

cepc

Mr Weston, SED

CDP
SW

Secretary of State's meeting with President of Cyprus:
New York, 7 June

The Secretary of State had a brief meeting with President Vassiliou in New York on 7 June.

President Vassiliou began by asking for his respects to be passed to the Prime Minister. He was very grateful that she had recently found time to interest herself in Cyprus questions and to write to him about it.

The Secretary of State said that he was glad that Vassiliou accepted the principle of meeting Denktash. Vassiliou said that he had never had any trouble with that as a concept. Indeed he had gone further than the Prime Minister advised him, in that she had said that a meeting needed full preparation. He was in fact having a meeting with some preparation, but by no means full preparation. He was doing this because he had concluded that Denktash really wanted to stall. He would only go into a meeting because of Turkish pressure. "Preparation" would provide endless opportunities for complicating and putting off. An attempt to prepare it fully in advance might never get there. In fact a meeting per se was more likely to produce results than informal contacts. This was a calculated risk.

The Secretary of State asked whether the meeting would be on the basis of the preliminary statement. President Vassiliou said that it would be. There would be a second, unpublished document which would constitute the agenda, but its content would be generally known. He wanted to make sure that the process did not founder on legalistic points. His own concept was to take a look well into the future: if they could agree on what the long-term future of Cyprus should look like, it might be possible to see what practical steps needed to be taken to get there. The Secretary of State commented that this was at least a fresh approach.

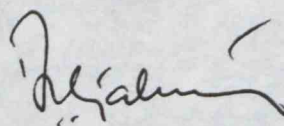
President Vassiliou went on that he trusted Turkey really had a wish to see this kind of progress. It was certainly in their interests. The key was the Papandreou/Ozal meetings. He was a little worried at declarations made the previous day by Evren. He hoped these were purely for internal consumption, and did not intend to react.

The Secretary of State said that he was glad that he had been able to refrain from reacting to Denktash's policy on visas. President Vassiliou said that this had been a deliberate attempt to sabotage negotiations and to react to it would have been to play into Denktash's hands. There was a limit to how long he could go on turning the other cheek, but he could manage for the time being.

The Secretary of State said that he was grateful for the decision to absent the Cypriot High Commissioner in Sweden for the State Banquet. President Vassiliou said that this had been on his own instructions. He did not wish to allow small things to get in the way.

The Secretary of State said that he was upset about the Daily Mail allegations on President Makarios. President Vassiliou said that he entirely accepted that this was not the fault of the British Government, but it was very irritating. Passions had been aroused in Cyprus, and there were threats to boycott The Queen's Birthday Party. He did not like this but could not afford simply to suppress it. Could the British Government now make some kind of statement? The Secretary of State explained that a statement would not be possible, because we had a long-standing policy of refusing to comment on any allegations of any kind relating to security and intelligence. President Vassiliou said that he understood this policy. He wondered however whether the Secretary of State would be prepared to make a statement to Cyprus Television, who were accompanying him, to explain why the British Government were not able to make a definitive statement but to add that they had the greatest esteem for President Makarios. The Secretary of State agreed to do this.

The interview subsequently took place with both the Secretary of State and President Vassiliou participating. It has been reported separately. President Vassiliou expressed himself as being very appreciative.



8 June 1988

(A C Galsworthy)

cc: PS/Mrs Chalker
 Sir J Fretwell
 Mr Boyd
 Mr Ratford
 Mr Battiscombe, PUSD
 Mr Powell, No 10

