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From the Private Secretary

15 April 1990

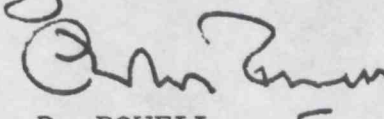
Dear Richard,

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO TURKEY

Bob Peirce wrote to me on 12 April about the arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit to Turkey. I agree that they are fairly hair-raising: but there is little we can do, except to remind ourselves that we are fortunate not to be visiting Gallipoli under the same circumstances as those who went there in 1915.

I think the Prime Minister would prefer to get away from Istanbul at the earliest possible moment. Could we not arrange a VIP room at the airport where she could wait and work on her papers, in the hope of departing by 2030?

I note your strictures about Turkish administration and planning and will make sure the Prime Minister is forewarned.

Yours sincerely,

C. D. POWELL

Richard Gozney, Esq.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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12 April 1990

Mr Charles

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Prime Minister
You should be aware of the rather gloomy prognosis on page 2.
CDP
15/4.

Prime Minister's Visit to Turkey: 24-25 April

Thank you for your letter of 10 April about a possible meeting with the leader of the Australian Liberal Party. We have asked the Embassy in Ankara to identify a possible slot, and advised that a decision may have to be taken at the last moment.

The draft programme has already to be changed in one respect. The international ceremony will now begin at 0930 rather than 1000, and will include a 15 minute account in English and Turkish of the Gallipoli Campaign. This is being done against our advice and that of the Australians, New Zealanders and French. It will extend an already over-long ceremony and touch on contentious issues. The Turks have been asked to think again, but are unlikely to do so. The earlier start will mean bringing forward the entire programme by 30 minutes, entailing a departure from the Consulate-General in Istanbul at 0715.

The Embassy have recommended that we reconsider the return arrangements. The Press cannot leave the Peninsula by bus before 1600 hours if they are to cover the Shrapnel Valley visit. The Turks have revised their estimate of travelling time to Istanbul Airport to at least four hours. Airport formalities could take a further 15 minutes. Since sunset is at 2010, and the Prime Minister's helicopter journey will need to be completed in good time before then, the plan is for her to leave the Peninsula at 1820 and arrive at Istanbul at 1930. She will, therefore, arrive at least 30 minutes before the journalists, and possibly more. Rather than waiting at the airport, she may wish to return to the Consulate-General for a pre-determined period which she could put to use (working on papers, light supper, rest). Assuming that 90 minutes would be the minimum to make this time productive, this would point to final departure from Istanbul Airport at 2200. I should be grateful for advice on this possible alternative.

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More generally, the Ambassador has warned that things are unlikely to go smoothly on 25 April. Despite our efforts to galvanize them, the Turks have yet to produce a co-ordinated and detailed plan and there is poor co-ordination between those principally involved. The Peninsula is remote, and the ceremony ambitious. The Ambassador does not consider the situation sufficiently serious to justify the Prime Minister cancelling her visit, and is encouraged by the favourable security report. But he has repeated the warning in that report that there is likely to be muddle and irritating delays: with poor speeches, protocol errors and possible bad weather for good measure.

Tomson

Bob

(R N Peirce)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

Am Tours: Turkey Nov 1971

