance to the peace negotiation process between the two countries.

3.1. The Camp David Accords of 1978

The US President Jimmy Carter invited both Begin and Sadat to Camp David to restart the peace negotiation process. Both of them agreed to participate at the Camp David meeting, even though the Prime Minister of Israel had some suspicions over the meeting (Morris, 2001, 463).

On the one hand, during that period Begin was pressured by the public opinion and by the Israeli political parties to achieve and sign a diplomatic settlement and not to abandon the peace process. On the other hand, the Arab states pressured Egypt to abandon the negotiation process with the state of Israel. The desire, however, of both parties for a diplomatic solution, US pressure to both of them, and the chance to be charged for the failure of the peace process if they rejected that proposal, forced both Sadat and Begin to make the appropriate steps towards peace.

Nevertheless, when the negotiation process at Camp David began, both parties understood that they had conflicting interests which they had to deal with. For instance, Sadat demanded full withdrawal of the Israeli troops and settlers from Sinai, while Israel

desired to retain an appropriate number of Israeli troops, and did not want to destroy the Israeli settlements in Sinai (Morris, 2001, 463). Consequently, a new deadlock in the negotiation process seemed to be inevitable. Despite that fact, due to American pressures to both parties to abandon their hard lines and to the fact that, as Morris (2001, p.466) points out, “neither Sadat, nor Begin had any thought of quitting Camp David”, the negotiations continued.

As a result of the negotiation process, the two parties signed the Camp David Accords in 1978. According to the agreement the Israeli forces would withdraw from Sinai in stages, while the two countries would establish diplomatic, economic and cultural relations. Moreover, the two countries agreed that a peace settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute and to the Palestinian issue should be achieved in full accordance with the UN Resolution 242 (Lesch, 2001, 44-5).

Simultaneously, there was an agreement about the proposed new status of West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to the agreement there would be a transitional period during which Egypt, Jordan, and Israel would have meetings and discussions for approximately five years about the proposed status of West Bank and Gaza Strip. The three countries during the course of their negotiations would discuss the process under which a self-governing authority would be established, while Palestinians from West Bank and Gaza could participate in the negotiations (Morris, 2001, 473).

During the course of the five years, there would be full autonomy on West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Israeli military and civil administration would withdraw, and would be replaced by an elected Arab authority. Moreover, there would be a three year period of negotiations between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and local Palestinians for a final settlement

(Morris, 2001, 473). There were hard critics against Egypt by the Arab states and PLO, regarding the Camp David Accords and the agreement, especially concerning the occupied territories and the future status of the Palestinian refugees. That treaty challenged PLO's legitimacy as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. As a result, the Palestinian movement began to mobilize the Palestinians within the occupied territories against the Camp David Accords (Sarraj, 1997, 177).

Moreover, from Palestinian perspective, the "autonomy" of West Bank and Gaza Strip meant nothing more than the continuity of the Israeli occupation of those territories and the end of their dream of establishing a Palestinian state, at least in the area of West Bank and Gaza Strip (Morris, 2001, 476).

3.2. The Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, 1979

After the sign of the Camp David Accords, the two countries continued the negotiation process trying to find a permanent solution to their conflict and to sign a peace treaty. President of Egypt Sadat was under pressure before the sign of the peace treaty with Israel, by the Arab states, that saw the agreement as an act of treason by Egypt. There were also opponents of the accords within Egypt, especially among left groups and organizations, and fundamentalists.

In the aftermath of the Camp David Accords, the other Arab countries severed their diplomatic relations with Egypt, they expelled it from the Arab League and the offices of the organization moved to Tunisia (Doran, 2004, 116). Moreover, the Egyptian President was blamed that he betrayed the Arabs and the Palestinian people, and was obliged to become more hardliner during the negotiation process. Thus, Sadat linked the

Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiation process to the Palestinian problem, a fact which presented an obstacle to the negotiation process (Morris, 2001, 477-8).

On the opposite side, the Israeli government did not want to accept (the unacceptable for Israel) Egyptian demands. The leaders of the two countries, however, after the initiative of the US President Jimmy Carter continued their bilateral negotiations. Even though the two sides presented different proposals in the course of the bilateral talks, an agreement was achieved and the peace treaty was signed in 1979. As Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 380) point out, “On March 26, 1979, Sadat and Begin signed a formal Egyptian-Israeli treaty in Washington”.

The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel followed up the Camp David Accords and had as a result the mutual recognition and the beginning of a new period in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was from this point onwards, that the two countries established diplomatic and economic relations. The Arab states, again refusing to accept any diplomatic settlement with Israel, reacted against the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, imposing to Egypt economic sanctions.

Moreover the state of Israel taking advantage of the new situation decided to destroy PLO's headquarters in Lebanon, by which the Palestinian movement initiated guerrilla attacks against Israel. In 1982 Israel made an invasion to Lebanon with the strategic aim of destroying PLO's camps there. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, dissatisfied the Egyptian authorities, which had just sign a peace treaty with Israel. However, that fact did not present any problems to the peace treaty of the two states, or in Egypt's bilateral relations with the USA (Doran, 2004, 116).

Chapter 2: The Regional and International Developments and the Trilateral Relations, 1980-1993

Introduction to Chapter

The second chapter deals with the regional and international developments in the years 1980-1993. Regional developments such as the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, as a result of the Lebanese civil war, which started in 1975 and lasted until 1990, and the Palestinian uprising- intifada of 1987, which led to the establishment of the Palestinian state had tremendous impact on the trilateral relations. Moreover, the PLO-Israel peace negotiation process influenced Turkey's regional policies. In that period Turkey improved its diplomatic relations with both Israel and PLO.

Chapter two is divided to three parts. The first part examines the situation in Lebanon in the course of the civil war of 1975 and the consequential Israeli invasion in 1982. In this context, I go over the reasons for the outbreak of the civil war in the aforementioned country and PLO's role in the course of the conflict. Furthermore, in this part, I analyze the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the regional and international reactions against the Israeli invasion.

Part two deals with the Palestinian uprising - intifada in the occupied territories. In this context, I make a brief analysis of the reasons of the Palestinian uprising, PLO's policies in the course of the uprising, the emergence of the Islamic movement Hamas, and Israel's reactions against the Palestinian people within the occupied territories. The uprising resulted to the establishment of the Palestinian state in West Bank and Gaza Strip and to the peace negotiation process between the two rival parties. The second part ends with an analysis of the peace negotiation process between PLO and Israel.

The third part of chapter two analyzes the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel since 1980. During that period, due to regional developments the bilateral relations of the two countries, mainly in the diplomatic level, were in a very low level. In contrast, the two countries improved their relations in the economic, military and intelligence sectors. Turkey as a result of the new developments in the Middle East in the very late 1980s and early 1990s, felt free to adopt a more flexible policy in the Middle East. Taking advantage of the peace process in the Middle East, the Turkish government improved its relations with both Israel and PLO and since the early 1990s it appointed an ambassador to Israel and upgraded its bilateral relations with the Israeli state.

Part three ends with an analysis of PLO's relations with Turkey and its impact on the trilateral relations since the organization's establishment. In this context I make an analysis of PLO's policies regarding Turkish national interests and its relations with radical and separatist movements such as, THKO, ASALA and PKK. PLO's relations with those organizations had crucial impact on its bilateral relations with Turkey.

Even more, PLO's policies during the Cyprus crisis of 1974 dissatisfied the Turkish authorities. PLO's policies during the Cyprus crisis of 1974 will be analyzed in chapter three. Also, PLO's (no) reactions during the expulsion of Muslim Turks from Bulgaria in 1989, as those of the Arab countries dissatisfied the Turkish government. For those reasons, even the fact that Turkey gave its permission to PLO to open an office in Ankara in 1979, remained suspicious against the Palestinian organization.

1. The Lebanese Civil War

1.1. The causes of the civil war in Lebanon

In order to understand the causes of the civil war in Lebanon, which had as a result the Israeli invasion of that country and the exodus of PLO from Lebanon, we have to look over the distribution of power among the religious communities in Lebanon. Furthermore, we also have to understand PLO's status within Lebanon, especially in the refugee camps, which constituted a state within the Lebanese state, and were another reason for the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

Since the establishment of the Lebanese state, the distribution of power was divided among the religious communities, and more precisely, the Muslim, the Druze and the Maronite communities of Lebanon. For that reason, the religious communities of Lebanon, even before its full independence from France in 1943, had to some extent equal rights and equal representation in the parliament and the government.

However, the religious communities were competing between each other over the distribution of power in the government and the parliament. Adding to this, the religious communities, in order to secure and advance their rights, had as their main goal to achieve more power in the government and the parliament. According to the National Pact of 1943 the two powerful communities of Lebanon were the Maronites Christians and the Sunni Muslims. However, since the 1970s, the Shiite community of Lebanon became one of the most powerful communities, a fact which challenged the National Pact of 1943. That fact could also present another obstacle to the domestic stability in Lebanon (Fraser, 2004, 111). Moreover, the fact that the Lebanese constitution did not

achieve to create a homogeneous national identity, increased the differences and the tensions in the Lebanese society.

The Palestinian presence in Lebanon further deteriorated the situation, while PLO's guerrilla attacks against Israel and the Israeli reprisals angered the Christian community of Lebanon. Since PLO's inception, the organization desired to have its own bases in an Arab territory, from which it could accomplish guerrilla attacks against Israel.

And even though the Arab countries, notably Egypt and Syria, supported the organization, they did not give their permission to the Palestinian movement to accomplish from their territories guerrilla attacks against Israel, while Jordan achieved to control its frontier with Israel. To the contrary, the Lebanese state was not able to stop or control the Palestinian activities against Israel (Brown, 2004, 283). In 1969, President of Egypt Nasser's initiative finalized PLO's status in Lebanon in general, and in the refugee camps in particular. According to the agreement, the Palestinian movement would have the ability to operate against Israel independently in south Lebanon, where Palestinian guerrillas could receive training in the camps (Bickerton, 2009, 148).

Furthermore, after the end of the civil war in Jordan in 1971, PLO moved its headquarters to Lebanon, whence it continued the guerrilla attacks against Israel. The Palestinian movement altered the status of the refugee camps in south Lebanon, where Lebanese government's authority ceased to exist (Morris, 2001, 499). The government of Israel responded to those attacks with air strikes against south Lebanon, which caused many casualties to the Lebanese state. As Cleveland and Bunton (2004, 383) indicate:

The relative ease with which Israeli forces were able to execute commando raids of their own, exemplified by a strike against Beirut International Airport in 1968 and the

assassination of three Palestinian leaders in Beirut in 1973, caused an outcry against the government from Arab nationalists and radical reformers.

The Christian community, however, was angered because PLO continued its guerrilla attacks against Israel, which resulted to new Israeli reprisals, and could possibly, had as an eventual result (as it did), a full-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In the words of Bickerton (2009, 149), “The Maronites felt no Arab solidarity with the Palestinians, and did not want to be drawn into a dispute they regarded as none of Lebanon’s business”.

The government of Lebanon was unable to react against the Israeli air strikes and to prevent or to try to control, even to some extent, PLO’s guerrilla activities. That fact had as a result tensions within the country. Adding to this the political tensions concerning the balance of power among the religious communities, the outbreak of a civil war in Lebanon was inevitable. Ergo, we can easily conclude that, the disputes among the religious communities for the distribution of power, the Palestinian presence in the south and PLO’s status in the form of a state within a state in the refugee camps, where the central government could not intervene, had as a result the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

1.2. The outbreak of the civil war and PLO

The clashes between the religious communities started on the 13th of April 1975 and lasted until the 13th of October 1990. The civil war began when Christian Phalanges opened fire against a bus, killing approximately 30 Palestinians (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 384-5). The civil war just started and PLO could not avoid the clash with the Christian militants. There were two reasons which forced PLO to take part in the clashes. The first reason was the fact that there were radical groups within PLO and PLO’s

leadership could not control them. Even though the leadership of the PLO tried to be neutral in the course of the civil war, the radical groups and individuals forced it to take an active part to the clashes in Muslims favor and against the Christian side (Morris, 2001, 500).

The second reason came as a result of the Phalangists' activities against the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, targeting the Palestinian refugee camps. For instance, as Morris (2001, 500) indicates, during the first days of the civil war, "In Beirut two refugee camps felt to Christian assaults and many of their inhabitants were massacred". The PLO reacted and in cooperation with the other Muslim military groups made an attack against the Christian Maronites. Israel and Syria were also involved in the conflict. Israel from its side had an indirect involvement in the first years of the civil war giving assistance to the Christian Maronites. As Wagner (2002, 66) points out, "In a way, the Lebanese civil war turned into a kind of Palestinian-Israeli conflict fought on foreign soil".

Due to the PLO-Muslim military groups' coalition, Syria made an intervention in June 1976 and rescued the Maronite community from PLO-Muslim militant activities. Syria's involvement came as a result of the request for help from the Lebanese Front, the military branch of the Christian Maronites (Bickerton, 2009, 149). As Bickerton (2009, 149) observes, "Assad's goal was to make Lebanon a Syria client and to achieve this he was prepared to weaken the PLO". As a result of Syria's intervention, on 9th of June a cease-fire agreement was signed and negotiation process began between the rival parties.

The government of Israel did not have any objections to the presence of the Syrian army in Lebanon, but the Israeli government could not accept further advancement of the Syrian army to south Lebanon (Bickerton, 2009, 149). Nevertheless,

the negotiation process between the rival parties came to a deadlock, and clashes began again. During that period of time the Syrian army collaborated with the Maronite militants and until the 16th of October Syria occupied Beirut and Sidon (Morris, 2001, 500).

In the meantime, PLO continued its raids against Israel during the civil war, and Israel responded to those attacks with air strikes against targets in south Lebanon (Morris, 2001, 501). Furthermore, Israel continued its indirect involvement by giving assistance to the Maronite forces. Finally, a cease-fire agreement was signed between the rival parties on October 1976. According to Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 385), “On October 18, 1976, Syria and PLO accepted a cease-fire drawn up by Arab heads of state, and the worst of the fighting came to a halt”.

However, a hijacking of an Israeli bus in 1978 by a Palestinian radical group, who killed 30 Israeli civilian passengers (Bickerton, 2009, 150), resulted to an Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Israeli forces initiated the invasion to Lebanon, with the strategic aim of eliminating PLO’s infrastructure there (Bickerton, 2009, 150). Besides, another strategic aim of the Israeli forces during the invasion was, according to Morris (2001, 501), “... to expand, and create continuity between the existing Christian-held enclaves on the Lebanese side of the border”. As a result the Israeli forces achieved to occupy “...the most of the area south of the Litani River” (Bickerton, 2009, 150).

In the meantime, the UN Security Council had a meeting concerning the “Operation Litani” and it passed the Resolution 425, which called for the cessation of all military actions and for Israel’s withdrawal from the Lebanese territory. Also the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established to supervise the withdrawal

of Israeli forces from Lebanon and the demilitarization of the area (Morris, 2001, 502). However, as Bickerton (2009, 150-1) observes, “Although the Israelis withdrew three months later, they established a nine-mile wide ‘Security Zone’ under Major Haddad’s control”.

Nevertheless, the conflicts between the religious communities, PLO’s guerrilla attacks against targets in north Israel, and the reprisals by the Israeli forces continued. In the end, PLO’s activities against Israel resulted to a major invasion by the Israeli forces in June 1982. The Israeli government initiated the invasion in order to oust the Palestinian movement out of Lebanon, and to crush its military infrastructure in that country, (Morris, 2001, 508). The cause for the invasion was the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London by a radical Palestinian group.

1.3. Israeli invasion of Lebanon, 1982

PLO’s guerrilla attacks against the Israeli settlements in northern Israel and the political power which the organization enjoyed in south Lebanon, which constituted a state within the Lebanese state, resulted to the Israeli invasion of 1982. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was more than obvious from the first months of 1982. During that period, the Israeli government was accomplishing the departure of the Israeli forces from the Sinai Peninsula. For that reason there was not any possibility that the Egyptian government would react if Israel invaded Lebanon (Bickerton, 2009, 152).

One of the main reasons for the invasion, of course was PLO’s activities against the Israeli settlements of northern Israel. Even though, the Israeli government had already decided the invasion; it was expecting an event to justify its decision to invade Lebanon. There were several attacks against Israel during the civil war, till the Israeli invasion, and

the Israeli authorities responded to those attacks with reprisals against targets in Lebanon. The government of Israel justified its raids against the refugee camps, blaming the PLO as responsible for the attacks against Israeli settlements.

However, the attempt to assassinate the Israeli ambassador in London, by a Palestinian group, the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), gave the pretext Israel necessitated to invade Lebanon. Even though, there was information from the intelligence services, that PLO was not responsible for the assassination attempt, and that the group, which was responsible for the incident, was an opponent to PLO, the Israeli government invaded Lebanon (Fraser, 2004, 125).

The strategic aim of the Israeli invasion was the destruction of PLO's headquarters in southern Lebanon and its expulsion from the Lebanese territory. Moreover, the Israeli government was aiming to lessen PLO's political power, to oust the Syrian forces from the Lebanese territory, and as final goal to construct the appropriate political environment, by which, the Lebanese state would sign a peace treaty with Israel (Reich, 2004, 128).

Even the fact that the full-scale invasion officially began on 6th of June; Israeli air forces launched airstrikes starting from the 4th of June 1982. During the first hours of the attack, the Israeli air forces targeted PLO's bases in Lebanon and afterwards, Palestinian guerrillas opened fire against the Israelis and the Israeli airstrikes proceeded the next day (Morris, 2001, 515).

After those incidents, the government of Israel began a full scale invasion of Lebanon on the 6th of June. There was a blueprint for the invasion, which the Israeli forces had to rely on for the purpose of achieving Israel's strategic goals. According to

the blueprint, the Israeli forces would destroy PLO military infrastructure in south Lebanon, while they would try to construct a secure zone in south Lebanon (Bickerton, 2009, 152).

The clashes between the Israeli forces and PLO fighters were harsh, but the military superiority of the Israeli forces, especially in the air, had as a result their advance in southern Lebanon. For that reason, the Israeli army achieved to reach its goals and after a few days the Lebanese capital-Beirut was surrounded by the Israeli forces (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 388).

As Israeli forces continued their advancement to Lebanon they could not avoid the clashes with the Syrian army, which until that period of time, did not play any role in the course of the conflict. Finally, after pressures from the international community, and demonstrations against the Israeli invasion even within Israel, an agreement was reached.

