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From the Private Secretary

15 April 1988

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO TURKEY: CYPRUS

The Prime Minister has signed much amended versions of the draft messages to Mr. Papandreou and President Vassiliou about her discussions of Cyprus during her recent visit to Turkey. I enclose the messages as signed. I should be grateful if the department could consider them carefully. If there are no objections, they may be despatched.

C. D. POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

15 April 1988

Dear Prime Minister,

In response to your oral message conveyed through Mr. Capsis on 22 March, I wanted to let you have a brief account of my visit to Turkey last week during which I had a good talk with Prime Minister Ozal about Cyprus. I have also, as you will know, met President Vassiliou.

My overall impression is that the prospects for progress on Cyprus are rather brighter now than a few months ago. It would be rash to be over-optimistic. But 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. The terms of that solution must be for the two sides in Cyprus to work out between them, and I have encouraged President Vassiliou to meet Mr. Denktash under the United Nations Secretary-General's auspices without preconditions. But the parties directly concerned will also need some outside help and the progress which you and Mr. Ozal have made in Davos and Brussels in establishing a new basis for relations between Greece and Turkey should have a very positive influence.

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. But frankly I do not believe that it is reasonable or realistic to expect the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots to give a

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commitment on this before the two sides on the island sit down to negotiate. 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 suggested both to President Vassiliou and to Mr. Ozal that the aim of such negotiations should be expressed as agreement on a unified Cyprus with a federal constitution, in which the presence of foreign troops would eventually be unnecessary.

I also noted what you said about the need for Mr. Ozal to meet President Vassiliou. I accept that such a meeting would be helpful in due course. But the first priority must be to get President Vassiliou and Mr. Denktash to begin negotiations under UN auspices as soon as possible. Once this has been achieved, I see merit in Mr. Ozal's idea of moving on to a quadripartite meeting involving Greece and Turkey, as well as the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus. It is for you to judge the potential usefulness of such a meeting. But I urge you not to rule it out.

I would prefer to keep the content of this message confidential between us, although 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. I should of course be most interested to learn your own further thoughts on the way ahead over Cyprus.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Mr. Andreas Papandreou

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. 748/88



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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 April 1988

Dear Mr. President,

Our discussion of the Cyprus problem during your visit to London was most useful. You might find it helpful to have a brief account of my meeting with Mr Ozal in Ankara on 7 April.

I told Mr Ozal about 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. He believed it might be possible to move later on to a quadripartite meeting involving Turkey and Greece as well. Mr Ozal made clear that the Turkish Government did not want a partition of Cyprus and accepted that it should be a unified state with a

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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 equally he 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 interesting. I hope that none of the parties involved will dismiss it in advance. I have noted press reports that the Greek Government has apparently rejected Mr Ozal's proposal because Mr Denktash would be present at such a meeting. But I am urging Mr Papandreou in a parallel message not to rule the idea out at this stage: all concerned should be ready to contemplate any step which might bring rapid progress towards achievement of a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would keep the content of this message confidential, although I would have no objection to your letting it be known that I have sent you a message to brief you on my talks in Turkey.

Finally, I know what a difficult task you and your Government faced last week in dealing with the particularly vicious hijacking, which as I write is still in progress. I am most grateful to you for keeping us so closely in touch and hope that such advice as we were able to give was helpful to you in confronting this appalling act of terrorism.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Papandhakis

His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou