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An FBIS monitoring station is overrun
in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus

THE LAST DAYS OF THE FBIS MEDITERRANEAN BUREAU

Dennis Berend

The FBIS bureau in Cyprus, officially called Mediterranean Bureau but better known as Medbureau among FBIS employees, is located about seven miles west of Kyrenia and a mile north of Karavas on the island's north coast. It stands in a serene setting of citrus and olive groves, less than a mile from a beach where the sand still yields relics of earlier civilizations.

FBIS staffers who have spent tours of duty there since the bureau began operations 25 years ago have considered it one of the most desirable posts FBIS could offer. The beauty of the location alone, a shallow coastal plain between the Mediterranean and the Kyrenia mountain range, would be worth a tour of duty there. Describing his efforts to buy a house in Kyrenia, Lawrence Durrell had said in his book, *Bitter Lemons*: "I had begun to feel guilty of an act of fearful temerity in trying to settle in so fantastic a place." The relaxed style of living in the small seaside town of Kyrenia also made an assignment there most attractive.

But it all came to an end at dawn* Saturday, on 20 July 1974, when Turkish forces invaded Cyprus. Three days later, the FBIS bureau would stand abandoned and shell-scarred. Weary employees and families, lucky to be alive, would gather on beaches where they once enjoyed themselves, waiting to be rescued. An operation that had accounted for 10 percent of all FBIS field bureau reporting and that had covered some of the world's most crucial events would be out of business.

The bureau previously had survived three other crises. EOKA terrorism against British rule in 1955-56 became so widespread and violent that FBIS families were given the option of leaving the island. No one did, and the bureau continued its work. The outbreak of violence between the Greek and Turkish communities at Christmas in 1963 ravaged part of Nicosia and spread elsewhere, including the Kyrenia coast. At that time, the threat of an invasion from mainland Turkey led to evacuation of FBIS dependents to Beirut. But the bureau carried on. A new outbreak of intercommunal violence in November 1967 again forced the evacuation of families to Beirut when a Turkish invasion appeared imminent. Indications that it would take place in the area between Kyrenia and Karavas led to a temporary closing of the bureau. But the operating staff remained on the island and continued work at a communications site in Yerolakkos, on the outskirts of Nicosia.

*Various time references are used in this account, depending on the locale involved. Washington time is four hours behind GMT and six hours behind Cyprus time. For example, 2000 in Washington is 0000 GMT and 0200 Cyprus time.

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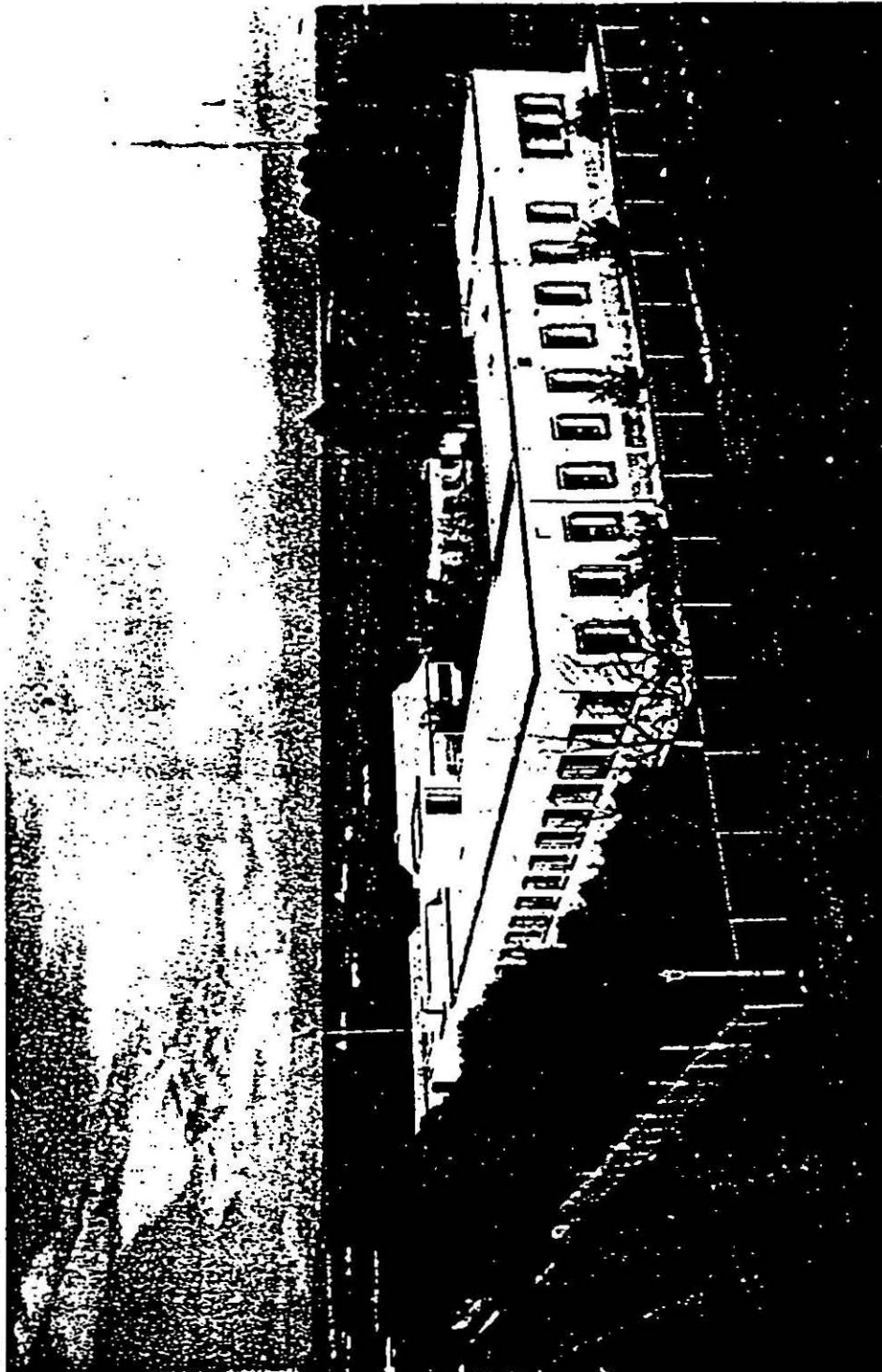


Fig. 1. FBIS Medbureau.

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At 1651 GMT on 14 July, FBIS Headquarters in Rosslyn, Va., was notified that its primary communications link with the bureau in Cyprus would be interrupted for routine maintenance at 0001 GMT 15 July. The link is part of the high-speed worldwide AUTODIN communications network. The outage took place as scheduled. Since it was planned and routine, it caused no particular concern in FBIS. A backup circuit via facilities of the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA), Cable & Wireless in England, and the FBIS London Bureau immediately replaced the AUTODIN link.

Monday, 15 July

For FBIS, the new crisis actually began in the early hours Monday when the backup link also went dead, without apparent reason and without warning, at 0635 GMT on 15 July. One or the other of the circuits normally carried a daily load of about 21,000 words of material monitored from the radios, press agencies, and newspapers of 23 countries in 12 languages. Vital information on such major developments as the 1956 Suez crisis, the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, and the three Cyprus crises had reached Washington through these channels. Now any new crisis in the eastern Mediterranean would catch Med-bureau without the means of sending its monitored product to Washington. But communications outages do happen, for a variety of reasons, and there was no way of knowing that this one was in fact the first sign of a crisis.

At 0417 hours Washington time (0817 GMT) on 15 July the Reuter teletype machine in the FBIS Wire Service office on the 11th floor of Key Building gave out a series of bell sounds to indicate that an important report was coming up. It was short: Air traffic between Beirut and Nicosia had been suspended at the request of Cyprus. There were no details. Moments later, FBIS Wire Service teleprinters in watch offices and operations centers throughout Washington alerted duty officers to the report. Meanwhile the missing details already were being flashed to FBIS Headquarters from the Bangkok Bureau: AFP had reported at 0814 GMT that President Makarios had "died" and that the Cyprus radio was broadcasting martial music.

The item had barely cleared the FBIS Wire at 0434 Washington time when Reuter rang the bell again, four minutes later, and reported that the Cyprus National Guard had seized power on the island.

A full-blown crisis was in progress, and the FBIS bureau on the scene was incommunicado.

In Washington, the Wire Service duty editor, alone on the job during the midnight shift, already was initiating action to cope with the situation. Staff officers were called out of bed and told what was happening. The London Bureau was asked to help in trying to contact Mediterranean Bureau and quickly replied that all communications with Cyprus had been lost. Without much hope, the Agency telephone operator was asked to put a call through to Cyprus. FBIS bureaus in Okinawa, Bangkok, and London, as well as the BBC Monitoring Service, were asked for fullest possible filing on the coup from secondary sources.

At 0925 GMT (0525 Washington time), a little over an hour after Reuter had given the first indication of trouble, a ZZ precedence message arrived at the

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Wire Service citing the Nicosia radio as announcing at 0707 GMT: "Half an hour ago authority in the island came into the hands of the army." Incredibly, and despite the communications outage, the message came from Medbureau. It had found its way into a British military communications channel, and it was the last bureau message containing monitored information to reach Washington for 48 hours. An immediate effort to reach the bureau through the same channel was fruitless. The hope raised by the unexpected appearance of the message was short-lived.

Several problems clearly had to be resolved: The Cyprus bureau presumably was on the job, monitoring the sources giving first-hand information on the coup—Greek and Turkish radios in Cyprus, Athens radio, Ankara radio—and a way had to be found to get that information to Washington. Meanwhile, all efforts had to be made to attempt coverage of the same sources elsewhere. In the absence of such coverage, monitoring of secondary sources had to be stepped up to fill at least part of the gap. And, not least, the Cyprus bureau's normal coverage, particularly of the Arab world and Israel, had to be reconstituted somehow, somewhere, and as soon as possible. The immediate needs had to be considered along with long-range needs should the crisis worsen and become prolonged through a renewal of intercommunal fighting—a strong possibility.

Difficult as the problems were, their occurrence at this point was a blessing in disguise. By the time the coastline around the Cyprus bureau became a battleground five days later, FBIS was far along with solutions.

Shortly after noon on 15 July, FBIS Headquarters received a cable via Agency communications from Medbureau. It consisted of a first report on what was happening at the bureau: "Commercial communications out. Bureau employees standing fast. Movement between Kyrenia and bureau controlled but we are able to make bus run. Bureau staffing overnight shift. Bureau has only radio-telephone communications with Embassy." Obviously, such a communications setup would not be able to carry even a fraction of the bureau file.

As early as March 1974, FBIS had made exploratory contacts with the U.S. military, who were establishing a new, highly sophisticated communications network. One of the terminals was being set up in Cyprus.

FBIS now resumed these contacts at high level and met immediate willingness to help and to cut red tape, although it was expected that some difficulties and technicalities still would have to be ironed out.

Tuesday, 16 July

By noon on 16 July, Medbureau had reestablished a teletype link to the Embassy in Nicosia, replacing the radio/telephone link. A limited amount of bureau monitoring output now could be transmitted to the Agency communications office at the Embassy. And, during a brief relaxation of the curfew that had been imposed in Cyprus, the bureau dispatched an engineer/technician to Nicosia to help the already overburdened communications personnel transmit material on to Washington. Some of these urgent items by now were more than

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24 hours old. As it turned out, addressing technicalities and an insurmountable backlog of high-precedence messages at the Embassy communications office held up the FBIS traffic for another 24 hours, until the cooperation promised by military communications began to pay off.