In the words of Bickerton (2009, 153), “The US finally brokered an UN-sponsored peace agreement. Syria agreed on 7 August; Israel, Lebanon and the PLO agreed by the 18th”. The peace agreement called for the exodus of PLO fighters from Beirut, which would be overseen by an international force – MNF, the Multinational Force in Lebanon, in which French, Italian and American forces would be included. The international force would also be responsible for the safety of the Palestinian civilian people, who would remain in the refugee camps (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 388). In the time of the withdrawal of the PLO guerrillas, approximately 15,000 Palestinians and Syrians departed from Beirut, and the Palestinian militants went to other Arab countries, such as Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, while the headquarters of the organization were transferred to Tunis (Morris, 2001, 538).

Bachir Gemayel was elected as new president of Lebanon under Israeli pressures. Afterwards, the MNF began to withdraw its forces from Lebanon on 10th of September (Bickerton, 2009, 153). On 14th of September, however, the Lebanese president Gemayel was assassinated and the Phalangists accusing the Palestinian guerrilla groups for the assassination entered the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and massacred Palestinian civilian people. Afterwards, the peace keeping force returned to Lebanon, to supervise the cessation of all military activities in the Lebanese state, and Amin Gemayel was elected as new president of Lebanon. The new government of Lebanon signed an accord with the Israeli government, but as Bickerton (2009, 154) points out, "... on 5 March {1984}, under pressure from Syria and Muslim militias, the Lebanese National Assembly cancelled the March 1983 accord with Israel".

1.4. The aftermath of the Israeli invasion

The government of Israel, by initiating the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, achieved the destruction of PLO's headquarters in Lebanon, and removed a danger from its northern frontier.

However, the Israeli government did not achieve all of its goals, and even the fact that the Israeli forces withdrew from Lebanon in 1985 they remained in the Security Zone, which was established in southern Lebanon. Moreover, the Christian community, which the Israeli government supported during the civil war, was weakened, while the Muslim community gained more power in the aftermath of the war, especially the most radical community - Shiites. According to Brown (2004, 284), "Soon the Lebanese Shiites, especially the political and military party, Hizbullah, more than matched the military nuisance posed earlier by the PLO".

On the other hand, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon did not end the presence of Syrian troops in that country. To the contrary, while the Israeli army controlled south Lebanon, the Syrian army had control over the rest of the country (Brown, 2004, 284). Furthermore, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon resulted to a Soviet involvement in the Middle East, in the form of military assistance primarily to Syria (Hale, 2000 166). The Soviet Union supplied the Syrian army with anti-aircraft weapons, which threatened Israel's national security.

Moreover, the Israeli invasion and the massacre of Palestinian civilian people in the refugee camps by Christian militias resulted to huge demonstrations within Israel and international criticism, even from its allies. The government of Israel established a commission, known as "Kahan Commission", which began an investigation for the massacre of the Palestinians within the refugee camps and tried to find those who were responsible for the massacre. As Morris (2001, 548) points out:

On February 8, 1983, the Kahan Commission published its unanimous findings, attributing to the IDF and Israel indirect responsibility for the massacre... on the political level, the commission attributed 'a certain degree of responsibility' to Begin... the main blame was directed to Sharon... he was removed from the Defense Ministry – but remained in the cabinet as a minister without portfolio.

The civil war of Lebanon and the Israeli invasion of 1982, which led to the exodus of PLO from that country also challenged PLO, and reshaped the policies and the program of the Palestinian movement (Budeiri 2010, 330). It was in this context that the PLO leadership turned to the occupied territories and began to influence the local people. As Hassassian (1997, 78-9) puts into words, "The focus of the political struggle shifted to the West Bank and Gaza because the PLO's formal institutions and infrastructure had

been partially shattered". Since that period, PLO understood the fact that a peace settlement could be achieved through diplomacy. Thus, as Hassassian (1997, 83) indicates:

The 'no' of the Palestinians with regard to negotiations with Israel and the restoration of their rights in Palestine has been altered by two important developments: (a) the PLO's adoption of a two-state solution and acceptance of the relevant UN Resolutions, and (b) the reluctance of the Palestinians in the occupied territories to play a leading role in the negotiation process.

However, the radical groups within PLO expressed their denial to any negotiation settlement with Israel, and their desire to continue the armed struggle until the total liberation of Palestine and the destruction of the state of Israel. In this framework, those groups accused the leader of the Palestinian movement Arafat for the defeat in Lebanon, and for his efforts to achieve a diplomatic settlement for the Palestinian issue (Bickerton, 2009, 156).

That new development drew King of Jordan Hussein's attention. In coordination with Arafat, King Hussein proposed a plan for a peace settlement in the Middle East in general, and in Palestine in particular, a plan which, according to Bickerton (2009, 156), called for "... the creation of a Jordan-Palestine confederation in the West Bank following Israeli withdrawal in return for a treaty with Israel".

The governments of Israel and USA did not accept the Jordanian proposal and a new round of Palestinian guerrilla attacks began. Israel responded to the guerrilla attacks with reprisals making the case for peace in the Middle East more difficult. As Bickerton (2009, 156) remarks, "PLO extremists assassinated three Israelis in Cyprus in late

September, and this prompted an Israeli air attack on Arafat's headquarters in Tunis a week later".

However, according to reports of the Greek-Cypriot press, the murderers did not have any connection with the PLO. According to those reports (The murderers of the three Israelis are opponents of PLO, Aneksartitos, newspaper, 9 December 1985, Greek, p.3), "one of the three persons who were charged for the assassination of the three Israelis, during the trial claimed that they were opposed to the PLO".

Nevertheless, a new development within the occupied territories, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, forced the two rival parties to take the appropriate steps towards peace. The Palestinian Uprising – Intifada of 1987, which came as a result of spontaneous youth demonstrations, challenged the stability in the occupied territories, and PLO's leadership in the Palestinian cause. It was in this framework that the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist and proclaimed the establishment of the Palestinian state in parts of the occupied territories a year later (1988).

2. The Palestinian Uprising – Intifada, 1987

In the words of Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 473):

The Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip participated in a mass uprising to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state. The uprising, called the intifada, endured for nearly five years and forced Israel to recognize the impact of occupation on the Palestinians.

One of the main reasons for the outbreak of the Intifada was the Israeli oppression measures against the Palestinian local people in the occupied territories. On the one hand, the Israeli government continued the construction of new settlements within the occupied territories, a fact which could lead to an eventual annexation of West Bank and Gaza

Strip. On the other hand, the oppressive measures against the Palestinians in the occupied territories, made the life of the Palestinian people even harder. As Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 474) point out, the Palestinians:

... were required to carry identity cards and pay special taxes; they had to overcome a maze of bureaucratic obstacles and security checks to obtain the most basic licenses and business permits; and they were arrested, imprisoned and sometimes tortured by the Israeli authorities at the slightest suspicion of political activism.

Moreover, the economic problems in the occupied territories were another reason for the Palestinian uprising. The Palestinians within the occupied territories until the mid-1980s counted on the economic assistance of the Gulf States in general, and to the Palestinians who migrated to the Arab states in particular. However, the economic problems which the Arab states, especially the Gulf countries, had to deal with since the mid-1980s, made the situation even more difficult for the Palestinians within the occupied territories (Sahliyah, 1997, 10).

2.1 The outbreak of the Intifada and Israel's reactions

The economic problems accompanied with the construction of new settlements in the occupied territories and the Israeli oppressive measures against the Palestinian civilian people, exhausted and angered the Palestinians. Moreover, the inability of both PLO and the Arab states to put an end to the Israeli occupation broke the moral of the Palestinian people, who came to realize that the situation would not change to the near future (Morris, 2001, 562).

The uprising began as a youth demonstration in the West Bank and had been transformed into a broad demonstration of the Palestinian people within the occupied territories. An incident in December 1987, in which four Palestinians died and six others

were wounded (Morris, 2001, 573), resulted to huge youth demonstrations in Gaza Strip and West Bank.

That incident had as a result the outbreak of youth demonstrations in Gaza Strip. As Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 475) indicate, “Thousands of Palestinians gathered to protest the incident, and when the Israeli army shot and killed some of the demonstrators, all of Gaza burst into open revolt”. The Palestinian uprising – intifada, just began.

If someone looks over the objectives of the Palestinian uprising he/she will definitely understand that the objectives and the reasons were in a kind of form the same. Thus, we can say that the Palestinians through the uprising, were aiming to force the Israeli authorities to stop the construction of new settlements in West Bank and Gaza Strip, to draw international community’s interest in the Palestinian cause, and as their final goal to end the Israeli occupation and establish a Palestinian state within the occupied territories (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 475).

To achieve their goals, the Palestinians initiated huge demonstrations, general strikes, they kept their shops closed, they made a boycott against the Israeli products, and they also refused to pay the taxes which were imposed to them by the Israeli authorities (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 475). The targets of the Palestinians were both Israelis, soldiers and settlers, and their Palestinian collaborators such as informants or spies (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 476).

The Israeli forces during the first period of the uprising used all the means to stop the demonstrations, and even open fire against the protestors. Moreover, according to Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 476):

The military also employed collective punishment on a broad scale, demolishing the homes of suspected stone throwers, placing entire villages under twenty-four-hour curfew

for several days at a time, cutting off water and electricity and closing the West Bank schools and Universities.

During the course of the uprising, more than 1,000 Palestinians and 56 Israelis died, while 37,000 were injured and approximately 35,000 Palestinians were arrested (William, and Bunton, 2009, 476-477). The oppressive measures of the well armed Israeli forces against the Palestinian civilian people resulted to hard critiques against the Israeli government from the international community. Turkey and Greece were among the countries which criticized Israeli policies in the course of the Palestinian uprising. And as Bengio (2004, 77) indicates, "...most Turks began to admire Palestinian youths for their courage in face of heavily armed Israeli soldiers".

However, Turkey, even it criticized Israel's policies against the Palestinian civilian people, did not freeze or cut off its relations with Israel, as a result of the new developments. And as Robins (1991, 80) indicates, "Turkey found itself able to pursue an even-handed policy in the area reminiscent of the late 1960s". On the other hand, the Greek government made hard critiques against the Israeli oppressive measures against the Palestinian demonstrators. Greece's reactions against Israeli oppression measures in the course of the Intifada will be analyzed to a more extent in chapter three.

2.2. PLO's policies during the Uprising and the emergence of Hamas

As I mentioned in chapter one, since the inception of PLO, the main goal of the organization was the destruction of the state of Israel and the establishment of an Arab Palestinian state in the whole territory of Palestine. The destruction of Israel could only be achieved through the armed struggle and the organization did not accept any negotiations or a diplomatic settlement with Israel.

However, since the end of the 1970s PLO's leadership understood that the Arab states could exchange land for peace with Israel, avoiding PLO and the Palestinian national demands. Egypt, one of the most significant Arab countries, had already signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, and other Arab countries could possibly follow Egypt's example. The new developments since the late 1970s challenged PLO, in a way that the Arab states could achieve a final settlement with Israel concerning the Palestinian issue, avoiding the PLO, however. For that reason, the PLO was divided between those who supported the diplomatic approach to the conflict and those who did not accept any diplomatic solution and desired the continuation of their struggle until the total liberation of Palestine (Muslih, 1997, 38-9).

After the 12th PNC, PLO adopted the diplomacy as a way of obtaining its objectives, without abandoning the armed struggle, however (Muslih, 1997, 40). Moreover, the split within the PLO after the 12th PNC, the civil war in Lebanon and the Israeli invasion of that country, which had as a result the exodus of PLO from Lebanon, and the pressures by the Arab states to accept a diplomatic settlement, reshaped PLO's policies. However, a new development within the occupied territories – the Palestinian Uprising Intifada of 1987 – challenged PLO's leadership over the Palestinian struggle and forced the organization to accept a diplomatic settlement with Israel, by accepting the UN Resolutions and Israel's right to exist and declared the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 (Sela, 1997, ix).

During the first months of the Intifada, PLO tried to influence the local people to its favor, in order to avoid any challenge to its domination to the Palestinian struggle. As Morris (2001, 575) expresses:

The man who ran the activities of Fatah in the territories from Tunis was Arafat's deputy, Khalil al-Wazir, known as Abu Jihad... But he and Arafat were slow to grasp that they were witnessing not just another ephemeral state of rioting but the start of a sustained rebellion which would continue for years.

For that reason, PLO's leadership failed to understand the realities of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and its leadership was challenged by the leading figures of the uprising. The greatest challenge for the PLO, however, came from the newly established Islamic movement Hamas which was established within the occupied territories (Litvak 1997, 183). The fact that Hamas was established within the occupied territories, gave to the organization the advantage to influence the local people and to understand the real problems of the Palestinians there. Moreover, Hamas desired to begin a "holy war" against Israel, it did not accept any diplomatic settlement with the Israeli side, and had as one of its main goals to force the Arab states to make a war against Israel (Morris, 2001, 577).

Thus, we can say that since its establishment, Hamas was a serious challenge to PLO and imposed many obstacles to the peace negotiation process between PLO and Israel. However, even the split within the PLO and the emergence of the Islamic movement Hamas, PLO approved a two-state solution and announced its readiness to begin a negotiation process with Israel in order to achieve a settlement for the Palestinian issue. It was in this context that Yasser Arafat declared the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and recognized the state of Israel.

2.3. The establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and the Peace Process

In the words of Hassassian (1997, 83):

In November 1988, the nineteenth PNC met in Algiers to adopt a declaration of independence and a political statement. In these documents a clear and concise peace strategy was laid down based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. This PNC constituted a clear formulation of PLO objectives in achieving political compromise with Israel.

The regional developments since the very late 1970s forced PLO to alter its policies and to adapt to the new realities in the Middle East. However, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories put another pressure to PLO which came to realize that it should transform its policies and start negotiations with Israel, in order to achieve a peace agreement and a diplomatic solution to the Palestinian issue. More precisely, as Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 477) observe: “Under pressure to act on behalf of the Palestinians of the Intifada, Arafat worked successfully to change the PLO’s position”.

It was in this context that Arafat recognized the state of Israel, and declared the establishment of the Palestinian state in parts of the occupied territories, after the end of the 19th PNC which was held in Algiers (Muslih, 1997, 47). The 19th PNC meeting underlined PLO’s readiness to begin the peace negotiation process with the state of Israel and USA in order to achieve a diplomatic settlement which could bring peace in the Middle East.

According to the PNC’s decisions, the Palestinian movement accepted the Resolutions 242 and 338, it recognized the state of Israel and Israel’s right to exist, and adopted diplomacy as a way to obtain peace with the Israeli state (Muslih, 1997, 48-9). Besides, PLO agreed to the principle “exchange land for peace” and also it renounced terrorism in all of its forms (Robins, 1991, 80). The Arab countries, countries of the Eastern bloc, of the non-Alignment movement and third world countries recognized the Palestinian state.

However, as Rubin indicates (1994, 107), “Western states did not acknowledge the claim, and Moscow’s response was especially disappointing for the PLO, only taking note of the declaration of independence”. Turkey, from its side, recognized the newly established Palestinian state becoming one of the first states (the first within the Western bloc) which recognize the newly established state (Robins, 1991, 80).

The state of Israel expressed its frustration over Turkey’s recognition of the Palestinian state. Furthermore, the governments of Israel and USA did not recognize the Palestinian state and refused to have any diplomatic contacts with PLO until the organization recognizes Israel’s right to exist and abandon terrorism. Finally, Yasser Arafat made a speech on December 1988 in Geneva, in which he recognized Israel and renounced terrorism (Rubin, 1994, x).

That declaration led to the beginning of a round of negotiations between PLO and USA, while the Israeli government was dissatisfied by the US-PLO negotiations. According to Morris (2001, 608), “American and PLO representatives held several rounds of talks in Tunis during the following weeks”. The government of Israel until that date did not accept to negotiate with the PLO while it was ready to begin negotiations with the Arab states and the Palestinians within the occupied territories.

Thus, we can say that Israel preferred to achieve a diplomatic settlement with the Palestinians within the occupied territories and the Arab states, while excluding PLO from the process. However, due to American and Arab pressures the Israeli government initiated a peace proposal in 1989. As Morris (2001, 609) indicates: Rabin, then Prime Minister of Israel,

Proposed that Israel negotiate with a joint delegation of Jordanians and Palestinians from the territories (rather than ‘external’ PLO officials); that three to six months of quiet and

'political' elections in the West Bank and Gaza, in which Palestinian representatives could be chosen, precede talks; and that, in line with Camp David Accords, the talks allow for both an interim 'expanded autonomy' stage and a final-settlement negotiations.

On the one hand, PLO, Egypt and Jordan rejected Rabin's peace proposal in the provisions, that the plan rejected the idea of PLO's participation in the negotiations, and did not accept the newly established Palestinian state (Morris, 2001, 609). On the other hand, PLO submitted an alternative proposal by which, as Morris (2001, 609) illustrates: it demanded

...at least partial Israeli military withdrawal from the territories before the elections were held; a commitment to full withdrawal within twenty-seven months; acceptance of the refugees' 'right of return' to their former homes in Israel and the territories; and agreement to an independent Palestinian state.

Rabin peace proposal came to nowhere. In the meantime, the dialogue between USA and PLO was in a deadlock. Despite PLO's readiness to accept a two-state solution and its willingness to renounce terrorism, the Israeli government in coordination with the Israeli lobby pressured US representatives to abandon the negotiation process with PLO. In the mean time, an attempted assault against Israeli civilian people from Palestinian guerrillas, who desired to stop the negotiation process, further deteriorated the situation (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 477-8). After that incident the US-PLO dialogues broke off.

However, due to pressures within Israel to achieve a final settlement with the PLO, and US and Arab pressures to both PLO and Israel, negotiations between Israel and PLO began. Additionally, global and regional developments such as the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 1991 had crucial impact on the negotiation process between PLO and Israel.

During the Gulf crisis, PLO supported Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait. Because of its decision PLO was isolated in the Arab world, and the Arab countries criticized its decision to support the Iraqi invasion. Saudi Arabia first and afterwards, the other Gulf States suspended their economic assistance to PLO due to its decision to support Iraq's decision to invade Kuwait (Rolef, 1997, 265).

Furthermore, PLO's decision had crucial impacts on the international arena too, and more precisely in the United Nations General Assembly and in the Islamic Conference. In 1991 during UN General Assembly's session, the resolution which equated Zionism with racism was cancelled, while during the summit of the OIC, which was held in Senegal in 1991, the Arab delegates did not present a resolution –as in the past- regarding the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and the liberation of Palestine (Rubin, 1994, 186).

