

FROM:

THE RT. HON. LORD HAILSHAM OF ST. MARYLEBONE, C.H., F.R.S., D.C.L.

Handwritten initials and a circled number '2'.



HOUSE OF LORDS,
LONDON SW1A 0PW

Prime Minister

23 June 1986

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The Right Honourable
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

A classicist's view!

EDP
23/6

Dear Margaret:

Greece and European Community/Turkey Association

As you know I have just returned from a visit to Greece to celebrate on behalf of the United Kingdom the Centenary of the British School in Athens.

While in Athens I took the opportunity to meet the President of the Parliament and the President of the Republic. I enclose our Ambassador's note of the meeting with Sartzetakis.

In the light of the approaching meetings with the Turks about their relations with the Common Market, I think by way of sounding a note of caution that I should make you aware of the extent of the suspicions of Turkey amongst senior Greek figures and their real apprehensions about Turkey's future intentions towards them. Turkey is a nation of 50 million with a long history of oppressing the Greeks (who number less than 10 million) and of acts of aggression toward them. I hold absolutely no brief whatsoever for PASOK but from what I observed there is no doubt that on the Turkish issue Alevras and Sartzetakis speak for the considerable majority of all Greek people. I really do feel that overtures towards Turkey from the West from within and without the Community, unless sensitively handled, may run the risk of alienating Greece and her people from the institutions of the West.

Of course there is a balance to be struck. Militarily at least Turkey is a potential asset to the West but the balance must be struck with an eye to the size of the stakes. To alienate the Greek nation, which, with all its faults, is unequivocally on the side of the West could be a dangerously high price to pay.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Howe.

Yrs:

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FM ATHENS
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELNO 286
OF 210700Z JUNE 86
INFO ROUTINE UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO, ANKARA

LORD HAILSHAM'S VISIT TO ATHENS : 20 JUNE

1. THE LORD CHANCELLOR, ACCOMPANIED BY LADY HAILSHAM, VISITED ATHENS ON 20 JUNE TO REPRESENT HMG AT THE COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS. HIS SPEECH, DELIVERED IN A MIXTURE OF ENGLISH, CLASSICAL AND MODERN GREEK, WAS A REMARKABLE 'TOUR DE FORCE' (UNDERLINED), AND A TRIBUTE TO HELLENISM WHICH BROUGHT TEARS TO THE EYES OF THE AUDIENCE, INCLUDING MELINA MERCOURI.
2. AFTER VISITING THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S OFFICE AND MEETING THE STAFF, LORD HAILSHAM PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THE SPEAKER OF THE GREEK PARLIAMENT AND UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO DEVELOPING THE PARLIAMENTARY CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE THEN CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC. THE TALK LASTED ONE AND A QUARTER HOURS. I HAD WARNED LORD HAILSHAM THAT SARTZETAKIS WOULD PROBABLY PLAY HIS ANTI-TURKISH GRAMOPHONE RECORD. HE DID. BUT IT WAS NOT JUST THAT. SARTZETAKIS, NUDGED BY LORD HAILSHAM, SPOKE MORE REFLECTIVELY ABOUT GREECE'S PREDICAMENT WITH TURKEY. THEY WANTED A RECOGNITION OF THE PRESENT FRONTIERS. BUT THEY WERE BEING BOMBARDED BY EXAMPLES OF TURKISH HOSTILITY. THEIR TROOPS REMAINED IN CYPRUS. GREECE FELT PART OF WESTERN EUROPE. SHE HAD A TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP WITH BRITAIN, WITH WHOM SHE HAD FOUGHT IN TWO WORLD WARS. THE TURKS HAD REMAINED NEUTRAL, SCHEMING WITH THE GERMANS AT THE EXPENSE OF GREEK SOVEREIGNTY. GREECE COULD NOT ACCEPT COMMUNISM AND, WITH WESTERN HELP, HAD DEFEATED THE COMMUNIST ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER AFTER THE LAST WAR. SHE HAD FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THE UN IN KOREA. SHE TOOK IT HARD THAT SOME OF HER WESTERN PARTNERS QUESTIONED HER ATTACHMENT TO THE WESTERN DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE. HE AGREED WITH LORD HAILSHAM THAT WESTERN EUROPE NEEDED TO WORK TOGETHER TO PERSUADE THE UNITED STATES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ITS DEFENSIVE SHIELD OVER EUROPE. BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL GREECE'S PARTNERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW DEEPLY GREECE DISTRUSTED TURKISH INTENTIONS. THE FAILURE OF BRITAIN TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE FOR CYPRUS IN 1974 HAD LEFT A SCAR. HE WELCOMED THE EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE TO DEVELOP A CLOSER AND MODERN PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND GREECE. HE AGREED WITH LORD HAILSHAM THAT GREECE HAD TO PLAY ITS PROPER PART INSIDE NATO IN PROMOTING A BETTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. BUT HE APPEALED TO BRITAIN AND GREECE'S OTHER EUROPEAN PARTNERS TO HELP SAFEGUARD GREEK TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AGAINST THE TURKISH THREAT. GREECE HAD FOR CENTURIES REPRESENTED THE EASTERN FRONTIER OF EUROPE. SHE WAS PREPARED TO DEFEND THAT FRONTIER. BUT SHE NEEDED UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FROM HER EUROPEAN FRIENDS IF SHE WAS TO PLAY HER EUROPEAN ROLE PROPERLY. LORD HAILSHAM UNDERTOOK TO REPORT TO HIS COLLEAGUES WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID.