Wednesday, 17 July

During the early morning of 17 July, Cyprus bureau managed to get two advisory messages to Washington via Agency communications. According to these messages, the bureau had changed shifts normally that morning and was continuing full monitoring operations; its communications with the Embassy were functioning, but various difficulties still shortcircuited the material at that point. The bureau even suggested that the backlog material eventually might have to be mailed—if and when mail service was restored.

FBIS Headquarters, still without first-hand reports from Cyprus nearly 48 hours after the coup, answered at 0623 Washington time: "We vitally need monitored reports on Cyprus situation." ". . . some of our traffic should be flowing through, but none is." Patience was wearing thin, and Headquarters officers who had gotten little more than cat naps in two days and nights were getting weary.

The CIA Office of Communications at Headquarters also was getting anxious, and told [redacted] an urgent cable that morning: "There is high-level interest at Headquarters in receiving FBIS Kyrenia traffic." "Request you begin relaying FBIS traffic, if at all possible, within your capabilities."

The communications office in [redacted] cabled its situation: "Even with two operators, the volume of incoming and outgoing traffic (has) reached a point where it (is) impossible for our comcenter to keep up with the load levied on it by the Embassy [redacted] and by incoming traffic." Some of the FBIS material on hand was being upgraded to flash precedence but still had to take its place in the long queue. Meanwhile, the operators were "bleary-eyed and dragging as a result (of) little sleep and constant hustling."

But things already were looking up elsewhere.

Work to link FBIS into the new military circuit bore fruit at 1124 Washington time, when FBIS Headquarters communicators confirmed they were receiving a test indicating the new Kyrenia-Washington circuit was complete and ready to carry traffic. Thirteen minutes later, the first monitored item from the Cyprus bureau appeared in FBIS Headquarters. It was a report on the departure from Ankara of Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit for consultations in London. Almost immediately after the item was received in Washington, the circuit failed because of technical trouble. There were three anxious hours at both ends until communications were restored.

At 1420 Washington time on 17 July, Medbureau began filing its huge backlog consisting, of course, of all the monitored Cyprus material as well as material from the bureau's coverage of other countries. New items were interspersed.

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Thursday, 18 July

More than 300 messages had come across the new circuit by 0800 Washington time the next day, 18 July. By 1000 hours, the entire two-day Cyprus bureau backlog had been cleared. FBIS was fully back in business.

Then a strange coincidence took place. At 1014 the new circuit failed again, and at 1018 the CYTA circuit, as if by some planning miracle, suddenly opened up again after an outage of 79 hours 43 minutes. The military circuit was to remain silent for nearly 24 hours, until shortly before 0900 the following day, 19 July.

The restoration of communications had solved the initial problem of the *FBIS Daily Report*, which on 15, 16 and 17 July had had to depend almost entirely on press service reporting—spotty at best—to inform readers about events in Cyprus. It was decided to publish the entire backlog "for the record" since it represented a complete chronology of events—from the primary sources themselves. This task was completed on 18 July, and the 19 July *Daily Report* was fully current.

Meanwhile, Back in Washington. . . .

The early loss of communications with Cyprus, the seriousness of the situation created by the overthrow of President Makarios, and previous experience with Cyprus crises caused FBIS to prepare as early as 15 July for a major loss of coverage not only of Cyprus but most of the Middle East. Even the eventual restoration of communications, which easily might have instilled a sense of euphoria, did not slow those preparations.

This determination resulted at least in part from the fact that most of the decision-making echelon in FBIS, including the Director, the Chief of Operations, and the latter's deputy, had at one time or another served tours in Cyprus. They were only too familiar with what had happened there in the past and what might happen anytime.

Aside from various FBIS bureaus around the world assuming emergency round-the-clock coverage of press agencies to keep up reporting on Cyprus events, two major operations were initiated on 15 July in an effort, first of all, to recapture at least some direct coverage of the island and, secondly, to prepare for a prolonged disabling of the Cyprus bureau:

1. The BBC Monitoring Service was to send a small monitoring team to one of the British "Sovereign Base Areas" (SBA) in Cyprus.
2. FBIS was to send a larger team to Tel Aviv, where a similar emergency operation had been successful during the 1963-64 Cyprus crisis.

Both operations naturally involved a mass of preparatory actions, including documentation of personnel, selection of linguists, readying and transportation of equipment, travel planning, establishment of communications, securing of approval from other government agencies—the British Defense Ministry in the BBC case, the State Department in the FBIS case:

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The speed with which it was all accomplished speaks for the cooperation of the governments and departments concerned.

The BBC team consisting of two monitors was in place at a Cyprus SBA and filing its first reports on 17 July. A third monitor joined a few days later. The team was capable only of handling Greek- and English-language broadcasts, and much of its early monitoring of Cyprus radios in those languages duplicated the efforts of the Cyprus FBIS bureau. But before the team was finally withdrawn on 2 August, it made a very substantial contribution to the coverage of Cyprus events.

The first member of the FBIS team for Tel Aviv, a British citizen, was a long-time monitor for the Vienna Bureau who had retired a month earlier and was living in Austria. Contacted by the bureau on 16 July, he immediately declared himself ready and willing to go to Tel Aviv under a hastily drawn contract. He arrived in Tel Aviv with a small receiver-recorder the afternoon of 18 July. Within two hours he had checked into a hotel, set himself up in the American Embassy, and telephoned the London Bureau to report on what he had heard so far. But his efforts, too, duplicated those of Medbureau. He was told to stay put and continue to look for frequencies that could be monitored in case of need. He would be needed three days later. Washington, meanwhile, was asking the Embassy in Tel Aviv to provide him limited communications support.

Friday, 19 July

A six-member FBIS team left Washington late on 19 July for Paris and a connecting flight to Tel Aviv. The team was headed by a former Cyprus bureau deputy chief and included two Arab linguists (one of them quickly "borrowed" from the Voice of America), one Hebrew linguist, one technician, and one teletype operator. A complete equipment package weighing 800 pounds prepared by the FBIS Engineering Staff left for Tel Aviv via air cargo two days later. It consisted of four receivers, three cassette transcribers, 10 cassette recorders, an off-line tape-punch teletype machine (affectionately known as an "iron horse"), as well as tools, meters, cables, and antennas.

Also on 19 July, the Medbureau Chief, who had been on TDY in London and who had been stranded there for lack of flights during the week of the coup, finally was able to return to his bureau. Before he did, however, he bought a supply of high-protein rations and stopped off at the Embassy in Nicosia to get five American flags for use at the bureau should an invasion take place.

As the week of 14 July drew to a close, the news from Cyprus went from bad to worse. By Friday, 19 July, it had become ominous: Turkish forces were boarding ships in southern Turkish ports. Tourists and journalists were being told to leave two southern Turkish provinces where military activity was intense. Landing craft were seen leaving ports and heading for Cyprus.

It had all happened twice before, during the 1960's, and FBIS personnel in Washington and Cyprus were having lively discussions on whether Turkey this time would make good its threat, or whether this would be merely another show of force to improve bargaining positions.

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FBIS Cyprus

Saturday, 20 July

Invasion

During a normal night, only a technician would have been on duty at Medbureau between 0000 and 0500 GMT as a watch officer to tend the receivers and the teletype machines. But the coup and subsequent events that week had necessitated long working hours and round-the-clock staffing.

Dawn of 20 July thus saw 14 Americans and 18 foreign national employees of FBIS at the bureau and the adjacent houses of the Chief and the Chief Engineer. The American complement consisted of the Chief and his wife, an editor, the engineer and his wife and son, and seven Marine guards. The 14th American was a visitor in the Chief's house, the daughter of a former Director of FBIS who had been the bureau's first chief 25 years earlier.

The foreign national members of the team included teletypists, technicians, and monitors for Greek, Turkish, Arabic and other languages. FBIS at all its overseas bureaus recruits most of its linguists and other specialists from the local population and from other countries where the needed language skills are available. This often produces compositions of people which anywhere else would be considered unusual if not unthinkable. Medbureau was typical: Palestinian Arabs displaced by the creation of Israel worked side by side with monitors bearing Israeli passports. Greeks and Greek Cypriots worked side by side with Turks and Turkish Cypriots. As elsewhere in FBIS, they considered themselves first of all professionals, members of one team, colleagues, often friends. They considered it poor form to take sides in conflicts.

Shortly after daybreak, a Marine guard stationed on the roof of Medbureau spotted a fleet of warships, presumably Turkish, close to shore near the bureau. Almost simultaneously, two monitors reported that both AFP in French and either the Beirut or Amman Domestic Service had broadcast flash items about Turkish landings on Cyprus. The duty editor whipped off his own three-line flash to Headquarters, including the on-the-spot observations; woke the Bureau Chief at his house nearby; and set off the alarm rousing the off-duty swingshift men who were sleeping in side rooms at the bureau.

From the Bureau Chief's report:

Everyone knows when it all began, but perhaps I should record the duty editor's words to me just before he pressed the alarm bell. He said: "Get your ass over here. The Turks are landing." I would like to have been summoned with more dignity, but I got the message. I was at the bureau in 60 seconds. It was two days before I realized that my shirttail was still out.

At 0532 local time, the bureau monitored a report from a Turkish Cypriot radio station saying that Kyrenia was under artillery attack. The people at the bureau hardly needed the confirmation. They had just flashed a message to

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Washington, based on reporting from Marines who had gone to the roof of the operations building to see what was happening:

"Planes, which the Marines believe are F-4's, are flying over bureau. We have put flags on roof. We can hear bombs."

The FBIS Wire Service in Rosslyn was running a declaration dealing with the Mexican President's visit to Argentina. This was unceremoniously abandoned in mid-sentence at 2318 Washington time (still on 19 July) to make way for a Reuter bulletin: "Turkish forces have intervened in Cyprus—official."

The duty editor then made the required series of telephone calls alerting senior FBIS officers as well as major operations centers and watch offices throughout Washington. The FBIS management arrived at Key Building within half an hour.

In Kyrenia:

In the town of Kyrenia itself, off-duty FBIS employees and their families awoke to the sound of explosions, gunfire, and low-flying jet aircraft. A drowsy editor at first thought his young son had discovered a new game to create unreasonable noises at an unreasonable hour. One American staff member, who had been roused by the humidity an hour earlier, probably was a witness to the first shots of the invasion. From his balcony, where he was waiting for the 0500 VOA newscast, he saw high-flying planes apparently making reconnaissance runs. A gun emplacement on the Kyrenia castle, at the harbor, opened fire on the planes. Moments later the planes made their first low-level attack runs over Kyrenia.

The first bombs seemed to be hitting a Greek Cypriot National Guard camp located between 200 and 500 yards from several homes occupied by FBIS people.

In Washington:

FBIS officers in Washington, including the Director and the Chief of Operations, met in the small office of the Wire Service Chief, adjoining the wire editorial room and the communications center, at first only to look at incoming messages and to get "read in" on the situation. It was midnight in Washington.

Developments came so rapidly, however, that those in the room would not or could not take the time to move to their own offices. Such a move, at any rate, would have required them to stay in almost constant telephone contact with each other. They automatically did the most logical thing under the circumstances: they stayed. Additional chairs were pulled in, office supplies appeared in great quantities, and within an hour the office had taken on the character of a military command post, a little chaotic in the first heat of battle, but functioning. It remained staffed round the clock for 96 hours, with the Director and the Chief of Operations generally present during the hours coinciding with daylight in Cyprus, while their deputies took the Cyprus night hours. The carpeted executive offices a floor below remained virtually unused.

