

With my best compliments

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PRESS RELEASE

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President Kyprianou makes a statement on recent developments
in the Cyprus problem, at a press conference in Nicosia

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, speaking at a press conference in Nicosia today, Saturday, made the following statement:

" It was quite natural that various questions should be raised following the failure of the high-level meeting in New York. I consider it my duty to give replies to these questions in order to inform the people of Cyprus as best as I can.

The question was raised, inter alia, whether I should have accepted to participate in the high-level meeting. I have no doubt whatsoever that this had to be done basically for two reasons: First, because we were sincerely seeking, within the framework of the U.N. Secretary-General's initiative, a constructive dialogue for the finding of a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. Secondly, because if we refused to participate we would torpedo ourselves the Secretary-General's initiative and condemn ourselves to complete isolation internationally. Nor was it possible for me to refuse to attend the high-level meeting convened by the U.N. Secretary-General in the light of the progress achieved during the third round of proximity talks. The Secretary-General himself considered that the degree of the progress made justified the convening of a high-level meeting. Therefore, I have no doubt at all that we rightly accepted to participate in the high-level meeting in the same way that we rightly accepted to participate previously in the proximity talks.

Another question is what was the reason for the climate of optimism created. This was natural because it was the first time in ten years that there had been some shifting of the

Turkish positions, and, therefore, some progress. This fact too justified cautious optimism. But, when I talked about cautious optimism, at the same time I stressed the need for restraint because of our past experience. And I also stressed that the progress made did not mean automatically a solution to the Cyprus problem and that there was still a long way to go.

It is natural that now, following the failure of the high-level meeting, there should be disappointment. This disappointment, however, should not turn either into defeatism or fatalism which are unquestionably the worst counsel at difficult times, nor should it halt our struggle for the salvation and vindication of the country and our effort for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem.

Not much effort is need to seek the reasons for the failure of the high-level meeting. This meeting did not prove productive simply because the Turkish side refused to negotiate or to discuss anything and stubbornly insisted on the signing of the documents as they stood. We accepted those documents as a basis for the holding of negotiations to find a framework for a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem.

We went to New York with all goodwill for a constructive dialogue. But we were instead asked in an ultimatum-like manner to sign texts the most basic points of which had not been agreed while others were vague or unclear and others incomplete.

The Turkish side opposed any negotiation, and all these despite the assurances continuously given to us, both privately and publicly, that there would be a substantive dialogue at the high-level meeting. The Secretary-General himself had designated the high-level meeting to last three days and if necessary he would devote another day, delaying his scheduled departure from New York. It would, to say the least, be ridiculous to claim that we would need three or four days for a signing ceremony, if the purpose of the high-level meeting was simply to sign some texts without discussion, as demanded by Mr. Denktash.

I could, in this respect, refer to a series of statements by the U.N. Secretary-General and the U.N. Secretariat regarding the purpose of the high-level meeting. It suffices, at the present state, to recall the Secretary-General's statement made at his press conference on 19 December, 1984, in which he stressed that he did not see the high-level meeting as a mere formality and that what he expected at the meeting was constructive discussion, during which the two sides would set out their views on his own presentation. Even two days ago, in an interview with the B.B.C., the U.N. Secretary-General reiterated that the documents were not put on the negotiating table on a "take it or leave it" basis.

As I have already said, repeated assurances were given regarding the purpose of the meeting, both by the U.N. Secretary-General and the Secretariat and by various Governments which were in a position to know. And these assurances were given when we continuously asked for information in the light of repeated statements by Mr. Denktash between the conclusion of the third round of the proximity talks and the day of the high-level meeting. Therefore, everything that could be done was done by our side in this matter too.

But the most characteristic element which proves that the object of the high-level meeting was the dialogue and not a mere signing are some provisions of the texts themselves which, according to Mr. Denktash, we were supposed simply to sign. Apart from the fact that the substantive matters needed negotiation - and this nobody can dispute - there is concrete reference to negotiation in the texts themselves.

