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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

20 November 1990

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OZAL

The Prime Minister had a meeting with President Ozal of Turkey this morning, in the margins of the CSCE Summit. The President was accompanied by the Turkish Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and several other what the Prime Minister subsequently described as 'not very young Turks'. The conversation was largely a re-run of their meeting in New York at the end of September.

The Gulf

The Prime Minister and President Ozal agreed early on that their views on the Gulf were still similar. President Ozal said that he had toured several countries in the Middle East, including Iran. The general opinion among Arabs and Moslems was that a war would be short and sharp. Europeans, on the other hand, expected a long war with many casualties. He accepted that the United States was right to want to minimise casualties. But he was certain that a conflict would not be another Vietnam. The Prime Minister agreed that the situation was quite different. But ground forces would undoubtedly be needed and we would be sending some more. It was not right to leave it all to the United States.

President Ozal said he thought that military defeat for Iraq would be followed by a period of chaos and a probable Kurdish uprising. Turkey was getting quite a lot of deserters from the Iraqi army, some 200 to date. They claimed that the Iraqi army was fed up after eight years of war and in mortal fear of sophisticated American weapons. They expected the Iraqi army to break and run in the event of a conflict. The Prime Minister commented that Iraqi forces in Kuwait were well dug in. President Ozal said they were sitting ducks for American air power.

President Ozal continued that there were some signs that sanctions were having an effect, particularly in the industrial and military sectors. He had found the Iranians pleased with the turn of events, which they depicted as two demons - the US and Iraq - fighting each other. They expected Saddam Hussain to be destroyed. The Prime Minister said it was clear that she and President Ozal both expected the military option to be necessary. President Ozal commented that, if a peaceful solution was to have any prospect, we must be prepared to go to war. But in practice

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he saw very little prospect for a peaceful outcome. The constant stream of foreign dignitaries to Baghdad only confused Saddam Hussain about the West's intentions.

Assistance to Turkey

The Prime Minister asked whether the promised financial assistance to Turkey was now being disbursed. President Ozal said that Turkey had received some money from Kuwait and had recently signed an agreement with Japan. He was not quite sure where matters stood with Germany. The Saudis were providing help in the form of oil. The Prime Minister said that sadly the question of an increase in textile quotas was blocked within the EC. And Greece continued to hold up implementation of the 4th Financial Protocol. President Ozal said that 600M ecu had been a substantial amount when the 4th Financial Protocol had originally been agreed, but was now mainly of symbolic value. He took the view that Greek objections could easily be overcome if the four big EC member states insisted.

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The meeting had to end at this point.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence) and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

(C. D. POWELL)

J. S. Wall, Esq., L.V.O.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.