

Cyprus and Turkey

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The Turkish presence in Cyprus shows that the drying up of the Euphrates in Revelation 16 is not yet complete. This presence is hindering talks about Turkey joining the EU. Meanwhile, a company in Cyprus is controlling the largest Russian shipping company, perhaps a precursor to Balaam's prophecy about ships and Chittim.

IN REVELATION 16 it is written: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (v. 12). The drying up of the Euphrates signifies the slow demise of the Ottoman Empire, which eventually came to an end at the time of the First World War. However, the existence of Turkey today shows that the Euphrates power is not yet fully dried up. Furthermore, the 'drying up' trend was actually reversed in 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus.

Cyprus had been part of the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century. In 1878 the island became administered by Britain, although still formally remaining within the Empire. When war broke out in 1914 the island was annexed by Britain. Turkey renounced any claim to Cyprus in the Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923. And

so, more of the Euphrates riverbed, so to speak, was revealed as the river dried up further.

Turkey invades Cyprus

As the rest of the empire withered away, the Euphrates power was reduced to a trickle, with just the actual country

remaining of this once great power. However, a small, but significant, resurgence of water was yet to flow through its near-waterless channels.

In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus in response to an attempt by Greece to seize control of the government of Cyprus. Turkey ended up controlling the northern third of the island, and in 1983 the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared, although this has only ever been recognised by Turkey. In 2004 the United Nations attempted to unify the island by proposing a settlement plan, but it was rejected by the Greek Cypriots.

The control of northern Cyprus is obviously not on the same scale as the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, for Turkey to invade and remain in a foreign territory is a reversal of the drying-up trend spoken of in Revelation 16. Perhaps we have allowed the magnitude of the rise and fall

Turkey and the surrounding nations



of the Ottoman Empire to blind us to the significance of the invasion in 1974. It was a sign that the sixth vial had by no means yet been fulfilled, something which, over thirty years later, is obviously the case.

The European Union

Soon after the failure of the UN to unify the island, Cyprus as a whole entered the European Union. However, the rights and obligations associated with this only applied to the part of the island controlled by the internationally recognised government. The Turkish Cypriots to the north remain in economic isolation. In response to this embargo on trade, Turkey refuses to allow Greek Cypriots to use its ports and airports.

Turkey is hoping one day to join the European Union, and initial talks had begun in this regard. However, Turkey's blocking of trade with Cyprus has caused these talks to stall. As Stephen Castle wrote in the *Independent*, "Turkey's EU membership talks are to be partly frozen after European foreign ministers agreed . . . on a punishment for Ankara's failure to open up ports and airports to trade with Cyprus".¹ A total of thirty-five policy areas had been under discussion. Discussions on eight of these, including agriculture, financial services, trade and transport, have now been halted. Moreover, none of the other areas, or chapters, as they are called, will be signed off, even where agreement has already been reached.

Turkey has been reluctant to allow trade with Cyprus because the EU has so far not fulfilled a promise to lift the embargo on northern Cyprus. They have not done this because the recognised government of southern Cyprus, based in Nicosia, has used its influence in the EU to block progress on this issue.

Regardless of the Cyprus issue, European countries such as Austria, France and Germany are against Turkey joining the EU anyway. We know from prophecy that the European "kings of the earth" will have a different role from the Euphrates power when Christ returns. The Cyprus issue is serving to emphasise the difference that exists between them.

A bridge afar

In the Bible, Chittim refers primarily to Cyprus. In one of his prophecies, Balaam spoke of Chittim in the latter days: "And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever" (Num. 24:24). This verse speaks of how ships will

come from Cyprus and afflict the area roughly covered by Syria and Iraq today. This is speaking of a small aspect of the invasion of the Middle East by Gog. It seems that Gog will use Cyprus as a stepping stone in its invasion.

Interestingly, Cyprus is already being spoken of in these terms, or at least as a bridge for economic expansion. In a recent issue of *World Report* concerning Cyprus, it was stated that, "With highly-developed services, infrastructure and an attractive tax regime, Cyprus is repositioning itself as the bridge from the EU to the Middle East and beyond".² This relates to trade, and to countries in general, but it is fascinating to see how Cyprus is now being perceived, knowing that in the future Russia will use Cyprus as a bridge to the Middle East for military purposes.

However, Russia is already establishing a presence in Cyprus in relation to "ships". This is seen in the case of a Cypriot company, Unicom. Of this company, *World Report* states: "as sole manager for JSC Sovcomflot, Unicom coordinates the shipping operations of Russia's leading shipping company".³ It goes on to quote Unicom's Fleet Director and Deputy Managing Director, Robert Thompson, as saying, "Our strategy is to become one of the prime movers of Russian energy, including gas, oil and eventually coal. We are working very closely on joint projects with some of Russia's big players, including Gazprom and Sibur, the biggest LPG exporter in Russia". It is clear from this quotation that this Cypriot-based company has massive influence with regard to Russia. The links between Cyprus and Russia will only become stronger as Armageddon approaches. At the same time, we can expect Turkish influence on the island to diminish as the Euphrates finally dries up.

1. Castle, S. (2006), "EU freezes talks on Turkey membership", *Independent*, 12 Dec. 2006, p. 19.
2. "From EU to the World" in *World Report*, 11 Nov. 2006, p. 5.
3. "A key player in the Russian energy sector", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

For a detailed consideration of the prophecy of Balaam with regard to the invasion of Cyprus by Russia and the identification of Asshur and Eber, see Ramsden, J. (1999), "Cyprus: Russia's stepping stone to doom!", *Bible Magazine*, 13 (1), pp. 4-6. Online at <http://www.biblemagazine.com/magazine/vol-13/v13i1mag.pdf>.