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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 January 1983

John Tim,

Cyprus

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Thank you for your letter of 12 January enclosing one to the Prime Minister dated 27 December from Mr Denktash the 'President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus' (TFSC). I am also replying to a letter from John Coles of 17 January enclosing another letter from Mr Denktash dated 30 December.

It would not be appropriate for the Prime Minister to reply to Mr Denktash's letters. As you know, the British Government do not recognise the 'TFSC', and do not therefore have official dealings with its 'government'. Mr Denktash, who regularly writes such letters, will not be expecting a reply.

You may like to have some comments on the points that Mr Denktash raises in his letters. His first letter is an attack on the Cyprus policy of Prime Minister Papandreou of Greece. Its main theme is that Mr Papandreou dominates the Greek Cypriots. Mr Denktash over-states his case. He is probably reacting to allegations that his own Community's policies are dictated from Ankara and trying to suggest that there is a similar relationship between Athens and the Greek Cypriots. But the relationship between Greece and the Greek Cypriots is not so simple and Mr Denktash is wrong in saying, for instance, that Athens has dictated Greek Cypriot policy on the problem of missing persons and on recourse to the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, issues like missing persons are often taken up more strongly by the Greeks (certainly with us) than by the Greek Cypriots themselves. This is the grain of truth behind Mr Denktash's allegations.

Another main theme of the letter is that Mr Papandreou is aiming to torpedo the talks currently being held in Nicosia between the two communities in Cyprus under UN auspices. Our view is that the talks offer the best hope of a solution to the Cyprus problem. Mr Denktash is well aware of this. No doubt he hopes that his complaints will find a ready ear. There is a certain amount in what he says about Mr Papandreou's negative

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attitude to the talks. Mr Papandreou undoubtedly believes that the talks are a waste of time. He wants more international pressure put on Turkey to withdraw her troops from the island. He knows that Turkey will not do so in the absence of a settlement providing security guarantees for the Turkish Cypriots. But it is a good issue with which to pillory the Turks. Against this, it is also true that the Turkish Cypriots have for a long time sheltered behind the intercommunal talks, being reasonably satisfied with the current status quo on the island and fairly certain that the talks will not make significant progress. For ourselves, we take every opportunity (for example, during Lord Belstead's recent visit to Athens and Ankara) to hammer home to all the parties the need for progress in the talks. We believe there will be a 'period of opportunity' during the summer, after the Greek Cypriot Presidential elections and before the expected return to democracy in Turkey, when substantial progress could be made if the parties were prepared to seize the opportunity. During this period, Mr Gobbi, the UN Representative on Cyprus, who thinks that a final settlement is too difficult for the two parties at present, plans to launch proposals for a settlement to be agreed and implemented in stages.

Mr Denktash's second letter refers to the UN resolution on missing persons debated in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in early December. The Greek Cypriots claim that up to 2,000 of their community have been missing since 1974. The Turkish Cypriots claim some 300 missing since 1963. An inter-communal Committee on Missing Persons was set up in 1981 to investigate the problem. It has not met since February 1982 and has more or less run into the sand. The UN resolution invited the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance of the Commission on Human Rights to assist the Committee to overcome its procedural difficulties. The resolution, sponsored by the Greeks and Greek Cypriots, was essentially a propaganda ploy designed to embarrass the Turkish Cypriots. We abstained because we did not wish to lend ourselves to this ploy. It is for this that Mr Denktash thanks us.

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Private Secretary

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