Team Enroute to Tel Aviv Grounded

The jetliner carrying the six-member FBIS team on its way to Tel Aviv touched down in Paris early that morning. The team, suffering the normal jet

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lag. got off to switch to the scheduled Tel Aviv flight. Instead, they learned that a Turkish invasion was under way in Cyprus and that all flights that would have to cross the war zone had been cancelled. The team was diverted to Rome instead, still in the hope that El Al might fly to Tel Aviv from there.

Precautions in Kyrenia

One of the nearly 170 FBIS people, including dependents, at home in Kyrenia as the fighting began was the bureau's Deputy Chief. He had returned home the night before, after a week-long unbroken stint at the bureau as acting chief. His presence in town was fortunate. He now was able to provide the leadership which such a large and scattered group needed if it was to act as a group and if there was to be any semblance of organization.

A warden system, long established and successful during earlier troubles in Cyprus, came to his aid. Under the system, personnel were assigned certain areas of Kyrenia and were responsible for contacting colleagues living within their area if there was trouble requiring dissemination of information and instructions.

Making use of the system, the Deputy Chief sent out his first instructions: "Stay put. Keep to the center of your houses, preferably in windowless halls."

One problem of our warden system was the difficulty of contacting people who did not have phones. In fact, the surprising continued functioning of the telephone system was the only thing that kept the warden system workable under fire. We had plans about how we might spread some kind of alert without phones, but under fire or curfew it could have been undertaken only in the direst need.

In the course of the morning, it seemed certain that Kyrenia would become a battleground. Landings had taken place outside town, and the National Guard was establishing positions on rooftops and along streets to make a stand. Aircraft were strafing and bombing, there was an almost constant rattle of small arms fire, and ships offshore were shelling the hills just south of Kyrenia.

Medbureau's Reports

Interspersed among the steady stream of monitored material which began pouring into FBIS Headquarters from Medbureau were further messages based on observations from the roof of the bureau. Contents ranged from matter-of-fact reporting to wry humor to earnest pleas for prayer. Even the appearance of these messages changed gradually as the situation worsened. Early ones still adhered strictly to format. Later ones, often hand-keyed by people sitting on the floor to avoid shrapnel, looked ragged, garbled, full of errors. Format finally went by the wayside completely.

Collations of the messages were sent to all FBIS field bureaus to keep them advised as the battle wore on. Individual messages also were sent via the FBIS Wire Service to the CIA Operations Center and other selected consumers.

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Early bureau reports speak for themselves: (all times GMT)

0335—"Rooftop observation confirms plane bombing village of Ayios Yeoryios [St. George], three miles from Kyrenia, and that ground forces are responding with rifle fire."

0400—"There has just been some machinegun fire so close (we) hit the floor. Planes are strafing the main road. The UN in Kyrenia says that it is telling people to head for the UN sector. Movement is not possible. People are gathering in lemon grove near bureau."

0414—"Eighteen C-47s have just flown over Kyrenia with doors open. They were not fired on."

0425—"The Marines on the roof say they can see ships firing on the land. The planes we saw go overhead with doors open now are coming back empty. Still have phones to Kyrenia. Two destroyers are five hundred yards off Kyrenia."

(At this point (0436) the FBIS Chief of Operations wired the bureau: "Keep personal observations coming and also reports you get by phone from reliable sources. Interested in eyewitness accounts of any landings or visual sightings of Turks on land.")

0516—"The area within 500 yards of the bureau was shelled by destroyers off the coast. Three destroyers and one gunboat steaming west were fired on by army camp west of bureau and fire returned. Shelling lasted 18 minutes. Shells landed near army camp, in village behind camp, and near Zephyros Hotel.* As soon as ships started shelling, we put flags on seaward side of building. There are now heavy Greek troop movements from Kyrenia toward Karavas, according to phone information." (See Figure 2)

0525—"We have seen 40 choppers going toward Nicosia over the pass on the main Kyrenia-Nicosia road. Planes are back overhead. Jets are rocketing area along main road from Kyrenia to Karavas about 400 yards from us."

0533—"There are 25 landing craft coming this way. They will land about three miles east of Karavas. There are more in the mist just coming into view."

0547—"The landing craft are now about 1½ miles offshore and they seem to be sailing almost directly toward us. It appears that they are headed toward the Zephyros Hotel, north of bureau. Public power has just gone off and we are using our generator. Now rockets and strafing 500 yards west of bureau."

(The FBIS Director, working in the command post, now sent a message to the bureau: "We are at wire room following your reports. Continuing operations extraordinary and deeply appreciated. Our hearts are with you all.")

The Landing

0605—"The landing craft have come into land and gone out of our view. The landing must have taken place. Plane just rocketed area near here. Lots of

*This \$14,000,000 hotel, less than a mile from the Bureau, had been completed only three months earlier.

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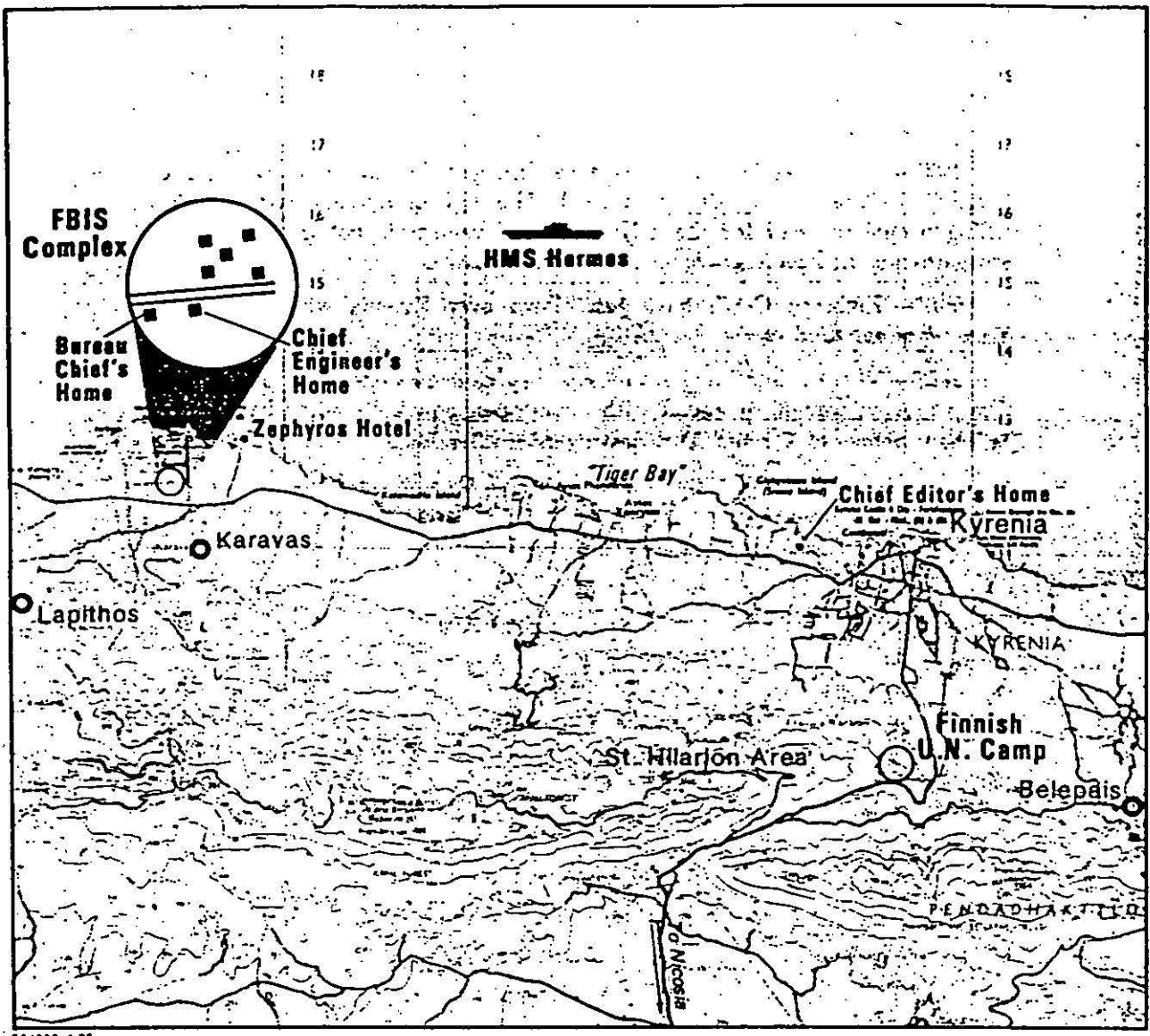


Fig. 2. Kyrenia area, north coast of Cyprus.

machinegun fire. We are also reporting to Embassy from roof. Spent 20-mm shells landed outside door."

0620—"It is strangely quiet for the first time after a considerable amount of strafing and rocketing about 300 yards from here. The spent shells which fell all around us have the following marking: '20 mm M105' and in the line below, 'MKE 1 72.' Thanks for message. It means a lot to all of us."

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0707—"All still quiet near bureau except for occasional jet whooshing overhead but not firing."

0741—"The small landing craft landed about an hour ago and now larger landing craft are less than 1,000 yards offshore, the kind we used to call LST's. We can hear heavy firing from the sea. Planes are flying overhead directing fire. Some shells, according to our Marines on roof, are landing in Lapithos. We have not seen any Turkish troops."

0749—"Report over radio link with Embassy Nicosia says Greek National Guard setting up machinegun positions on roof of Hilton Hotel, Nicosia. Americans inside advised to stay in corridors at all times and to avoid lobby area."

0828—"Phone reports from Kyrenia state many Turkish helicopters flying over city with Greek National Guardsmen firing from rooftops at them. Activity near bureau picked up short while ago with jets strafing and rocketing nearby hills."

0841—"At present we are only concentrating on Cyprus situation and intend to keep filing as long as possible. Hopefully no significant reports will be missed while ducking under desks, preparing for evacuation, etc. Nearby air-to-ground attacks have reduced in past hour."

(The FBIS Chief of Operations wired the bureau at 0847 to advise that its reports were being ripped off the machines at the CIA Operations Center one by one and avidly read. He added: "It is a great show, but keep your heads down.")

Arrangements at Headquarters

One of the first actions of the FBIS command post in Rosslyn was to delegate a senior staff member to the CIA Operations Center in the Headquarters Building to maintain liaison with the Center and the DDO Cyprus Task Force. The idea was to get an immediate reading on Agency and other communications traffic with bearing on the FBIS bureau situation and to coordinate all actions with the Agency components concerned.

The liaison proved so effective that senior staffers, most of them with Cyprus bureau experience, continued doing shifts at the Operations Center until nearly 1700 on 24 July, when FBIS personnel had been evacuated from Cyprus.

Early efforts to determine what contingency planning existed for an evacuation of Americans from Cyprus were frustrating and yielded nothing conclusive. A number of calls to the State Department later during the crisis led to the conclusion that no firm evacuation plans existed.

Contrary to the experience a week earlier, communications with the bureau held up well on 20 July. Curiously, the commercial CYTA link was fully functional much of the time. Conjecture in Washington was that the Cypriots themselves urgently required the services of CYTA, and no one at CYTA had time to consider "pulling the plug" on FBIS.

