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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

2 JUL 1976

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting Between Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and
Greek Minister of Defense Averoff, 15 June 1976

During a refueling stopover at Athens, Secretary Rumsfeld was met at the airport by the Greek Minister of Defense and Mrs. Averoff; U.S. Ambassador and Mrs. Kubisch; and other U.S. and GOC military and civilian officials. Following arrival greetings, Secretary Rumsfeld held a forty minute discussion with Defense Minister Averoff. Minister Averoff was accompanied by Greek Air Force Colonel Kambiotis. Secretary Rumsfeld was accompanied by Assistant Secretary McAuliffe, Mr. Alan Woods and Ambassador Kubisch.

Discussion began with Secretary Rumsfeld conveying greetings from the NATO Secretary General and expressing Luns' regret that the Greek MOD had not been present at the just concluded NATO meetings. Secretary Rumsfeld noted that during the DPC he had personally voiced optimism regarding recent progress made by the Portuguese government. In addition, SecDef indicated that during the bilateral meetings at NATO he had encouraged the idea of NATO membership for Spain.

In response, Minister Averoff noted that Spain has been moving slowly toward democracy and expressed the view that the ultimate goal of democracy in Spain was probably best served by moving slowly and deliberately. SecDef noted that the King is being pulled from both the right and the left and stated that it is important that the friends of Spain within the Alliance make their support known.

Turning to a discussion of the situation in Italy, Averoff indicated he was hopeful regarding the outcome of the forthcoming elections; expressed the opinion that the Italian people were tired of the "same old faces"; and noted that the government of Greece was very concerned about the election outcome.

Secretary Rumsfeld at this point observed that NATO cannot have a security relationship with Italy if Communists are brought into the government, given the nature of parliamentary governments and the fact that any member of the cabinet would have access to information critical to NATO security. Secretary Rumsfeld then mentioned Prime Minister Caramanlis' recent speech to the Greek Parliament in which Caramanlis stated that Greece will always

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stand with the West and expressed to Minister Averoff how pleased he was to see Caramanlis taking this tack.

Averoff then said that Greece was still searching for the formula for its relationship with NATO, and that he did not yet know what that formula might ultimately be. Secretary Rumsfeld indicated in reply that in his opinion a special status for Greece was not a very good idea; [REDACTED] and that special status for any member nation had the effect of weakening the Alliance. Averoff agreed with this observation, indicated that Caramanlis held similar views, but went on to observe that significant problems had been caused by the Turkish military action which placed definite domestic political requirements on the Athens government.

Secretary Rumsfeld then mentioned that he had held bilateral discussions with Italian Defense Minister Forlani while in Brussels, and that during those discussions he had voiced concern over the trends of the past five to ten years which have been adverse with respect to the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. And, as a consequence of this concern, President Ford in his FY 77 Defense Budget request has taken positive steps to arrest these trends. Secretary Rumsfeld went on to express the personal view that in a few years all over Europe governments will be asking not "how much can we cut from the defense budget" but rather "are defense budgets all over Western Europe and in the Alliance enough?" Averoff replied that he was similarly concerned about the pace of Soviet activity and observed that Greece has been invaded from the north for centuries and, in fact, had been invaded in that manner four times in his lifetime.

Secretary Rumsfeld observed that some Europeans, particularly in the Arts and Universities, have been describing Communism as not greatly different from democracy; and went on to discuss a recent conversation with Clara Boothe Luce and endorsed her observation that we must not grant them (the Communists) moral parity. Averoff agreed that this was right but that "democracy, by its very nature, has to put up with such things."

Assistant Secretary McAuliffe at this point indicated that the voice of Greece was missed in the councils of NATO. Averoff replied that he would have liked to have been there, but went on to discuss the impasse with Turkey. Specifically, Averoff noted that there had been no progress in twenty-two months of negotiations, and although new proposals are being made there has been no progress, and this lack of progress makes the situation potentially explosive. In Averoff's view it could yet lead to war. He went on to point out that the Turks are currently outfitting a ship called the Hora to possibly explore for oil in the Aegean Sea area being claimed by Greece — a very difficult problem for the Greeks. As an aside, Averoff noted that it had been Caramanlis and himself who had negotiated the 1960 Cyprus agreement.

