

## ***Kissinger and the Invasion of Cyprus: Diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean***

WILLIAM MALLINSON

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In his latest book, William Mallinson employs a well-known method of his – the analysis of material from diplomatic archives that is – to sketch out the portrait of Henry Kissinger in light of the latter’s involvement and role in the 1974 Cyprus invasion. The author makes use of archival sources as well as Kissinger’s own writings to point out the statesman’s reasoning behind decisions on specific course of action, aiming at “*understanding his behaviour vis-à-vis his alleged acts against humanity, since the case of Cyprus serves as an accurate microcosm of, and pointer to, his behavior in other world fora*” (p. xxiv).

In Chapter 1, the author presents us with Kissinger’s tactical and strategic approaches and views on Europe, the Soviet Union/Russia, the UK, Greece, Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean and comments on the latter’s morality as well as what he describes as Kissinger’s obsession with geopolitical vacuums. On Cyprus in particular, the author highlights Kissinger’s personal antipathy vis-à-vis Makarios as well as the former’s tactics of presenting the Cyprus debacle as a result of ethnic conflict, turning a blind eye to the role of interfering outside powers therein.

Chapter 2 describes Cyprus as a strategic asset of Britain and the US against the Soviets. Mallinson elaborates on how Cyprus’ geopolitical ‘victimhood’ served British interests by giving the latter control over the whole of the Mediterranean and how gradual US involvement in the Balkans was a result of Britain’s efforts to maintain its interests in Greece and Cyprus in a Cold War context.

In Chapter 3, the author explains how the 1974 dismemberment of Cyprus had been the outcome of a process initiated by Britain in the 1950s, in the context of the latter’s friendship with NATO-allied Turkey, while the 1960 arrangement for the independence of Cyprus contained itself elements of partition.

Chapter 4 focuses on briefly outlining Soviet policy vis-à-vis Cyprus in the 1960s and 1970s as well as on explaining the reasons that underpinned this policy and

the Anglo-american positioning in this context, which can be summed up in an obsession with the USSR that the author labels as “*the essential cause of Cyprus’ problems*” (p. 54).

Chapter 5 contains an account of Kissinger’s views, methods and overall behaviour on the basis of testimonials by American, British and French officials. The author sketches out a powerful and idiosyncratic megalomaniac, who tends to ignore the advice of even senior diplomats of the State Department.

In Chapter 6, the author argues that Kissinger encouraged the partition of Cyprus through the invasion and misled the Brits about it, this being part of a private agenda. Mallinson points at Kissinger’s delaying tactics in July 1974, which he describes as a “*US-British strategy to allow Turkey the space it needed to invade*” (p. 95), as well as his keen interest in maintaining Turkish goodwill. The author concludes that Kissinger “*condoned the Turkish invasion to keep Turkey US- and NATO-friendly*” (p. 97).

Chapter 7 follows Kissinger’s *coda vis-à-vis* the Cyprus case and the mark he left behind on his way out, which was – according to the author – nothing short of the former supporting the partition of the island, while Chapter 8 offers a critical look on Kissinger’s way of conducting as well as his impact on diplomacy.

In the final chapter, the author attempts a recap of Kissinger’s personality as sketched out throughout the book: a tactical strategist of the realist school and a Metternich-admiring geopolitical engineer. Mallinson describes him as a self-contradicting pseudo-diplomat, skilled in state affairs but not in traditional diplomacy, before concluding that “*Cyprus today is the result of Kissinger’s alleged balance of power policies, where morality and law take a backseat to political realism.*” (p. 184)

This book is not a mere ‘yet another’ addition in existing literature about Kissinger and Cyprus. It moves well beyond the examination and assessment of the main actors and facts in a historical context. William Mallinson, a *connoisseur* of the contemporary history of Cyprus and industrious researcher of the relevant diplomatic archives, manages to flip the coin and present us with a look on well-known historical facts from a different viewpoint. This is a piece of work which, placing Kissinger himself (rather than Cyprus) at the epicentre of the analysis, focuses on explaining how Kissinger’s idiosyncratic personality is the key to interpreting (his) decisions and policy choices concerning Cyprus and beyond. In this context, this

book offers a wider understanding of US foreign policy with Kissinger at the helm and, in light of this, the turn of events in world affairs and, in particular, the ‘how and why’ therein.

Mallinson’s extensive research in, and analysis of, diplomatic archives (predominantly those of the FCO) constitutes the backbone of this work. With a great deal of direct quotations (rather than simple references) from the unpublished, archival material, juxtaposing the author’s accompanying analysis and conclusions (often also one’s own) when reading through the book, becomes a particularly intriguing process. Apart from the use of original archival sources, the author also makes use of, and provides the reader with, a long list of relevant bibliographic works, including Henry Kissinger’s own writings. In this respect, the book can be a useful tool for postgraduate students of politics, international relations and (diplomatic) history as well as researchers and academics. At the same time, it makes an enlightening and thought-provoking read for practitioners and all those with a special interest in the topic.

Precisely the fact that this book is not intended to cater exclusively for the needs of academic research is one of its advantages. By the same token, the author makes sure that the amount of information included regarding the historical background is fairly balanced. This way, the book is suitable both for a reader with basic as well as one of more advanced/specialised knowledge on the topic at hand. The complexity of the (at times obnoxiously candid) language used by the author makes the book anything but a light read for the average academic-level reader; nevertheless, the skillful use of the English language offers a nowadays rare taste of ‘outside the (academic) box’, native-speaker linguistic mastery. The individual chapters are well-structured and the reader is neatly led through the author’s argumentation, which is built in a coherent manner. The index provided at the very end is another advantage of the book and can be particularly useful for research purposes. All in all, this book presents a fresh look on and fills a gap in existing literature on the topic; certainly a worthwhile addition to one’s bookshelf.

ANNA KARAFOLIDOU