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But with mounting evidence that fighting on the island was spreading and intensifying by the hour, the FBIS command post had to anticipate that communications could break down completely at any moment.

In Cyprus, too, the telephone and other means of communications continued to function well. This and the warden system made it possible for the Deputy Chief to advise the bureau and, by extension, Washington fairly early in the day that most employees and their families had been accounted for and that there had been no injuries so far.

The Administrative Staff of FBIS in Rosslyn immediately went into action and by early morning (Washington time) was passing the information to anxious relatives on the east coast. As the day went on, people in places farther west also were called. Working in round-the-clock shifts, administrative officers contacted the emergency addressees about every eight hours throughout the crisis with the latest information. It was not always as simple a task as might be imagined. The parents of the Medbureau Chief's house guest were at a fishing camp in the northeastern United States and were finally contacted by way of a nearby store. Close relatives of some of the Marine guards also had no telephones and had to be contacted through various police agencies.

Chief Editor Isolated

At the same time deep concern developed in Cyprus and Washington for the bureau's Chief Editor and his wife, the only Americans not accounted for. They were living in an isolated area close to the beach outside Kyrenia, and the last time they had been heard from was the evening of 19 July, when they reported that they would seek shelter in their basement in case of trouble.

The Chief Editor had gone home for the first time that evening after a week at the bureau. With him at the house were his wife and seven house guests. When the fighting began, the group went to the basement for what the Chief Editor later described as "an uneventful stay" of two days. Their telephone had gone dead almost as soon as the invasion began. They later theorized that it must have happened when a nearby house took a direct hit during the first hour of fighting.

Another small group of employees, including the bureau's American Administrative Officer, was isolated at a monitor's summer cottage on the edge of the water about half-way between Kyrenia and the bureau, a place named Tiger Bay. With fighting at times going on immediately next to the cottage, the group had no choice but to sit out the invasion.

Saturday Afternoon

By afternoon in Cyprus, the Deputy Chief, after consultation with the Chief, reached the decision to send the FBIS employees and their families to the Finnish UN camp located in the mountains just above Kyrenia, along the Kyrenia-Nicosia road. It seemed an infinitely safer place than Kyrenia and its prospects of house-to-house fighting. A BBC report—erroneous as it turned out—that the entire Kyrenia-Nicosia road already was under Turkish control led to the assumption, and quite naturally so, that the UN camp along that road would be out of the line of fire.

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Later in the afternoon, 127 FBIS people, including all the Americans who had been in Kyrenia except the Chief Editor's party, had made their way to the camp in private cars. Believing that a fight for Kyrenia would not last long in view of apparent Turkish strength, few brought more than barest essentials. They expected to be back home by the next day at the latest, and they expected the camp to have more facilities and supplies than it actually had. Also, surely an evacuation effort was under way.

One of first benefits derived from the move to the camp was that the Deputy Chief was able to report to the bureau by radio that the Kyrenia families were safe and in a group. (The Administrative Officer and his party, of course, were still at Tiger Bay.) Word of the move also quickly made its way to FBIS Headquarters in Rosslyn. One major worry to both places apparently could be discarded, at least for the time being. Any concrete plan for evacuation now would be greatly aided by the fact that nearly all FBIS people were in two coherent groups—at the bureau and at the camp.

While the people at the camp eventually found themselves in grave danger as a result of heavy fighting around the camp, there is no doubt that most of them were better off than they would have been in their homes. Official visits to these homes some weeks after the fighting showed that several of them had hundreds of bullet holes in the inside wall. It was reported that bodies had been found in some of the homes.

As night fell on 20 July, the FBIS contingent bedded down for whatever sleep they could get under the sheltering stand of trees. They did not get much. Heavy fire fights broke out in the pass, and although none of the fire was aimed at the camp, the noise alone was enough to keep people awake.

A Turkish enclave, consisting of a small town and a military camp was located just south of the mountain range, not far from where the main road comes off the mountains and into the inland plain. Turkish forces apparently set down there by helicopter were beginning to fight their way north through the mountains, intent on linking up with the forces that had been landed at Kyrenia.

This put the UN camp squarely in the path of battle.

The Evacuation Question

The evacuation picture, which had begun with frustration, remained uncertain throughout 20 July. The main question in everyone's mind was whether an evacuation from the battle area in northern Cyprus would be possible at all as long as the fighting was going on. Another consideration was that so long as communications with Medbureau were holding up, the bureau was able to provide invaluable information. Should not, therefore, at least a skeleton crew remain at the bureau even if the rest were evacuated? And, finally, if there was to be general evacuation, the bureau's foreign national employees, including Cypriots, certainly would have to be brought along if FBIS coverage of the Middle East was to be reconstituted elsewhere. Quite aside from humane considerations, the language capabilities of those employees were essential.

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An early morning Agency cable to [REDACTED] pointed out that any evacuation would have to include all persons designated by the Bureau Chief in Cyprus. The cable further urged that the Greek and Turkish governments be made aware of the presence of the FBIS installation on the coast, an annex of the Nicosia Embassy.

By early evening Cyprus time, Ambassador Davies in Nicosia came in with a long cable outlining evacuation planning. He emphasized that it was "very tentative," subject to the rapidly changing military situation. He made the following points:

1. Nicosia airport had to be ruled out as departure point since it continued to be a main military target.

2. A large convoy from Nicosia to one of the British bases in the south might work if there was a firm cease-fire and if the belligerents could give adequate assurance of safe passage. The Ambassador doubted this. He also had bad news for FBIS:

3. "We see no conceivable safe way to move FBIS personnel and other Americans on northern shore through battle lines." The only way would be by sea, and the British High Commission shared this view as regarded the large British community around Kyrenia. The Sixth Fleet would have to move a ship with helicopter capability to the north coast.

4. Close contact with the High Commission would be maintained through the night, and citizens of both countries would be kept advised of evacuation plans by the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) in Cyprus.

A little later, the Sixth Fleet advised that it was planning to send ships to the area off a British base the next day. There was no mention of the north coast.

Shortly after 2300 Washington time, the Agency cabled the U.S. military command in Stuttgart, Germany: "FBIS installation in Kyrenia-Karavas area is in danger of being beleaguered as new wave of Turkish landings and fighting envelopes residential area where approximate 174 FBIS American and third country national employees and dependents reside." The cable suggested a helicopter evacuation and provided descriptions and grid coordinates of possible helicopter landing zones (HLZ) in the area. However, it was pointed out that the actual selection of HLZ's would have to be made by the evacuees themselves since only they would know where they could safely go.

More Bureau Reports

The afternoon and evening brought no relief to the bureau, as its situation reports show: (times GMT)

1036—"Planes are flying overhead but have done no rocketing or bombing nearby since last report. We probably will have to do with the staff we have here for at least another 24 hours. The ships offshore seem to be thinning out and two destroyers are cruising slowly toward Kyrenia. One is remaining offshore of station. The largest group of choppers seen totaled 44 at 1014 Cyprus time.

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They were seen returning to their base at sea. We still have not seen a single Turkish soldier. Strangely the phone system is working, and one of our Turkish employees called from Nicosia. Right at this moment Marine came in to say everything was quiet, both here and Nicosia. Also, just had a call from Kyrenia. Everything there also relatively quiet."

1345—"We just saw two medium tanks, one light tank, four armored personnel carriers, with approximately 10 men each and supporting machinegun for each vehicle, and five unarmed jeeps with four men each heading toward Kyrenia on main road. This Greek convoy was in good discipline and proceeding about 10 miles an hour. They are moving in short spurts to avoid aircraft."

1352—(Bureau Chief)—"Helicopters continue in waves of as many as 60 to take troops through pass on main road from Kyrenia to Nicosia. Around bureau there has been a firefight in progress. The shelling from ships is getting very heavy and sounds like bigger stuff than earlier today. The big guns are firing once or twice a minute, some of it about three miles away and some of it possibly farther away. Ships firing are strung out off coast. There is no way we can move or get relief. It has become clear that if we are to get out of here it will have to be by sea. Without going into further detail, believe I can assure you that this is thinking of Embassy. We will have to go separately. I have some of our people resting now. Those still left are noble ones indeed. Phone ringing constantly. Americans asking for help we cannot give. Have drafted my wife as editor. No one here or in Kyrenia has seen a single Turkish soldier or tank. Still cannot make contact with Chief Editor. House near theirs took a shell but their house seems to be upright. Our house guest is at bureau and cooking us meals. This all local color for now."

(The FBIS Director replied at 1433: "I have been assured that sea or helicopter evacuation is planned if possible. Advise as soon as possible when you recommend action, with Ambassador's concurrence if possible, without if contact is lost. First concern of course is dependents and any employees not absolutely essential to maintain operations so long as operations remain otherwise possible.")

1639—"Greek Cypriot soldiers took over some of the houses of bureau employees and erected gun emplacements over them. After changing houses a few times, Kyrenia Americans and some foreign nationals have headed for Finnish UN camp on main Kyrenia-Nicosia road. Some Americans, and possibly most of them, are now there, having passed through Greek roadblock. Kyrenia Greeks went to Bellapais. Bombing and strafing near bureau continued for several hours. We have been ordered to black out lights tonight. We will continue filing. Any evacuation of dependents and nonessential personnel will have to be by sea, Embassy believes. Am still in contact with Embassy but am gradually losing contact with staff whose radios have apparently gone dead for lack of power. If we lose contact for any reason connected with these events, we will try to restore operations as long as there is the slightest hope. Then we will try to keep together to get started again whenever and wherever we can."

(The FBIS Director wired the bureau at 1729: "We continue to follow your reporting very closely. The DD/I says that all are very pleased with

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bureau reporting and performance of all concerned. He relays his boss's compliments.")

1739—"We are in blackout condition at moment with limited lighting, making AFP coverage almost impossible. Please ask either Okinawa or Panama to file AFP reports on mideast till further notice. FYI, heat pretty bad with windows boarded up and no air conditioning—place would make good commercial for Right Guard."

(The Wire Service duty editor replied at 1806: "Appreciate your situation. It's a real stinker.")

2039—(Bureau Chief)—"We have put up blackout materials and are ready for the night. The Kyrenia range is ablaze east and west as far as I can see. There are literally hundreds of fires. I have made contact with Kyrenia Americans who are now in the Finnish UN camp and therefore in UN hands. Our power will last unless there is a mishap during the night or early morning hours when we expect resumption of activity. Our Marines, monitors, engineers, and teletypists have sustained themselves beyond what I would have thought possible. The Lord has been with us today. For those of you in the wire room who pray, please remember us."

(The FBIS Deputy Director, who had now spelled the Director, replied at 2056: "Your file and your spirit are overwhelming. We are all praying.")

2325—"Local situation outside bureau relatively quiet. Will see what the dawn brings."

Some 12 hours after the beginning of the invasion, the bureau finally abandoned its coverage of radio stations outside the immediate area of concern. A Baghdad radio item citing Iraqi Foreign Ministry reaction to Cyprus events and a Beirut radio item reporting the Lebanese Prime Minister's visit that day to Syria were the last items from such coverage to leave the bureau. It was shortly after 1600 GMT.

Activity in Washington

The stream of Cyprus material pouring into FBIS Headquarters made it obvious early in the game that the Daily Reporting Division, normally off duty on weekends, would have to go into action immediately if it was to cope with the mountains of information. The decision was made to publish a special Cyprus issue of the *Daily Report* dated Sunday, 21 July.

