



MO 6/12

N.B.P.R.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

A.P.C. 24/10.

RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE
AND THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER, MR TURKMEN,
HELD IN THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTRY
AT 0915 HOURS ON 18TH OCTOBER 1983

Present:

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for Defence

Mr İlter Turkmen

His Excellency Mr R M Russell CMG
HM Ambassador, Ankara

Brigadier General M Okçu

Mr J N H Blelloch
DUS(P)

Mr N H R Evans
APS/Secretary of State

1. After an initial exchange of pleasantries the Secretary of State raised the question of a possible declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriots. Mr Turkmen said that he was somewhat surprised to hear of Britain's attitude. A Turkish Federated Cypriot State existed at present and UDI would not be a tragedy. The Turkish government was trying to persuade Mr Denktash to exercise restraint because of the emotional reaction which would follow a declaration. But a declaration would not change the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and the fact remained that the Turkish Cypriots had the right to self determination. Naturally his government would like to see a peaceful partnership between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus and they supported the Secretary General's initiative. But they could only seek to persuade Mr Denktash, not to control him. The use of force was out of the question and his stand would be supported by Turkish public opinion. The Greeks had not been able to control Mr Makarios in 1974.



2. The Secretary of State said that Britain was involved as a guarantor power and viewed the deteriorating situation with concern. The inter-communal talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots were the only way forward and they should proceed on the basis of the UN initiative. Our concern was at the political level. A Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence was unnecessary and provocative. The Greeks would certainly take offence and the prospect of a successful settlement would have been jeopardised. The Turks would be placed on the wrong foot.
3. Mr Turkmen said that he believed that a row in the UN could be avoided. He understood Britain's position as a guarantor power. But it was necessary to go back to 1974. Then, faced with a Greek takeover, the Turkish Prime Minister had flown to London to invoke British assistance as a guarantor power, but nothing had resulted. The recent actions of Mr Papandreu in NATO meant that it was the Greeks who were on the wrong foot. His government would continue to urge Mr Denktash to tone down his statements and actions but, realistically, there was nothing they could do to restrain him. Mr Papandreu's efforts to push the Greek Cypriots to break off the talks and to try to get an international solution had been a major cause of the present situation. We could not ignore the fact that there were two nations in Cyprus.
4. Turning to the Middle East Mr Turkmen asked whether it was true that Britain had two aircraft carriers in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Secretary of State said that, coincidentally, HMS HERMES had a planned exercise in the area and HMS INVINCIBLE had been on passage through the Eastern Mediterranean on her way to the Far East. Mr Turkmen said that so far as he could see there was no change in the underlying position in the Iran/Iraq conflict. In particular the Iranian attitude had not changed. He had asked the Iranian Prime Minister about the possibility of her oil supplies being cut off as a result of the Gulf conflict. The Prime Minister had replied that Iran had been without oil for 1500 years. Mr Palme had made efforts to bring the two sides together but had failed. Iraq would suffer more damage from an attrition war. In this connection he believed that it would be difficult for the Iraqis to use EXOCET near the Kharg Island terminal. The Secretary of State and DUS(P) confirmed that EXOCET was a sea-skimming missile which was generally less effective close to the land. It could have a deterrent effect although it was possible that the Iranians might get around the threat to international tankers by using their own ships to shuttle oil down the Gulf to tankers moored off the Straits of Hormuz. In answer to a question about arms sales, the Secretary of State said that British policy was not to supply weapons to combatants. Mr Turkmen commented that the French were not so scrupulous. The Secretary of State said that the industrial pressures for such sales were considerable and should not be underestimated.



5. The meeting ended at 0945 hours.

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Ministry of Defence

20th October 1983

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