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FILE

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cc PC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October 1985

Possible Visit to the UK by the Turkish Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 29 October proposing that the Government should extend an official invitation to the Prime Minister of Turkey to visit the United Kingdom in the first half of 1986.

The Prime Minister would be content for such an invitation to be issued in her name. But this is on the assumption that her own participation in the programme would be limited to a full session of talks and a dinner, both on the same day. Subject to your confirming that this is adequate, we could offer a choice of 18 February or 12 March.

(Charles Powell)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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12 March }

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to him at the
11 March
not
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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 October 1985

Agree that we should
invite Mr Ozal as an
official visitor? It would involve
a round of talks and a dinner.
We have identified 12 February and
Dear Charles, 12 March as possible dates. COP 30/11

Yes, no

Possible Visit to the UK by the Turkish Prime Minister

During the summer we corresponded about an invitation to the Turkish Prime Minister to Britain as an alternative to the Prime Minister visiting Turkey. In your letter of 2 July you said that the Prime Minister was not keen to invite Mr Ozal in the last quarter of this year. You said that this meant that we should look towards 1986 for such an invitation. Our reply of 4 July indicated that Sir Geoffrey Howe was content with this but recorded his view that we should not allow ourselves to be left too far behind our Western competitors and that it would therefore be wise to issue an invitation later this year.

We would now like to proceed along the lines agreed during the summer and issue an invitation to Mr Ozal soon for an official visit to this country. The arguments in favour of such a visit remain very much as set out in our letter of 1 July (copy enclosed for ease of reference). But since then the Turkish economy has continued to improve. There are several major contracts in prospect, both in the civilian and military fields, from which British industry can hope to benefit. A visit by Mr Ozal should help their chances. There is the question of Mr Ozal's invitation to the Prime Minister but we believe this could be finessed.

The complicating factor remains Turkey's human rights record. During the summer the Turks have made some progress on this, and with the further development of the democratic process. On the other hand, the prospect for an amnesty has receded. The reason for this was understandable. Ozal discovered the proposals could not benefit political prisoners. He accordingly rejected the plan and asked for a re-examination. Public perception in Western Europe may however be less understanding of the motive. We should therefore expect some opposition from those whose main concern is human rights. The Secretary of State, however, thinks that this can be managed. We would be able to say that Mr Ozal's visit provides inter alia a further opportunity to make clear to the Turkish Government at the highest level our concern over the human rights situation and our support for further progress in this and other fields. For his part Mr Ozal has shown during his visits to the US and Germany earlier this year that he can defend himself skilfully.

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It is important that if the visit goes ahead it is treated as a full official visit. Mr Ozal's reception elsewhere, eg Washington, Bonn, Tokyo, was such that he would quickly discern any suggestion of lesser treatment in Britain.

The precise timing of any visit would have to take account of other high-level visitors to the UK and to Mr Ozal's own programme. Ideally we would suggest having him here in the first half of the year, before the United Kingdom is in the Presidency of the European Community. Meanwhile, partly with Greek anxieties in mind, Sir Geoffrey Howe is considering the possibility of paying a visit to Athens himself during 1986.

I would be grateful for the Prime Minister's agreement that we should proceed along the above lines.

Your ever,
L V Appleyard
(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

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