A team of editors and typists went to work on Saturday and Sunday to put the issue together. Printing Services Division, too, cooperated by printing the 68-page book on Sunday evening. Consumers found it on their desks Monday morning. Included were 150 items from Medbureau itself, supplemented by material from other sources. The index alone provided a comprehensive chronology of events. The book covered material monitored as recently as 0600 GMT 21 July.

Some of those who worked on the issue had a personal stake in the crisis. Two of the young women editors involved had just seen off their husbands, former FBIS monitors, to London and Tel Aviv to help with the emergency redistribution of Cyprus coverage then under way.

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Another such "coverage widow," wife of the man heading the Tel Aviv team, spent her weekend helping type the special issue. One editor-linguist who had been working on the issue Saturday was on a plane heading for Tel Aviv on Sunday. (Meanwhile the team headed for Tel Aviv was still grounded in Rome.)

Staffs of the Wire Service and the Communications Branch had to be augmented beginning Saturday to handle the load. Of the record 291 items appearing on the FBIS Wire during the GMT day of 20 July, only 58 were unrelated to Cyprus events, and 22 of these appeared before the invasion reportage began. The Cyprus bureau contributed 130 items—nearly half the entire run. The Argentine-Mexican declaration which had had to yield early in the day finally made the wire 10 hours later. Wire wordage that day was 66,500—nearly twice that of a normal day.

An FBIS engineer in Rosslyn on the evening of 20 July was giving thought to what might be done if all communications with Medbureau should break down. Even if the worst should happen and the bureau should not be able to communicate with Headquarters, could one not at least maintain a one-way link from Headquarters to the bureau? The engineer came up with a relatively simple solution: The bureau was a monitoring station with the capability of receiving and printing radioteletype traffic. Why not give the bureau a frequency to tune in on and then have an Agency communications facility somewhere transmit a signal that the bureau could intercept? The engineer called the Agency's Office of Communications with his proposal. There had to be fast action. If other communications broke down, it might become impossible even to give the bureau a frequency. And a little time was needed to test such a hookup and to get confirmation that it was working.

Shortly after midnight Washington time, the Agency's communications facility in Athens began transmitting a test beamed at Cyprus. The bureau confirmed that it was hearing the signal but added that it was having trouble getting the signal printed out on its teletype machines. After several hours of ironing out technical matters, the bureau at last confirmed that it now was receiving and printing the signal. The bureau in effect was able from then on to "monitor" instructions sent to it from Headquarters. It was a first for FBIS, and it came none too soon.

Communications via the CYTA circuit were becoming more and more erratic, and outages were getting longer. There was bad news, too, about the military link. The Bureau Chief wired at 2240 GMT (0040 on 21 July Cyprus time, 1840 on 20 July Washington time) that he had just been notified the personnel manning the Cyprus end of the link might have to evacuate their site. "If they leave," he said, "we are satisfied that we will lose contact with Washington. Feel tomorrow is the critical day. As I write this, heavy shelling from the sea resumed for about seven minutes."

Sunday, 21 July

The GMT day of 21 July, it was clear in Washington and in Cyprus, would bring rapid and critical developments in the bureau's situation, evacuation planning, communications and in the war situation itself:

0053 GMT—(Bureau message)—"Considerable firing in immediate area. All lights out and employees in safehaven [center hallway of operations building]."

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Heavy mortar fire and intensive small arms as well as machinegun fire in area immediately east of bureau."

0110—(Bureau message)—"It is much quieter here at this moment but may hot up again any time. In fact, mortar has started firing again but not to earlier extent."

0120—FBIS Headquarters is advised officially that the Cyprus end of the military communications link will cease operations at 0200 to permit personnel to evacuate. The equipment is to be destroyed. In fact, the link continues to operate for another six hours.

0134—An Agency cable from [REDACTED] says evacuation planning at that point is incomplete and unapproved for lack of JCS orders that the military instead of the State Department carry out such a mission. "Responsibility continues rest with State," the message says. It adds, however, that Sixth Fleet vessels are being sent to the south coast of Cyprus for evacuation of refugees from there—if JCS approves. Such an evacuation could include people from an overland convoy from Kyrenia, the cable says. The FBIS staff officer on duty at the CIA Operations Center underscores this passage and makes the pencil notation "hopeless" in the margin. The cable further proposes that ships be sent to the north coast and that they could be on station by early light of 22 July. The cable notes that the European Command was advised of Headquarters concern for the safety and evacuation of FBIS personnel.

0147—(Bureau message)—"During lull, want to tell you about situation. At 0025 GMT exchanges of artillery fire began between two forces. There have been exchanges of artillery fire over the roof of the bureau. The battle expected will begin about two miles east of bureau and will move toward Kyrenia. For the first time we heard the low loud whistle of artillery rounds over bureau. We are receiving pieces of debris from rounds which are exploding near the bureau. For the time being quiet, and it will be light in about 20 minutes."

0240—The incoming teletype machine at FBIS Headquarters suddenly begins the rapid garbling which indicates that the circuit has been disrupted. At 0245 the machine resumes printing normally with the following message: "We just got a hit. No injuries but considerable damage. Lost circuit breakers was reason for outage. First aid room was hit and wiped out. We will try to salvage some items should they be needed."

0251—(Bureau message)—"We still have telephone to the Embassy. Situation very grim. Heavy shelling continues. Day has just broken here. Chief was in contact with Deputy who is at the UN camp and he reports much shelling but all is well. CUL [cablese for "see you later"] hopefully."

0318—A message goes out from FBIS Headquarters to the London Bureau with a request that the monitor in Tel Aviv be told to get ready for operations.

0319—(Bureau message)—"We have recovered the timing fuse—all this according to our Marines—and it was an 81 mm M-51 A 5. It is American-made. This is a mortar shell."

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0327—(Bureau message)—“The lexan in many windows blew in, and the glass panes in the door between the canteen and the lobby shattered. One of the Marines had a very narrow escape. We are taking advantage of our experience and are keeping to safehaven except for minimal operation which we consider essential. We are monitoring Greek and Turkish programs. The planes are back and firing at this time. We think the fight is about to start. CUL, hopefully.”

0403—The first item from the Tel Aviv monitor arrives at FBIS Headquarters. He had dictated it to the London Bureau over the telephone. The item is from the Nicosia radio and charges that Turkish forces have attacked civilians, particularly the Famagusta hospital.

0505—(Bureau message)—“Turkish jets have returned in force with strafing runs on nearby hills; sonic booms seem worse than actual gunfire.”

0514—FBIS learns that evacuation of the Cyprus military communications site has been postponed.

0735—The editor at the Cyprus bureau signs off on the last monitored item to come from the bureau. Heavy fighting in the bureau area begins at that point to make it impossible to tend the recording and playback equipment, to translate material and to file it to Washington. The last item, monitored from the Turkish Cypriot radio, says that the second phase of the invasion is about to begin. It adds: “Landing craft which will land more troops on the island are ready, waiting for orders, near landing areas off the Kyrenia shore.”

0747—FBIS Headquarters sends a message to London, asking that the Tel Aviv monitor be told to start filing material. “We have gotten nothing substantive from Medbureau for two hours,” the message adds.

0759—(Bureau message)—“We have almost ceased operation preliminary to evacuation. No time yet available (and I expect it will be hours away).”

0802—(Bureau message)—“Note that in my previous I said almost rpt almost ceased operation. We are still monitoring local radios.”

0848—The military communications link with Cyprus fails at last. Personnel at the Cyprus end leave the site.

Sunday Afternoon

1232—The CYTA communications channel is still working intermittently. Medbureau makes use of it and reports: “We have had to abandon operation due to extremely heavy bombing. We are awaiting evacuation but no time set. Possibly may not come today.”

1240—(Bureau message)—“Trying to continue operation after what appears to be takeover by Turks although fighting still continuing in this area.”

1256—A message from the Nicosia Embassy gives the number and location of FBIS personnel and their dependents, as well as foreign employees. It notes particularly that the bureau's Chief Editor and his wife still are unaccounted for. It adds: “We have telephone and portamobile contact with FBIS/Kyrenia. Telephone link could be lost at any time. Portamobile signal is weak and at best poor substitute for telephone. FBIS Chief has been advised of planning for helicopter

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evacuation." All bureau efforts, the cable notes, are to be devoted to evacuation. "Chief was assured that we will continue to advise him via telephone or portable of evacuation plans."

1330—(Bureau message)—"Considerable firing down toward Zephyros Hotel. Not at all clear to me to who is on first or any other base for that matter. Shooting picking up again and I may leave in the middle of a word. We have spent the past two or three hours on the floor as bombs and shells fell all around. You might be interested to know that one of our water pipes was punctured by shrapnel. Tide of battle has certainly not turned. Heavy firing and plane strafing very close to bureau continues without letup. All personnel quite tired with hardly any sleep in 48 hours. Monitors afraid for safety working next to relatively unprotected windows. Have already had shrapnel penetrate bureau premises. Kitchen and first aid room almost an open patio. At present, all personnel holed up in corridors as safest place."

1404—(Bureau message from Chief Engineer)—"My office was raked with shrapnel. That is why we are in safehaven area and will not monitor and keep on the floor. We have some info on hotel burning and will send later."

1417—(Bureau message)—"We just had several Greek Cypriot employees of hotel climb over bureau fence for safety. They said that the hotel was bombed and burned. They also said that there were about 70 guests in the hotel and it was burned out. They also reported no casualties at the hotel."

1424—The British Forces radio in Cyprus broadcasts the following: "Here is a message from the British High Commission: The convoy evacuating British and other nationals from Nicosia left successfully, a short while ago. Evacuation from Famagusta is also well under way. I should like to assure you all in the Kyrenia area that we have not forgotten you. We are working as hard as we can on plans to get you out and hope to organize something tomorrow."

1425—(Bureau message)—"It is very uncomfortable typing from floor. We continue to remain crouched in safehaven area of building. Firing picking up again now. Chief says that we are in good spirits."

1444—A message from the Nicosia Embassy says the British High Commissioner has advised Ambassador Davies that a 1,000-car convoy carrying between 4,000 and 5,000 persons of various nationalities, including about 300 Americans, has made it safely to a British base from Nicosia. According to the message, the High Commissioner also told the Ambassador that the British now will make an all-out effort to evacuate people from the north coast. "A British frigate with an admiral aboard is enroute to Kyrenia to negotiate with Turks and to survey the coastal area. The British are hopeful that they may actually begin evacuating some personnel from this coast area some time tomorrow. Ambassador replied that he too has initiated action with Sixth Fleet to begin evacuation of American personnel in Karavas/Kyrenia area as soon as possible." Both officials were to keep in constant touch to insure maximum results from a joint British-American effort.

1502—(Bureau message)—"Rooftop observation by Marine guards indicates that tonight may really be a bad one. There is an emplacement on a rooftop very near, and it is certain to draw fire if it becomes active. The airstrikes have been

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extremely accurate but the other weapons have been off target very badly. It will be sundown here in about 90 minutes and then it will probably be a poor night for sleeping, at best. Firing throughout the night last night prevented most from getting more than a few minutes sleep."

1507—(Bureau message)—"Marines have seen artillery pieces being set up and we feel confident there will be a real fight tonight."

1542—(Bureau message from the Chief)—"I was able to contact the Ambassador from the roof with radiophone which we have set up there. He told me we should hang on tonight and gave us every encouragement. Told him we were in good spirit and that we expected another fight tonight. Shelling is continuing but is not close."

