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FM NICOSIA
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 141

OF 210800Z APRIL 88
INFO IMMEDIATE ANKARA, ATHENS, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON
INFO ROUTINE PARIS, BONN, ROME, UKREP BRUSSELS

YOUR TELNOS 80 AND 81: PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUMMARY

VASSILIOU HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE AND PROMISES A VERY EARLY REPLY. LIKELY TO SPELL OUT HIS HESITATIONS (DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF PAPANDREOU) ABOUT OZAL'S SUGGESTION OF A QUADRIPARTITE MEETING. VASSILIOU HAS GIVEN THE UN THE SIGNAL TO GO AHEAD WITH TRYING TO ARRANGE DIRECT BUSINESS-LIKE NEGOTIATIONS IN NICOSIA, ON THE KIND OF 'NO PRECONDITIONS' BASIS DISCUSSED AT NO. 10, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND WITHOUT WAITING FOR OZAL'S VISIT TO ATHENS.

DETAIL

1. I DELIVERED THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO VASSILIOU ON 20 APRIL. HE WAS HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF HER HAVING GONE TO THIS TROUBLE, AND SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEND A VERY EARLY REPLY THROUGH ME, POSSIBLY THE NEXT DAY. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD NO OPTION, AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT, BUT TO RESPOND NEGATIVELY TO OZAL'S SUGGESTION OF AN EVENTUAL QUADRIPARTITE MEETING. THE IMPLICATION WAS, HOWEVER, THAT HE DID NOT RULE OUT ALTOGETHER SOMETHING WHICH WE BOTH AGREED WAS NOT FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE ANYWAY. HIS RESERVATIONS WERE NOT ABOUT SUCH A MEETING CONFERRING RECOGNITION ON DENKTASH (WHICH IT COULD NOT DO), BUT ABOUT THE UNDESIRABILITY OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM APPEARING TO BE TREATED AS A GREEK/TURKISH PROBLEM, GIVEN THE POLITICAL REACTIONS THAT WOULD AROUSE HERE IN THE LIGHT OF PAST HISTORY (AS EVIDENCED IN THE CURRENT LIVELY DEBATE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OR OTHERWISE TO CYPRUS OF THE DAVOS PROCESS). INSOFAR AS THE PROBLEM WAS NOT ONLY AN INTERCOMMUNAL ONE, IT WAS ONE BETWEEN CYPRUS AND TURKEY, AND IF IT COULD NOT BE HANDLED IN THOSE BILATERAL FRAMEWORKS, IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UN AND RELEGATED TO THE STATUS OF A BILATERAL GREEK/TURKISH DISPUTE WHICH EVERYONE ELSE COULD IGNORE.

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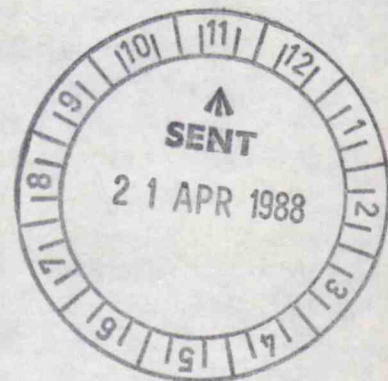
2. IT WAS EVIDENT FROM WHAT FOLLOWED THAT VASSILIOU HAD TAKEN ON BOARD THE POINTS WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE TO HIM ON 31 MARCH. WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD BE IN LONDON FOR CONSULTATIONS NEXT WEEK, AND WOULD LIKE AN UPDATE ON HIS APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS, HE AT ONCE VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD TOLD FEISSEL (OF THE UN SECRETARIAT) ON 19 APRIL THAT HE WISHED THE UN TO START ARRANGING FOR DIRECT FACE-TO-FACE NEGOTIATIONS IN NICOSIA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT HE WANTED TO GET SOMETHING GOING BEFORE OZAL'S VISIT TO ATHENS IN JUNE, INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR THAT. HE EXPECTED THAT FEISSEL WOULD FIRST HAVE TO REPORT BACK PERSONALLY TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN NEW YORK BEFORE THE UN COULD GET GOING.

3. VASSILIOU SEEMED TO BE CONTEMPLATING SIMULTANEOUS DISCUSSION OF THE FOUR OR FIVE MAIN GROUPS OF ISSUES, ALONG THE LINES DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. AT FIRST HE ARGUED THAT PEREZ DE CUELLAR WOULD HAVE TO WITHDRAW THE MARCH 1986 DRAFT FRAMEWORK AS AN ELEMENT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. WHEN I ARGUED THAT HE COULD HARDLY DO THAT, VASSILIOU ACCEPTED THAT SOME FORMULA MIGHT BE FOUND BY THE UN FOR SIMPLY SETTING ASIDE THE MARCH 1986 DRAFT, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.

4. VASSILIOU CONFIDED IN ME THAT, BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF GETTING THE PARTY LEADERS TO AGREE ON ANYTHING POSITIVE (EG. THE PROPOSED SET OF GOODWILL MEASURES) IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, HE HAD DECIDED TO MANOEUVRE ROUND THEM BY MAKING PRIVATE SUGGESTIONS HIMSELF TO THE UN ON WHICH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE THEIR MINDS WHEN THEY WERE PLAYED BACK TO HIM OFFICIALLY AS UN SUGGESTIONS. HANDLING THINGS IN THIS WAY IS GOING TO REQUIRE MUCH DISCRETION ON THE PART OF THE UN BOTH HERE AND IN NEW YORK.

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