Besides, the Palestinians within the occupied territories had economic problems as a result of the continuing uprising and the Gulf crisis, and were exhausted. As a result, in 1991 the PNC meeting, which was held again in Algiers, decided to adopt a new program. According to Rubin (1994, 188): the new program

called for a peace conference based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338; full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories including East Jerusalem; an exchange of land for peace; a halt to Israeli settlements; acceptance of Palestinian national and political rights; a strong connection between the interim and final stages of negotiations; a confederation between Jordan and Palestine; and the PLO's role in making all Palestinian's decisions.

Finally, negotiations began between PLO and Israel as secret first, and the negotiation process lead to the mutual recognition of the rival parties, to the Peace

Conference in Madrid in 1991, and to the sign of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) – or Oslo Accords I, between PLO and Israel in 1993.

In the words of Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 502), “... the agreement provided for mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and laid the foundations for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip”. According to the DOP, the Israeli forces would withdraw from West Bank and Gaza Strip in stages and afterwards the Palestinian leadership would obtain political rule in those areas (Cleveland, and Bunton, 2009, 504). However, as Cleveland and Bunton (2009, 504) indicate:

... Oslo I was not a peace treaty but an interim agreement that was to lead in stages to a final peace settlement... Israel simply recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and agreed to negotiate with it. The PLO, however, had fully recognized Israel’s right to exist.

3. Turkish-PLO Relationship and its Impact on Turkish-Israeli Relations

As I mentioned before, the relations between Turkey and Israel, since Israel’s independence and until the mid-1960s, were influenced by the relations between Turkey and the Western bloc, mainly USA, and the relations between Turkey and the Arab countries. The regional and international developments, especially in the mid-1960s, which threatened Turkey’s national interests, had a crucial influence on the bilateral relations of the two countries.

Particularly the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the Cyprus crisis of 1963-1964 challenged Turkish position in the Western bloc. That fact came as a result of its isolation in the Western bloc, especially during the Cyprus crisis and had a great influence on the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel. During that period the Turkish authorities took into account the importance of the Arab world towards Turkey’s national interest. Thus,

since the mid-1960s, we can observe that, Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Arab states in order to gain their support especially at the UN General Assembly's meetings regarding the Cyprus issue.

Moreover, the inception of the PLO in 1964 was another development which influenced the bilateral relations of the two countries. For that reason, we can say that since the establishment of the PLO the relations between Turkey and Israel were interdependent with the relations between Turkey and the Palestinians in particular, and between Turkey and the Arab states in general. The Arab states during that period pushed Turkey to freeze, or even more to cut off its relations with Israel. Towards their aim, the Arab states even used their vote to the United Nations regarding the Cyprus issue to convince the Turkish authorities to do so (Bengio, 2004, 56).

The Turkish government, even the fact that it did not upgrade its diplomatic relations with Israel, it refused to cut off its relations with the Israeli state. The Arab states however, continued to pressure Turkey to cut off or freeze its diplomatic relations with Israel and during the course of the meetings of the Islamic Summit, which was held in 1969 in Morocco, many countries put pressure on Turkey for that issue (Liel, 2001, 206). The Turkish side, however, did not accept Arab states' demand, while the Turkish representative strengthened Turkey's position claiming that the Arab states initiated peace negotiations with Israel in order to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and to solve the Palestinian issue (Liel, 2001, 207).

As I mentioned before, during the course of the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Turkish state adopted a pro-Arab policy and as Gause (2011, 27) describes, "... after the oil embargo of 1973-74, Turkey tended to side

publicly with the Arab side on Arab-Israeli issues”. On the other hand, Turkey did not take any part on the military operations giving military assistance to the one or the other side and refused the demands of the Arab states to cut off its diplomatic relations with the state of Israel (Bengio, 2004, 74).

After the emergence of the oil crisis the situation became even more difficult for Turkey, which since the very early 1970s had economic problems and political instability. Turkey, due to its economic problems and its isolation in the West after the Cyprus crisis of 1974, made a rapprochement towards the Arab states, giving them support at the UN General Assembly meetings, and voting in favor of the Arab states in the course of the Resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue.

For instance, as Bengio (2004, 74) defines, “... in 1974 it {Turkey} recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and in 1975 voted for the UN Resolution that equated Zionism with racism”. Furthermore, the regional and global developments since the late 1970s had crucial consequences on the relations between Turkey, Israel, and PLO.

Developments such as the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979, the civil war in Lebanon and the eventual Israeli invasion of that country in 1982, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories of 1987 and the establishment of the Palestinian state, and the peace negotiation process between PLO and Israel, resulted to the adoption of a new policy by the Turkish authorities in regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

3.1. Regional developments and Turkish-Israeli relations

After the signing of the Camp David accords and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, Turkey tried to take advantage of Egypt's isolation and improved its relations with the Arab states in order to secure its interests in the region. During that period, Turkey recognized the Palestinian movement as the sole representative of the Palestinian people in 1975, while in 1979 the Turkish government gave its permission to the organization to open a diplomatic office in Ankara. That fact came as a result of the new developments since the late 1970s, which had an impact on Turkey's relations with Israel and the Arab states. In the words of Liel (2001, 192):

Such events as the fire at the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Jerusalem law, the Lebanon war – particularly the massacre in Palestinian refugee camps near Sidon in 1982 – the bombing of Beirut, and, later, the Palestinian uprising have all had a significant impact on Turkish-Israeli relations.

The Israeli government decided to annex Jerusalem, which became the capital of the state of Israel, and had as a result many critiques against Israel, from the Arab states, but also from Turkey too. After that decision, Turkey decided to downgrade its diplomatic representation to Israel to the secretary level. The bilateral relations of the two countries were at a very low level until the mid-1980s when the two countries began improving their relations once again. However, the two countries had secret intelligence and military relations during that period (Bengio, 2004, 74-5).

Thus, we can conclude that even the fact that Turkey downgraded its diplomatic relations with Israel the intelligence relations between the two countries remained secret and stable. And when the Israeli government invaded Lebanon, the Israeli intelligence informed the Turkish government for PLO's relations with radical and separatist

movements such as ASALA and THKO, while the Israeli army arrested members of those groups and transported them to Turkey (Hale, 2000, 171). In this context, Turkey did not vote in favor of the PLO during the UN resolution, by which Israel was accused for committing genocide in Lebanon, due to PLO's relations with separatist groups (Aras, 2004, 57).

Since the mid-1980s Turkey and Israel improved once again their bilateral relations when Israel began to withdraw its forces from Lebanon (Liel, 2001, 211). With the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising the relations between the two countries further deteriorated. The Turkish authorities expressed their opposition against the Israeli measures against the Palestinian demonstrators, while the public opinion in Turkey supported the Palestinian civilians.

The situation became even worst when in 1988 following the declaration of the establishment of the Palestinian state Turkey recognized the newly independent state. The Israeli state reacted against Turkey's recognition of the Palestinian state, comparing it with Turkey's recognition of Israel back to 1949 (Robins, 1991, 80). That development, however, did not harm the bilateral relations of the two countries which were improving since the mid-1980s.

In the meantime, Bulgaria and Greece established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1990 and 1991 respectively. Turkey felt threatened by those developments and understood the importance of improving its relations with Israel. Finally, as Aras (2004, 58) observes, "Ankara upgraded its relations with both the Palestinians and Israel to the ambassadorial level". That decision was a result of the Peace Conference of 1991, which was held in Madrid, between PLO and Israel during the negotiation process.

However, PLO's international guerrilla attacks, its relations with separatist and radical movements within Turkey and the policies which adopted concerning the Cyprus issue and the 1974 Cyprus crisis, displeased the Turkish authorities and made them suspicious against PLO. PLO's policies concerning Turkish national interests had a crucial impact on Turkey's bilateral relations with the Palestinian movement.

3.2. PLO's policies on Turkish national interests

As I mentioned before, the Turkish authorities during the 1970s adopted a pro-Arab policy concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and supported the Arabs and the PLO in the diplomatic level, while Turkey's diplomatic relations with Israel seemed to have problems. To the opposite side, the military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries were improving, even at times when their bilateral relations were at a very low level (Makovsky, 1996, 150).

Turkey did recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, but PLO's relations with radical and separatist movements within Turkey had crucial impact on the bilateral relations of Turkey and PLO. We can observe that, through the 1960s and 1970s the Turkish radical left organizations supported the PLO and members of those organizations received training in PLO camps in Jordan and Lebanon (Bengio, 2004, 75-6).

The radical left groups, which had many university students on their ranks, had close contacts with the PLO. One of the leading figures of the radical leftist groups was Deniz Gezmiş. Deniz Gezmiş was one of the leaders of the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO), and according to Ulus (2011, 126), "Deniz Gezmiş went to Palestine in the winter of 1969 for military training in Al Fatah camps".

The assassination of the consul of Israel, Ephraim Elrom, in Istanbul had led to the proclamation of curfew in Istanbul and of the martial law in May 1971, after the military coup of March 1971 (Ulus, 2011, 128). The kidnapers of the Israeli consul “demanded the release of all revolutionaries in Turkish custody in return for Elrom’s life” (Israeli Leaders Shocked, Outraged at Elrom’s Assassination, JTA, May 24, 1971). The Turkish authorities refused to accept the kidnapers’ demands and began an investigation to find the kidnapers and the Israeli consul without any results however.

According to reports, “A 15 hour curfew and a house-to-house search were ordered by the military commander in Istanbul” (Israeli Leaders Shocked, Outraged at Elrom’s Assassination, JTA, May 24, 1971). After the end of the investigations, the government of Israel blamed those who were responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Ephraim Elrom. Besides, the Israeli government thanked the Turkish authorities for their efforts to find the consul.

Furthermore, the Turkish authorities reacted against the kidnap and murder of the Israeli consul, extending the martial law and arresting members of the radical left groups. Moreover, the Turkish government asserted that the guerrillas who murdered the Israeli consul received training in Syria by the Palestinian movement Fatah (Kushner, 1987, 98). The government of Syria rejected those claims, but this incident had a negative impact on Turkey’s bilateral relations with both Syria and PLO. During that period, the military government chased and arrested students and teachers, and charged them for their involvement in radical movements. The THKO leadership was arrested and charged with a series of crimes. For instance, as Ulus (2011, 128) indicates:

Deniz Gezmiş confessed to the kidnapping of US servicemen (whom they released unharmed) and two bank robberies. A military court sentenced Gezmiş and seventeen others to death on 9 October 1971.

In the mean time, members of the THKP-C (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey) were arrested and charged for several crimes, including the kidnap and assassination of the Israeli consul Ephraim Elrom (Ulus, 2011, 129). The Turkish authorities, taking into account reports of their intelligence services in cooperation with those of Israel, were dissatisfied to know that PLO backed those radical organizations and trained them in its camps in Lebanon. However, the oil crisis in the mid-1970s, following the Yom Kippur War, its isolation in the Western bloc after its intervention in Cyprus in 1974, and the ensuing American arms embargo, created the need for allies within the Arab world.

During the course of the Cyprus crisis of 1974 the Arab states and PLO supported the Greek-Cypriot side, and Turkey, by initiating a rapprochement towards the Arab states, tried to bring the Arab side to its favor. (PLO's policies concerning the Cyprus crisis will be analyzed in chapter three.) For that reason, in the aftermath of the Cyprus crisis, Turkey supported the Arab states in the international arena regarding their conflict with Israel, in order to gain their support on the Cyprus issue. The emergence of political Islam within Turkey had also a great influence to the new approach towards the Arab states. Under the pressure of the Islamic political party the Turkish government began improving its relations with the Arab countries, and voted in favor of the Arab side in the UN General Assembly resolutions (Harris, 2004, 267).

In this context, as Robins (1991, 79) observes, "In January 1975 it {Turkey} recognized the PLO as the exclusive mouthpiece of the Palestinians..." and in the same

year Turkey voted in favor of the Resolution which equalized Zionism with racism, during the meeting of the UN General Assembly (Robins, 1991, 79). Moreover, as I mentioned before, Turkey taking advantage of Egypt's isolation in the Arab world, after the latter signed the Camp David accords with Israel in 1978 and the peace treaty in 1979, improved its relations with the other Arab countries.

During that period, Turkey gave its permission to PLO to open a representative office in Ankara in 1979, and since that time it adopted a pro-Palestine policy in the course of the UN resolutions (Harris, 2004, 267). Moreover, when the Israeli government initiated the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Turkey was among the countries which criticized Israel's decision to invade Lebanon.

However, Turkey did not cut off its relations with Israel despite domestic and political pressure, especially within the Islamic movements. Moreover, the cooperation between the Turkish and Israeli intelligence services continued as in the past, and during the course of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Israeli intelligence services informed the Turkish authorities for PLO's relations with the separatist movements ASALA and PKK. Members of the Armenian movement ASALA received training in PLO camps in Lebanon and as Zürcher indicates (1998, 291) "Until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 its {ASALA's} headquarters were in Beirut".

PLO's relations with the separatist movement PKK presented another obstacle to the Palestinian movements' relations with Turkey. In the words of Nachmani (2003, 15), "The eruption of the Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan (PKK) uprising in 1984 was attributed by Turkey to the support of Syria and the PLO". The Kurdistan Worker's Party – PKK

which was established in 1984 and threatened the domestic stability of Turkey, established close relations with PLO. As Bengio (2004, 137) indicates:

According to Turkish security officials, these ties had been established at the end of 1979 through a PLO official in Ankara. Subsequently, the PKK transferred a considerable number of its fighters as well as its leadership to Palestinian camps located in Lebanon.

PKK guerillas received training in PLO camps and remained there until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. After the exodus of PLO from Lebanon and the transfer of its headquarters to Tunis PKK fighters went to Syria. It has been argued (Bengio, 2004, 137) that:

Syria permitted the PKK to train in Syrian territory. The involvement of Syria and the PLO in what Ankara considered as its internal affairs, cooled relations with the PLO and created a new area of friction with Syria.

Besides, another regional development in the late 1980s, which threatened Turkey's national interests, influenced the bilateral relations of Turkey with PLO and the Arab states. In 1989 the Bulgarian authorities decided to expel the Muslim Turks from Bulgaria. As Hale (2000, 169) points out:

Beginning in 1984, the Bulgarian authorities launched a campaign of forced assimilation and oppression, in which the Bulgarian Turks were obliged to adopt Bulgarian names or prevented from performing religious ceremonies. Many thousands were arrested and imprisoned, or uprooted from their homes after being forced into internal exile.

Afterwards, in 1989 approximately 300, 000 Muslim Turks were expelled to Turkey. Turkey expected that the Arab states and PLO would express their reaction against Bulgaria's policies and their solidarity with the Muslim Turks. However, neither the Arab states nor PLO reacted against Bulgaria. In the words of Bengio (2004, 22), "Turkey's call for support from the Arab world went unheeded and it had to absorb a

large number of these refugees”. That fact dissatisfied the Turkish authorities and challenged its balanced policies in the region.

Moreover, during the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, the relations between Turkey and PLO further deteriorated, due to the fact that PLO compared the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait with Turkey’s intervention in Cyprus of 1974. As Nachmani (2003, p.23) points out:

In 1990, however, it was Arafat who, after supporting Saddam Husein fervently throughout the Gulf crisis and war, complained bitterly of the international community’s hypocrisy in relation to Iraq. The world was up in arms about Iraq’s actions in Kuwait in 1990, but the selfsame world had come to terms with Turkey’s aggression in Cyprus ever since 1974. Greece reveled in the comparison but in Turkey it further inflamed declarations against Iraq.

That statement dissatisfied the Turkish authorities and made them once again suspicious against PLO’s leadership. Another obstacle on Turkish-PLO relations was PLO’s policies during the Cyprus crisis of 1974 in favor of the Greek-Cypriot side. The continuous relations between PLO with Greece and Greek-Cypriot leadership further deteriorated the situation.

Chapter 3: Greece, Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1947-1993

Introduction to Chapter

Chapter three goes over the relations of Greece and Cyprus (in the case of Cyprus the Greek-Cypriot side) with the Arab states and Israel since 1947. In this context, I analyze the policies of Greece and Cyprus (in the case of Cyprus again the Greek-Cypriot side) in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict, their bilateral relations with the Arab countries (Egypt and Syria primarily), their bilateral relations with Israel, and their special relationship with the Palestinian movement – PLO.

Chapter three is divided into two parts. The first part examines Greece's relations with the Arab states and Israel during that period and Greek policies regarding the Palestinian issue. In this framework, I examine Greece's position during the 1947 UN partition plan of Palestine, its policies in the course of the various Arab-Israeli wars and Greece's diplomatic relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel.

Moreover, the second part of chapter three examines Greek-Cypriot's policies in the course of the Arab-Israeli wars even before the establishment of the republic of Cyprus (1960), Cyprus's bilateral relations with both the Arab states and Israel until the 1974 Cyprus crisis, and the special relationship between the Greek-Cypriot side and PLO. Furthermore, I make an analysis of the bilateral relations of Cyprus (Greek-Cypriot side) with Israel and the Arab states after the crisis of 1974 and until the early 1990s when the peace process between PLO and Israel began.

This special relationship between Greek-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriot political parties with the PLO had crucial impact on Greek-Cypriots' and PLO's relations with Israel and Turkey respectively. On the one hand, the Turkish authorities were frustrated

regarding PLO's policies during and in the aftermath of the Cyprus crisis of 1974, and its relations with Greek-Cypriot political parties. On the other hand, the relations between Greek-Cypriots and PLO displeased the government of Israel, which was trying to gain support by the regional countries on regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The assassination of Israeli civilian people accompanying with the assassination of Palestinian members of the PLO, and attacks against PLO's offices in Cyprus further deteriorated the situation. Thus, we can say that PLO's relations with Greek-Cypriot political parties had crucial impact on PLO's relations with Turkey and Greek-Cypriots' relations with Israel.

Due to the lack of literature concerning Greek and Greek-Cypriot policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, and their bilateral relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel, my research is based on primary sources (especially concerning their bilateral relations with the Arab states and Israel after 1974), mainly articles of the Greek-Cypriot press and online articles. Furthermore, I had interviews with Greek-Cypriot politicians, who had in the past relations with the PLO and Yasser Arafat, and other Palestinian movements and personalities.