Ambassador Roger P. Davies, who had taken a very personal hand in the efforts to secure the safety and evacuation of FBIS personnel, was shot and killed at the embassy on 19 August 1974 during an anti-American demonstration by Greek Cypriots charging that the United States had supported Turkey during the crisis.

1635—(Bureau message)—"Deputy and his people totaling 126 are going to be moved to the beach tomorrow 2 to 12 miles east of Kyrenia. We have told him to go ahead and have confirmed this with Ambassador. We have been instructed to listen to British Forces guidance as Ambassador is working closely with British. After hearing about hits the compound received, he said that he would contact Turkish Ambassador and UN and that he would attempt to see if Ankara and Athens could be contacted to see if this area could be respected as safehaven for civilians and refrain from heavy action in our vicinity. Our cars have taken extensive hits and building pocked with shrapnel marks from near misses. This stuff consists of an ounce or two of lead as sharp as a razor. We are very grateful for this help and we feel more reassured now than we did about two hours ago. There is distant light shelling to our south. An artillery battery has been set up southeast of us, a Greek one, and this may bring us more action but we hope and pray not."

1653—(Bureau message)—"Here is more on Zephyros disaster from an employee who climbed over our fence. Shortly after the Turkish fleet came in, the National Guard moved one truck with a machinegun and one small tank to the hotel. When the eight soldiers found the task of defense impossible, they fled the scene. The Turks, not knowing the weapons were no longer manned, bombed the hotel and it is completely burned out, according to the employee."

1654—Immediately after receipt of the preceding message, the CYTA circuit goes dead for good. All that remains for communications between the bureau and Headquarters is the tenuous telephone/portamobile link between bureau and Embassy and, from there, the already overburdened Embassy circuit to Washington. In addition there is the one-way radioteletype link from Headquarters via Athens to the bureau, set up by the Office of Communications the day before.

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1720—The British Forces radio (BFBS) in Cyprus broadcasts the following: "This is a clarification of the message that has been broadcast by BFBS on the evacuation from Kyrenia. No ships will be available for the evacuation of British subjects before tomorrow morning at the earliest. No one should move to the coast until further instructions are issued. We are all doing our best to secure your safety. Clear and precise details of evacuation arrangements will be broadcast over this station."

1728—A message from Stuttgart says: "Military planning for evacuation north Cypriot coast continues inhibited by lack of direction from JCS to do so." "Also . . . consideration now being given to joint evacuation operations with British vessel."

1816—The Director of FBIS sends a message to the bureau via the Athens radioteletype link saying bureau personnel should follow evacuation instructions to be broadcast by BFBS Cyprus and that a British ship would approach the coast east and west of Kyrenia early next morning. Evacuees were to form groups on the beach and display British or American flags or other signs of identification. The message had to be sent "in the blind," since there was no immediate means of finding out whether the bureau had received it. Communicators were instructed to keep repeating the message until the bureau had confirmed receipt. The confirmation came more than an hour later via the Embassy.

2244—The Deputy Director of FBIS, again using the one-way channel, advises the bureau that the Nicosia Embassy is seeking to pinpoint the location of FBIS personnel for the Sixth Fleet. The bureau is asked to provide the Embassy precise geographic descriptions of possible helicopter landing zones. This is the first of several instances in which the Embassy is unable to reach the bureau, and FBIS in Washington, with its improvised Athens channel, serves as a relay point for messages between Embassy and bureau. The two are less than 16 miles apart, but the messages have to travel nearly 20,000 miles.

By the end of the day, the evacuation picture hardly was any clearer than it had been from the start. Would the Sixth Fleet come to the rescue or would the British Navy, or would they do it in a joint operation? No one knew. Nor did anyone know exactly how or where it was to be done or, for that matter, where the evacuees were to be taken.

Sunday at the UN Camp

The people who had sought refuge at the UN camp above Kyrenia were no better off than those at the bureau.

The dawn of 21 July, Sunday, brought renewed Turkish aerial attacks on positions in the hills. There were further massive flights of troop-carrying helicopters heading toward Nicosia. Heavy firing in the area lasted throughout the day, and people began to realize that the expected move back to their homes was not going to materialize that day.

They huddled together in small family groups. Most were beginning to feel the first twinges of hunger and, as the day wore on, the 100-degree temperature and the insects added to their discomfort. The water supply still was adequate—but not for washing—and people became accustomed to drinking in small sips to keep from dehydrating and to preserve the water supply.

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During the day, the UN contingent made a vain attempt to reach Kyrenia to obtain a supply of food for the refugees. The fighting prevented it. But thanks to the generosity of the UN forces and several British residents in the area, there was an issue of bread and butter early in the day. Later, potato soup was served. Most of those who had managed to bring small food supplies also shared with their less well-prepared colleagues.

The fighting, meanwhile, was getting closer, and bullets began to sing through the trees of the camp. Some groups moved to the shelter of a broad ditch, a sunken Roman road.* It was a safer place, but what little breeze managed to penetrate the woods did not make it into the ditch, and temperatures rose well above 100 degrees.

That day the FBIS contingent took its only casualty, a minor one, but one which pointed up the seriousness of their situation. One of the editors was lying next to his young son, trying to keep the boy's mind off the fighting around them. As a wave of C-47's passed overhead, the father was explaining what a good jump plane the C-47 is. He raised his hand about six inches off the ground to point at one of the planes, and a bullet passed through his hand. He was tended to by UN medical personnel, and was soon to regain full use of his hand.

Forest fires which had been started by the firing were coming closer to the camp, an additional worry as the refugees bedded down for a second night. Heavy firing continued through the night, but it seemed that the firing from the Greek-held ground was dwindling. At the same time, flares fired by Turkish forces indicated to those in the camp that the Turks were getting close.

Filling in Coverage Gaps

The material appearing on the FBIS wire on 21 July clearly reflected the desperate coverage situation that arose for FBIS as Medbureau ceased operations. Nearly 10,000 words less appeared on the wire Sunday than had appeared on 20 July, when the bureau still was making a massive contribution. Of the 210 items that ran on 21 July, 150 dealt with Cyprus, but only 10 of these came from Medbureau. The lone monitor in Tel Aviv and the small BBC team in the British base were making small but important contributions to the file.

Most of the material came from the BBC/FBIS London Bureau and dealt with reaction of other countries. Turkish broadcasts also were being monitored there, and an FBIS Turkish monitor from Cyprus who happened to be on leave in London was pressed into service.

The BBC Monitoring Service also quickly assumed emergency coverage of Middle East sources that have transmitters strong enough to be monitored in England. Notable among these were Cairo's domestic radio service and the Middle East News Agency's international English-language service.

The Vienna Bureau, where some Athens broadcasts could be heard, was feeding those casts directly to London through a voice communications link for processing.

*The depression in which the FBIS group found shelter has been described in the various accounts as a ditch, a sunken Roman road, a dry streambed, a firetrail, "an old road," or trench.

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Press agencies monitored in London, Panama, Okinawa and at FBIS Headquarters provided the bulk of reporting on developments in Cyprus itself. But the press agencies, too, reported they were having serious communications trouble and were having to depend more and more on radio broadcasts from the island, Greece and Turkey.

How serious the coverage situation was getting is best illustrated by the fact on several occasions on 21 July the FBIS Wire Service used roundabout reportage which editors under normal circumstances would have discarded without a second look: The Vienna Bureau, able to hear some Jerusalem broadcasts, was filing material in which Jerusalem was reporting on what it was hearing from the Greek Cypriot radio.

Further Adventures of the Tel Aviv Team

The Tel Aviv team, still stuck in Rome, also was having a bad time on 21 July. From their hotel room they continued efforts to get reservations on the next El Al flight to Tel Aviv, whenever that might be. The airline kept insisting that it would fly even though all other carriers had canceled their flights. The Embassy, too, was trying to book the group on a Sunday afternoon flight.

A little more certainty emerged later in the day, when El Al said a special flight would leave at 0330 on Monday. To be sure not to miss it, the team went to the airport at 2300—and ran into new problems.

Israeli security officers discovered that one team member was carrying a transcriber and that he and most of the others were carrying tourist passports. To complicate things further, the team made onward reservations in their individual names, while the Embassy had made six reservations in one name. The Israeli officers took a dim view first of the transcriber and then of the fact that six people obviously traveling together on some sort of mission to Israel involving electronic gear were apparently being passed off as tourists. Intensive searches and confiscation of the transcriber resulted.

But the team at last was allowed aboard the plane, which took off for Tel Aviv shortly after 0500 (Rome time) on 22 July, six hours after the team had left the hotel and two days after it had left Washington. Soon after arrival in Tel Aviv there were discussions with Embassy officers to review the team's mission, which by now had changed somewhat because of the developments in Cyprus. The team's chief insisted that they wanted to start operations immediately.

A makeshift first-floor auditorium in the Embassy, measuring 20 by 36 feet and normally used to show movies to personnel, had been made available to the original monitor from Vienna and now was rapidly stocked with office supplies and equipment, thanks to helpful Embassy officers cutting red tape. The team's monitoring equipment at this point consisted only of the portable radio/recorder the Vienna monitor had brought and another borrowed from an Embassy staffer. A third, brought along by one of the team members as a gift for a relative living in Tel Aviv, was pressed into service a little later.

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Within minutes after the discussion with Embassy officers, the team was handcarrying the edited copy of its first monitored item to the fifth floor for transmission. It was a Nicosia radio report broadcast at 1130 GMT in which the Cypriot foreign minister condemned the Turkish bombing of Kyrenia. Later in the day, other monitors began looking for Arab radios that might be monitored. They were able almost immediately to file an important report from the Damascus radio.

Some members of the team had had no more than about eight hours of sleep in three days.

Monday, 22 July

One of the first pieces of news to reach the UN camp in the pass above Kyrenia on 22 July was that a cease-fire was being arranged for 1600 (Cyprus time) the same day. Spirits among the FBIS refugees rose considerably, and the morning was relatively quiet, but the heaviest and closest fighting yet broke out about noon. The Turks above the camp were beginning their push downhill toward Kyrenia, while the Greeks below were returning the fire. All of the civilians now had to seek the shelter of the ditch, with mortar rounds landing around the camp. Low gunfire passed directly above the ditch.

Turkish troops finally appeared, heading down the ditch. At first they looked startled, and some pointed their guns at the huddled group of civilians. Then they went on their way, shooed on by UN troops. The latter had an obvious interest in having the line of battle pass as quickly as possible. The Turkish troops were smartly dressed, apparently fresh off the helicopters. Incongruously, some of them saluted as they passed the group of civilians.

Whatever relief there was in knowing that the battle had passed on was destroyed almost immediately by a new threat. A forest fire on the lower slopes was racing uphill, directly toward the camp. The massed cars and their gasoline tanks became a huge potential bomb. The camp was evacuated within minutes. Cars were driven a safe distance away toward the Turkish enclave. Once the fire had passed through the camp, the cars and the people returned to a lot at the entrance to the charred camp to establish their new headquarters.

The UN troops provided another issue of bread and butter, which they had received from Nicosia. Later a UN convoy arrived from Nicosia, and the refugees were offered safe conduct back with the convoy. But word had come meanwhile that an evacuation finally was going to get under way from the north coast the following day, 23 July. The refugees decided to stay put for one more night.

Information Becomes Sketchy

After the breakdown in communications ended two days and nights of direct bureau reporting, FBIS Headquarters was getting only infrequent and sketchy information throughout 22 July on what was happening at the bureau and at the UN camp.

