Anglo-Turkish Society hybrid lecture, 13 April 2026, 6.00 pm (UK time)
Speaker: Andrew Southam
Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT
Title: 'Cyprus 1974: a Turkish point of view'

On 15 July 1974, the president of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios III, and his three bodyguards evaded death by thirty minutes. He had escaped a coup d'etat sponsored by Greek military dictators called the Junta, which seized power in Athens six years earlier in 1967. At its head was secretive military police chief general Dimitrios Ioannidis, who regarded the archbishop as a communist favouring the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. Ioannidis presumed the CIA was on his side and the West, especially US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, would rejoice at Makarios' death. This was a terrible mistake.

Few people today remember this background to events which led to the eventual division of Cyprus in 1974/5. Instead, the prominent narrative is about Turkey's 'invasion' of Cyprus.

Yet, many western governments were initially sympathetic to Turkey's situation when the coup attempt happened. Ankara had a right to protect Cyprus' sovereignty and stability as a co-guarantor alongside Greece and the UK, had to protect Turkish Cypriots from ethnic violence, as happened twice in the 1960s, and had to resolve longstanding security concerns about the island. Turkey's military chiefs, its civilian poet prime minister Bulent Ecevit, Turkey's fragile political structure, popular sentiment on the street and defence concerns all informed Ankara's decisions.

Andrew Southam has written a narrative history of these events analysing the story from the point of view of the five principal countries, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, the UK and the US. He shines a light on Turkey's motivations and actions, which are generally missed in the few books written on the subject.

Booking essential: https://andrew-southam-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk

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Turkish prime minister Bulent Ecevit and America's most senior career diplomat, Joe Sisco.



Andrew Southam is a history journalist and writer with a 30 year career. His credits include The Times, Guardian US, Parliament's The House Magazine, the British Forces Broadcasting Service, National World, History Today, Civil Service World, US News and the Commentator, the Church Times, Saga magazine, Military History Matters. This includes radio interviews for Times Radio and BFBS radio.

He studied history at Leicester, Oxford and London, has written for think tanks in London and Washington, taught British history at the foundation level for global students at the university of Buckingham, is an associate fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

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