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London SW1A 2AH

14 April 1988

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Dear Charles,

Cyprus: Possible Messages to President Vassiliou
and Mr Papandreou

// The Foreign Secretary would see advantage in personal messages from the Prime Minister to President Vassiliou, to brief him on her talks with Mr Ozal, and to Mr Papandreou, to give him her assessment of the prospects for forward movement over Cyprus. The aim would be to encourage them to maintain a flexible approach to the search for a solution to the problem; and to register our continuing interest, without committing ourselves to any action. I attach draft texts for the Prime Minister's consideration. The draft message to Mr Papandreou refers to an oral message from him which was passed to us before the Prime Minister's visit to Turkey. I am afraid that because of an oversight the telegram concerned was not copied to you at the time, though account was taken of it in the briefing for the visit. I now enclose a copy.

The Foreign Secretary believes that personal messages would be particularly valuable given the personal rapport which the Prime Minister has already achieved with President Vassiliou and the need to reassure Mr Papandreou that we are not ignoring him in our contacts over Cyprus. An alternative would be to ask Mr Wilberforce in Nicosia and Sir J Thomas in Athens (who would deliver any written personal messages) to give an oral account of the Prime Minister's thinking to the two leaders. I should be grateful to learn how the Prime Minister wishes to proceed.

Yours ever,
L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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DRAFT MESSAGE TO MR PAPANDEOU

As you may know, I visited Turkey last week as the guest of Prime Minister Ozal. While I was there, I had interesting discussions with him and President Evren, covering among other things Cyprus. I also had the opportunity of meeting President Vassiliou here before my visit to Turkey. In response to your oral message, conveyed through Mr Capsis and HM Ambassador on 22 March, I felt I should give you my assessment of the prospects in the light of those talks.

The prospects appear to be a little brighter now than a few months ago. But it would be foolish to be over optimistic. I was impressed by President Vassiliou's readiness to negotiate with the Turkish Cypriot leadership; and by Mr Ozal's commitment to facilitating the search for a solution. Clearly the terms of that solution are for the two sides in Cyprus to work out

between them, and I have encouraged President Vassiliou to respond positively by agreeing to meet Mr Denktash under the United Nations Secretary-General's auspices without preconditions. That is the only way to get the necessary forward movement. But the parties directly concerned will need some outside help.

I have been encouraged by the progress you and Mr Ozal have made in Davos and Brussels in establishing a new basis for relations between Greece and Turkey. I know that you and he will be seeking to build on this when you meet again in Athens in June. I considered very carefully your proposal that I should persuade Mr Ozal of the need to fix a timetable for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from northern Cyprus, which I understand you will want to revert to in June. But frankly I do not see that such an advance commitment before the two sides on the island sit down to negotiate would be helpful. In any case, I do not believe that it is reasonable or realistic to expect the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots to accept that they should play one of their key cards before they are satisfied that the Greek Cypriots are sincerely intent on negotiating a settlement meeting the concerns of both sides - and one which will last. It would be far better to get negotiations started on a pragmatic basis, and then see what might be possible after confidence has been established.

I noted also what you said about the need for Mr Ozal to meet President Vassiliou. I accept that such a meeting is likely to be necessary in due course. But I entirely agree with Mr Ozal's view that the top priority is to get President Vassilou and Mr Denktash to begin negotiations under UN auspices as soon as possible. Once this has been achieved, all the parties concerned will want to see what other steps it might be useful to take. I see considerable merit in the idea Mr Ozal raised with me in Ankara that it might be possible to move on to a quadripartite meeting involving Greece and Turkey, as well as the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus. I do not wish to pre-judge the desirability and potential usefulness of such a meeting. But it seems to me that it might be worth considering when the time comes. And I urge you not to rule it entirely out of hand now. I should of course be most interested to learn your further thoughts on the way ahead over Cyprus.

I know that you will wish to keep the content of this message confidential between us. But I have no objection to your making it known that I had sent you a personal message to brief you on my talks with the Cypriot and Turkish leaders. I have also written to President Vassiliou to inform him of my talks with Mr Ozal in Ankara.

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DRAFT MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT VASSILIOU

I much valued the opportunity to meet you in London on 31 March. Our discussion of the Cyprus problem was most useful before my visit to Turkey last week. I know you will wish to have an account of my meeting with Mr Ozal in Ankara on 7 April.

I briefed Mr Ozal on our talks here, stressing, as you had asked me to do, your willingness to negotiate with the Turkish Cypriots and the importance you attached to the improvement in relations between Turkey and Greece as they affected Cyprus. I reaffirmed my own view that it would be a mistake for either side in Cyprus to erect road blocks in the way of a negotiated settlement by setting conditions for progress, for example, through insistence on an advance commitment to withdrawal of Turkish troops from the north and demilitarisation of the Island; that, since progress could only come about as a result of negotiations between the two communities, you

should be prepared to meet Mr Denktash; and that a meeting between you and Mr Ozal could come only after that. I said that goodwill gestures by both sides would make a resumption of negotiations easier.

Mr Ozal agreed that the first step must be a meeting between you and Mr Denktash. But he believed it might be possible to move later on to a quadripartite meeting involving Turkey and Greece as well. Mr Ozal says Turkey's role as making it easier to solve the Cyprus problem, rather than to make it harder. The Turkish Government did not want a partition of Cyprus and accepted that it should be a unified state with a federal structure. But they had to make absolutely sure that Turkish Cypriot security and Turkey's own strategic concerns were satisfied. Mr Ozal contended that the Turkish military presence in the north had played its part in keeping the peace on the Island, where there had been no bloodshed since 1974. He was worried about the consequences of a withdrawal. But Mr Ozal was determined to reach a solution to the Cyprus problem, and hoped that Mr Papandreou was too.

I found Mr Ozal's suggestion of a possible quadripartite meeting later on most interesting. I had myself wondered if he might be receptive to such an idea. I hope that none of the parties involved will take up rigid rejectionist positions in advance. I have noted press reports that the Greek Government has already rejected Mr Ozal's proposal because Mr Denktash would be present at

such a meeting. But I am urging him in a parallel message not to rule the idea out at this stage: all concerned should be ready to contemplate any steep which might bring rapid progress towards achievement of a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

I know, Mr President, that you will wish to keep the content of this message confidential. But I have no objection to any public statement from your side that I had sent you a message to brief you on my talks in Turkey.