

## **Has the ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ served the democratic values and long-term interests of the United Kingdom? A reassessment of a mode of thought originating in 1955**

The ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ is a term coined by the author. It encapsulates the Cyprus-related purposes, principles, policies, phrases and procedures which were promoted by or on behalf of Harold Macmillan as Foreign Secretary in 1955 and as Prime Minister from 1957 until 1963. These include:

- the ‘purpose’ of ‘safeguard[ing] ... British bases and installations’;<sup>1</sup>
- ‘the principle of partnership’,<sup>2</sup> i.e., ‘partnership between the communities in the island and also between the Governments of the UK, Greece and Turkey’;<sup>3</sup>
- ‘the policy of communal autonomy’;<sup>4</sup>
- phrases such as ‘the two communities’<sup>5</sup> and
- the procedure known as ‘the Conference on Cyprus’.<sup>6</sup>

The ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ infused the legal instruments which came into operation on 16 August 1960.<sup>7</sup> Since then, the ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ has effectively remained as the basis of British policy but to the detriment of the democratic values and long-term interests of the UK. The aim of this paper is to explain why with reference to two evidence-based theses.

Firstly, the ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ subverts democratic values. After all, it disempowers the demos, stimulates segregation, fosters parallel societies and instrumentalises each of ‘the two communities’, an intrinsically undemocratic concept founded on the Islamist-Ottoman distinction between the non-Muslim and the Muslim. This distinction was previously enshrined in laws such as the Cyprus (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925, which distinguished ‘non-Mohammedan persons’ from ‘Mohammedan persons’.

Secondly, the ‘Macmillan Doctrine’ serves neo-colonial Turkish interests while endangering British interests. This has become palpable since 2003. Under the post-2003 Erdogan regime, Turkey has descended into an Islamist autocracy with a civil nuclear relationship with Russia,<sup>8</sup> deepening ties with China,<sup>9</sup> a determination to display bellicosity<sup>10</sup> and proclivities which are unmistakably expansionist.

The originality of this paper lies in its interdisciplinary methodology and use of a blend of declassified UK Government documents, UK Parliament records, legal instruments and other primary sources.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister (Harold Macmillan) in Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Volume 589, 19 June 1958, columns 1315-1320 at column 1315, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1958/jun/19/cyprus> (accessed 10 June 2025).

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, column 1316.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, column 1316.

<sup>4</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Alan Lennox-Boyd) in Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Volume 590, 26 June 1958, columns 611-618 at column 615, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1958/jun/26/cyprus> (accessed 10 June 2025).

<sup>5</sup> The Prime Minister (Harold Macmillan) in Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Volume 589, 19 June 1958, columns 1315-1320 at columns 1315, 1316 and 1317, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1958/jun/19/cyprus>, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Alan Lennox-Boyd) in Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Volume 590, 26 June 1958, columns 611-618 at column 616, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1958/jun/26/cyprus> and the Prime Minister (Harold Macmillan) in Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Volume 590, 26 June 1958, columns 723-731 at column 725, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1958/jun/26/cyprus> (accessed 10 June 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 679: Miscellaneous No. 4 (1959): Conference on Cyprus: Documents signed and initialled at Lancaster House on February 19, 1959: Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister by Command of Her Majesty: February 1959 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959) and Cmnd. 680: Miscellaneous No. 5 (1959): Conference on Cyprus: Final Statements at the Closing Plenary Session at Lancaster House on February 19, 1959: Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister by Command of Her Majesty: February 1959 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959).

<sup>7</sup> Cmnd. 1093: *Cyprus: Presented to [the UK] Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defence* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, July 1960), Cyprus Act 1960, 1960 c. 52 (Regnal. 8 and 9 Eliz 2), [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/52](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/52) (accessed 10 June 2025), The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia Order in Council 1960, No. 1369, [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1960/1369/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1960/1369/contents/made) (accessed 10 June 2025) and The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia Royal Instructions 1960 in *Statutory Instruments 1960: Part III* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), 4213-4214.

<sup>8</sup> 'Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in relation to the Construction of a Nuclear Power Plant at the Akkuyu Site in the Republic of Turkey ... Signed in Ankara on May 12, 2010', *Official Gazette of Turkey*, [www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/10/20101006-6-1.pdf](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/10/20101006-6-1.pdf) (accessed 10 June 2025).

<sup>9</sup> See *inter alia* 'Xi, Erdogan agree to enhance China-Turkey cooperation', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 27 July 2018, [www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zy/jj/2018zt/xgswfcxjxgjmlqs/202406/t20240606\\_11380540.html](http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zy/jj/2018zt/xgswfcxjxgjmlqs/202406/t20240606_11380540.html), 'China and Turkey Establish Ruling Party Governance Exchange Mechanism', International Department, Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1 June 2021, [www.idcpc.gov.cn/english2023/bzhd/202106/t20210603\\_160421.html](http://www.idcpc.gov.cn/english2023/bzhd/202106/t20210603_160421.html) and Türkiye's Multilateral Transportation Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, [www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye\\_s-multilateral-transportation-policy.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_s-multilateral-transportation-policy.en.mfa) (accessed 10 June 2025).

<sup>10</sup> The bellicosity is exhibited by countless Turkish Ministry of National Defence videos such as 'Kıbrıs 50.Yıl Marşı', Ministry of National Defence of Turkey, 19 July 2024, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRMF3iPXhX4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRMF3iPXhX4), 'MAVİ VATAN-2025 Tatbikatı'ndan Görüntüler', Ministry of National Defence of Turkey, 10 January 2025, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCtK7Be3FvA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCtK7Be3FvA) and 'Türkiye-Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti Özel Kuvvet Eğitimi-2025 Başarıyla Gerçekleştirildi', Ministry of National Defence of Turkey, 10 May 2025, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xpp6vU3c7EU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xpp6vU3c7EU) (accessed 10 June 2025).