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FCO TELNO 330: CYPRUS: OZAL'S REPLY TO PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUMMARY

1. VASSILIOU INTRIGUED BUT NOT OUTRAGED BY OZAL'S REPLY. DETECTS SOME SIGNS OF HOPE. BUT DOUBTS ABOUT DENKTASH'S REAL INTENTIONS REMAIN.

DETAIL

2. I TOOK ACTION WITH VASSILIOU ON 20 DECEMBER . VASSILIOU FIRST TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON HIS MEETING WITH DENKTASH THE PREVIOUS DAY. THE ATMOSPHERE HAD BEEN FROSTY AT THE OUTSET, DENKTASH MAKING PLAY WITH THE RECENT SHOOTING OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT SOLDIER IN THE UNBZ. BUT SOME USEFUL EXCHANGES ENSUED AND BY THE END REASONABLE TERMS HAD BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED. I DETECTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S ACCOUNT NO SIGN THAT HE STILL BELIEVED THE RUBICON HAD BEEN CROSSED (MY TELNO 540) (SEE BELOW).

3. WE THEN WENT OVER OZAL'S LETTER IN DETAIL, THE PRESIDENT TAKING NOTES. HE WAS GRATEFUL TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONFIDENCE AND GLAD SHE HAD WRITTEN IN THE FIRST PLACE. HE THOUGHT OZAL'S REPLY CLEVERLY DRAFTED AND SAW IN IT SOME SIGNS OF HOPE. FOR INSTANCE, OZAL'S LEADING OFF WITH THE CONSTITUTION (SOMETHING ON WHICH DENKTASH HAD MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS UNTIL THE NEW YORK MEETING) SUGGESTED THAT ANKARA REALISED THE BAD EFFECT OF DENKTASH'S BAD HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE (EG ON THE THREE FREEDOMS) AND NOW WISHED TO SWITCH THE FOCUS. VASSILIOU LOOKED FORWARD TO TACKLING THIS QUESTION, WHICH HE HAD NEVER EVADED, IN THE NEXT ROUND.

4. APART FROM THE CHARGE OF 'EVASION', VASSILIOU FOUND OTHER PASSAGES TENDENTIOUS AND MISLEADING. FOR INSTANCE, THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SURELY NOT ENDORSED DENKTASH'S CONCEPT

OF "REGULATING" THE THREE FREEDOMS. I QUOTED FROM THE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF HER LETTER, WHICH STRONGLY CALLS IN QUESTION DENKTASH'S CONCEPT OF AN 18-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, WHICH (IN HIS PROPOSALS) WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A FURTHER PERIOD OF REGULATION. I SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD CERTAINLY NOT ENDORSED THE SORT OF REGULATION WITH AN EYE TO ETHNIC APARTHEID WHICH DENKTASH HAD ADVANCED IN THE DIALOGUE.

5. OZAL WAS ALSO WRONG TO TAX HIM WITH CALLING FOR "IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL" IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THREE FREEDOMS. HE HAD FROM THE OUTSET SET OUT TO EXAMINE THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY WHICH MAKARIOS AND DENKTASH HAD IDENTIFIED AS A PROBLEM IN 1977. THIS MEANT THAT SOME REGULATION ON A PRACTICAL BASIS WOULD BE NECESSARY. BUT DENKTASH HAD HITHERTO REFUSED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE THIS WAY JUST AS HE HAD SHIRKED THE QUESTION OF A TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENT. THE THEMES WERE OF COURSE LINKED. THEY TOO WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEXT PHASE: HE ADDED OMINOUSLY, "IF THERE IS A NEGOTIATION".

6. VASSILIOU FIRST LAUGHED AT THE SUGGESTION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD RECEIVE DENKTASH. BUT HE ADDED IF DENKTASH DID NOT CALL HIMSELF THE "PRESIDENT" OF HIS SO-CALLED REPUBLIC, VASSILIOU WOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED SUCH A MEETING: HE WOULD LIKE MRS THATCHER TO KNOW THE NATURE OF THE BEAST.

7. VASSILIOU ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS MEANT BY POLITICAL EQUALITY (PARAGRAPH 2 OF OZAL'S LETTER). I SAID I THOUGHT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A GUARANTEE OF EQUAL POLITICAL STATUS WITH THE GREEK CYPRIOTS, EQUAL RIGHTS BEFORE THE LAW, ENJOYING THE BASIC RIGHTS ENTRENCHED IN THE 1960 TREATY, WITH THE ASSURANCE OF PROTECTION AGAINST THREATS TO THEIR SECURITY AND THE ENJOYMENT OF POLITICAL AUTONOMY. VASSILIOU COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN READY TO CONCEDE ALL THESE "YESTERDAY", GIVEN THE CHANCE. HE DREW AN ANALOGY WITH ASSEMBLIES FOR SCOTLAND OR WALES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT DENKTASH WAS REALLY DEMANDING BINARY FISSION, WITH ETHNIC SEPARATION AND CONTROL OF THE WORKINGS OF A CONSTITUTION WHICH PROVIDED FOR ONLY THE LIGHTEST FEDERAL AUTHORITY. HE COULD NOT ALLOW THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE TO BE SO WEAKENED.

8. I ASKED HOW THE PRESIDENT PLANNED TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF PROPERTY. THIS WAS SURELY NOT A TAIL THAT SHOULD BE ALLOWED

TO WAG THE DOG. IT SEEMED TO BE DETERMINING THE NATURE OF A FUTURE FEDERATION. IT WAS SURELY AMENABLE TO PRACTICAL SOLUTION WITHOUT SUCH AN INFLATED ROLE. VASSILIOU ADMITTED THAT UNDER THE KIND OF BICOMMUNAL REPUBLIC HE ENVISAGED (HE AVOIDED THE WORD BI-ZONAL THROUGHOUT), SOME CEILING COULD BE FIXED (HE MENTIONED 30 PER CENT) FOR THE GREEK CYPRIOT POPULATION OF NORTHERN CYPRUS TO ALLAY TURKISH CYPRIOT FEARS OF BEING SWAMPED. THIS COULD NOT BE ADVANCED FOR THE MOMENT. IF DENKTASH WAS NOW READY TO MODIFY THE CONSTRAINTS ADVANCED IN HIS FIRST PAPER, AGREEMENT ON THIS ISSUE WAS POSSIBLE. BUT HIS DOUBTS ABOUT DENKTASH'S REAL INTENTIONS REMAINED.

9. BY CONTRAST HE INDICATED THAT HE COULD COPE EASILY WITH ANY TROUBLE FROM KYPRIANOU AND LYSSARIDES (OPPONENTS OF THE TALKS) AT HIS POLICY MEETING ON 28-30 DECEMBER. EDUCATION WOULD BE AN UP-HILL JOB.

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