For example, in the preliminary draft agreement or the agenda - since both terms are used - it is stressed that territorial readjustments, in addition to the areas referred to in the Turkish proposals of 5 August, 1981, would be agreed at the high-level meeting and that the extent of these readjustments and the number of refugees who would return to their homes would be defined in the agreement that would emerge. Another example is the question of withdrawal of foreign troops referred to in the same document. Regarding this question, it is explicitly explained in the so-called non-paper that an agreement on the timing of withdrawal of foreign troops would be discussed at the high-level meeting. Matters are, I think, very clear.

Even on the question of the working groups the relevant paragraph in the text says that the working group or the groups will be set up in the light of the political decisions to be agreed upon at the high-level meeting so that the details of the agreements may be elaborated. That is to say, decisions had to be taken first on the various issues, particularly the important ones, and then the committees would undertake to work out the details on the basis of terms of reference to be given them by the high-level meeting. The taking of the decisions and the preparation of the terms or reference certainly presuppose discussion and a dialogue. The Turkish side refused to discuss and rejected the dialogue insisting on its demand for signing. But sign what? The texts could not, as they stood, become a framework of an agreement for a solution to the Cyprus problem. Consequently what would be signed? An agenda or texts with many blanks and vague points, the signing of which, in addition to being paradoxical would adversely affect our negotiating possibilities later. The texts were such that they could be used only as a basis for negotiation or dialogue.

If these texts were signed, anyone could very well ask me what I agreed to by signing, for example in connection with the territorial issue of the withdrawal of troops or the fundamental freedoms or the guarantees or other matters. And my answer to these logical questions would be "I do not know what I have signed". But it would be irresponsible on my part to sign texts without the basic issues contained in them having been discussed and agreed upon.

And while this was the situation, Mr. Denktash for four whole days insisted that nothing at all should be discussed and that the texts should be signed as they stood and outstanding matters be referred to working groups. However, the most serious of these matters were not matters for working groups but for serious political decisions at a high-level meeting, as I have already said.

In the face of this situation, I would be justified walking out of the meeting or denouncing the pressing, to say the least, tactics of the other side. Instead, I stayed until the end trying by formulas and proposals and in other ways to contribute to averting a deadlock.

My last proposal, which was made as a final effort to avert the deadlock, contained the element of reconciliation of opposite views and its rejection was in no way justified. But this too was rejected by Mr. Denktash. I recall that, in accordance with that proposal, I suggested that a new high-level meeting be fixed soon to deal with four basic issues, i.e. the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the territorial issue, the fundamental freedoms and the guarantees, suggesting at the same time, even though this was a departure from a basic principle, the immediate setting up of a working group to start studying the constitutional aspect and submit its finding to the high-level meeting.

It was obvious that no matter how many proposals were made, the Turkish side was not prepared either to discuss anything or to accept a formula to avert the deadlock, insisting immutably on its demand that the texts should be signed as they stood or nothing would be done.

In the light of the situation, the U.N. Secretary-General invited us to a new high-level meeting by the end of next February. His proposal has been accepted by our side at once. I sincerely hope that the Turkish side will respond positively to the U.N. Secretary-General's proposal and that it will not finally decide to neutralize the Secretary-General's continuing initiative for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. This, after all, is the only way to prove that it sincerely wants real negotiation for a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem and that it does not use the various procedures, as for example the high-level meeting, merely for the creation of impressions as part of time delaying ^{tactics and} / promote its policy of faits accomplis.

While we on our part are studying developments very carefully and with sang froid, I consider it necessary to repeat that we shall continue our cooperation with the U.N. Secretary-General with sincerity in the effort for a comprehensive, just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem within the framework of his mission as defined by the Security Council. At this point too I repeat that we are ready for substantial negotiation and for an honourable compromise that would secure a just and viable solution. But, at the same time, I should once again declare that we shall not become party to anything that would aim at arrangements that would be unfair and non-viable or would be tantamount to abandonment

of the rights of Cyprus and its people. Our targets are firm and our efforts will be continuous. At these difficult hours, it is necessary, more than ever, that the national interest alone should prevail in the minds of all of us.

