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OCTOBER 14, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

At the beginning of my Administration I pledged to work closely and cooperatively with the Congress. I believe I have kept that promise. I have appeared before two joint sessions of the Congress, I have met frequently with the leadership of both Houses, and I have agreed to appear personally before a subcommittee of the House of Representatives -- a step no other President has undertaken in more than a century.

These actions are an earnest of my commitment to a new partnership between the legislative and executive branches of our government. They reflect my deep belief that the antagonisms that have too long divided our nation must be resolved, that hopes for partisan advantage must be put aside, and that we must get on with the business of doing the best we can for our country.

The cooperation I have received from the leadership of the Congress -- Democratic and Republican alike -- has been truly remarkable. The leaders have advised me and I have listened; I have explained my problems to them and they have responded with understanding and support. For this I am deeply grateful.

It is, therefore, with deep regret that I am returning today without my approval the recently passed Continuing Resolution, H.J. Res. 1131, granting funds for the operation of several departments and agencies and for the temporary continuation of our foreign aid programs. I take this step with great reluctance, but in the belief that I have no other choice.

The Continuing Resolution the Congress has passed and sent to me for signature contains an amendment requiring an immediate cut-off of all military assistance to Turkey. That amendment was passed despite my own public objection to it, and in the face of the unanimous opposition of the bipartisan leadership of both Houses of Congress. It is an act which is harmful even to those it purports to help.

The United States is making every effort to play a useful role in assisting the parties to a resolution of the Cyprus dispute. The Continuing Resolution as amended is entirely destructive of those efforts. Instead of encouraging the parties involved in the Cyprus dispute to return to the negotiating table, an arms cut-off to Turkey could mean the indefinite postponement of meaningful negotiations. Instead of strengthening America's ability to persuade the parties to resolve the dispute, it would lessen our influence on all the parties concerned. It would as well imperil our relationships with our Turkish ally and weaken us in the crucial Eastern Mediterranean. It directly jeopardizes the NATO alliance.

(MORE)

(OVER)

Most tragic of all, an arms cut-off would not help Greece or the Greek Cypriot people who have suffered so tragically over the past several months. We recognize that we are still far from a settlement consistent with the honor and dignity of Greece, and are prepared to exert our influence to that end. But reckless acts that prevent progress toward a Cyprus settlement harm Greece, 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.

It is for these reasons that I am vetoing the bill sent to me. I do so because, should this measure become law, it would be impossible for the United States to continue to play any meaningful role in assisting the parties to resolve the Cyprus dispute. We would inevitably be forced to withdraw from the negotiations because the Congress would have taken from us the tools we need to affect the outcome.

My choice, then, is unavoidable; my responsibility clear. I ask that the Congress reconsider its action and send to me a bill that we can all support; a bill that provides the flexibility needed to carry forward the foreign policy of the United States.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,
October 14, 1974.