There is of course literature on the issue on the bilateral relations of Greece with the Arab states and Israel, but it is very limited. Amikam Nachmani with his book "Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean" of 1987 sheds light on the bilateral relations of Greece and Israel, examining Greece's attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Israel's stance in regards with the Cyprus issue. Moreover, John Sakkas with his book "Greece, the Cyprus issue and the Arab states, 1947-1974, Diplomacy and Strategy in the Cold War era" makes a brief historical analysis of the bilateral relations of Greece with the two rival parties. Furthermore, articles written by

Jacob Abadi, John Sakkas, Levey Zach, and others, give more information concerning the bilateral relations of Greece and Cyprus (the Greek-Cypriot side) with the Palestinian movement, Israel and the Arab states.

1. Greece and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1947-1993

In this part I make an analysis of the bilateral relations of Greece with the Arab states and Israel, and the policies which the Greek state adopted in the various regional crises especially in the mid-1960s and 1970s.

First of all, I make an analysis of the historical background of the relations between Greece, the Arab states and Israel. In this context I analyze the reasons why Greece voted against the partition plan of Palestine, its policies during the Suez crisis of 1956 and its bilateral relations with the Arab countries and Israel up to 1966. Moreover, I examine Greece's relations with the rival parties during the junta regime. The military regime diplomatically adopted a pro-Arab stance during the years 1967-1974. However, during the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967, and 1973, even the fact that officially remained neutral, the military regime gave its permission to USA to use their bases in Greece. On the other hand, the Greek state supported the Arab position in the UN General Assembly.

Moreover, I go over the bilateral relations of Greece with the Arab states and Israel from 1974 after the collapse of the military regime until the early 1990s. During that period, we can observe that the governments of both New Democracy and PASOK (especially until the mid-1980s) adopted a pro-Arab stance and tried to keep a distance to their relations with Israel. Nevertheless, the emergence of the Gulf War (1990-1991), and the peace negotiation process between Israel and PLO, forced the Greek governments to reorient their policies in the Middle East. It was in this context, that Greece recognized

the Israeli state de jure in 1990, and appointed an ambassador to Israel (Abadi, Jacob, 2000, p.65)

1.1 Greece, the Arab states and Israel, the early stages, 1947-1966

As I mentioned before, Greece was among the countries which voted against the partition plan of Palestine in 1947. We can observe that Greece since that period, even the fact that it recognized the state of Israel in 1949 -only de facto- (Abadi, 2000, 42); it adopted a pro-Arab stance in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There were several reasons which guided Greek policies in the Middle East. Greece desired to protect the Greek minorities in various Arab countries. Moreover, the Greek state was in need for the Arab support regarding the Cyprus issue. Additionally, another reason for Greece's attitude towards the Arab states was its needs for cheap oil, which was vital to its economic prosperity (Sakkas, 2007, 1).

In contrast, Greece's relations with Israel were in a very low level, and as Nachmani (1987, 90) argues, "...a basic pattern established in 1949 has undergone not the slightest alteration, whether for better or worse". Thus, we can say that Greek-Israeli relations were in a stable low level and the Greek state did not intend to upgrade its bilateral relations with Israel. Moreover, as Abadi (2000, 42) points out, "Israel and Greece established consular relations in 1952". However, the Greek state did not support Israel's requests to join {the Israeli state} numerous global organizations, even the fact that some organizations had nothing to do with politics like the International Postal Union, etc (Nachmani, 1987, 91).

However, a regional crisis, the Suez crisis of 1956 changed the balance of power in the Middle East, and challenged Greece's relations with Egypt. In 1956 the Egyptian

president Nasser decided to nationalize foreign companies in Egypt and the Suez Canal. The West reacted against the nationalization process, which affected their vital interests in Egypt. One of those countries, which were affected by the nationalization process, was Greece, which had a prosperous community in Egypt. As Abadi argues (2000, 43):

At the time it numbered more than two hundred thousand, most of who lived in Egypt. The Greek shipping industry, which constituted the bulk of the country's revenues, depended on constant Arab cooperation, and free passage through the Suez Canal was deemed essential to the country's prosperity.

For that reason, Greece's bilateral relations with Egypt had some problems in that period, and the Greek government reacted against the Egyptian policies against its citizens. However, Greece did not cut off its diplomatic relations with Egypt, as a result of the nationalization process, and the Greek state denied participating in the conference which was held in London in August 1956 (Sakkas, 2012, 58). In the meantime, foreign navigators and employees, protesting for the nationalization of the Suez Canal, resigned from their jobs in the Suez Canal, in order to force the Egyptian government to abandon its intentions.

To the contrary, Greek navigators and employees remained in their positions in the Suez Canal and contributed to the continuation of Suez Canal services (Sakkas, 2012, 62). Besides, when the Israeli army in coordination with the British and French troops initiated the invasion of Egypt in 1956, the Greek government denounced the invasion and sided with Egypt (Sakkas, 2007, 2). So we can observe that, Greece, even the fact that the Greek minority was affected by the nationalization process in Egypt; it did not support the triple invasion of Egypt.

Nevertheless, regional crises which erupted in the end of the 1950s challenged Greece's policies in the Middle East. During the Iraqi, Jordanian, and Lebanese crises of 1958, USA requested free passage through the Greek airspace and harbors for the American forces, in order to support the Jordanian King and the president of Lebanon. The Greek state did not deny US's request, but asked from the US army to use Greek airspace and harbors as secret as possible (Sakkas, 2012, 75). That fact came as a result of the emergence of the Cyprus issue and its need for support from the Arab states. The Greek state had an anxiety that the Arab states could possibly support Turkey in the Cyprus issue (Sakkas, 2012, 75), if they found out that Greece contributed – indirectly – to the American and British operations in Lebanon and Jordan respectively.

After the end of those crises, Greece continued in the 1960s as in the past to support the Arab and the Palestinian side in all international forums, while its relations with Israel remained cool. So, despite the fact that the Greek minorities in Egypt and Syria faced with new problems in the 1960s, and a big part of those people left from the Arab countries, the Greek state did not freeze its relations with the Arab states. That fact came as a result of the Cyprus issue and Greece's need for the Arab support in the UN. As Sakkas (2007, 3-4) points out:

In the 1950s they {Arab states} voted at the UN General Assembly in favor of the UN's handling of the Cyprus's dispute (a Greek-Cypriot demand) and in the 1960s they supported the Greek-Cypriot attempts to jettison the 1960 constitution, which by reserving the office of vice president and three cabinet seats for Turkish-Cypriots, gave the Turkish "minority" an important voice in the country's policies. In December 1965 Egypt, Iraq, and Syria voted in favor of UN resolution 2077 reaffirming the sovereignty of Greek-dominated Cyprus and the illegality of external (Turkish) interventions.

Furthermore, during the early 1960s Greece signed various agreements with the Arab states concerning trade and tourism fields. Thus, we can observe that the bilateral relations between Greece and the Arab states were improving in that period, while Greece tried to keep a distance in its relations with Israel. That was the case until 1967, when the colonels made a military coup and dominated Greece until 1974. During the seven year period of their dominance, regional developments in the Middle East challenged Greece's policies in the region and its relations with both Israel and the Arab states.

1.2 The military regime and the regional developments, 1967-1974

After the colonels made a coup and took the leadership in Greece, they continued to support the Arab side in all international forums (Sakkas, 2012, 168). However, immediate after they took the leadership in Greece, a new crisis erupted in the Middle East, the Six Day War of 1967. When the Six Day War broke out, the military regime officially remained neutral. However, the Greek junta gave its permission to the US army to use the military bases in Greece, while it also enabled the Israeli army to refuel its helicopters in Rhodes Island (Sakkas, 2004, 252).

To the contrary, the military regime supported the Arab states in the UN General Assembly's discussions regarding the Six Day War, and voted in favor of the Arabs and against Israel. That fact came as a result of its need for support in the Cyprus issue, a fact which forced the colonels to adopt a pro-Arab policy in that period. Nonetheless, the military regime tried to present itself as neutral in the Arab-Israeli conflict, while it continued as in the past to vote in favor of the Arab states in the United Nations (Abadi, 2000, 51).

Another important development which challenged junta's neutral policies was the Palestinian guerrilla attacks against Israeli targets within Greece. Attacks such as in 1968 when Palestinian guerrillas opened fire against an Israeli airliner, and in 1973 a Palestinian attack against passengers within the airport put pressure to the regime. In the first case, (of 1968), as Sakkas (2004, 253) argues: "Yet while condemning the attack, the junta instructed the press to avoid portraying the Palestinian commandos as 'terrorists'". In the second case, the attack of 1973, whence four civilian people died and 53 were wounded, junta denounced the attack, but avoid to call it "political crime" (Sakkas, 2012, 170). The Israeli government reacted against the attack and accused the military regime for their ineffective measures against the Palestinian guerrillas (Sakkas, 2004, 253).

Following that incident the military regime took some measures to improve the security in the airports. Moreover, the Greek regime tried to improve its relations with the Israeli state, without abandoning its neutrality. According to Abadi (2000, 53): "In 1969, diplomatic representatives were appointed in both countries. Both had the rank and the role of ambassador. However, the de facto recognition remained in force". Additionally, when the Jordanian crisis erupted (1970-1971), USA requested free passage from Greek air space in their way to Jordan, a request which the military regime accepted. After that incident, USA cancelled the arms embargo against the regime (Sakkas, 2004, 253).

Nevertheless, another regional crisis – the Yom Kippur War of 1973 - tested junta's regional policies and forced it to reorient its relations with the rival parties. The Yom Kippur War began in 1973 when the Egyptian and Syrian armies initiated a simultaneous attack against Israel. The military regime as in the case of the Six Day War officially remained neutral. That decision came as a result of Greece's economic

problems and its need for cheap Arab oil. However, the military regime gave its permission to the US army to use the airbases in Athens and Crete (Souda Bay) (Sakkas, 2004, 255).

The Cyprus crisis which erupted in 1974 after the military coup against the president of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios and Turkey's intervention in the island a few days later resulted to the collapse of the military regime in Greece. The new governments of New Democracy and PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement) redefined their relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel. We can observe that until the mid-1980s especially the government of PASOK, but also the one under New Democracy adopted a pro-Arab policy. However, since the mid-1980s the new regional developments and the peace process between the Arab states and Israel and afterwards between Israel and PLO, forced the Greek authorities to reexamine their bilateral relations with the rival parties.

1.3. The New Democracy government, 1974-1981

After the collapse of the military regime the conservative party New Democracy won the first free elections and took the leadership in Greece. The new government of New Democracy adopted a pro-Arab stance and tried to keep at a distance the Israeli state, securing its national interests.

The Greek state had several reasons which forced it to support the Arab states in their conflict with Israel. Reasons such as the need for cheap Arab oil and Arab investment, the improvement of commercial links with the Arab states and its need for support at the UN General Assembly regarding the Cyprus issue (Sakkas, 2007, 5), prevented any improvement on its relations with Israel. From their side, the Arab states and PLO continued to support the Greek side in regards to the Cyprus issue. Moreover,

the Arab states and PLO did not recognize the Turkish-Cypriot proclamation of a state (Sakkas, 2007, 5) a fact which angered the Turkish authorities.

To the contrary, the conservative government of New Democracy explored the possibilities of establishing commercial links and agreements in other fields with Israel, such as trade and cultural agreements. In the words of Abadi (2000, 56), "... the two countries signed a cultural agreement facilitating exchange of academics and scientists." However, the Greek government desired to keep the agreements with Israel secret, while officially remained as in the past pro-Arab (Abadi, 2000, 56). It was in this context that, the Greek state did not endorse the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, claiming that the Israeli army should withdraw from the occupied territories and that the international community should recognize Palestinian's right of self-determination (Sakkas, 2007, 6).

Israel, on the other hand, tried to improve its relations and its diplomatic representation with Greece during that period, without any success, however. In that period, the Israeli state tried to take advantage of Greece's accession process to the European Community, in order to improve its bilateral relations with Greece. During that period, the EC members put some pressure to Greece to recognize the Israeli state de jure and to improve its bilateral relations with Israel (Abadi, 2000, 57). However, the Greek state did not improve its diplomatic representation to Israel and when the pro-Palestinian socialist party PASOK won the elections in 1981, the bilateral relations between Greece and Israel remained cool, a situation that did not change until the mid-1980s.

1.4. The socialist - PASOK government, 1981-1989

In 1981 the socialist party PASOK won the elections, formed government and in the 1980s dominated in the Greek politics. However, despite the fact that the socialist party adopted, since its establishment, a pro-Arab stance concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, we can observe that since the mid-1980s Greece made a rapprochement towards Israel. As Abadi (2000, 57) points out:

When PASOK came to power in 1981, Papandreou unleashed an extraordinary vilification campaign against Israel and invited PLO leader Yasser Arafat to discuss the possibility of upgrading his organization's diplomatic representation in Athens... Arafat arrived in Athens in December 1981, and Papandreou granted the PLO diplomatic status at the same de facto level that Israel had.

That decision resulted to hard critics against the Greek government and its policies from the Israeli side. In 1981 the Israeli air forces destroyed the nuclear reactor of Iraq (Nachmani, 1987, 116), and Greece was among the countries which criticized the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Moreover, when the Israeli government initiated the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 the Greek government condemned the invasion, and the bilateral relations of the two countries further deteriorated. Moreover, as Nachmani (1987, 116) argues, "...Greece seized upon these events as further pretexts for maintaining its low level of recognition".

Adding to this, the Greek government characterized the Israeli invasion as "a crime against humanity", while it asked from the international community to put an embargo against Israel (Abadi, 2000, 58). As a result of the Greek policies against Israel, it has been argued (Abadi, 2000, 58) that "...Israel raised strong objections to Greek participation in the multinational peacekeeping force in Lebanon". In that period the

bilateral relations of Greece and Israel were in a very low level and there were several demonstrations in Greece against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. According to Nachmani (1987, 120):

...dock workers boycotted ships flying the Israeli flag. Greek volunteers signed up to fight alongside the Palestinians in Lebanon, and the wife of the Greek Prime minister, Margaret Papandreou, headed a large demonstration outside the Israeli legation in Athens.

There were several reasons, which forced PASOK government to support the Palestinian movement and to make such harsh critics against Israel and its policies in the Middle East. The Greek government needed the Arab support regarding the Cyprus issue and in its dispute with Turkey in the Aegean Sea, economic assistance in the form of investments by the Arab states and oil resources (Abadi, 2000, 58). Besides, politicians within PASOK and the Greek Communist party were against any improvement of the bilateral relations of the Greek state with Israel (Abadi, 2000, 59), a fact which made the situation even harder for any rapprochement with Israel. Arafat's arrival to Greece after PLO's expulsion from Lebanon improved PLO's relations with the Greek state, while Greece's relations with Israel further downgraded. As Rory Miler (2004, p.141) mentions:

He {Arafat} arrived on 1 September 1982 to a rapturous welcome from Papandreou, who praised the 'heroic behavior, the hard fight, the bravery and self-sacrifice of the PLO'. The Greek Prime Minister also described the visit as a 'historic moment' and a 'great honor' and promised to do all in his power to support 'the struggle of the Palestinian people for complete self-determination and for the creation of their own country and state'.

Arafat, from his side, appreciated Greece's longstanding support to their struggle for the liberation of Palestine (Miler, 2004, 141). According to PLO officials, Yasser Arafat went to Greece in order to show the organization's appreciation to the Greek state for its policies during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, but also PLO's dissatisfaction of the Arab policies during the invasion (Nestor, 1982). Israel on the other hand, frustrated by the arrival of Yasser Arafat in Greece and expressed its opposition against the improvement of relations between Greece and PLO.

In addition to those events, the Greek government under PASOK since the mid-1980s made a rapprochement towards Israel. It was in that period that according Sakkas (2007, 7) "...PASOK adopted a friendlier attitude toward Tel Aviv". During that period the Greek government signed cultural and trade agreements with the Israeli state (Abadi, 2000, 61), without abandoning however its pro-Arab policy. The Greek state was very careful to its new approach towards the Israeli state, in order on the one hand, not to dissatisfy the Arab states, and on the other hand, to secure its interests in the Middle East.

Besides, when the Israeli air forces made an air strike against PLO's headquarters in Tunisia (1985), the Greek government criticized the Israeli attack, as "...an act of state terrorism which is a hideous form of war" (Abadi, 2000, 62). However, that fact did not present any obstacles to the improvement of the bilateral relations between the two states. To the contrary, the Palestinian uprising of 1987, presented an obstacle to the improvement of the bilateral relations of the two countries. Greece during the course of the uprising supported the Palestinian people and protested against the Israeli policies. After the elections of 1989, when the New Democracy won and formed government, Greece's relations with Israel improved rapidly.

1.5. The New Democracy government and the Arab-Israeli dispute, 1989-

1993

The new government of New Democracy decided to recognize the Israeli state de jure in 1990, and appointed ambassador in Tel Aviv. The bilateral relations of the two countries were improving, even the fact that Greece continued as in the past to support the Arab states (Abadi, 2000, 65). Moreover, Greece's relations with various Arab countries and PLO remained intact and the majority of the Arab states supported the Greek and Greek-Cypriot side on the Cyprus issue. Moreover, as Sakkas (2007, 8) argues:

Neither at the UN nor at the OIC the Arab world recognized the Turkish Cypriots' demand for a separate national identity... many Arab states, as well as the PLO, enjoyed cordial relations with the Greek Cypriots and recognized the Greek Cypriot government as the sole legitimate administration on the island. This was due not only to the pro-Arab stance of both Greece and Cyprus but also to the bad relations of Turkey with Syria and Iraq.

Thus, we can say that one of the major problems to the improvement of Greece's relations with Israel was Greece's dispute over Cyprus with Turkey. Both countries tried with some success to improve their relations with the Arab states and PLO, in order to gain their support in their dispute over Cyprus. However, the majority of the Arab states and the Palestinian movement sided with Greece and the Greek-Cypriot side. Turkey was dissatisfied with the Arab states and PLO regarding their relations with Greece. Another obstacle to Turkish relations with PLO and the Arab states was the Cyprus issue. The policies of the Arab states and PLO concerning the Cyprus issue, their policies after the Cyprus crisis of 1974, and their bilateral relations with the Greek-Cypriot side angered

Turkey. In the next part I examine the bilateral relations of the Greek-Cypriot leadership with the Arab states and PLO, in order to understand to what extent the Cyprus factor influenced the bilateral relations of Turkey and PLO.

2. The Cyprus factor in Turkey's relations with Israel and PLO

Cyprus and the Cyprus issue presented one of the major problems on Turkey's regional and global policies and on Turkey's bilateral relations with the Arab states, PLO, and Israel. The Arab states and the Palestinian movement (since its establishment in 1964) since the inception of the Cyprus issue in the mid-1950s supported the Greek-Cypriot side, a fact which dissatisfied the Turkish authorities.

