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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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John

400th Anniversary of Anglo-Turkish
Diplomatic Relations


/ I enclose a background note for the Prime Minister's use in preparation for her attendance at the Turkish Ambassador's reception on 4 May.

John
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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TURKISH AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION: WEDNESDAY 4 MAY

BACKGROUND NOTE

The Reception

1. Mr Gumrukcuoglu (pronounced GOOM-RUEK-CHU-OLU) and his wife are hosting this reception to mark 400 years of Anglo-Turkish diplomatic relations. The first English Ambassador to Turkey, William Harborne, presented his credentials at the Sublime Porte on 4 May 1583.

Professor Ozdas

2. Professor Ozdas (pronounced URZ-DASH), Minister of State (equivalent of Deputy Prime Minister in Government hierarchy) is attending the celebrations with his wife. His responsibilities are the environment, science and nuclear power. He will have called on Ministers at the Department of the Environment (the Rt Hon Tom King MP) and at the Department of Education and Science (Mr William Shelton MP). Lord Belstead is hosting a lunch for Professor Ozdas on 6 May. The latter's programme also includes calls on the British Council and the Royal Society and a seminar at the School of Oriental and African Studies on the history of Anglo-Turkish relations.

Bilateral Relations

3. The Turks regard Britain as their best friend in Europe because of our sympathetic understanding of the Turkish regime's efforts to restore law and order and democracy. The military intervened in a bloodless coup in September 1980. General Evren became President for seven years in a national referendum on a new constitution in November 1982. Elections are due in November this year.

4. Trade figures are improving in parallel with Turkey's impressive economic recovery. In 1982 UK exports were £218m (f.o.b) and imports £208m (c.i.f). ECGD restored limited short-term cover in March. Community action to limit Turkish textile imports is the only bilateral trade problem. The UK has supplied

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£15m bilateral aid annually since 1979. This year's aid agreement for £15m project aid (likely to be used on a lignite mining project) is due to be signed in Ankara on 3 May.

Mr Denktash

5. Mr Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, who is in London on a private visit, will be at the reception. We do not recognise the 'Turkish Federated State of Cyprus' of which he is the self-styled 'President'. But we have informal dealings with him as the Turkish Cypriot leader and it would not imply recognition of the 'TFSC' if the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State spoke to him in this capacity.

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