I wish to express once more our gratitude to the Greek Government for our harmonious cooperation and its valuable help and also to the opposition in Greece for the support it has been providing to our efforts in these hard time. "

Replies given by President Kyprianou to journalists'
questions during his press conference today, Saturday

1. In an answer to a question about a possible meeting between him and President Reagan next month and what was expected from this meeting, the President of the Republic said: "As you know, I attach great importance to those high-level meetings. There is absolutely no doubt that one of the countries that can play a substantive role in the Cyprus developments, without this meaning that I suggest that the U.N. Secretary-General's initiative should be substituted, in any way is the United States and also Britain and other countries. Not because I underestimate any other factor. And it is a fact that in view of the developments I asked for a meeting with President Reagan without fixing a time. This does not mean that we are not in touch with the U.S. Government and also with all Governments but I feel that there are certain things which it will be useful to discuss at this level."

2. Replying to a question why we did not proceed with the ratification of what had been agreed, leaving the outstanding issues to working committees or to be discussed at the new high-level meeting, given that our insistence would lead to a breakdown of the negotiations, Mr. Kyprianou replied: "Mr. Denktash was against our signing half of the paragraphs of the texts. He wanted the texts to be signed as they were. And then I am wondering to what agreed matters you refer unless you talk about details. Because there was no agreement reached regarding the timing of the withdrawal of troops. There was no agreement on that matter because it had not yet been discussed. There was no agreement on the issues of guarantees, the territorial issue and the fundamental freedoms. Even regarding the constitutional issue, in which there was some narrowing down of the differences - hence I made the proposal that this matter should be referred immediately to a working group - there was no agreement on this matter. Neither the Turkish side nor we can claim that we reached agreement."

But you must bear in mind the following: when one handles such a matter - I imagine this is true in other cases too - one handles it with the thought that everything constitutes one integrated whole and the Turkish side said so repeatedly. Everything we proposed was subject to a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem. If something was accepted, if there was something to be accepted, for it is my position that of all the serious issues there was nothing about which one could say "this has been agreed, let's set it aside for signing". I ask you to indicate to me any such matter, constitutional, territorial, fundamental freedoms, troops? Which of the basic aspect of the Cyprus problem, Varoshia? You yourselves might ask me: "What did you sign concerning Varoshia? My answer would be: "I don't know" and this would be entirely irresponsible on my part. There was no substantive issue on which agreement had been reached. There may have been progress on certain issues, but progress is one thing and agreement is another. Progress is not something to sign. One signs an agreement. For, even progress is subject to other things.

To come back to something I said at the beginning suggestion should in such a case have been made to sign an agenda. But this would have had no meaning. What was meaningful, and I think this was accepted and appreciated, irrespective of the fact that some foreign newspapers, misled by other sides, gave a wrong picture of the situation, was that we were ready for a constructive dialogue".

3. Asked whether there was a real danger of De Cuellar's initiative being torpedoed by the decision taken for general elections to be held in the occupied areas next June, President Kyprianou said: "This is covered in my opening statement. Nevertheless I must say that the Secretary-General has assured us that he is acting in the direction of averting any developments that would impede his task and that in this connection as he has told us, he has the support of many Governments. As I have said, we on our part are monitoring the situation

with coolheadedness and I think I can tell you from now that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has today made various representations on the matter".

4. In reply to a question whether after the breakdown of the high-level meeting and Mr. Denktash's response with new faits accomplis, the Greek Cypriot side contemplated to reviving Security Council Resolution 550, which, inter alia, refers to the taking of urgent measures, and whether the Greek Cypriot side intended to call for such measures, President Kyprianou said: "First of all I must tell you that no Security Council Resolution has even been abandoned by our side, nor can it be abandoned. The resolutions in question constitute the framework within which we have been moving. They are the framework in which we also view the role of the Secretary-General. Any other steps besides those taken today by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be announced. The matter will be considered by our side, by the Government, but it will also be one of the subjects on which there will be an exchange of views with party leaders next Friday. This is one of the matters that I shall raise for discussion. Beyond this, before taking any decisions regarding any possible additional actions on our part, we must have the Secretary-General's assessment regarding the results of his own steps. Therefore, we shall be able in a few days to see how we shall handle the matter further.