In this part I make an analysis of the historical roots of the relations between the Greek-Cypriot leadership and the Arab states since the mid-1950s and its policies during the regional crises up to the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Moreover, I make an analysis of the bilateral relations of the republic of Cyprus with the Arab states, Israel and PLO until the Cyprus crisis of 1974. In this framework, I analyze the policies of Cyprus during the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 and the policies which the Arab states, Israel and PLO adopted during the Cyprus crises of 1964 and 1974.

Furthermore, I present the relations of the Greek-Cypriot side with the Arab states and PLO after the 1974 crisis and their exchange of support in the UN. The Arab states and PLO continued as in the past to support the Greek-Cypriot side over the Cyprus issue, while Greek-Cypriot leadership continued, as in the past, its pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian policy. Turkey and Israel were dissatisfied with the Arab states – PLO and Greek-Cypriot leadership respectively. There were tensions in the bilateral relations of Turkey with the Arab states and PLO due to their policies in regards to the Cyprus issue.

Moreover, Greek-Cypriot special relationship with the PLO presented obstacles to the improvement of their bilateral relations with Israel.

Due to the lack of literature concerning Greek-Cypriots relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel, my research is based primarily on articles of the Greek-Cypriot press and some articles from websites. Moreover, I had interviews with three Greek-Cypriot politicians, who in the past had warm relations with the Palestinian movement.

2.1. The Historical background of Cyprus' relations with the Arabs and Israel

Cyprus' relations with the Arab and Jewish people had a long history since the ancient times. Cyprus, due to its proximity to the Middle East and to the fact that it is an island in the East Mediterranean, was from that period one of the most important trade centers. For that reason, Cyprus established close commercial contacts with the Jewish and the Arab people since that period. That fact was a result of the conquest of Cyprus by various kingdoms and empires from the very early days until the end of the 19th century.

Cyprus since 1878 was under the British rule and since 1914 became a mandate of the British Empire. Moreover, during the course of the Second World War, many Jewish people left from Europe and went to Cyprus, from where they sought to immigrate to Palestine (Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Tel Aviv, last visit 28/11/2014). It has been said that “During 1946-49, an estimated 53,000 Jews were detained by the British in camps on Cyprus, where they found consolation and solidarity by the people of Cyprus” (Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Tel Aviv, last visit 28/11/2014).

During an interview with the Greek-Cypriot politician Doni Christofini*, the Greek-Cypriot politician confirmed that fact, while he made a mention to AKEL's efforts. "During that period, AKEL helped the Jewish people who escaped from Nazi camps and came illegally to Cyprus and were placed by the British Empire to another camp, to escape from Cyprus and to resettle in Palestine. As AKEL we supported the Jewish people, due to the fact that we believed that those people, who were victims of Nazi Germany, were antifascists".

Even that case, however, the Greek-Cypriot political and ecclesiastical leadership adopted a pro-Arab policy during the various Arab-Israeli wars, even before the independence of Cyprus in 1960. During the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, as Donis Christofinis mentions "AKEL condemned the unilateral proclamation of the Israeli state and the forced expulsion of the Palestinian people from their fatherland after the end of the 1948 war." During the Suez crisis of 1956 Cyprus was used as a military base by the British and French forces during the operations against Egypt (Pavlidis, 1978, vol. A, 451)

In the meantime, the British Empire faced with problems in Cyprus due to the Greek-Cypriots' demand for union with Greece. In the years 1955-1959 the Greek-Cypriots began an armed struggle under EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston - National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) in order to force Great Britain to leave from Cyprus and to achieve the union with Greece. It has been argued (Sakkas, 2012, 62) that:

* Donis Christofinis is member of the left – communist party of Cyprus AKEL since the 1950s. Moreover, Donis Christofinis served as secretary general of the left - communist youth organization EDON in the years 1964-1974. Between the years 1973-2009 Donis Christofinis served as secretary general of the People's Solidarity Committee. Also Donis Christofinis was elected as member of the Executive Committee of AKEL in which he served for several years.

During the British and French operations there was coordination between the Egyptian intelligence services and EOKA. Due to the fact that Cyprus was used as an operation base during the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, Nasser asked from Grivas {the leader of EOKA} to exchange information concerning the presence of {British and French} troops, troopships and air planes in the island.

During that period, the Greek-Cypriot nationalist movement escalated its raids against the British presence in the island. As a result, in September (1956) during an attack the Greek-Cypriot nationalist movement achieved to destroy the airfield of the British base at Akrotiri (Sakkas, 2012, 63). When I had an interview with Taki Hadjidemetriou^{*}, the Greek-Cypriot politician confirmed to me those events and claimed that British airplanes were exploded too. In fact, as he mentions:

“In that period, the relations between the Greek-Cypriot struggle {for independence and union with Greece} and Egypt and the bilateral relations of Greece with Egypt were improving. That was because on the one hand, Greek navigators contributed to the continuation of the operations of the Suez Canal; while on the other hand, EOKA targeted the British bases and presence in Cyprus. Moreover, by initiating the blasting of British airplanes, the Greek-Cypriot nationalist movement showed its solidarity with the Egyptian people”.

Another important development, which contributed to the improvement of the bilateral relations of Greek-Cypriot leadership and Egypt, was the conference of African and Asian states which was held in Indonesia (Bandung) in 1955. Makarios, the Archbishop of Cyprus, participated in the conference and had private meetings with the

^{*} Takis Hadjidemetriou was one of the founding leaders of the socialist party EDEK. Moreover, Takis Hadjidemetriou was elected as Member of Parliament, while he was also president of the Defense Committee and president of the European sub-commission of cultural heritage. He is also president of the IKME - Institute of Sociopolitical studies.

political leaders of various countries. As Ker-Lindsay (2008, 537) points out, “There he {Makarios} sought to enlist support for the island’s nascent campaign for self-determination”. One of those leaders with whom Makarios had contacts was Nasser. Nasser and Makarios enjoyed a cordial and strong relationship (Ker-Lindsay, 2008, 537).

Since that period we can observe that the relations between the Greek-Cypriot leadership and the Arab states, primarily with Egypt, were improving rapidly. Immediately after the end of the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Makarios made a visit to Egypt, where he had meetings with the Egyptian president. During the course of their meetings, Makarios asked for Egypt’s support regarding the Cyprus issue and Nasser reaffirmed Egypt’s support to the Greek-Cypriot demand for self-determination (Pavlidis, 1978, 297). During the Suez crisis of 1956 Makarios sided with Nasser and against the triple invasion of Egypt. After the end of the crisis, “...Makarios declared his support for the Arab states” (Mallinson, 2005, 51). The relations between Makarios and Nasser and Greek-Cypriots with Egypt were steadily improving since that period.

2.2. The republic of Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1960-1974

On August 1960 Cyprus became independent and Archbishop Makarios was elected as the first President, and Fazil Küçük as the first Vice President of Cyprus. President Makarios continued as in the past to be pro-Arab concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, and tried to avoid taking sides in the Cold War.

In this context, president Makarios made his first official visit to Egypt in 1960, rather to Greece (Ker-Lindsay 2008, 537), while he participated in the first conference of the non-Alignment movement, which was held in Belgrade in September 1961 (O’Malley, and Craig, 2001, 89). As a result, Cyprus became member of the non-Aligned

movement even the objections of Turkey and Turkish-Cypriots. Takis Hadjidemetriou, from his side, claimed that “Even the fact that Fazil Küçük {then Vice President} had some reservations; he did not veto Makarios’ intentions”.

The Israeli state since the establishment of the republic of Cyprus in 1960, desired to establish full diplomatic relations with the new state. There were several reasons why Israel desired to establish relations with Cyprus. Israel was isolated in the Middle East and was surrounded by hostile states. Moreover, the Israeli state thought that normal relations with Cyprus could possibly lead to the improvement of its bilateral relations with Turkey and Greece, while Israel longed for establishing commercial links with Cyprus (Levey, 2003).

The Arab states put some pressure on Cyprus and on Makarios not to recognize Israel, and to not establish diplomatic relations with the Israeli state. Arab pressures presented an obstacle to the recognition of the Israeli state by Cyprus, but there were other obstacles too. According to Levey (2003):

Yet four main obstacles obstructed Israel’s diplomacy in Nicosia: the disposition toward Israel of the government of Greece, the circumstances of the Greek Diaspora {there was also Greek-Cypriot Diaspora} in Egypt, the identification with Athens of the Greek community of Cyprus, and the attitude of that community’s leader Archbishop Michael Mouskos Makarios.

The Israeli state, from its side put pressure on Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot community in order to pressure Makarios to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. There were also intense pressures from Egypt against any recognition of Israel by Cyprus. In order to prevent Cyprus to recognize the Israeli state, as Levey (2003) claims, “The Egyptians threatened that were Cyprus to allow Israel to open an embassy, all

markets in the Arab states would be closed to Cypriot trade”. However, that was not the case.

According to Taki Hadjidemetriou, “Even though, Israel opened an embassy in Cyprus, our relations with the Arab states were not terminated and remained warm and cordial”. Vassos Lyssarides* also denied those assertions, saying that, “From the beginning Israel hastened to establish diplomatic relations. President Makarios, on the other hand, was expecting the Egyptian representative firstly {in order to avoid tensions with Egypt}. For that reason, I do not think that there was any reaction by the Arab states, because Cyprus had to recognize all the member-states of the UN”.

The same was the case until the emergence of the Cyprus crisis in 1963-1964. President Makarios in 1963 proposed constitutional changes, which were not accepted by the Turkish-Cypriot community. As a result, bi-communal clashes began in Cyprus between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots. In that period, Turkey threatened to intervene in Cyprus in order to protect the Turkish-Cypriot community. In the end after intense pressures from USA and the Soviet Union, Turkey did not intervene in the island, while negotiations started between the two communities.

During the crisis the Arab states supported the Greek-Cypriot side and Greece in the UN General Assembly. After the end of the crisis, Makarios asked for help from the Arab countries (primarily Egypt and Syria) and the non-Aligned movement. As a result, according to O’Malley and Craig (2001, 121):

Makarios... had triumphantly persuaded a conference of 47 non-aligned countries at Cairo to endorse his view that the island should be free to determine its future without outside intervention.

* Vassos Lyssarides is a Greek-Cypriot politician, the founder and the historical leader of the Greek-Cypriot socialist party EDEK (EDEK was established in 1969). Between the years 1969-2001 Vassos Lyssarides was EDEK’s president. Besides Vassos Lyssarides was also elected as Member of Parliament since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and served as President of the Parliament for six years (1985-1991). Furthermore, Vassos Lyssarides also took part in the London conference regarding the Cyprus issue which was held in 1959.

Makarios also asked for military assistance from the Arab countries, mainly Egypt and Syria. Egypt and Syria accepted Makarios' demand for military assistance. Vassos Lyssarides confirmed that "There was a limited military assistance from Syria". Takis Hadjidemetriou said that "The Arab states showed their solidarity with our case, especially Egypt which gave to us limited military assistance". In the mean time, Cyprus bought Soviet missiles, which were transferred to Egypt secretly from where the missiles would be transported to Cyprus, but after intense pressures the Soviet missiles remained in Egypt (Sakkas, 2012, 157) Furthermore, as O'Malley and Craig (2001, 121) mention:

Clerides admitted later that the Egyptians trained the {Greek-} Cypriots in the use of Eastern bloc arms, including ground-to-air missiles, tanks and artillery which the Soviets had been supplying since before the Suez crisis.

Moreover, Cyprus, from its side, supported the Arab states throughout the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. During the course of the Six Day War of 1967, "President Makarios sent via Foreign Minister Spyros Kyprianou a message of his support to the Arab states, expressing Cyprus' solidarity with the Arab states, against the Israeli aggression" (Makarios' solidarity message to Nasser, Haravgi newspaper, 7 June, 1967, Greek, 1). Moreover, the leaders of the other Greek-Cypriot political parties expressed their solidarity with the Arab states, and their opposition against the Israeli policies.

Huge demonstrations were held in Cyprus condemning the Israeli invasion (Makarios' solidarity message to Nasser, Haravgi newspaper, 7 June, 1967, Greek, 7), in which local people and youth organizations took part, showing their solidarity with the Arab states. In the years 1970-1971 another regional crisis erupted, the Jordanian civil war, or the war between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian movement. During the Jordanian civil war the government of Cyprus gave moral support to the Palestinian

movement. That fact came as a result of Cyprus' policies regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. According to Vassos Lyssarides:

“In general Cyprus was more pro-Palestinian. The Greek-Cypriot political parties supported the Palestinian people more than any other Arab state”.

The same was the case during course of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. In the time of the Yom Kippur War, Cyprus' leadership expressed its solidarity with the Arab states. Moreover, huge demonstrations were initiated in Cyprus by the local people against Israel, in which political parties, youth organizations and civilian people participated, showing their solidarity with the Arab states. USA in that period asked Cyprus' government permission to use the British air bases in order to give military assistance to Israel, a request which was declined by Makarios' government (Sakkas, 2012, 196). The British government also denied the usage of the British bases by the American forces.

2.3. The Cyprus crisis of 1974, the Arab states, PLO and Israel

On the summer of 1974, another regional crisis, which threatened the stability in the East Mediterranean, erupted. On 15th of July 1974, the Cyprus National Guard in cooperation with Greek commanders, made a military coup against President of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios. As Harris (2004, 266) points out:

The Cyprus constitution had clearly been violated by the ousting of Makarios, raising the possibility that Athens would run the island, effectively carrying out enosis (union with Greece) to the detriment Turkish interests.

Turkey, which according to the Cyprus' constitution was a guarantor power, made an intervention on the 20th of July in order to protect the Turkish-Cypriot community. After the intervention negotiations began between representatives of Turkey, Greece and Cyprus in order to find a solution to the conflict. However, the negotiation process came

to a deadlock. Between 14th -16th of August 1974 Turkey made another intervention to the island, occupying the north part of Cyprus (approximately 37% of Cyprus territory).

The international community reacted against Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, and as Harris (2004, 266) indicates:

Unfortunately for Turkey, whereas the first operation was accepted by the international community as necessary to deal with a junta in Athens generally regarded as odious, the second wave, after democratic forces were in place, has never been accepted by the outside world as legitimate.

Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, led to its isolation in the West and to the US arms embargo (until 1979). As a result of its isolation in the West, Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Soviet Union, the Arab states and PLO. However, the PLO did not support the Turkish side concerning the Cyprus issue, a fact which dissatisfied the Turkish authorities. As Donis Christofinis argues, "The Palestinian movement and the Palestinian people, on the other hand, were/are the primary supporter of our side {Greek-Cypriot side} within the Arab world. That was due to the fact that the Greek-Cypriot leadership, AKEL and the Greek-Cypriot civilian people had always supported the Palestinian movement and Palestinians' demand for self-determination". Moreover, as Aras (2004, 56) argues:

PLO had always supported the Greek Cypriot position that the Turkish troops had no right to be in Cyprus and should be withdrawn at once, and it did not endorse the resolutions of the Seventh Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Istanbul in May 1976, supporting the Turkish side.

Nevertheless, due to the fact that the Arab states were divided since the mid-1970s, we cannot say that the majority of them supported Greek-Cypriot position in the Cyprus issue. As Takis Hadjidemetriou maintains, "Arab reactions after the Cyprus crisis

of 1974 was depended on their bilateral relations with Turkey. For instance, Saudi Arabia did not have any diplomatic relations with Cyprus {Greek-Cypriot side} until our days, even the fact that Greek-Cypriots had economic links with Saudi Arabia... Cyprus {Greek-Cypriot side}, on the other hand, enjoyed cordial and warm relations with Syria, which was a hostile state to Turkey”. On the other hand, Vassos Lyssarides claims that “Neither the Arab states nor PLO did recognize Turkish-Cypriot proclamation of a separate state.”

There were also some unconfirmed reports about the Israeli role during the Turkish intervention in favor of Turkey (Sakkas, 2012, 203). The Greek-Cypriot politicians denied that such was the case. According to Takis Hadjidemetriou, “During that period I made a research to find some evident of Israel’s contributions or any articles concerning the military coup without any success, however. Jerusalem Post made only a mention of the military coup without any further details. Our suspicions against Israel were due to our pro-Arab policy. We considered Israel as one of our main enemies”.

2.4. Greek-Cypriot bilateral relations with the Arab states, PLO and Israel, 1975-1994

In the aftermath of the Cyprus’ crisis, the Greek-Cypriot leadership continued its pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian policies regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute. After the 1974 crisis Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Arab states, in order to gain their support to the issue. Afterwards, when the Turkish-Cypriot leadership declared the establishment of a separate state in the north part of the island, Turkey tried to convince the Arab states to recognize the Turkish-Cypriot proclamation of state. As Ker-Lindsay (2008, 538) argues:

Particular efforts were made to secure the Turkish-Cypriots full membership within the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). In order to prevent this, the government of Cyprus sought to enlist the help of the Muslim states of the Middle East with which it had cultivated a strong relationship. Thus, both Ankara and Nicosia engaged in extensive lobbying activities across the region. The Greek Cypriot efforts were the more successful.

During the mid-1970s when the Israeli government began the construction of new settlements in the occupied territories, the Greek-Cypriot leaders expressed their opposition against that policy. In the meantime, Greek-Cypriot politicians had contacts with members of the PLO, during which they exchanged opinions about the Cyprus and the Palestinian issues. During those meetings, PLO thanked the Greek-Cypriots for their support on the Palestinian issue, and assured them for the continuation of their support towards the Cyprus issue.

In 1977 PLO invited the Left-Communist political party AKEL, to Beirut, where the leadership of PLO and AKEL had meetings and exchanged thoughts and opinions about the regional developments (AKEL and PLO common communiqué, *Haravgi* newspaper, 10 February, 1977, Greek, 1). Moreover, AKEL invited PLO's leadership to Cyprus, whence again both parties had meetings and expressed their solidarity between each other (Same enemy and struggle..., *Fileleftheros* newspaper, 04 October, 1977, Greek, 10).

Furthermore, Greek-Cypriot organizations and political parties expressed their solidarity and their support to the Palestinian people, during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. During that period Greek-Cypriot organizations gave economic and material assistance to the Palestinian and the Lebanese people. In the meantime, Greek-Cypriot political parties, individuals and organizations expressed their

objection towards the peace treaty of 1979 between Egypt and Israel. According to reports the majority of the political parties blamed the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and accused President of Egypt as a traitor of the Arab world (AKEL's solidarity message to PLO, Haravgi newspaper, 27 March, 1979, Greek 1, 7).