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3. SARTZETAKIS WAS OBVIOUSLY DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE LORD HAILSHAM AND, WHEN HE REALISED THAT HIS VISITOR KNEW AS MUCH (IF NOT MORE) ABOUT GREEK HISTORY AS HE DID, THE PRESIDENT UNBENT. HE HAS A FIXATION ABOUT TURKEY. BUT SO DO ALMOST ALL HIS COUNTRYMEN. AS A LAWYER, HE REGARDS IT AS UNJUST THAT THE TURKS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR TROOPS ON CYPRUS AND TO THREATEN GREEK SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AS DEFINED BY THE TREATY. IN HIS APPEAL FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF GREECE'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS, HE MAY HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATING WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOU WILL HEAR FROM PAPANDREOU AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AT THE HAGUE.

4. SARTZETAKIS IS SOMETHING OF AN UNGUIDED MISSILE. BUT I THINK WE WOULD BE WISE NOT JUST TO DISMISS WHAT HE SAID OUT OF HAND. A NUMBER OF THOUGHTFUL GREEKS TO WHOM I HAVE SPOKEN IN THE PAST FEW DAYS (AND THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR HIMSELF) ARE SERIOUSLY WORRIED AT THE PROSPECT OF AN APPARENTLY ENDLESS DECLINE IN GRECO-TURKISH RELATIONS, GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE. IF THEY ARE PARANOID ON THE SUBJECT, HISTORY GIVES THEM SOME CAUSE TO BE. IF WE TELL THEM TO START A DIALOGUE, THEY REPLY THAT ALL THEY WANT IS TO SECURE THE RECOGNITION OF THEIR EXISTING FRONTIERS, THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS FROM CYPRUS AND AN END TO TURKISH DISCRIMINATION. THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THEIR PARTNERS WILL NOT RECOGNISE THE LEGITIMACY OF THEIR CONCERNS.

5. WHAT SARTZETAKIS SAID TO LORD HAILSHAM UNDERLINES HOW IMPORTANT IT WILL BE TO HANDLE THE EC/TURKISH ASSOCIATION QUESTION CAREFULLY, IF WE ARE NOT TO RISK A SERIOUS GREEK BACKLASH, DAMAGING TO GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND THE WESTERN ALLIANCE, AND TO OUR OWN BILATERAL INTERESTS.

PLEASE PASS COPIES TO PS/LORD CHANCELLOR AND PS/SECRETARY OF STATE.

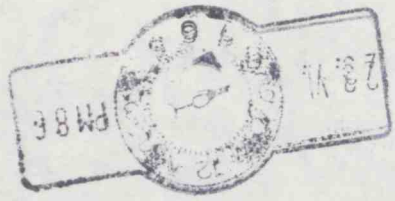
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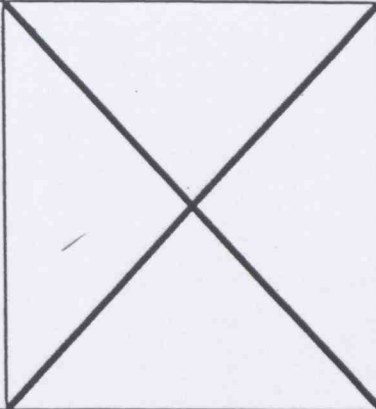
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