

Clerides sets out vision for a reunited Cyprus

Addressing the 56th session of the UN General Assembly in New York on 11 November, President Clerides set out his vision for Cyprus as "a reunited federal state, member of the European Union, with the human and other rights of each and every citizen fully protected under the processes of democracy and the rule of law". Such a Cyprus, he said, would be "a demilitarized state with a single citizenship, sovereignty and international personality, enjoying the fruits of its labours in the wider European family, while at the same time playing its rightful role in the Eastern Mediterranean region".

During his stay in New York, President Clerides undertook an intensive programme of contacts and exchanges from 7-16 November with the aim of reactivating the stalled Cyprus settlement negotiations (see page 1). As well as having talks with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, he hosted a lunch for the ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council and had a meeting with the US State Department's Special Co-ordinator for Cyprus, Thomas Weston. He also had talks with US Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman, who assured him that the US Government supported UN efforts to revive negotiations on Cyprus.

President Clerides told the General Assembly that a solution to the Cyprus problem was long overdue and deplored the decision of Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash to boycott further talks. The Turkish side, said Mr Clerides, had abandoned the concept of a bizonal, bicomunal federal Cyprus, as stipulated in UN Security Council

resolutions. Moreover, it was calling on the international community to accept the so-called "realities", i.e. the legalization of Turkey's occupation of 37 per cent of Cypriot territory, the forceful expulsion of Greek Cypriots from the occupied area and the subsequent importation of 120,000 settlers from mainland Turkey in an effort to change the demographic character of Cyprus.

Calling on Turkey "to abandon its threats for the annexation of the occupied part of Cyprus" (see page 1), President Clerides urged the Turkish side "to consider the obvious advantages of the solution of the Cyprus problem for the stability in our region, the consolidation of the Greco-Turkish rapprochement and the promotion of Turkey's aspirations to join in the process of European integration". He also referred to the problem of missing persons and appealed again to Turkey to show the necessary political will in order to bring a final solution to this issue and to abide by the May 2001 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights.

"It is noteworthy", said the President, "that the economic prospects for a post-settlement Cyprus are truly impressive. And this growth will be even greater for our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, who are currently suffering due to the dire political and economic situation in the occupied areas. Tragically, almost 50 per cent have been forced to take the cruel road to emigration. The Turkish Cypriots will benefit considerably from the accession of our country to the European Union. I urge Mr .Denktash to realise that he and I are not getting any younger and that we owe it to the younger generations of Cypriots to do away



• Vision for the future of Cyprus... President Clerides addressing the UN General Assembly.

with the walls of division."

President Clerides concluded by reiterating his readiness "to engage in the process of negotiations with the necessary political will and good faith for finding a fair and viable settlement based on the UN resolutions, meeting the legitimate interests of all Cypriots".

● President Clerides on 14 November visited "Ground Zero", the site in New York where the World Trade Centre had stood until 11 September. He said that "the whole of humanity needs to co-operate so that we do not allow such terrorist attacks to occur, as they are contrary to our civilization, our history and our religion". □



• British support for Cyprus... Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides with his UK counterpart Jack Straw.

Straw confirms support for Cyprus

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw confirmed on 7 November that the British Government would continue to work for a political settlement of the Cyprus problem through the United Nations and stressed that there was "no intention whatsoever of Cyprus being marginalized" in the new international situation. He was speaking in London after his first formal talks with Cyprus Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides, at which Britain's Special Cyprus Envoy, Lord Hannay, and the Cyprus High Commissioner in London, Myrna Cleopa, were also present.

On Cyprus' EU application, Mr Straw reiterated that the UK Government wished to see Cyprus becoming a member "as soon as the criteria for membership are fulfilled" and

noted that Cyprus was further advanced in its negotiations than any of the other applicants. He said that it was preferable that a Cyprus settlement should be reached before EU entry and that Britain wanted to see UN-sponsored settlement negotiations proceeding in parallel with the EU accession negotiations. He stressed, however, that "we don't place conditions on the latter in terms of success of the former".

Mr Straw also said that he had conveyed to Mr Kasoulides the British Government's deep gratitude to the Cyprus Government and people for their support in the international coalition against terrorism following the 11 September events, "which has been forthcoming not only in words but also in deeds". □

House approves Anti-Terror Bill

The Anti-Terrorism Bill tabled by the Government in October in light of the terrorist attacks on the USA on 11 September secured virtually unanimous approval in the House of Representatives on 22 November. It provided in particular for the ratification by Cyprus of the International Convention to Combat the Financing of Terrorism, laying down severe penalties for contravention of its detailed stipulations.

The Bill was adopted by 42 votes in favour and none against, with the single Ecologist member abstaining. It specified that those convicted of contravening its provisions would be liable to sentences of life imprisonment and/or fines of up to C£2 million and would face the confiscation or freezing of their financial assets. Those charged under the Bill would not be able to plead political, ethnic or religious motives in defence or in mitigation of alleged offences.

Under the Bill, the Government was authorized to set up a special unit to conduct investigations into suspected offences, consisting of personnel nominated for a three-year term by the Attorney General, the Chief of Police and the Director of Customs and Excise. The unit will be able to carry out searches, subject to issuance of a search warrant by a competent authority, and will collect, classify, evaluate and analyse information relating to terrorist or terrorism-financing crimes. It will also be able to apply for authorization to place information gathered in the public domain. □