During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon of 1982, the Greek-Cypriot political parties gave moral and economic assistance to the Palestinian and Lebanese people, while they expressed their conviction against Israeli policies. And when the Phalanges entered the Palestinian refugee camps massacring the Palestinian people, demonstrations were held in Cyprus condemning the crime, in which many Greek-Cypriot political parties and organizations participated (EDEK's demonstration against Israel, Filelefttheros, newspaper, 20 September, 1982, Greek, 12).

Besides, when the Palestinian uprising – Intifada began in the occupied territories in 1987, Greek-Cypriots politicians and civilian people supported the Palestinian people, while they condemned the Israeli oppressive measures. Vassos Lyssarides claimed that “I am sure that they were {Greek-Cypriots} supporters. However I do not know if there was any assistance towards the Palestinians. Of course we gave to the Palestinians moral support and we supported them diplomatically.” And when PLO declared the establishment of the Palestinian state (1988) in the occupied territories, the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognized it immediately.

PLO, from its side, was satisfied with the Greek-Cypriot position in the Palestinian issue, and their cordial and warm relations. In this framework, the Palestinian movement supported the Greek-Cypriot policies concerning the Cyprus issue. Thus, we can say that the bilateral relations of PLO with the Greek-Cypriot leadership were rapidly

improving in that period. Furthermore, after Yasser Arafat's visit to Turkey, there was information that the PLO would open a new office in the north part of Cyprus. During his visit in Ankara the PLO political representative Kaddoumi (Kaddoumi denied the establishment of PLO office... Simerini newspaper, 19 August, 1979, Greek, 1) said that: "There is already a PLO office in Nicosia which represents the organization in Cyprus... it is not necessary to open two offices in one country". In 1980, during the Islamic conference which was held in Pakistan (Ten Arab countries against the partition of Cyprus, Haravgi newspaper, 15 June, 1980, Greek, 5):

Lebanese and Palestinian representatives did not accept the greeting to the Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash as president of the ' Turkish-Cypriot state', and preferred to call him as the chief of the Muslim community... during the course of the conference, ten Arab countries were opposing the partition of Cyprus... among them were Syria, Jordan and PLO.

Moreover, there were reports in the beginning of 1989 that Yasser Arafat was ready to mediate in order to find a solution to the Cyprus issue. According to those reports (Arafat mediator on the Cyprus issue, Simerini newspaper, 24 January, 1989, Greek, 16):

The Palestinian representative in Nicosia, Cyprus, confirmed that Yasser Arafat, who is going to make a formal visit to Cyprus, will use his good relations with both Prime Minister of Greece Andrea Papandreou and President of Turkey Turgut Özal, in order to mediate for a solution to the Cyprus issue".

In contrast, the fact that Yasser Arafat was planning to make an official visit to Cyprus, during which he would have meetings with Greek-Cypriot leaders dissatisfied the Turkish authorities. According to reports to the Greek-Cypriot press (Arafat's visit, Fileleftheros newspaper, 9 February, 1989, Greek, 13), "The Turkish Foreign Ministry

was dissatisfied by the information about the official visit of Yasser Arafat to Cyprus...” Finally, Yasser Arafat did not initiate the visit to Cyprus. However, PLO’s relations with Turkey did not transform PLO’s policies regarding the Cyprus issue and did not challenge PLO’s relations with the Greek-Cypriot political parties.

Nevertheless, some incidents in Cyprus especially since the mid-1970s threatened that special relationship. One of the most serious incidents was the assassination of Yusuf Sebai by Arab guerrillas. That incident had as a result the disruption of Egypt’s bilateral relations with the Greek-Cypriots. According to Dimitrakis (2010, 159): “...on the morning of 18 February 1978 Yusuf Sebai, a prominent pro-Sadat Egyptian editor, was murdered by a Kuwaiti and a Jordanian at the Nicosia Hilton hotel”.

Afterwards, the attackers kidnapped 50 delegates and they tried to leave from Cyprus via the Larnaca International Airport. During the negotiation process between the kidnappers and the Greek-Cypriot authorities, they agreed to leave Cyprus, but they took as hostages 12 Arab delegates. Afterwards, the kidnappers with 12 hostages took an airplane and tried to leave from Cyprus and go to an Arab country without any success. For that reason, they went to Djibouti where the plane was refueled and they returned to Larnaca airport (Dimitrakis, 2010, 159). Finally, the plane reached Larnaca airport and the Greek-Cypriot authorities began negotiations with the kidnappers. According to Dimitrakis (2010, 160), “...President Kyprianou offered the hijackers Cypriot passports as well as safe passage of the island...”

In the meantime PLO leader Yasser Arafat offered his assistance to end the hostage ship. As a result, 16 PLO fighters came to Cyprus and offered their assistance to the Greek-Cypriot authorities (Dimitrakis, 2010, 160). Moreover, the Egyptian authorities

expressed their readiness to mediate in order to find a solution, and an Egyptian representative arrived in Larnaca. However, instead of the Egyptian representative Egyptian troops arrived in Larnaca airport.

Afterwards, the Egyptian forces attempted to make a rescue operation and opened fire against the aircraft with the hostages and the kidnapers. The Greek-Cypriot National Guard opened fire against the Egyptian commandos and a clash between the Greek-Cypriot and Egyptian troops began. As a result 15 Egyptians died while many Egyptians and Greek-Cypriot troops were injured (Dimitrakis, 2009).

Since that incident the relations between Egypt and the Greek-Cypriots were frozen, and both parties blamed each other for the clash. Moreover, PLO refused the charges that it was responsible for the assassination of the Egyptian editor and for the kidnapping (Dimitrakis, 2009). The relations between PLO and Greek-Cypriot leadership remained stable. However, Greek-Cypriots' relations with Egypt were cut off. It has been argued (Dimitrakis, 2010, 164) that "...Sadat threatened to recognize the international status of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus ...under President Rauf Denktash". Vassos Lyssarides, was one of the 50 hostages, and described to me his memories from the incident.

"It was Sadat's mistake... {President} Kyprianou reassured Sadat that "we will arrest them and either we will put them on a trial, either we will send them to you"... he {Sadat} sent an Egyptian commando group in order to free the hostages...It was a really sad incident, an incident that should be avoided".

Furthermore, there were several other incidents in Cyprus, in which, an Israeli businessman was assassinated in 1971, two PLO members were assassinated in 1979, in 1984 another PLO member was assassinated, while in the same year a bomb was

exploded near the Israeli embassy in Nicosia with no casualties. In 1986, two Greek-Cypriot students were taken as hostages by an Islamist movement, and after weeks of negotiations, in which Yasser Arafat offered his assistance, the two Greek-Cypriot students were set free (Arafat's efforts brought their freedom Aneksartitos newspaper, 23, June, 1986, Greek 1). Moreover, in 1985 three Israelis were assassinated by a radical Palestinian group, in 1988 a bomb exploded in a car and killed three PLO members, while in the same year a bomb was exploded in the Palestinian 'Return Ship' in Limassol and a car bomb exploded near the Israeli embassy with two Greek-Cypriots and one Arab dead.

The relations between the Greek-Cypriot authorities and PLO were influenced to some extent by the assassination of Israeli civilian people within Cyprus. That fact came as a result of Israeli pressures to Greek-Cypriots politicians to reconsider their relations with the PLO. In this context (Cyprus became a problem, Simerini newspaper, 10 February, 1987, Greek, 1):

The Israeli naval chief officer claimed that Cyprus became a problem for Israel's national interest in the Middle East, due to the fact that PLO transformed its offices in Cyprus to an operation center.

Even though, PLO's relations with Greek-Cypriot political parties and individuals remained stable in this period, and even more were extended during the peace negotiation process. PLO enjoyed warm relations with the left and socialist parties AKEL and EDEK, while those parties had cordial relations with other Palestinian groups which were taking part in the executive committee of the PLO. And when Abu Jihad, one charismatic leader of PLO was assassinated by the Israeli intelligence services in Tunisia in 1988, all the Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned the attack and expressed their solidarity

with the Palestinian people. The fact that the PLO and the Greek-Cypriot authorities upgraded their relations with Turkey and Israel respectively did not had any influence on their bilateral relations.

Greek-Cypriot authorities expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and their national rights, while PLO supported the Greek-Cypriot side concerning the Cyprus issue and it was opposing to the partition of Cyprus. Thus, we can say that the bilateral relations remained intact, even the pressures from Israel and Turkey to Greek-Cypriot side and PLO respectively.

On the other hand, Greek-Cypriots' relations with Israel remained cool and at a very low level. Despite the fact that Cyprus recognized Israel since its establishment in 1960, Greek-Cypriot attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and its pro-PLO policy, did not allow any improvement to the bilateral relations of the two parties. In 1978 a Greek-Cypriot journalist, Panagiotis Paschalis, was arrested in Tel Aviv by the Israeli police, and accused that he committed spying activities against Israel (The Zionists arrested a Greek-Cypriot journalist, Ta Nea, newspaper, 18, January, 1978, Greek, 1).

There were initiated huge demonstrations in Cyprus and all the Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned the arrest of the Greek-Cypriot journalist. Even the communist party of Israel condemned the arrest of the Greek-Cypriot journalist (Paschalis placed under custody for two weeks, Ta Nea, newspaper, 20, January, 1978, Greek, 8). According to Donis Christofinis, "Paschalis was sentenced to prison for many years, but he was released after one and a half year. That fact came as a result of huge demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy in Cyprus".

Moreover, in the mid-1978 members of the Israeli Mossad were arrested in Cyprus for spying activities against government departments, socialist party's (EDEK) and PLO's offices (Organized spying activities Aneksartitos, newspaper, 15 May, 1978, Greek 1). Greek-Cypriot politicians mentioned that fact, without giving any details, however. Takis Hadjidemetriou claimed, that "Greek-Cypriot police after receiving information from a Greek-Cypriot civilian arrested Mossad agents." Moreover, Vassos Lissaridis maintained, that "All the Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned those activities... Of course there was not any confession by the Israelis."

Thus, we can say that Cyprus and the Greek-Cypriot leadership adopted a pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian policy in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Greek-Cypriots enjoyed cordial and warm relations with Egypt (until the end of the 1970s, and again in the mid-1980s), Syria and PLO, while its relations with Israel remained cool. Only after the end of the Cold War and the peace negotiation process between Israel and PLO the Greek-Cypriot leadership made a rapprochement with Israel. And as Levey (2003) argues, "Cyprus did not send an envoy to Israel and only in 1994 did they open an embassy in Tel Aviv."

Conclusions

This thesis examined how the PLO's relations with Cyprus and Greece influenced Turkish Israeli relations. It was obvious that Turkey's relations with the Arab countries have always been an important, most of the time decisive, parameter of Turkey's policies with Israel. In spite of the fact that Turkey could have preferred to steer its policies towards Israel free of Arab pressure, the dynamics of Arab-Israeli conflict made Turkey susceptible to Arab demands.

In this context, alongside the policies of a number of Arab countries such as Egypt and Syria, the PLO's policies vis-à-vis Cyprus question became a matter Ankara found difficult to deal with. In the eyes of policy makers in Ankara, the difficulties became conspicuous almost since the inception of the PLO in 1964, and grew to be more insurmountable in the 70s and 80s when the organization cultivated clandestine relations with a number of organizations, which Turkey proclaimed to be outlawed. Therefore, as the PLO improved its international position and eventually became the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people, Turkey's predicament became more insurmountable. This aspect of the Turkey's relations with the PLO and that of Turkey's relations with Arab countries were overlooked. The present thesis focused on the relations of the PLO with Cyprus and Greece and evaluates its impact on Turkey's relations with Israel.

It is interesting that the foundation of the PLO in 1964 coincided with the first serious crisis broke out in Cyprus since the proclamation of the republic in the island. It was also important to note that crises such as the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 had already marred Turkey's relations with the West. Especially in the wake of the Cyprus crisis of

1963-1964 Turkey felt isolated in the Western bloc, while the Arab countries did not support Turkish policies in Cyprus. Thus, Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Arab countries and the Soviet Union, reconsidering its relations with USA and Israel. The main objective of Turkey's new policies was the need for support by the Arab states regarding the Cyprus issue.

The Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 also resulted in acceleration of the transformation of Turkey's policies towards the region. In both wars, Turkey left its more or less neutral position in the Arab-Israeli conflict and extended its support for the Arab states: In the UN General Assembly, while in 1975 Turkey voted in favour of the resolution which equated Zionism with racism. Turkey took a step forward in 1975 by recognizing the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, and by allowing the organization to open a representative office in Ankara in 1979.

In protest to Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem, Turkey downgraded its relations with Israel. Turkish-Israeli relations became even worse when the Israeli government invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982. Since the mid-1980s, however, the bilateral relations between the two countries were improving once again. However, during the Palestinian uprising, the public opinion of Turkey criticized Israel's policies against the Palestinian activists and the bilateral relations of the two countries were in a low level. Moreover, after the declaration of the Palestinian state in 1988, Turkey was among the first countries which recognized the Palestinian state. That fact dissatisfied the Israeli authorities. Even though, the bilateral relations of the two countries began improving since 1988.

During that period, PLO leadership recognized the state of Israel and a negotiation process between the two rival parties began. The negotiation process accompanying with the Gulf crisis in the 1990s enabled Turkey to transform its policies and to upgrade its relations with Israel. In that period, the Turkish authorities announced that they would do the same with the Palestinian state. After the sign of the Declaration of Principles between PLO and Israel in 1993, Turkey felt free to improve its relations with Israel.

Since its inception PLO influenced the relations between Turkey and Israel. Turkey, since the eruption of the Cyprus crisis in the mid-1960s and again in 1974, and due to the oil crisis of the 1970s, tried to construct warm relations with the Arab states in order to gain their support concerning the Cyprus issue. For that reason we can easily conclude that, Turkey understood the importance of the Palestinian issue and the PLO to the Arabs and in the mid-1970s Turkey recognized the PLO and voted in favor of the Arab states in the UN General Assembly.

Nevertheless, PLO's relations with Turkish radical and separatist movements, its relations with Greece, and its policies regarding the Cyprus issue dissatisfied the Turkish authorities. In cooperation with the Israeli intelligence the Turkish authorities found out that PLO had close relations with those groups which received support and training in PLO camps in Lebanon. Also, the fact that PLO established close contacts with the Greek-Cypriot political parties and opened an office in Cyprus (in the south part of the island) displeased the Turkish authorities. Moreover, the intimate relations between the PLO and Cyprus have always been brought to the fore by the Israeli authorities claiming that collaboration between the two parties were detrimental to the interests of Israel and

Turkey. Therefore, the PLO's clandestine relations with a number of organizations and policies in support of Greek Cypriots slowed down Turkey's efforts to improve its relations with the organization. Moreover, this configuration also gave legitimacy to Turkey's position to maintain its relations with Israel, which went far beyond the diplomatic levels.

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Appendix

Interview with Vassos Lyssarides

Vassos Lyssarides is a Greek-Cypriot politician, the founder and the historical leader of the Greek-Cypriot socialist party EDEK (EDEK was established in 1969). Between the years 1969-2001 Vassos Lyssarides was EDEK's president. Besides Vassos Lyssarides was also elected as Member of Parliament since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and served as President of the Parliament for six years (1985-1991). Furthermore, Vassos Lyssarides also took part in the London conference regarding the Cyprus issue which was held in 1959. The interview with Mr. Vassos Lyssarides was placed on November 14, 2014 in his office in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Question:

First of all, I will like to ask from you to make an analysis over the historical background of Cyprus's relations with the Arab states until the establishment of the PLO. In this context, could you describe to me the special relationship between Makarios and Nasser? When did they meet for the first time and how this meeting was transformed into a real friendship?

Answer:

Our {Greek-Cypriot side} relations were warm, especially Makarios' relations with Nasser. They had a personal friendship beyond their cooperation in the context of the non-Aligned movement. Both of them were among the leading figures of the non-Aligned movement. Cyprus' relations with the majority of the Arab states were warm and pure. I cannot say that our relations with all Arab states were warm, however. The same was the case of course with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian movement. Now concerning the Palestinian issue Cyprus {the Greek-Cypriot side} adopted a clear policy, that UN resolutions should be implemented and that a truly independent Palestinian state should be established. As a result, Cyprus and the Greek-Cypriot side enjoyed cordial and warm relations with PLO at first and afterwards with the Palestinian Authority. Until our days, the relations between the Greek-Cypriots and PLO-PA remained warm and cordial. Makarios' successors maintained his warm relations with the Arab states, with a high degree of success.

Question:

During the Suez Crisis of 1956, Cyprus, which was under the colonial rule of Great Britain, was used as a base for the British and French operations against Egypt. Was there any reaction by Makarios or Greek-Cypriot or Turkish-Cypriot politicians or individuals? Did Makarios support Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal?

Answer:

Of course there were reactions. Makarios, however, was not at that period of time president of Cyprus; he was the leader of the Greek-Cypriots. I have to add something here. Grivas {the leader of EOKA}, who was anti-communist, supported Nasser's policies in Egypt. And as I remember, under his commands, two British airplanes were blown up in the British base in Cyprus, in order to show Greek-Cypriots' solidarity with Nasser's struggle. However, you should confirm that, because I am not so sure. Furthermore, all the politicians of that time (of course there were not so many politicians and political parties in the 1950s) supported Nasser and condemned the attack. There was a mobilization against the invasion, and during the crisis only Greek navigators remained in their positions in Suez Canal. Nasser never forget that incident, and due to Greek navigators' contributions the Suez Canal remained open {until the invasion}

Question:

Concerning your last point, I would like to ask you if there were Greek-Cypriots navigators in the Suez Canal.

Answer:

I do not know.

Question:

During my research I found out that after the independence of Cyprus (August 16, 1960) under pressures by Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot side, Cyprus recognized Israel and gave its permission to Israel to open an embassy in Nicosia. Could you describe to me the reactions of the Arab states, especially Egypt against Cyprus' decision to give its permission to Israel to open an embassy on the island?

Answer:

I have not heard about it, and I do not think that such was the case. From the beginning Israel hastened to establish diplomatic relations. President Makarios, on the other hand, was expecting the Egyptian representative firstly {in order to avoid tensions with Egypt}. For that reason, I do not think that there was any reaction by the Arab states, because Cyprus had to recognize all the member-states of the UN. When Makarios was exiled in Seychelles, Nasser proposed to him to stay in Egypt before his return in Cyprus. Makarios instead chose to go to Greece.

