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07. Memcon	Re: Meeting with George Vassiliou, President of Cyprus [FOIA EXEMPTIONS REDACTED] (5 pp.)	3/30/92	(b)(1)	C

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RESTRICTION CODES

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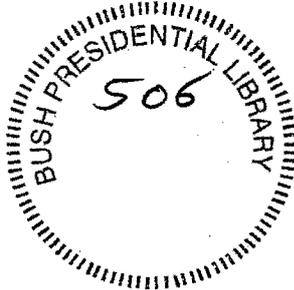
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with George Vassiliou, President of Cyprus

PARTICIPANTS:



The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Thomas Niles, Assistant Secretary of State
for European and Canadian Affairs
Robert Lamb, Ambassador to Cyprus
Nelson Ledsky, Special Cyprus Coordinator
Jane E. Holl, Director European and Eurasian
Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

George Vassiliou, President of Cyprus
George Iaccovou, Foreign Minister
Michael Sherifis, Ambassador to the United
States
Akis Fantis, Government Spokesman

DATE, TIME March 30, 1992, 4:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Welcome. I'm very glad to see you, sir. Can we talk about Macedonia first? What is your view? I've been talking with my good friend Constantine Mitsotakis, he asked us for some time to work out the problem they are having with Macedonia and we went along, but what is your view about what we should be doing? How do you see it being resolved? (S)

President Vassiliou: I went to Greece to help Mitsotakis solve this problem. Sometimes it is good for someone from the outside to come in and offer help. I wanted to help Mitsotakis address the issue. All of the political parties see this as an issue that needs to be solved. First, I would say that it is vitally important to make sure that there are no claims on the territory of Greece, and second that the propaganda about minorities must cease. The entity that would be established should be guaranteed because if Skopje collapses that would be worse. It is better to have a small but neutral state that you can help develop and grow. (S)

That is the substance. As far as the psychological aspects go, the name has too many connotations -- some compromise must be worked out. Therefore an independent republic should be set up and helped to develop and not be threatened with being taken over. It cannot be developed as a source of tension in the region, but as a means of stability. (S)

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The President: So the real problem is with the name. (C)

President Vassiliou: Yes. Either it should be changed completely, or if that is not possible then to find some kind of compromise. (C)

The President: I know that Mitsotakis made it clear that a name change was important. But do you think a compromise is possible? (C)

President Vassiliou: If enough persuasion is brought to bear, they will compromise. (C)

The President: We do want to help but I don't know what leverage or influence we can have. We've been under a lot of pressure from ethnic Americans here -- Croatian Americans -- all kinds really that say that these people want their independence, and you're not moving forward U.S. -- when is the U.S. going to recognize their independence. I know it's not easy, but it's not easy for us either. Tell that to Mitsotakis. He's a good man. (C)

President Vassiliou: I can tell you that he appreciates greatly that you have given him some time. It is vital to make sure that the independence of Skopje/Macedonia is secure and guaranteed by everybody. There can be no irredentist efforts. (C)

The President: How about Cyprus? Where do we go from here? (U)

President Vassiliou: First, let me say how grateful I am for all you have done. And I am grateful for you seeing me today. (U)

The President: Let me just say that we have great respect for you as a person and your background -- what you have been through -- and for what you have done while you are in office. Second, I would like to say that on our trip, when we sat with the Turks and with the Greeks, I thought we'd really have something. Then the Turkish political situation got us all caught up. I think events have been not as we would have liked. I had thought we would have had a settlement by now. (C)

President Vassiliou: (b)(1)
(b)(1)
(b)(1) They want to turn this into a bicomunal discussion. The UNSYG wants to break the deadlock -- the Turks cannot wash their hands of Cyprus -- but the UN Security Council and the SYG want to see real progress made. They are not prepared to always accept this one step forward and then another back. (b)(1)

The Permanent Five met with me and they will see Mr. Denktash today. If they could set up a committee -- to be visibly supportive of the SYG -- then we will have a cause to make progress. The U.S. should be behind this and I ask for your

personal support as well. (b)(1)

(b)(1) The issues must be negotiated. All of the chances for a solution are there -- they should be persuaded to negotiate. I will dedicate all of my efforts in the next months. The international climate is such that it needs a settlement. (C)

The President: I think it would be better without a lot of public pressure and posturing on Turkey. When Demirel was here we had a good discussion. He's willing to give it a shot. But I don't know him very well. What is your impression of him? Have you met him? (C)

President Vassiliou: Yes, only once at Davos. My impression is that Demirel is a shrewd politician. (b)(1)

(b)(1) But if you continue to come at him, he will make up his mind. (C)

The President: He indicated to me that he wanted to stay involved. We can remind him again after this visit. Didn't Demirel talk to Mitsotakis at Davos? (C)

President Vassiliou: Yes, but nothing substantive. You know it is an illusion that Turkey could improve its relations with Greece without solving the Cyprus problem. But if there were a solution to Cyprus, all differences between Greece and Turkey would be solved. I would work for it. (b)(1)

The President: You support the UNSYG efforts, do you want another resolution or just that the Security Council support the SYG more? (C)

President Vassiliou: I think it is very important that we have a new resolution. (C)

The President: But we can't just beat up on Turkey -- that would force Demirel to back off. I think it would be counter-productive. (C)

President Vassiliou: If you say nothing and not let it be known who is responsible for the current lack of progress -- we must say that we are disappointed with the lack of progress and that this problem has to be addressed. (C)

Ambassador Ledsky: When I saw Prime Minister Demirel two weeks ago, he renewed his commitment to you. I don't think there is any question that he wants a settlement. But he is concerned. He says he cannot be seen to be pressured or seen to be pressuring Mr. Denktash. I share President Vassiliou's view that the SYG should be active and that the Security Council support his position to get more progress. (C)

President Vassiliou: If the UN thought that Turkey should be left out of the process -- (b)(1) there is no hope of a Cyprus solution. (C)

The President: I can be in touch with Demirel -- write to him and say that I assured President Vassiliou of your commitment to me and of your willingness and commitment, and that we think progress can still be made. What do you think? (C)

General Scowcroft: We can certainly do that. (U)

President Vassiliou: They have to be kept on the line -- the only way to be really kept moving -- if they don't cooperate, the whole world will know it. (C)

The President: What is President Ozal's role? Can he be helpful here? Because I have a very good relationship with him. (C)

President Vassiliou: Yes. He has some role because the opposition is in favor of a solution. But he does not have executive powers. And Demirel doesn't like him. (C)

The President: I like both of them. I wasn't sure, is Ozal totally out of this question? He's coming here in a few weeks. (C)

President Vassiliou: He's totally out of any question because he doesn't have executive powers. (b)(1)

(b)(1) The only time there was progress was after your visit. Then they cooperated. But shortly after that they changed. (C)

The President: Well, we will follow-up with Demirel. I don't think he'll try to wiggle out. But I don't know about his foreign office. Do we have good contacts there? (C)

Ambassador Ledsky: The Foreign Minister is good, and their number two is very good. He's a friend. (C)

General Scowcroft: I think a letter from you Mr. President will help. (C)

The President: We'll get that out right away. (C)

President Vassiliou: One more thing, Mr. President. You know our region of the world is not the most stable. (b)(1)

(b)(1) (C)

The President: Well we appreciate it. It's a very generous gesture. I just hope we don't have to take you up on it. (C)

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President Vassiliou: Well you do not need to make any decisions
now, (b)(1) (b)(1)

The President: Thank you very much. (U)

-- END OF CONVERSATION --

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