

SUBJECT
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file No
c: Giray
ce for PC

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LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

5 March 1990

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE TURKISH DEFENCE MINISTER

The Prime Minister had a talk this afternoon with the Turkish Defence Minister. Mr. Giray was accompanied by the Turkish Ambassador and by a member of his staff.

The Prime Minister welcomed Mr. Giray and enquired after President Ozal. Mr. Giray said that he brought respects from the President, and also from the Turkish Prime Minister. There was great admiration in Turkey for the Prime Minister's policies. Britain was seen as closest of all the NATO allies to Turkey. The Prime Minister said that she was much looking forward to her visit to Gallipoli. Mr. Giray said that the President was hoping to have a meeting with the Prime Minister while she was there.

The Prime Minister continued that developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had far-reaching implications for NATO. We were entering a period of great uncertainty in which it would be extremely important to maintain NATO and strong defences. Mr. Giray agreed. It would not be easy to establish democracy and a market system in Eastern Europe. Changing attitudes would take time. There was also the danger of fragmentation leading to the emergence of large numbers of small, independent nations round Turkey's borders. The Turkish Government had been somewhat alarmed by the heavy-handed way in which the Soviet authorities had dealt with the problems in Azerbaijan. They would need to show greater sensitivity in their dealings with Eastern Europe. He wondered how the Soviet troops in East Germany would react to the elections on 18 March.

The Prime Minister explained our concern to ensure the fullest possible consultation about the consequences of German unification, particularly for NATO. We had to ensure that the United States forces and nuclear weapons remained in Germany. We must avoid a situation in which NATO countries competed to make unilateral reductions in their forces. At the same time, the reductions being negotiated through the CFE talks would turn up a certain amount of surplus equipment. Turkey should have first choice of this.

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The Prime Minister briefly mentioned Racal's bid for the fire control system for Turkey's air defence guns. We had been very pleased to win the contract for the supply of radio sets to the Turkish Army and hoped to follow up this success. Mr. Giray said that the matter would be looked at closely.

I am copying this letter to Stephen Wall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

CHARLES POWELL

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Ministry of Defence.

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