Question:

Makarios made his first official visit as President of Cyprus in Egypt in 1961. Moreover, in September 1961 Cyprus, despite objections of the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey, became member of the non-aligned movement. How did Greece, Turkey, and Israel react against those moves by Makarios?

Answer:

I think that the Arab states were satisfied by that fact. Besides almost all Arab states were members of the non-Aligned movement, in which Cyprus too was a member state. It was the only possible decision. Cyprus could not be member of NATO. And even Makarios desired Cyprus to become member of NATO, Turkey surely would not accept. It is important to mention the effectiveness of the non-Aligned movement within the UN General Assembly. As I remember, Israel did not react to Cyprus' accession to the non-Aligned movement.

Question

During the eruption of the Cyprus crisis of 1963-1964, there were reports that Egypt supplied weapons to the Greek-Cypriots. There were also reports that until 1974 Syria provided secretly the Greek-Cypriot side with weapons. Could you confirm those reports? Did the other Arab states supply weapons to the Greek-Cypriots?

Answer:

I can affirm to you that Nasser, Syria and various Arab countries supported our side. I can confirm that fact, because I was present during Makarios' official visits to Egypt/Cairo.

Makarios' friendship with Nasser was warm and stable. That is to say, the relations between Cyprus {mainly the Greek-Cypriot side} and the Arab states were warm. That was of course Arab attitude during the bi-communal clashes in 1963. The majority of the Arab states claimed that they would give any assistance that we {Greek-Cypriots} needed. There was a limited military assistance from Syria {only light weapons}.

Question:

PLO was established in June 1964. Did any political party or the government have any contact with the Palestinian movement in its first years?

Answer:

I had some contacts with the first leader of PLO Ahmad Shuqayri. However, I had close, warm, and cordial relations with the Arab world and especially with the Palestinian movement since Arafat became PLO's leader.

Question:

How did the Greek-Cypriot political parties and the Government of Cyprus react during the Six Day War of 1967, the Jordanian crisis of 1970-1971, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973? Did the Cypriot civilian people give any assistance to the Arab states during those crises? Was there any reaction by Israel? Did Great Britain use its bases in the island in favor of Israel during those crises, and if she did what was the reaction by the Greek-Cypriots? What were the consequences of the oil crisis for Cyprus?

Answer:

Of course, there was moral support. There was not any other assistance beyond through diplomacy, because we could not give any assistance beyond that. I do not think that there was any usage of the British bases in Israel's favor. But I am not the appropriate person to answer that question. In general Cyprus was more pro-Palestinian. The Greek-Cypriot political parties supported the Palestinian people more than any other Arab state. If they asked for any assistance of course we gave it, but I cannot remember specific cases.

Question:

After the Cypriot National Guard made a military coup against Makarios on 15 July 1974 Turkey made an intervention to Cyprus on 20 July 1974. How did the Arab states and PLO react against Turkey? There were also reports that Israel during the crisis, gave logistical support to the Turkish army. Could you confirm those reports? What was the reaction of the Greek-Cypriot leadership against Israel?

Answer:

As I remember, light weapons were sent from Syria, but I cannot remember when and how. During Turkey's intervention we did use not even our weapons. There was not any assistance by the Arab states during Turkey's intervention. Now concerning Israel's policies during that period, I cannot confirm that, but it appeared that they were not neutral during the Turkish intervention.

Question:

Were there PLO's bases in Cyprus until Turkey's intervention in 1974?

Answer:

As I know, there were not any PLO bases. We had some contacts, not bases. PLO was more organized than our side.

Question:

In 1975 the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. What were the reactions of the Israeli government against Greek-Cypriot's decision to recognize the PLO?

Answer:

As I know, the Greek-Cypriot leadership, government but also the political parties supported Palestinians' demand for self-determination. We support until our days Palestinians' demand for self-determination, and the creation of a free and independent Palestinian state.

Question:

In the same year Rauf Denktash declared the establishment of the “Turkish Federated State of Cyprus”. Did the Arab states or PLO recognize that state in any forum or organization? What the Greek-Cypriots did to prevent the Arab states and PLO to recognize the “Turkish Federated state of Cyprus”? Did Israel recognize it?

Answer:

Neither the Arab states nor PLO did recognize the Turkish-Cypriot proclamation of a separate state. Arab policies did not change until our days and they recognize only the Greek-Cypriot leadership and each succession government.

Question:

Another regional crisis erupted in the Middle East in 1975, the Lebanese civil war, which resulted to the Syrian and Israeli intervention in 1976 and 1978 respectively and to the major Israeli invasion of that country in the summer of 1982. What were the reactions of the Greek-Cypriot leadership against Israel? Did the Greek-Cypriots support the Palestinians and the PLO and if so, how they supported them?

Answer:

Generally speaking, there was an attitude towards the Palestinians and a general pro-Palestinian policy, but I cannot remember specific incidents. Besides Cyprus was one of the first countries which allowed PLO to open a representative office and our relations with the Palestinian movement were friendly and warm.

Question:

Moreover, in 1975 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which equated Zionism with racism. Did Cyprus and Greece vote in favor of that resolution?

Answer:

Yes of course.

Question:

In the late 1970s Egypt and Israel started the peace negotiation process, after the US initiative. As a result of the peace process the two countries signed at first the Camp

David Accords in 1978 and the peace treaty in 1979. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership or any political party react against the sign of the treaties between Egypt and Israel? Was there any consequence on the bilateral relations of Cyprus with Egypt or Israel?

Answer:

I cannot remember the reactions. There were controversial reactions concerning the agreement between Israel and Egypt. But I cannot remember to what extent did the political parties react.

Question:

In 1978 the Israeli forces arrested the Greek-Cypriot journalist Panagioti Paschali in Tel Aviv and claimed that he was a spy. Could you tell me something about that incident? What steps were taken by the Greek-Cypriot leadership in order to release the journalist? Were there any reactions by the Arab states?

Answer:

I know that the Greek-Cypriot government took the appropriate steps, but I do not know what steps were taken. Of course, all of the Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned the arrest, beyond AKEL, in which the journalist was member. I supposed that the Arab states too condemned the arrest of the Greek-Cypriot journalist, based on their general attitude towards the Greek-Cypriot side.

Question:

In 1978 there was an incident in Cyprus, in my opinion one of the most important ones, in which Arab guerrillas killed Yusuf Sebai an Egyptian pro-Sadat editor. Afterwards the guerrillas took as hostages 12 Arab delegates and the crises ended with a clash between Egyptian commandos and soldiers of the Greek-Cypriot army. As I know you were taken as hostage too. Could you describe to me those events? Why Egypt intervened? What were the consequences of that event?

Answer:

It was Sadat's mistake. They {the kidnappers} were politically speaking amateur. When they took us as hostages, they told us that they would release the non-Arab delegates and they kept only the Arab delegates. I said that I could not leave because those people were

guests, while later Benyamin, then minister {of the Greek-Cypriot government}, offered himself as hostage. During the negotiation process, I understood that their {political} level was very low. I was with President {Greek-Cypriot President} Spyros Kyprianou and when Sadat called him I was present too. Kyprianou reassured Sadat that “we will arrest them and either we will put them on a trial either we will send them to you”. When they did not get permission from any country to land, the kidnappers returned back to Larnaca airport and demanded Greek-Cypriot passports in order to go to Athens as passengers. There they would of course be arrested and either they would return to the country where they committed the crime, either they would be sent to the victims country, and that is Egypt. Of course they would be arrested, but the process was delayed because they demanded to have their photo in the passports and we did not have a camera with us. I suppose that Sadat was not satisfied only with the arrest of the kidnappers and desired to show to the world that he could prevent such events. And instead of accepting Kyprianou’s opinion, which was my opinion too, that “we will deliver them to you in a while”, he sent an Egyptian commando group in order to free the hostages, who actually were to be assassinated if the fight continued. The kidnappers had already released their weapons. There was not any fight with the kidnappers. The fight was between the Greek-Cypriot soldiers and the Egyptian commandos. It was a mistake. I was there too. I know that I convinced the kidnappers to hand over their weapons and to travel as passengers to Athens with Greek-Cypriot passports. They thought that our passports were their way out. Thus, there was no reason for the fight and so many people died unjustifiable. It was a really sad incident, an incident that should be avoided.

Question:

In May 1978, according to some reports two Israelis were arrested and charged for spying activities in Cyprus against governmental offices and also against the offices of EDEK and PLO. Could you describe to me the whole situation? How did the government and the political parties react?

Answer:

All Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned those activities. I do not know further details concerning that incident but I can assure you that everybody condemned those activities. Of course there was not any confession by the Israelis.

Question:

Furthermore, in 1979 PLO opened a representative office in Ankara. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership have any reservations against the improvement of PLO's relations with Turkey? Did any political party or organization ask for the reconsideration of the relations with the PLO?

Answer:

I do not think so. Actually, when we recognize a state, we are expecting all the countries around the world to recognize it. Our dispute with Turkey is one thing. The Palestinian issue is another. Could we tell to a state that "you should not recognize the Palestinian movement", when we had already did that?

Question:

On 15 of November 1983 the Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash proclaimed the establishment of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". Did any Arab state or the PLO recognize that state? How did the Greek-Cypriot leadership respond to that proclamation and what efforts did they make in order to prevent the Arab states and PLO to recognize that state?

Answer:

All Arab states, with minimal exceptions, were against the recognition. During the course of some OIC summits, there was an option to establish links with the Turkish-Cypriot separate state, without any recognition, however.

Question:

On December 1987 the Palestinian Uprising-Intifada broke out. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership support the Palestinians and did they accuse the Israeli oppressive measures against the protestors?

Answer:

I am sure that they were supporters. However, I do not know if there was any assistance towards the Palestinians. Of course we gave to the Palestinians moral support and we supported them diplomatically. If they demanded any further assistance such as clothes, medicines, food, etc surely we gave to them, but I do not have any evident for that.

Question:

After the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada, the PLO proclaimed the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and by accepting Israel's right to exist the rival parties began the peace negotiation process. When the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognized the Palestinian state? Was there any pressure to other states, such as Greece to recognize the Palestinian state? Did they support the peace process between Israel and PLO?

Answer:

I do not know if that was the case. Our policy is that the Palestinians should solve their problems by themselves. Our attitude was based on our policy concerning the Palestinians' demand for self-determination.

Question:

Since the early 1970s, Greek-Cypriot political parties had contacts with the PLO and various members of Greek-Cypriot political parties, mainly those of the Left-Communist and Socialist parties paid official visits to PLO's headquarters in Lebanon. Moreover, PLO leading figures paid official visits to Cyprus, whence they had meetings with leading figures of political parties of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community. Is it possible to make an analysis of those meetings and to describe to what extent did those meetings influence the relations between PLO and Cyprus/Greek-Cypriots?

Answer:

We had always pure and warm relations with the Palestinian movement in general. We continue as in the past to have close contacts with the Palestinian movement, and we

support Palestinians' demand for self-determination. AKEL also, as I remember, adopted the same policies. But I think that all Greek-Cypriot political parties were pro-Palestinian. I cannot remember any negative attitude within the Greek-Cypriot political parties.

Question:

There were several incidents in Cyprus since the mid-1970s, such as assassinations of Palestinians, assassinations of Israelis by Palestinian guerrillas, etc. Of course we cannot mention all the incidents. Could you make a comment concerning all those incidents? How did the Greek-Cypriot leadership react in the aftermath of those attacks?

Answer:

All Greek-Cypriot political parties condemned the assassinations and all the other attacks. We could not accept the fact that in our country, members of friendly organization to us were murdered.

Question:

My last question has to do with the assassination of one of the leading figures of PLO, Abu Jihad, in 1988. Was there any reaction by the Greek-Cypriot leadership or the political parties?

Answer:

I knew him {Abu Jihad} personally, and we were friends. Of course I felt terrible when I heard about his death. However, I do not know further details concerning any reactions, beyond the articles in the press.

Interview with Donis Christofinis

Donis Christofinis is member of the left – communist party of Cyprus AKEL since the 1950s. Moreover, Donis Christofinis served as secretary general of the left - communist youth organization EDON in the years 1964-1974. Between the years 1973-2009 Donis Christofinis served as secretary general of the People’s Solidarity Committee. Also Donis Christofinis was elected as member of the Executive Committee of AKEL in which he served for several years. The interview with Mr. Donis Christofinis was placed on November 19, 2014 at Donis Christofinis’ home, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Question:

First of all, I will like to ask from you to make an analysis over the historical background of Cyprus’s relations with the Arab states until the establishment of the PLO. In this context, could you describe to me the special relationship between Makarios and Nasser? When did they meet for the first time and how this meeting was transformed into a real friendship?

Answer:

AKEL as a political party, Makarios and the government, had warm relations with the Palestinians and the Arab states. Makarios realized from the beginning that Cyprus should become member of the non-Aligned movement and not member of NATO. The Arab states were also members of the non-Aligned movement. During that period {World War II}, AKEL helped the Jewish people, who escaped from Nazi camps and came illegally to Cyprus and were placed by the British Empire to another camp, to escape from Cyprus and to resettle in Palestine. As AKEL we supported the Jewish people, due to the fact that we believed that those people were victims of Nazi Germany, and we thought that they were anti-fascists. We could not predict that after the establishment of the Israeli state, that the Israeli state would oppress the Palestinian people. Israel is a democratic state, with parliament, elected representatives, etc. However, they oppressed the Palestinians, while they adopted an anti-communist and I can say anti-human policies against the Palestinian people. I have to say that there were of course progressive and communist Israelis who did not accept and condemned the Israeli policies against the Palestinian people, and desired to live in peace with the Palestinians, and that a

Palestinian state should be established in the pre-1967 frontiers. Our official policy as AKEL, since I remember, is that a fair solution should be achieved, concerning the Palestinian issue, with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Cyprus during the Suez crisis was used as a military base by the British and French troops, even our oppositions. Of course we gave moral support and any assistance to the extent we could to the Arab states and the Palestinian people too, because we also had economic problems. There was a solidarity between the two people {Greek-Cypriot and Palestinian people}, a solidarity which exists until our days. As AKEL we had relations not only with PLO and Fatah, but also with DFLP, PFLP, and the communists and in general with all the Palestinian organizations. I remember a specific incident, probably during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when we sent our assistance to the Palestinian and Lebanese people. A truck was full with medicines, clothes and food, by the Greek-Cypriot refugees, who had their own problems in that period of time, who in some cases did not have a place to leave and were staying in the refugee camps. We had also established the People's Solidarity Committee (EPAL) which organized huge demonstrations against the Israeli policies, in order to show our solidarity with the Palestinian people and we organized also charity events. I had also personal contacts and meetings with the leader of PLO Yasser Arafat.

Question

During the eruption of the Cyprus crisis of 1963-1964, there were reports that Egypt supplied weapons to the Greek-Cypriots. There were also reports that until 1974 Syria provided secretly the Greek-Cypriot side with weapons. Could you confirm those reports? Did the other Arab states supply weapons to the Greek-Cypriots?

Answer:

I cannot confirm that information, because I do not know about that. Of course the Arab states supported our side {Greek-Cypriot side}, as we did. However, I do not include Saudi Arabia, which adopted a pro-American policy.

Question:

How did the Greek-Cypriot political parties and the Government of Cyprus react during the various Arab-Israeli wars, in 1967, the Jordanian crisis of 1970-1971, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973? Did the Cypriot civilian people give any assistance to the Arab states during those crises? Was there any reaction by Israel? Did Great Britain use its bases in the island in favor of Israel during those crises, and if she did what was the reaction by the Greek-Cypriots? What were the consequences of the oil crisis for Cyprus?

Answer:

The first Arab-Israeli war erupted in 1948. AKEL condemned the unilateral proclamation of the Israeli state and the forced expulsion of the Palestinian people from their fatherland, after the end of the 1948 war. During the Suez crisis, Cyprus was used as a base for the British and French military operations against Egypt, a fact which we condemned. In the course of the Six Day war of 1967 we condemned Israel's aggression/attack. During that period, as I remember, we sent an x-ray device to Syria from East Germany. Generally speaking, we supported the Arab states and the Palestinian movement during the Arab-Israeli wars.

Question:

After the Cypriot National Guard made a military coup against Makarios on 15 July 1974 Turkey made an intervention to Cyprus on 20 July 1974. How did the Arab states and PLO react against Turkey? There were also reports that Israel during the crisis, gave logistical support to the Turkish army. Could you confirm those reports? What was the reaction of the Greek-Cypriot leadership against Israel?

Answer:

I do not know if Israel gave any assistance to the Turkish army during the Turkish intervention of 1974. They had close relations, but I cannot say that they {the Israelis} were involved during the course of the crisis. The Palestinian movement and the Palestinian people, on the other hand, were/are the primary supporter of our side {Greek-Cypriot side} within the Arab world. That was due to the fact that the Greek-Cypriot leadership, AKEL and the Greek-Cypriot civilian people had always supported the Palestinian movement and Palestinians' demand for self-determination. And I believe

that they will continue their policy concerning the Cyprus issue and that they would prevent any recognition of the Turkish-Cypriot separate state within the context of the OIC.

Question:

Were there PLO's bases in Cyprus until Turkey's intervention in 1974?

Answer:

PLO did not establish any bases in Cyprus, because they did not need that. They had already a representative office in Cyprus. Of course Palestinian refugees came to Cyprus and stayed in the island, but not the Palestinian leadership. That is because Cyprus is a small island and they could be an easy target for Mossad agents.

Question:

In 1978 the Israeli forces arrested the Greek-Cypriot journalist Panagioti Paschali in Tel Aviv and claimed that he was a spy. Could you tell me something about that incident? What steps were taken by the Greek-Cypriot leadership in order to release the journalist? Were there any reactions by the Arab states?

Answer:

Paschalis was member of AKEL and journalist of the newspaper Haravgi. He went to Tel Aviv as a correspondent and the Israeli police arrested him and charged him that he was a spy. Paschalis was sentenced to prison for many years, but he was released after one and a half year. That fact came as a result of huge demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy in Nicosia.

Question:

In 1978 there was an incident in Cyprus, in my opinion one of the most important ones, in which Arab guerrillas killed Yusuf Sebai an Egyptian pro-Sadat editor. Afterwards the guerrillas took as hostages 12 Arab delegates and the crises ended with a clash between Egyptian commandos and soldiers of the Greek-Cypriot army. As I know you were taken as hostage too. Could you describe to me those events? Why Egypt intervened? What were the consequences of that event?