Of course, one might say that in view of the danger that the Turkish side would hold elections, the documentation should have been signed in order to avert this action. My answer to this is unquestionably no. I rule this out. My view is that this is not the way to negotiate. Nor do I believe that the Turkish side has decided to do what it is going to do, responding to our own actions, in the same way that it was not in response to our actions that it decided to declare the so-called state in the past. It is a policy of its own that it is implementing. What must be done on our part, beyond what has been done so far, we shall see in a few days".

5. Asked if there was truth in information given by U.N. circles, in any case not the U.N. Secretariat, that Mr. Kyprianou's introductory speech at the start of the high-level meeting was full of extreme positions which did not allow the holding of the negotiations the President himself wanted to take place at the high-level meeting, Mr. Kyprianou replied: "The opening of the discussion was very simple.

The Secretary-General made an introductory statement and asked for our comments and of course our comments on the texts. Our comments on the texts were, naturally, the same as those made during the proximity talks. Our comments did not in any way prejudge the manner in which the negotiations would be conducted. Proof of this is the fact that when I said I accepted that only four issues should be discussed at the next high-level meeting and the working group on the constitutional aspect should start work immediately, my suggestion was rejected. I do not think that if you were there and you heard my statement you would be distressed as Cypriots. I believe you would rather feel satisfied. At this point I wish to stress that when something does not go as well as we expect, our national cause is not served when we try to find scapegoats in our own front".

6. To a question about the prospects of success of a new high-level meeting, Mr. Kyprianou said: "I do not know if you suggest that we should not have gone to the high-level meeting. I covered this point in my opening statement. ^{In my view we had to go to the meeting.} / In any case, I mention here that in the third round of the proximity talks there was progress in the constitutional aspect, substantive progress in the executive, but there was no progress in the legislative issue. At the same time there was progress in the territorial issue, without this meaning that this problem was solved. When there is progress in these two issues with a prospect for progress in more issues, while at the same time it is accepted to discuss at the high-level meeting the timing of withdrawal of the Turkish troops and the territorial issue not only from the point of view of percentages but also from the point of view of defining areas and numbers of refugees and other matters, I think

it is reasonable to attend the meeting with cautious optimism. What I supported then, I also support now. The facts were such that they absolutely justified that position. Consequently no one objects to seeking responsibilities, if any, or levelling criticism. But it is not fair to attempt to invent responsibilities. The national cause is not served in this way. I believe that we rightly went to the high-level meeting both because we wanted to negotiate reasonably and honestly and because if we had not gone we would have been isolated internationally. We rightly judged that cautious optimism was justified. For, the Secretary-General himself should not have convened the meeting if he himself had not been cautiously optimistic. His was more than cautious optimism. Also the shifting in positions in the third round of the proximity talks were of such a nature both in the territorial and the constitutional issue as to justify this cautious optimism, particularly in view of the prospect of discussion, at the high-level meeting of other basic issues, such as a the question of withdrawal of the Turkish troops, regarding the timing of which the text says an agreement should be reached. Therefore, we went to the high-level meeting for substantive discussion and justifiably with cautious optimism."

7. Asked whether the proposal made at the high-level meeting for discussion of the four issues continues to be valid whether the elections to be held by Mr. Denktash neutralize Mr. De Cuellar's initiative and whether the talks would be carried on from where they have been left, if the Secretary-General calls for a new high-level meeting before Mr. Denktash carries out the elections, President Kyprianou said: "My proposal for the four points continues to be valid. As to what should be done in the light of the declared intention of the Turkish side to go ahead with new faits accomplis, I will say nothing more than what I have already said, pending the results of consultations with the U.N. Secretary-General and with various Governments".

