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OCTOBER 8, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Yesterday the House of Representatives, once again acting against the almost unanimous advice of its leadership, amended the continuing resolution granting funds for our foreign aid programs. The amendment requires an immediate cessation of all U.S. military assistance to Turkey, and is, in my view a misguided and extremely harmful measure.

Instead of encouraging the parties involved in the Cyprus dispute to return to the negotiating table, this amendment, if passed by the Senate, will mean the indefinite postponement of meaningful negotiations. Instead of strengthening America's ability to persuade the parties to resolve the dispute, it will lessen our influence on all the parties concerned. And it will imperil our relationships with our Turkish friends and weaken us in the crucial Eastern Mediterranean.

But most tragic of all, a cut-off of arms to Turkey will not help Greece or the Greek Cypriot people who have suffered so much over the course of the last several months. We recognize that we are far from a settlement consistent with Greece's honor and dignity. We are prepared to exert our efforts in that direction. But reckless acts that prevent progress toward a Cyprus settlement harm Greeks, for it is the Greek government and the Greek Cypriots who have the most to gain from a compromise settlement. And it is they who have the most to lose from continued deadlock.

Thus I call upon the Senate to accept the original conference report language on Turkish arms aid and to return the bill to the House of Representatives once again. And I ask the House of Representatives to reconsider its hasty act and, working with the Senate, pass a bill that will best serve the interests of peace.