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Diplomatic pressure on Turkish side mounts

Diplomatic efforts to unblock the logjam in the search for a Cyprus settlement gathered pace in late August, as a meeting in Salzburg, Austria, between UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş was followed by a further visit to the island by the Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto.

Mr Annan's objective in his Salzburg talks with Mr Denktaş on 28 August was to persuade the Turkish Cypriot leader to return to the negotiating table, from which he had unilaterally withdrawn in November 2000 after five rounds of "proximity talks". No details were disclosed of the content of the meeting, which was described by a UN spokesman as having been "very good and very useful".

A similar news blackout was maintained by Sr de Soto following his arrival in Nicosia on 29 August. He immediately embarked upon a process of shuttle diplomacy involving a series of separate meetings with President Glafcos Clerides and Mr Denktaş which were scheduled to continue on a daily basis into early September.

Cyprus Government Spokesman Michalis Papapetrou said on 29 August that President Clerides had made it clear that he would not accept the terms being set by Mr Denktaş for a resumption of the talks and had stressed that there was no more room for concessions by the Greek Cypriot side consistent with the UN objective of a federal settlement which preserved Cyprus as a state with a single sovereignty. Specifically, said Mr Papapetrou, "the Cyprus Government and President Clerides are not going to agree on either acknowledgement of the pseudo-state or upgrading the status of Mr Denktaş, which would be in conflict with the strict provisions of the UN Security Council resolutions".

The Spokesman continued that President Clerides "has not been under pressure to agree to any kind of confederation", adding that in his meetings with Sr de Soto "the President will clearly stress that Mr Denktaş's terms are unacceptable". Asked



* Seeking to reactivate the peace process... The UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, confers with President Clerides on his latest visit to Nicosia.

to comment on an agency report that the UN talks were doomed unless President Clerides accepted the concept of "partnership" with Mr Denktaş, Mr Papapetrou replied that the Turkish Cypriot leader's idea of partnership "is a confederation and two independent states", which was totally unacceptable to the Greek Cypriot side.

Mr Papapetrou stressed that "the Greek Cypriot side is ready to co-operate with the Turkish Cypriot side in the framework of a bizonal, bicomunal federation, as defined by the UN resolutions". He added that over many years many rounds of talks on the Cyprus problem had been doomed to failure because of the Turkish Cypriot leader's negative stance. He expressed the hope that "this time, irrespective of his threats, Mr Denktaş will

come to the negotiating table with a different political will that can end the deadlock".

● The continued commitment of the US Government to UN efforts to find a just and permanent settlement in Cyprus was reaffirmed by President George W. Bush on 30 August in submitting his bimonthly report to Congress on the Cyprus problem. The report recorded that during the June-July period covered US Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas G. Weston and US Cyprus Ambassador Donald K. Bandler had continued to provide diplomatic support for a resumption of the UN process. In London, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokeswoman on 11 August also reiterated the UK Government's full support for UN efforts to reactivate the peace process. □

Verheugen urges Denktaş on EU

European Union (EU) Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen was reported on 27 August to have urged Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş to take up the invitation of the Greek Cypriot side that the Turkish Cypriots should join in the negotiations on Cyprus' accession to the EU, for the obvious benefit of both communities on the island. Herr Verheugen was meeting Mr Denktaş in Zurich, Switzerland, as the Turkish Cypriot leader was en route for his meeting with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Salzburg (see report above).

The Verheugen-Denktaş meeting was an initiative by the European Commission, which had accordingly informed the Governments of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey that it would take

place. An EU spokesman gave no details of the talks and said only that they had covered "all relevant subjects" and had taken place in "a constructive atmosphere".

In a telephone conversation with Cyprus Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides on 21 August, Herr Verheugen had given assurances that his meeting with Mr Denktaş "in no way" indicated a change in EU policy. He said that there would be no "upgrading" of the Turkish Cypriot leader which would encourage him to believe that his illegal regime would be recognized by the EU or that the EU would modify its established position that the lack of a Cyprus settlement would not constitute a block on Cyprus' accession to the EU. □

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