8. In answer to a remark that there has been a change in our positions as regards a meeting with Mr. Denktash given that whereas in the past we said there would be no meeting and no discussion with Denktash if he did not revoke the "state" he had declared in the occupied area, a meeting finally took place, President Kyprianou said: "The answer is simple. The high-level meeting with Mr. Denktash does not mean acceptance of the faits accomplis and it has taken place within the framework of the United Nations resolutions and the framework of the Secretary-General's initiative. I should also like to recall that the Resolution 550 has basically two provisions, (a) revocation of the pseudostate and efforts for its revocation and (b) a mandate to the U.N.

Secretary-General for a definite solution of the Cyprus problem. The Secretary-General chose the second course of action and we are cooperating with him within the framework of his initiative and it is within the framework of this initiative that we have accepted the high-level meeting. This development has nothing to do with our past positions which were based on other data. Therefore, I think we have done the right thing. Besides, things did not take place suddenly and you all know the developments which led to the recent high-level meeting.

9. To a remark that in his written statement he had said that there were blancs in the high-level meeting document and to a question whether Mr. Denktash had proposed anything at all to fill in these blancs or submitted any substantive proposal on the territorial aspect in order to fill in these blancs, President Kyprianou said: "No substantive discussion was carried out at the high-level meeting in New York. Whatever has been achieved was achieved at the proximity talks and the result of those talks was a preliminary draft agreement and two non-papers which together make up the so-called documentation. As I have said, no substantive discussion took place at the high-level meeting. All that happened in the 3-4 days was that Mr. Denktash was refusing to discuss and I was trying to convince him that discussion had to take place. As I pointed out to some of my interlocutors, the whole

problem at the high-level meeting was not an attempt to cheat each other, but clearly a question of disagreement. Mr. Denktash insisted that the documentation should be signed as it stood, while I took the position that a constructive dialogue should be carried out".

10. Asked what guarantees he would ask for in order to take part in a new high-level meeting or whether he would go to such a meeting if he was simply invited by the Secretary-General, President Kyprianou said: "To be absolutely honest, if the Secretary-General invites me to a new high-level meeting, I shall participate. I believe, however, that it would not be right for the Secretary-General to do so. The Secretary-General should first make sure that there will be a really constructive dialogue at the meeting that will take place. There should be a constructive dialogue, so that what happened at the latest meeting may not be repeated. And as I understand, this is his intention, that is to make sure that the meeting will be 'productive'".

11. Finally, asked whether he pointed out to Mr. Denktash that paragraph of his own document in which he himself supports that the most serious question of troops should be referred to an agreement at the high-level meeting and what Mr. Denktash's reaction was and, if this was so, should not this by itself have put an end to the controversy, the President of the Republic said: "As I told you earlier, I put forward our arguments on all issues and I used the necessary examples regarding this matter to prove that negotiations should be carried out. I should like to observe that as these two documents, besides the agenda or the preliminary draft agreement, are called non-papers, they are not presented as documents coming from Mr. Denktash or anyone else. Therefore, it could not be said "this document is yours". It was a non-paper containing Mr. Denktash's views. In any case, besides the other provisions mentioned in the agenda he had this in mind too. The whole concept, the whole formulation of the documents and the whole meaning of everything that took place previously was that the high-level meeting was intended for negotiations.

It is reasonable and natural that we should concern ourselves with our arguments in support of our position for negotiation. Let me in my turn, put a question, to which of course I do not expect you to reply. My question is since the Turkish side wants a solution to the Cyprus problem, why did it not accept a constructive dialogue on the basis of these documents? Was what we asked, which in any case was justified by the facts, documents, previous consultations, so unreasonable? Let us assume that Denktash did not understand things correctly, that there was a misunderstanding in his consultations with the Secretary-General. Was it unreasonable for us to propose to him a constructive dialogue on all issues included in the said document, or at least at a first stage, on the serious matters, the four points, as proposed by me and even to go ahead with the setting up of working committees? Honestly I do not think this was an irrational thing. to propose in such a serious matter. When one has to handle the future of a country, the future of a people, is it objectionable to want free and constructive negotiations? For the other side wanted to sign certain points, as they stood, which some called "draft agreement", others "agenda" and others "preliminary" but no one can call it "agreement". "