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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 July, 1985

Mr. [unclear]
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Dear Charles,

Turkey

In his letter of 17 June about the Bosphorus Bridge Peter Ricketts promised advice on Mr Ozal's invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Turkey. You will also recall our previous correspondence resting with my letter of 11 March when it was the Foreign Secretary's view that the Prime Minister should not visit Turkey for the time being. Meanwhile Kohl, Tindemans and Andreotti have paid or are about to pay visits to Ankara whilst Ozal has been well received in Washington, Tokyo and Bonn.

Sir Geoffrey Howe is anxious that we should not lose ground to others in Turkey by appearing unwilling to develop our contacts following his own visit to Ankara in February. Nevertheless, there are two factors, apart from diary considerations, which lead him to conclude that the Prime Minister should not at this stage commit herself irrevocably to a visit to Turkey. Firstly the Turks have just promulgated a law giving additional significant powers to the police which have been widely seen as a retrograde step on the otherwise steady progress towards greater respect for Human Rights. An early announcement of a visit by the Prime Minister could give rise to domestic criticism which might undermine part of the purpose of such a visit. A further argument is that at present we seem unlikely to be able to provide the scale of export credit finance Turkey seeks and for which the Turks would certainly press if the Prime Minister were to go to Ankara.

The Foreign Secretary believes however that in responding to Ozal's invitation we should avoid any suggestion of rejection. If the Prime Minister agrees, our Ambassador in Ankara would be instructed to convey to Mr Ozal personally the Prime Minister's thanks for the invitation and say that she very much hopes to be able to visit at some time, although it is not now possible to say when. For our own planning purposes, Sir Geoffrey Howe suggests that we should think in terms of a possible visit by the Prime Minister late next year.

Sir Mark Russell had earlier welcomed the suggestion in my letter of 11 March that Ozal might initially be invited by Chatham House allowing us to

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build a programme of calls round such an invitation. He now agrees with our view that given the level of Ozal's reception elsewhere such an arrangement would be inappropriate. Unless Ozal was genuinely stopping over in London, eg en route to UNGA, when Chatham House could be used, we believe he should be invited to pay an official visit. As regards timing the Foreign Secretary is inclined to favour the period October to December of this year with the invitation being launched in the early autumn if we are satisfied that concern about the Human Rights issue has receded adequately.

I should be grateful if you would let me know if the Prime Minister is content for us to proceed on this basis.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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