



ate *SM*
cc Mike Home
Sir P. Coadock

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 January 1986

VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY

I see from Ankara Telegram No. 003 that a leading Turkish television journalist has requested an interview with the Prime Minister before Mr Ozal's visit to Britain. It would be helpful to know as soon as possible whether you will be recommending this request so that we can try to find diary space for it.

C D POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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TURKISH TV REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY

1. MEHMET ALI BIRAND, TURKEY'S LEADING FOREIGN AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT WILL BE REQUESTING A TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER BEFORE MR OZAL'S VISIT TO BRITAIN. I RECOMMEND THAT IF POSSIBLE THIS BE GRANTED. IT PROVIDES A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR BRITISH VIEWS TO BE PUT ACROSS TO THE TURKISH GENERAL PUBLIC. THE PRIME MINISTER IS HELD IN HIGH REGARD HERE.

DETAIL

2. BIRAND WRITES AND PRESENTS A MONTHLY TV FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROGRAMME CALLED 'THE 32ND DAY' FOR TURKEY'S MONOPOLY TV CHANNEL, TRT. BASED NORMALLY IN BURSSELS, HE ALSO WRITES A DAILY COLUMN FOR THE NEWSPAPER MILLIYET, WHICH CONCENTRATES ON TURKISH RELATIONS WITH EUROPE AND NATO. BIRAND IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS TURKEY'S BEST FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT. HE IS OBJECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE. THE 32ND DAY PROGRAMME IS OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD IN TURKISH TERMS AND ON A PAR WITH EUROPEAN CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES.

3. BIRAND'S IDEA IS TO SCREEN ABOUT 30 MINUTES OF AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS THATCHER ON TRT ON TUESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY AS A CURTAIN RAISER TO PRIME MINISTER OZAL'S VISIT TO LONDON. HE PLANS TO ASK QUESTIONS ON GENERAL INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS TURKISH RELATIONS WITH EUROPE AND ANGLO/TURKISH RELATIONS. HE WOULD, NO DOUBT, BE PREPARED TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE. HE WOULD ALSO WISH TO USE EXTRACTS OF THE INTERVIEW FOR HIS DAILY COLUMN IN MILLIYET.

4. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRESS SPOKESMAN HAS ADDED OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR BIRAND'S REQUEST.

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5. OZAL'S VISIT TO THE UK WILL ATTRACT ENORMOUS PUBLIC INTEREST HERE AS THE FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT BY A TURKISH PRIME MINISTER TO A LEADING EUROPEAN COUNTRY SINCE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THE INTERVIEW ON TRT WOULD ENSURE THAT THE UK GETS ITS FULL SHARE OF THE PUBLICITY BENEFIT. THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE SEEN BY UP TO 30 MILLION VIEWERS (TRT'S AVERAGE EVENING AUDIENCE).

6. BIRAND HIMSELF IS AN EXPERIENCED INTERVIEWER WITH A SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH. WHEN HE RECENTLY INTERVIEWED LORD CARRINGTON FOR HIS PROGRAMME, THE RESULT WAS DUBBED FAITHFULLY INTO TURKISH AND WAS A SUCCESS IN ALL RESPECTS.

7. BIRAND'S OFFICIAL REQUEST CAN BE EXPECTED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

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NEWS D

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR SAMUEL

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