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## **DESPITE GROWING OPPOSITION, CLOSING THE UK MILITARY BASES IN THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS WOULD NOT BE EASY**

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Tom CLEAVER

When an Iranian-made Shahed unmanned drone crashed into the side of an aircraft hangar at the Akrotiri air force base in Cyprus(\*) at three minutes past midnight on 2 March, it was, for many, the realisation of what had been feared for decades.

With the United Kingdom following the United States lead in pursuing an interventionist policy in the Middle East, Cypriots have long felt that far from providing protection from the tribulations of their geographical neighbourhood, the existence of two British sovereign base areas on the island effectively placed a target on the back of Cyprus and therefore of Cypriots.

The Akrotiri base is located just a 25-minute drive from downtown Limassol (the heavy traffic of Cyprus richest city notwithstanding), and while the nature of the attack did not leave the people of Limassol or the island at large fearing for their lives, it did leave them fearing for their economy.

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**(\*) AVİM uses "Cyprus" as a geographic name. AVİM considers the expression "Republic of Cyprus" to mean the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus.**

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