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FBIS Cyprus

The Embassy in Nicosia, basing its reports on information it was receiving from the bureau, cabled that exchanges of fire were continuing hot and heavy in the bureau area as of 1100 GMT, three hours before the cease-fire was to go into effect. Turkish ships offshore were exchanging fire with Greek artillery units on land, with the bureau right between them.

Reuter reported shortly afterward that these exchanges had forced British authorities to postpone a planned evacuation of British and other foreigners from the area.

Other bits of news came from the Associated Press, which had a reporter holed up in a hotel close to the bureau. He had managed to telephone the bureau and in a story at 1122 GMT quoted one of the bureau's Marines as saying: "The Turks are trying to grab every inch of territory before the cease-fire. The main Turkish force landed in the three-mile sector between your hotel and the station (FBIS). They are fighting all around us." In an AP story filed about three hours later the Marine was quoted as saying: "British Navy frigates are lying offshore waiting for the cease-fire to begin so they can approach the coast and send launches to pick up civilians who make it to the beaches. Wave a white flag, wave anything, but attract their attention. Do not go onto the road; jets have been bombing and strafing it for days. They have strafed again this morning, and when there is no strafing, there is a hell of a lot of shooting out there."

It was a novel way for FBIS to get information about one of its sites. But it was information.

A very reassuring report came from Ambassador Davies shortly after 1200 GMT on 22 July. He had been in touch with the FBIS bureau and had been told that all Americans, Cypriots and other nationals were safe. However, the Ambassador's cable noted that information about the bureau's Chief Editor still was lacking.

People who had been at the bureau reported after their evacuation that 22 July indeed had been a bad day.

The Bureau Chief recalled that the shelling was so heavy and so close he felt sure the edge of the bureau compound was being shelled deliberately, possibly to put the generator out of action. The Chief Engineer theorized that the Turkish forces might have tuned in on the bureau's emergency radio link with the Embassy and were objecting to the situation reports that were going out over the link. With the consent of the Ambassador it was then decided to stop these reports.

The employees continued to spend most of their time in the safehaven hallway, where the Greek and Turkish monitors had set up a transistor radio and a typewriter to continue monitoring Cyprus stations for the information of bureau personnel.

The four Turkish and two Greek monitors, who felt deeply about the events in Cyprus, tried not to show their feelings. They worked together throughout the crisis, as most of them had in previous crises on the strife-torn island, as professionals loyal to FBIS.

FBIS Cyprus

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According to the editor, the group was counting the minutes to the announced cease-fire—only to find it failed to take effect until about 2200 Cyprus time, when night had come and another day had passed without evacuation.

Soon afterward a disconcerting piece of news came over BFBS: Cypriot nationals would have to be excluded from any evacuation! What, then, was to become of the Cypriot colleagues among them? The Ambassador, reached on the telephone, said he would get in touch with the British High Commission on the subject. But he could make no promises.

The Chief Editor's Adventures

Late in the afternoon of 22 July, the bureau's Chief Editor, his wife, and their guests—still out of contact with the bureau—finally emerged unharmed from their basement, where they had been sheltering throughout the fighting. They immediately found themselves in the ludicrous situation of being asked to accept the surrender of a 30-man Greek Cypriot National Guard contingent.

The soldiers, thinking the Chief Editor was a UN officer, turned up at the house to request help, because they were afraid to surrender to the Turks. Still armed, they asked to be let into the house. The occupants realized that this would seriously jeopardize their own safety in the event Turkish troops should show up. On the other hand, they also knew it might be unwise to argue with a group of armed soldiers. The Chief Editor's wife then took matters into her own hands. She flatly told the soldiers to throw their weapons into the street; then they would be allowed to stay.

The soldiers hesitated. She approached the nearest one, took his rifle from him, and threw it into the garden. The others then followed suit. The first Turkish troops turned up about two hours later. They surrounded the house, searched it, and marched off their National Guard prisoners. The original occupants also had to go along to a nearby command post for interrogation. While it was in progress, the post came under fire, causing everyone to hit the ground. With the firing continuing, Turkish soldiers at last escorted the group back to the house, skipping from shelter to shelter as they went.

At the house, the Chief Editor discovered an 18-year-old Guardsman who had evaded several searches by hiding in a clothes closet. He was told he would be turned over to Turkish troops the following day.

It was evening, and the group bedded down for the night, still unable to contact the bureau.

The Group at Tiger Bay

At about the same time that the Chief Editor's group was taking its "prisoners," the people at the Tiger Bay cottage became prisoners themselves. A Turkish patrol in search of National Guard stragglers hustled the group out of the cottage and lined them up against the wall, where they remained under guard for an hour and a half while the remainder of the patrol went about its business.

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They were then taken to a nearby Turkish position, from where the Med-bureau Administrative Officer and a Turkish-speaking monitor were taken by jeep to a command post a few miles away.

There they were received by a Turkish Lieutenant who spoke excellent English and who asked to be called "Tarzan." He appeared to be in charge of civilian prisoners, and he said about 140 Greek Cypriots and 40 British nationals were being held in the house next door. The others of the Tiger Bay group were brought to the post by jeep. Tarzan seemed unhappy at having an American official on his hands. But he tried to make the best of his dilemma. He asked the Administrative Officer to call the bureau with the request that the entire complement of prisoners, including three American newspapermen and three seriously wounded Greeks, be taken to the bureau and placed in the charge of the Chief. The Administrative Officer welcomed the chance to call the bureau. But the Chief, after consulting with the Ambassador by phone, had to turn down Tarzan's request. The bureau would have been unable to take care of such a large group, particularly the wounded.

With darkness approaching, Tiger Bay group had little choice but to spend the night as Tarzan's guests, even though Tarzan by now appeared really eager to get rid of the whole lot. They were assigned a room and veranda and, thanks to three small children in their group, were given some Turkish C-rations and sufficient water.

Outlook for Evacuation

As it had been for two days, evacuation of the bureau personnel and those at the UN camp remained the principal concern at FBIS Headquarters on 22 July. Two things emerged as the day wore on: Failure of the cease-fire and continued fighting on the north coast and most other places would make an evacuation by sea impossible before dark. But there were growing signs at last that a definite plan was in the works for the following day.

In a cable at 1150 GMT, Ambassador Davies already was concerning himself with the fact that provision must be made for evacuees with Israeli passports, should Beirut be designated the safehaven.

Shortly afterward, he reported that unless otherwise instructed he would authorize abandoning the FBIS bureau and evacuating all personnel "as soon as security conditions permit and evacuation capability in place." The State Department, acting on FBIS request, replied that FBIS would prefer a small team of essential personnel to stay behind if at all possible under the circumstances to reestablish operations at the bureau. The decision was to be left to the Bureau Chief.

The Ambassador cabled back: "Believe I must insist that entire FBIS unit depart together for safehaven, which I assume will be Beirut." He added that the Bureau Chief previously had indicated he advised total evacuation. In a later message, the Ambassador again recommended a combined British-U.S. operation, and he noted that the British Navy now had two frigates in the area and was awaiting London's authorization to go ahead the next day.

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Late in the evening he reconfirmed that a plan for the evacuation was under way, and he gave an accurate breakdown of FBIS numbers, including foreign national employees and their dependents.

The day's most reassuring news came at 2306 GMT in a State Department cable: The British Embassy in Washington had advised the Department that four British ships, including the carrier HMS *Hermes*, would arrive in the Kyrenia area between 0500 and 0700 Cyprus time on 23 July to evacuate British and other nationals by helicopter or small craft. The British Embassy, in turn, had been given numbers and locations of the FBIS people who would be involved.

A further State cable a little later put a damper on this, however. The British Embassy had informed the Department that the Turkish Government was cooperative but was unable to contact all military units concerned in the area by the designated time, then only three to five hours away. The cable added: "Operation still possible for later time on 23 July."

Meanwhile, shortly after 2100 hours Washington time, the FBIS staff officer at the CIA Operations Center had called FBIS Headquarters with the grimest report received throughout the three days of fighting: The Finnish UN camp near Kyrenia had been shelled and set on fire. This was the camp, as everyone knew, where the largest group of FBIS people, including most of the women and children, had sought shelter. The report was reconfirmed later, with the addition that the refugees were spending the night in a field next to the camp, that evacuation now had become a matter of great urgency, and that a number of the evacuees would require medical attention.

As has been seen, the FBIS "family" had escaped the fire and was, in fact, safe. But this was not yet known at FBIS Headquarters.

Tuesday, 23 July

The Turkish statement that 0500-0700 Cyprus time on 23 July was too early to permit a safe evacuation from the north coast brought fast and unequivocal reaction from British Foreign Secretary Callaghan in a cable to Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit:

"On my return from Brussels I have learned of the problem which has arisen in the humanitarian situation where British and other subjects are stranded in the neighborhood of Kyrenia on the north coast of Cyprus. I understand that we have requested the agreement of your government to this operation. The only reply we have received at low level has been through our naval attaché, who has been informed that in the view of your naval authorities the operation should not proceed. I regret this. The commander on the spot has been given discretion to proceed with this rescue operation at the time and in the place already notified to you. I expect him to receive full cooperation from your people on the spot and shall have to hold your government responsible for any incident involving your forces. I am sure you realize that the condition of those stranded around Kyrenia, some of whom are wounded and many of whom have had no food for some time, is my only concern in authorizing this operation."

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FBIS Cyprus

Negotiations Continue

The State Department, which flashed the text of this message to the Embassies in Athens, Ankara, Nicosia and London (State 159052, dated 230336), appended the information that a British Naval force was scheduled to arrive off Kyrenia at 0600 Cyprus time and that evacuation was to commence an hour later. The Embassies in Athens and Ankara were told to inform their host governments that 350 Americans on the north coast would seek evacuation by the British force.

At 0529 GMT Ambassador Davies reported to Washington that there was no sign of hostilities in the Kyrenia area and that he had been informed by the British High Commissioner that the decision had been made to evacuate the FBIS people on the north coast by helicopter. The only thing lacking was actual confirmation from the British task force that evacuation had commenced.

The stage was set, or so it seemed. But then, literally at the last moment, the problem of evacuating Cypriot citizens came up in earnest. The British government held that it would be improper and illegal to evacuate persons who at least theoretically were a party to the conflict. FBIS and, in fact, the U.S. government felt a humane obligation to include these long-time employees. And there was an immediate and critical need for their skills to reconstitute FBIS's Middle East coverage elsewhere. Since FBIS cooperates closely with the BBC Monitoring Service, it could rightly be claimed that the British government, too would benefit if the Cypriot employees were taken along.

The question raised a tremendous flurry of fast-paced diplomatic and other official activity—while the Cypriot FBIS employees and their families presumably were standing on the beaches in Cyprus about to watch their American and other colleagues take off for safety.

At 1054 GMT (nearly 1300 Cyprus time) the Embassy in London flashed word that the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had decided against authorizing evacuation of Cypriots employed by FBIS since it had decided against such employees of the British government. All arguments the Embassy could offer had been rejected. The Embassy added this recommendation for circumventing the FCO decision:

"We suggest Nicosia press UK High Commission and local British commander as hard as possible to evacuate these FBIS employees quickly. There should be two to three hours left before FCO makes its instructions known. If operation cannot proceed that rapidly and FBIS people are stranded, we are prepared to march in at higher level with effort to reverse this decision, difficult as it seems."

One minute after this cable was sent from London, Ambassador Davies reported that FBIS employees were now on the beach near the bureau and that the British on the scene were refusing to accept Cypriot employees. He said he had been in touch with the Bureau Chief, who had told him that leaving the employees on the beach "would be tantamount to a death sentence."

