

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am submitting, pursuant to Public Law 94-104, the first of a series of reports on efforts this Administration is making to help resolve the Cyprus problem. Subsequent progress reports, as required by this legislation, will be forwarded to you at sixty-day intervals.

In his speech before the U.N. General Assembly on September 25, 1975, the Secretary of State outlined the Administration's policy on the complex Cyprus problem as follows:

"The details of a Cyprus settlement are for the two communities themselves to decide. However, in keeping with U.N. resolutions which the United States has fully supported, the following principles are essential:

"A settlement must preserve the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Cyprus;

"It must insure that both the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities can live in freedom and have a large voice in their own affairs;

"The present dividing lines cannot be permanent. There must be agreed territorial arrangements which reflect the economic requirements of the Greek-Cypriot community and take account of its self-respect;

"There must be provisions for the withdrawal of foreign military forces other than those present under the authority of international agreements; and,

"There must be security for all Cypriots; the needs and wishes of the refugees who have been the principal victims and whose tragic plight touches us all must be dealt with speedily and with compassion."

These elements, which we consider essential to a settlement, are consistent with the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the people of Cyprus. Beyond that, only the Cypriot people can decide how to rebuild and preserve their sovereign, independent nation so it may again serve the interests of all its citizens.

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With this appreciation of both the opportunities and limitations of U.S. Action, I declared immediately following enactment of P.L. 94-104 on October 6 that the United States would make a major effort to encourage a resumption of the Cyprus negotiations and to facilitate progress by all the parties involved -- Greece, Turkey and Cyprus -- toward a peaceful and equitable solution. I also stated that the United States would undertake whatever role the parties themselves wanted us to play in achieving a settlement.

Immediately thereafter, we took a number of steps through diplomatic channels aimed at helping the parties find a basis for resuming the intercommunal talks under the aegis of U.N. Secretary General Waldheim. As a first step, I wrote directly to the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey to stress the importance the United States attaches to the resumption of the intercommunal Cyprus talks and to emphasize our wish that the Cyprus problem be removed as a source of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean. My letters were followed by a series of communications from Secretary Kissinger to the Foreign Ministers of Greece and Turkey and to President Makarios of Cyprus. In each of these communications, an effort was made to define the differences as we saw them between the negotiating positions of the other parties and to urge that an effort be made to narrow the gap.

The Secretary of State, during the past sixty days, also has consulted extensively with several of our major European allies who have engaged in corresponding and complementary initiatives with the Greek, Turkish and Cypriot governments. Parallel initiatives also were undertaken during this period by the European Community.

These initiatives have not produced a major breakthrough; but taken together they have advanced prospects for a negotiated settlement. A new appreciation now exists in Athens, Ankara, and Nicosia that delay in resuming the intercommunal talks will harden attitudes and make future progress more difficult. In each capital, there is a desire to begin anew an earnest search for a solution. Each party also has a realistic understanding of what it must do to make progress possible.

In Ankara, the Turkish Foreign Minister announced on October 21, shortly after the Turkish senatorial elections, that the time was opportune to search for a solution and that all aspects for a settlement could be discussed at the intercommunal talks. Turkey has also indicated that it would encourage the Turkish Cypriots to engage in meaningful negotiations within the intercommunal framework. There is also a recognition in Ankara that a discussion of their position on territory is essential once the intercommunal talks have been resumed and that troop reductions as well as steps to resolve the refugee issue are essential ingredients to any Cyprus settlement.

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Similar meaningful changes have occurred in the Greek and Greek-Cypriot negotiating positions with respect to such subjects as the organization of the future central government and the division of responsibilities and delegation of authority to the future regional administrations.

In sum, we have seen, as have our principal Western allies, a narrowing of differences on most of the key issues necessary to negotiate a Cyprus solution. The range of disagreement between the parties now seems to us surmountable. Under such circumstances, it should have been possible in November to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. However, once a date had been scheduled in New York for the Cyprus debate at the U.N. General Assembly, the parties felt compelled to await the outcome before sitting down with the U.N. Secretary General to resume actual negotiations.

Now that the United Nations has completed its consideration of the Cyprus question and passed a new resolution calling for intercommunal negotiations, efforts to schedule new talks are underway. We have consulted U.N. Secretary General Waldheim and the Governments of Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. Our common interest is to have renewed negotiations of sufficient depth and duration to allow full discussion of all key substantive issues. There is every reason to believe this kind of negotiation will begin in the very near future. To facilitate this effort, I have asked the Secretary of State to give special emphasis to the subject of Cyprus negotiations when he meets with the Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministers during the NATO Ministerial meeting in Brussels in the second week of December.

We now find ourselves at an important juncture in the search for a Cyprus settlement. The negotiating framework which has emerged finally should allow early and orderly discussion of the most serious substantive issues, including refugees which hold the key to a final settlement. We have succeeded in moving to this point in large part because, since early October, the United States has been free to resume an active, evenhanded role among all the parties. The outcome of the resumed Cyprus negotiations may depend upon our ability to maintain this role in the months ahead.

An important beginning has been made in the past sixty days toward the elusive goal of a peaceful, equitable, and enduring Cyprus solution. In the days ahead, I believe our efforts will bring results if we continue to have the support and understanding of the Congress. I intend to review with you in subsequent reports the progress that has been made in the common quest to restore peace and stability to the island of Cyprus.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

December 8, 1975.