Answer:

Of course we condemned Sebai's assassination, as we did with all the incidents like that. I cannot remember further details for that incident, but it was one of the most serious incidents in Cyprus.

Question:

Furthermore, in 1979 PLO opened a representative office in Ankara. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership have any reservations against the improvement of PLO's relations with Turkey? Did any political party or organization ask for the reconsideration of the relations with the PLO?

Answer:

Of course it is rational for the Palestinian movement to demand international recognition and in this case with Turkey too. Our reservations and our concern had more to do with any effects against our relations with the Palestinian movement, as a result of the establishment of relations with Turkey. We feared that the opening of PLO's representative office in Ankara could damage our warm relations with the Palestinian movement.

Question:

On December 1987 the Palestinian Uprising-Intifada broke out. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership support the Palestinians and did they accuse the Israeli oppressive measures against the protestors?

Answer:

The Palestinian uprising – Intifada, was a general strike/demonstration of the Palestinian people, who suffered the Israeli oppressive measures in the occupied territories. Of course we supported them in the diplomatic level, and we gave assistance to the Palestinian people to the way we could. We sent to them medicines, clothes, food, etc.

Question:

After the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada, the PLO proclaimed the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and by accepting Israel's right to exist the rival parties began

the peace negotiation process. When the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognized the Palestinian state? Was there any pressure to other states, such as Greece to recognize the Palestinian state? Did they support the peace process between Israel and PLO?

Answer:

In my opinion, the establishment of the Palestinian state is a victory of the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian movement. The Israeli army should withdraw from the Palestinian territories and the international community should press Israel to do so. Israel should also end the blockade of Gaza Strip. Greek-Cypriot leadership of course supports Palestinians demand for self-determination.

Question:

My last question has to do with the assassination of one of the leading figures of PLO, Abu Jihad, in 1988. Was there any reaction by the Greek-Cypriot leadership or the political parties?

Answer:

I knew Abu Jihad personally. It was an illegal action by the Israeli intelligence and of course we condemned the assassination of Abu Jihad. Our attitude was the same when Palestinian guerrillas committed attacks like that.

Interview with Taki Hadjidemetriou

Takis Hadjidemetriou was one of the founding leaders of the socialist party EDEK. Moreover, Takis Hadjidemetriou was elected as Member of Parliament, while he was also president of the Defense Committee and president of the European sub-commission of cultural heritage. He is also president of the IKME - Institute of Sociopolitical studies. The interview with Mr. Takis Hadjidemetriou was placed on November 25, 2014 at Takis Hadjidemetriou's home, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Question:

First of all, I will like to ask from you to make an analysis over the historical background of Cyprus's relations with the Arab states until the establishment of the PLO. In this context, could you describe to me the special relationship between Makarios and Nasser? When did they meet for the first time and how this meeting was transformed into a real friendship?

Answer:

First of all, I would like to say that the Cyprus issue was connected with Arab nationalism. Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, when Faruk was overthrown and at first Muhammad Naquib, and afterwards Nasser rose in power, Arab nationalism was spread in the Arab world, and created anti-imperialist feelings. In that period, the demand for union with Greece {Greek-Cypriots' demand} was radicalized. During that period, Turkey, that was connected with the West and USA and was member of NATO, felt threatened by the rise of Arab nationalism and the connection of the Arab states with the Soviet Union. As a result, Turkey on the one hand, was isolated within the Arab world, while Cyprus was connected with Arab nationalism due to its ant-colonial struggle {against Great Britain}. We can say that during that period Cyprus and the Arab states joined hands. Makarios, in the very early years of the Cyprus issue {probably 1955} visited Egypt. Makarios took part in the meetings of the Afro-Asian conference, which was held in Bandung {1955} – a conference which lead to the establishment of the non-Aligned movement years later. That fact explains why the newly Cypriot state became member of the non-Aligned movement. It was in this framework, that the Arab states supported the Greek-Cypriot side at the UN in the course of the resolutions concerning

the Cyprus issue. I can possibly say that during that period there were ruptures in Turkey's relations with the Arab states. Afterwards, when Cyprus became independent, it also became member of the non-Aligned movement. And even the fact that Fazil Küçük {then Vice President} had some reservations; he did not veto Makarios' intentions. As a result, Cyprus became member of the non-Aligned movement, and there was a connection, or more precisely a continuation of the connection with the ant-colonial movements. I can say that Cyprus remained connected with the non-Aligned movement and of course with the Arab world. As a result, Cyprus was connected also with the Palestinian organization al-Fatah and of course with the Palestinian movement. We had so close and warm relations with the Arab states and the Palestinian movement that during the Six Day War of 1967 there were discussions within the Cypriot parliament concerning that issue. After the end of the Six Day War there was a general view that Nasser and Arab nationalism was weakened, while there was a rise of the Palestinian movement and al-Fatah, which was radicalized. During that period, Cyprus was connected with al-Fatah at first, and afterwards with the PLO. Of course our relations with the Palestinian movement were improving rapidly since 1967. We enjoyed for several years cordial and warm relations with the Arab states and the Palestinian movement. I have to say that, even the fact that Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Soviet Union there was not any change in its bilateral relations with the Arab states. That came as a result of Turkey's relations with Israel, especially in the economic and intelligence fields. In my opinion, Israel ought its existence to a great extent to Turkey, beyond Cyprus, because many Jewish people passed through Cyprus in their way {to Palestine}. Now, concerning our relations with Israel, Cyprus since its establishment {in 1960} established diplomatic relations with Israel. However, our relations were cool. Cyprus did not open an embassy in Israel; we did not have any representative either. We did not have any contacts with the Israeli state, and Israel from its side, as I observed, remained neutral concerning the Cyprus issue, during the bi-communal clashes, etc. However, since the mid-1970s there was a new development: Cyprus became for some years the battlefield arena of PLO and Israel. Since the mid-1970s Mossad agents assassinated Palestinians members of the PLO. There was an incident in hotel Olympia {the assassination of Husein al Bashir Fatah's representative in Cyprus in 1973, in

retaliation to the Munich 1972 massacre}. There was an attack against an Israeli yacht in Larnaca later. And there was also the incident in which Sebai was assassinated {Larnaca airport incident 1978}, but the assassination took place after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. During that period, the Arab states were divided, Egypt was the black sheep within the Arab world, and was isolated, especially from Syria, with which Cyprus had and has until our days cordial relations. In that period, our relations with Egypt were terminated after the Larnaca airport incident of 1978, and the Camp David accords. During that period we had also economic relations with the Arab states. Greek-Cypriot companies were operating in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states, in Libya, Algeria in some cases and in Syria, to some extent. That is to say, that there was an improvement on our economic relations with some Arab states, even our general pro-Arab policy. Our economic relations with the Arab states continued for many years. Afterwards, our relations with Egypt too were normalized, after Greek mediation. In the meantime, Turkey made a rapprochement towards the Arab states, while US presence was strengthened especially after the Camp David Accords and the Israeli-Egyptian alliance. In that period Cyprus' {Greek-Cypriots'} diplomatic relations with the Arab states were weakened, while our economic relations were improving rapidly. That was within the context of the global and regional developments {since the very late 1970s}. This is a general outline of our relations with the Arab states and Israel.

Question:

During the Suez Crisis of 1956, Cyprus, which was under the colonial rule of Great Britain, was used as a base for the British and French operations against Egypt. Was there any reaction by Makarios or Greek-Cypriot or Turkish-Cypriot politicians or individuals? Did Makarios support Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal?

Answer:

In that period, the relations between the Greek-Cypriot struggle {for independence and union with Greece} and Egypt, and the bilateral relations of Greece with Egypt were improving. That was because, on the one hand, Greek navigators contributed to the continuation of the operations of the Suez Canal; while, on the other hand, EOKA targeted the British bases and presence in Cyprus. Moreover, by initiating the blasting of

British airplanes the Greek-Cypriot nationalist movement showed its solidarity with the Egyptian people.

Question:

During my research I found out that after the independence of Cyprus (August 16, 1960) under pressures by Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot side, Cyprus recognized Israel and gave its permission to Israel to open an embassy in Nicosia. Could you describe to me the reactions of the Arab states, especially Egypt against Cyprus' decision to give its permission to Israel to open an embassy on the island?

Answer:

There was an attack against the Israeli embassy. An armed Palestinian group opened fire against the Israeli embassy, with no victims, however. The Israeli embassy in Cyprus for several years became the center of anti-Israeli and pro-Palestinian demonstrations. I have not any knowledge on that fact {Arab reactions against the opening of an Israeli embassy}. Even though, Israel opened an embassy in Cyprus, our relations with the Arab states were not terminated and remained warm and cordial.

Question

During the eruption of the Cyprus crisis of 1963-1964, there were reports that Egypt supplied weapons to the Greek-Cypriots. There were also reports that until 1974 Syria provided secretly the Greek-Cypriot side with weapons. Could you confirm those reports? Did the other Arab states supply weapons to the Greek-Cypriots?

Answer:

The Arab states showed their solidarity with our case, especially Egypt which gave to us limited military assistance. Our warm relations with Egypt continued as in the past. Here I have to tell you something: Nasser was not against our {Greek-Cypriots'} demand for union with Greece, because he said "I desire to create a union with all the Arab states and Egypt had already united with Syria. So, if you desire to unite with Greece, in this sense, I do not have any reservations". Egypt supported Greek-Cypriot policies, even those which were too nationalistic. The Arab states of course supported our {Greek-Cypriot} side in the UN. The situation seemed to change since 1967. Nasser remained the leader of Egypt, but he was weakened and so Arab nationalism too.

Question:

How did the Greek-Cypriot political parties and the Government of Cyprus react during the Jordanian crisis of 1970-1971? Did the Cypriot civilian people give any assistance to the Arab states during those crises? Was there any reaction by Israel?

Answer:

Of course, PLO was a state within the Jordanian Kingdom and threatened King Hussein's authority. We had close contacts with al-Fatah and PLO and we were more pro-Palestinian in general.

Question:

How did the Greek-Cypriot political parties and the Government of Cyprus react during the Six Day War of 1967, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973? Did the Cypriot civilian people give any assistance to the Arab states during those crises? Was there any reaction by Israel? Did Great Britain use its bases in the island in favor of Israel during those crises, and if she did what was the reaction by the Greek-Cypriots? What were the consequences of the oil crisis for Cyprus?

Answer:

We do not have any evident to prove that. It is questionable if during the Six Day War of 1967 there was any usage of the British bases in Israel's favor, because the Israeli forces advanced rapidly and they did not want any assistance, not even ammunitions. In any case, the British bases could possibly were ready to give any assistance that Israel could need. Now concerning the Yom Kippur War of 1973, there was an exchange of information and usage of bases, but I think that they used the bases in Crete, Souda, and not those in Cyprus.

Question:

Here, I would like to ask from you to make a comment concerning the Munich Olympic Games incident in 1972, when a Palestinian group assassinated members of the Israeli Olympic team.

Answer:

It was a murder, which had nothing to do with Olympic Games' spirit, which is peace. Of course we condemned the assassination.

Question:

After the Cypriot National Guard made a military coup against Makarios on 15 July 1974 Turkey made an intervention to Cyprus on 20 July 1974. How did the Arab states and PLO react against Turkey? There were also reports that Israel during the crisis, gave logistical support to the Turkish army. Could you confirm those reports? What was the reaction of the Greek-Cypriot leadership against Israel?

Answer:

I do not have evident concerning any Israeli assistance to Turkey. Here I have to tell you something. During that period, I made a research to find some evident of Israel's contributions or any articles concerning the military coup without any success, however.. Jerusalem Post made only a mention of the military coup without any further details. Israel seemed to be neutral during the military coup. Our suspicions against Israel were due to our pro-Arab policy. We considered Israel as one of our main enemies. We shall not forget, however, that the announcement that Makarios was still alive was transmitted to the international community via an Israeli radio station.

Question:

In the same year Rauf Denktash declared the establishment of the "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus". Did the Arab states or PLO recognize that state in any forum or organization? What the Greek-Cypriots did to prevent the Arab states and PLO to recognize the "Turkish Federated state of Cyprus"? Did Israel recognize it?

Answer:

I cannot remember their reactions. Besides, the Arab states were divided. Arab reactions after the Cyprus crisis of 1974 were depended on their bilateral relations with Turkey. For instance, Saudi Arabia did not have any diplomatic relations with Cyprus {Greek-

Cypriot side} until our days, even the fact that Greek-Cypriots had economic links with Saudi Arabia. We made a rapprochement towards Saudi Arabia, without any success, however. I cannot remember if we had any contacts or relations with the other Gulf States. Cyprus {Greek-Cypriot side}, on the other hand, enjoyed cordial and warm relations with Syria, which was a hostile state to Turkey.

Question:

Were there PLO's bases in Cyprus until Turkey's intervention in 1974?

Answer:

No, there was not any case, besides the Palestinian movement did not need a base in Cyprus. Their bases and their infrastructure in Jordan and Lebanon were amazing. I had been in Jordan, and I had an experience of their bases/camps, which were to a great extent organized. They had libraries, schools for the kids, etc. Cyprus {Greek-Cypriot side} could only support them through diplomacy and the Greek-Cypriots had a friendly attitude towards the Palestinians, who stayed in the island. Greek-Cypriots could not offer more than that and it was not necessary to offer more than that. I am sure that there were not any bases in Cyprus. And when Cyprus became the battlefield arena between Mossad and PLO, we said to the Palestinians "Please leave us, we have our own problems", a demand which the Palestinians respected.

Question:

Another regional crisis erupted in the Middle East in 1975, the Lebanese civil war, which resulted to the Syrian and Israeli intervention in 1976 and 1978 respectively and to the major Israeli invasion of that country in the summer of 1982. What were the reactions of the Greek-Cypriot leadership against Israel? Did the Greek-Cypriots support the Palestinians and the PLO and if so, how they supported them?

Answer:

I can tell you that I remember PLO's infrastructure in Lebanon, because when Israeli agents assassinated two PLO members in Cyprus, I went to Lebanon to deliver their bodies to the leader of PLO Yasser Arafat. As it was the case in Jordan in 1970, PLO was a state within the Lebanese state. Cyprus {Greek-Cypriot side} during the Israeli invasion

could not give any assistance to the Palestinians, except of making easier their deportation from Lebanon {many Palestinians left from Lebanon and they passed through Cyprus in their way to other Arab states}.

Question:

In 1978 there was an incident in Cyprus, in my opinion one of the most important ones, in which Arab guerrillas killed Yusuf Sebai an Egyptian pro-Sadat editor. Afterwards the guerrillas took as hostages 12 Arab delegates and the crises ended with a clash between Egyptian commandos and soldiers of the Greek-Cypriot army. As I know you were taken as hostage too. Could you describe to me those events? Why Egypt intervened? What were the consequences of that event?

Answer:

The assassination of Sebai was committed by the Abu Nidal Organization (AON). After that incident, they took as hostages Arab diplomats and they hijacked an airplane, which after it refueled in Djibouti, came back to Larnaca airport, and the Greek-Cypriot government initiated negotiations with the kidnappers. In the meantime, there was an idea to bring Palestinian mediators. I personally went to Beirut in order to bring the Palestinian mediators in Cyprus, in order to contribute their efforts to end the kidnapping. When I arrived in Beirut, instead of Palestinian mediators I met with Palestinian guerrillas, with whom I returned back to Larnaca. When we landed to Larnaca airport I informed the authorities that they were not mediators, they were fighters, and the airplane landed far away from the other plane. During the course of the fight between the Egyptian commandos and the Greek-Cypriot soldiers, the Palestinian guerrillas participated too {against the Egyptian commandos}. That fact further complicated our relations with Egypt. After that incident, Boutros Boutros-Ghali came to receive the victims and the bilateral relations between Egypt and the Greek-Cypriot side were frozen.

Question:

In 1978 the Israeli forces arrested the Greek-Cypriot journalist Panagioti Paschali in Tel Aviv and claimed that he was a spy. Could you tell me something about that incident?

What steps were taken by the Greek-Cypriot leadership in order to release the journalist?
Were there any reactions by the Arab states?

Answer:

Paschalis was a very good friend of mine, but we did not have a talk on that issue, and I am not sure if he went to Israel for spying activities, or if the Israeli authorities overreacted. I can tell you that I know, that in some cases the Palestinians requested to Greek-Cypriots to visit Israel, to take some pictures there and come back. But they were not organizing spying activities, as I know. For instance, Greek-Cypriots could visit Israel with a yacht they could take some pictures and return back. They could not organize something serious, because they were amateurs. However, Mossad agents were arrested in Cyprus for spying activities. Greek-Cypriot police, after receiving information from a Greek-Cypriot civilian, arrested Mossad agents.

Question:

Furthermore, in 1979 PLO opened a representative office in Ankara. Did the Greek-Cypriot leadership have any reservations against the improvement of PLO's relations with Turkey? Did any political party or organization ask for the reconsideration of the relations with the PLO?

Answer:

I cannot confirm that. Instead there was a confusion concerning their relations with Turkey. We were satisfied with our warm relations with the PLO, but we were skeptical about the improvement of PLO's relations with Turkey. There was not any case or chance for us {Greek-Cypriots} to reconsider our relations with PLO. The Palestinians had their own struggle for their survival and they needed international support.

Question:

After the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada, the PLO proclaimed the establishment of the Palestinian state in 1988 and by accepting Israel's right to exist the rival parties began the peace negotiation process. When the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognized the Palestinian state? Was there any pressure to other states, such as Greece to recognize the Palestinian state? Did they support the peace process between Israel and PLO?

Answer:

I cannot confirm that. As I know, Cyprus {the Greek-Cypriot side} proposed to give its assistance for the construction of an airport in Gaza. Yet, PASOK, which had warm relations with PLO and Fatah, was in government in Greece. Besides, when Arafat left from Beirut {after of PLO's expulsion from Lebanon}, he paid an official visit to Athens. For that reason, no pressure to Greece was needed. Greece, on the other hand, did not recognize Israel de jure {until the early 1990s}. So, Greece's bilateral relations with the Arab states and PLO were warm.

Question:

My last question has to do with the assassination of one of the leading figures of PLO, Abu Jihad, in 1988. Was there any reaction by the Greek-Cypriot leadership or the political parties?

Answer:

I went to the house, where the Israeli agents assassinated Abu Jihad. His assassination was in the context of the Palestinian Intifada. There was coordination between the exiled leadership {in Tunisia} and the Palestinians within the occupied territories. For that reason, the Israelis decided to assassinate Abu Jihad.