The Chief's estimate probably was not far off the mark. It still was unclear to him and his staff whether the bureau area was in Greek Cypriot or Turkish

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hands. But whatever the case, either side could, and very likely would, have considered as traitors or deserters those of their countrymen who had not taken part in the fighting.

The Director of FBIS at 1141 GMT flashed instructions to the Chief of the London Bureau to seek intervention "at the highest level possible" from the head of the BBC Monitoring Service. His contacts, the Director pointed out, "may help go around or through" the obstacle posed by the FCO. The Chief in London replied at 1228 GMT that his BBC counterpart had made representations to the Ministry of Defense and the FCO. "He is up against a sticky situation and not highly optimistic."

This was followed by a more encouraging message from the London Bureau at 1410 GMT: The FCO had ruled that 1) Cypriots would be picked up from the beaches and taken to a British Sovereign Base Area, 2) for the present, no exceptions could be made regarding evacuation of Cypriots from the island by the British, 3) informally, there would be no British objection to FBIS Cypriots being evacuated from the British base area by U.S. components.

The message at first appeared contradictory: The people would be taken off the beaches but they would not be evacuated. What the message actually said was that the British apparently had resolved their dilemma: So long as the Cypriots remained at least in Cyprus waters, no one could claim that they had been evacuated. If they then were turned over to U.S. "components," well, what the Americans did with them was no British concern.

The Embassy in London was unaware of this development. It messaged at 1421 that the responsible British minister had made the firm decision that his government "must stick by its policy not to evacuate any Cypriots." It had been suggested that FBIS employees "try to fade into hiding if possible." The Embassy went on: "Our feeling is that only a personal intervention with Foreign Secretary Callaghan (stressing humanitarian aspect) is likely to reverse this ministerial decision." "Of course, if Sixth Fleet had capability undertake this evacuation, that would appear to be a solution."

At 1610 GMT Ambassador Davies reported that the UN forces in Cyprus could not override the British decision. But the UN people had given assurances that they would take custody of the stranded Cypriots. He said he and the UN forces meanwhile had lost contact with both FBIS evacuation parties.

The fact is that most of the diplomatic activity was purely academic. The FBIS people who had been on the beaches, including the Cypriots, had been safely aboard the HMS *Hermes* for hours. Some plain gall by the FBIS contingent and some unofficial forbearance by a UK officer had done the trick.

The Evacuation Begins

At 0700 (Cyprus time) on 23 July a convoy formed on the road near the burned-out UN camp and slowly made its way down to Kyrenia, following a UN armored car. Little damage was to be seen in the town. Not far from the shore the convoy turned east along the narrow and winding coast road to a beach which for lack of a better name has always been known as Six Mile Beach, simply because it is about six miles outside of town.

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A second and third convoy followed. Some Greek Cypriots who had been in the camp unfortunately had to be left behind because a Turkish police officer checking passports at the camp as the convoys were forming would not allow them to leave. But they were safe in UN hands.

It was a ragged, tired, hungry but happy bunch of people that gathered on the beach. To their surprise, after days and nights of fear, confusion and uncertainty, the evacuation itself took place so quickly and efficiently that it was almost an anticlimax. British helicopters were ferrying people to the HMS *Hermes* three miles offshore almost as fast as the people could get on. It was rare for anyone to have to spend more than 15 minutes waiting before he was airborne. By about 0900, all were aboard the carrier. Some already were taking showers.

The Strays are Rounded Up

The Chief Editor and his party learned of the evacuation plans from an early morning newscast. It took them some time to ascertain from Turkish soldiers that the road from their house to Kyrenia was open and that it would be safe to go. They turned over their last National Guard "captive" to a Turkish patrol and then cautiously drove to Kyrenia. From the Dome Hotel, the Chief Editor at last was able to telephone the bureau. He learned from the duty editor that an evacuation was under way at Six Mile Beach. They made their way there and were safely aboard the HMS *Hermes* soon afterward.

At about 0700, two Marines at the bureau lashed a U.S. flag to a bureau bus and set out to find the Administrative Officer and his party, who still were in Tarzan's care. Everyone else was getting organized for the short busride to a hotel beach near the bureau for the expected helicopter pickup.

By 0930, the duty editor was on the telephone with the Embassy, giving a blow-by-blow account of what was going on at the bureau and asking that the information be passed on to Washington. He was able to report that the evacuation was in progress at Six Mile Beach. He also had just received the telephone call from the Chief Editor and had directed him to Six Mile Beach. The bus with the two Marines and the Administrative Officer's group just then came tearing into the bureau compound, horns blaring.

And at that point a helicopter could be heard circling overhead. Before he hung up the telephone, he reported: "Update as of 0800 GMT (1000 Cyprus time): Evacuation at bureau now in progress by chopper. No time for details."

The editor rushed into the hallway to tell his colleagues that the Chief Editor was safe. The hallway was empty. Outside, the bureau buses were gone. There was no one in sight. For a brief moment the editor felt panic, thinking he had been forgotten. But then the Chief Engineer called from the roof to reassure him that a bus would be back for them soon; the other personnel already had been taken to the beach. The helicopters had not yet started picking up the evacuees; they had merely been circling the area to survey the situation. On one of those runs, a helicopter drew small arms fire from a lemon grove at the bureau.

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FBIS Cyprus

~~SECRET~~*Cypriot Nationals Problem*

A British UN major was in charge on the beach. He told the bureau Chief flatly that Cypriot nationals would not be permitted aboard the helicopters. From a nearby telephone the Bureau Chief called the Embassy to ask for assistance, pointing out that the Cypriot FBIS employees would be in grave danger if left behind.

As the helicopters touched down, the British major, having made his point, walked along with the Bureau Chief without taking a direct hand in checking identities of those who boarded. The bureau's Americans meanwhile were busy shoving their Cypriot colleagues into the helicopters. The Chief was the last to step aboard. No more was said about Cypriot nationals.

From the helicopters the employees got a last saddening view of Medbureau. Minutes later they set foot on the deck of HMS *Hermes* to be reunited with their families and their colleagues.

A few hours later, FBIS Headquarters received a commercial cable from HMS *Hermes* advising that both FBIS parties were aboard. The ship was sailing toward a British base area on the south side of Cyprus, where the evacuees were to be transferred to an American ship for the trip to Beirut. Evacuees with Israeli passports would be taken from the base area to Israel by way of England.

Wednesday, 24 July

Early on 24 July it became certain that Turkish forces were in control of the area around the FBIS bureau. A State Department cable instructed the Embassies in Ankara and Nicosia to ask the Turkish Government and the Turkish forces in Cyprus to provide the bureau compound with protection against looting and vandalism.

An FBIS administrative officer at the same time was on his way to Beirut from Washington to assist with the many problems that would have to be handled when the FBIS evacuees arrived.

By 1000 (Cyprus time) on 24 July the FBIS people had been transferred to the USS *Trenton* of the Sixth Fleet. The Bureau Chief sent a message to Ambassador Davies: "Entire U.S. party which evacuated Karavas and Kyrenia aboard *Trenton*, including Cypriot nationals. Grateful your assistance that made this possible. Sailing Beirut."

At 0735 on Thursday, 25 July, FBIS Headquarters received a brief message from the Embassy in Beirut announcing that the FBIS party had arrived.

The FBIS Director replied with a message to the Bureau Chief, care of the Embassy: "Congratulations on your successful evacuation and superb bureau performance under the most difficult and hazardous circumstances. Please extend our highest regards and best wishes to every member of the FBIS party. We know there will be many difficulties yet to overcome, but be assured we at Headquarters will do everything we can to support you. Your families have been kept informed daily."

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FBIS Cyprus

From the Bureau Chiefs report:

Although the evacuation was a shattering affair, and sometimes was pushed to the brink of chaos by forces beyond our control, FBIS arrived in Beirut with its tail riding high. Ambassador Godley said we arrived with an internal discipline and an intact organization.

The Aftermath

There remained the massive problems of pay and allowances, relocating and housing personnel, recovering government and private property from Cyprus, and reconstituting the lost FBIS coverage.

An early return to the Karavas bureau to resume operations had to be ruled out from the start. It would be months, possibly years, before the necessary communications and support would become available again. With the north coast, including the bureau area, in Turkish hands and the Embassy and communications facilities—even the power supply—in Greek parts of Nicosia, it would be necessary to deal with two sets of authorities. Would Greeks and Turks be able to work at the bureau and live in the area? Where would American and third country national children go to school? Would the Turks or Greeks allow the bureau to operate to begin with? These and many other questions remain unanswered even at this writing.

The evacuees had not yet landed in Beirut, when the Chief of the FBIS London Bureau began to anticipate an influx of refugees. Some families would not wish to remain in Beirut, while others would be needed in London to help absorb at least some of the Middle East coverage that had been lost. Negotiating with the Air Force, the bureau succeeded in having part of a standby airbase near London opened to house FBIS people. More than 40 of them eventually took up residence there until their relocation in mid-September.

The Tel Aviv unit received its equipment package from Washington by the end of the first week of the operation. Coverage and operations began to settle into a normal routine. The unit was able to monitor substantial portions of the Middle East, and its production continued to expand.

By early August, personnel were changed as Cyprus bureau evacuees began to arrive in Tel Aviv and original team members were rotated home. The unit by then had standardized editorial and office procedures. The original plan called for up to 19 employees and a "lease" of about six months.

A small unit was established in Athens and began operating on 8 August. For the moment the unit, consisting of nine employees, is covering only Greek radios and newspapers. But this coverage quickly proved to be better than had ever been possible in Cyprus.

Two Arabic monitors from Cyprus were dispatched to the BBC's monitoring site in Nairobi, Kenya, to take up some of the lost Arabic coverage.

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FBIS Cyprus

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Beirut, which originally received the Cyprus evacuees, was the most logical place to take up the remaining coverage of the Arab Middle East. Initial State Department objections to an FBIS presence at the Embassy were overcome in high-level negotiations, and a unit began operations there on 16 August. The unit's staff was limited to 13, however, and its lifespan to 90 days.

By the middle of September, FBIS was able to report that it had reconstituted nearly 100 percent of its Cyprus bureau coverage. No significant coverage was lost. Plans for further relocation are in the works.

An eventual return to Cyprus also remains under consideration, although no FBIS operation on the island would ever again be as large or as important as in the past. Plainly, neither Cyprus nor any other Middle East location is the kind of basket to hold all of FBIS's eggs.

Expenditures resulting from the loss of the Cyprus operation amounted to an estimated \$250,000 a month for the first two months. Personal claims for loss of possessions could run as high as \$600,000.

In the Turkish quarter of Kyrenia, there is a man named Sabri. He has an incredibly shabby office with a sign announcing that he is an "estate agent." Sabri seems always to have been there; he even figures prominently in Lawrence Durrell's Bitter Lemons. Every American who has served a tour of duty with FBIS in Cyprus knows Sabri—and has probably done business with him.

Most remember Sabri as an operator of some standing who would buy or sell almost anything and who could get almost anything done or undone—for a price. He drove a ramshackle pickup truck to deliver firewood or bottled gas to your house. You could get a pretty decent meal at Sabri's restaurant, or you could arrange your vacation trip through Sabri's travel service.

Being a Turkish Cypriot, however, he had never figured in public life. During times of strife Sabri had to keep a very low profile indeed. A few days after the situation in Kyrenia stabilized, Sabri became the mayor.

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