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THE PRIME MINISTER

13 September 2010

*In David*

Thank you for your letter of 10 August about UK/Turkey relations and the Cyprus settlement process. I greatly appreciated your thoughts on the issues, given your experience both in the APPG and from engagement with your constituents.

As you highlight in your letter, we fully support both Cypriot communities in their pursuit of a just and comprehensive settlement to reunify Cyprus. I agree that the status quo is unacceptable and benefits no one on the island. I believe that the best way to change this is through working with the Republic of Cyprus, engaging with Turkey, and supporting the UN's Good Offices mission in Nicosia.

The ethos of the current process, by Cypriots and for Cypriots, and without the imposition of deadlines distinguishes it clearly from previous processes, such as the Annan Plan. This approach allows Cypriots to have greater trust in the talks, knowing that those individuals with the greatest understanding of the issues, Cypriots themselves, are at the negotiating table, seeking a solution which balances the interests of both communities.

Turkey has a crucial role to play in the success of this process, particularly in encouraging Eroglu to engage fully and constructively in the negotiations. The Foreign Secretary and I have urged the Turkish Government to be flexible in its approach to the Cyprus talks. You are right that part of Turkey's accession criteria also requires full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Ankara Protocol, including allowing access to its ports for Cypriot shipping. We continue to press Turkey to do this.

The strategic partnership signed with Turkey in July marked our commitment to building a modern, constructive relationship between our countries. It was a broad, strategic document covering a whole range of UK/Turkish issues. It highlighted both sides' commitment to achieving a Cyprus settlement, but did not go into further detail. I attach a copy for your information.

I welcome the significant progress the UN Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) has made in its work, to date exhuming the remains of 690 Cypriots from both communities. I understand that Turkey is now allowing better access to restricted sites for investigation, so the CMP's important work is able to continue.

The UK and the international community must support those showing the leadership needed to bring peace and security to Cyprus, as they strive to build a more stable and prosperous future. The UK's politicians also have an important role to play in supporting the efforts to build consensus, and I greatly appreciate your enduring commitment to the settlement process.

Yours

David

Mr David Burrowes MP