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Secretary Rumsfeld then commented on the importance of regularizing relationships within the Alliance and noted that it was essential that negotiations on the base agreement move quickly in the interests of collective security. He noted also that it was important that the Congress move quickly on this issue.

Secretary Rumsfeld noted also that the relationship between Greece and Turkey was better with both in the Alliance than it would be if either departed. Averoff agreed, but observed that it would not solve the problem if the Greek government accepted the Turkish presence on Cyprus in a way that did not seem fair to the Greek people for in that event, the Greek government would immediately be defeated.

At this point Secretary Rumsfeld asked if the Greek people understood the role of Greece in the creation of the Cypriot problem? Averoff replied that Caramanlis had said recently in Parliament that the Cyprus crisis was partially the fault of Greeks and that negotiations were at a difficult impasse. Secretary Rumsfeld replied that difficult problems are often sorted out in the face of more difficult problems -- for example, concern over activities of the Warsaw Pact countries might replace the Turkish threat. Averoff replied that the Greek people see only the threat from Turkey and that they are just not focusing on problems with the Warsaw Pact countries.

Secretary Rumsfeld observed that Turkey has the same threat from the north as Greece, and that he would not want to see either Greece or Turkey not firmly in the Alliance. The Secretary went on to observe that the Soviet Navy has become much stronger and that it is very important for both Greece and Turkey to recognize their role in that regard. Averoff replied by mentioning a quotation from the book, "Conversations with Stalin" by Milovan Djilas in which Stalin is quoted as opposing the communist uprising in Greece, and indicated that the reason he did so was because, "What do you think, that Great Britain and the United States -- the United States the most powerful state in the world -- will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea! Nonsense and we have no Navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible."

Ambassador Kubisch asked Secretary Rumsfeld how important it is that the base agreement be sent to the Congress promptly. Secretary Rumsfeld replied that if the Congress does not address the legislation this year that it would put off the regularization of the relationship for yet another year. It would probably be March, April, or May of next year before the legislation could be acted upon.

Minister Averoff said at this point that you cannot decide general principles this year and specifics next year -- that the political situation in Greece will not allow for that -- that the whole package must go to the Greek Parliament at one time. He went on to say that for presentation to the Parliament, it is important that the Greeks have the same deal, and that they seem to have the same deal, as the Turks.

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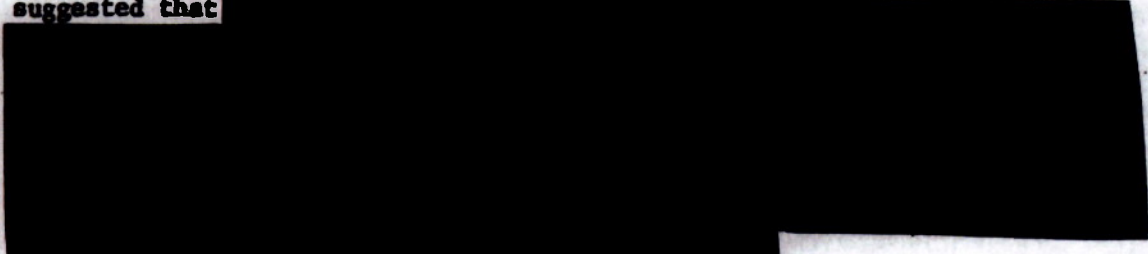
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Assistant Secretary McAuliffe observed that the agreement is either in the common interest of the United States and Greece or it is not, and its relationship to agreements with the Turks should be somewhat irrelevant. That, in fact, there are 26 U.S. bases in Turkey and only 17 bases in Greece and that these bases have different missions, therefore, the circumstances are different.

Secretary Rumsfeld said at this point that there is a need for speed; that he personally has a relaxed attitude about U.S. presence in the world; and that the United States should not plead to stay. SecDef observed that there are either legitimate common reasons of importance or there aren't, and went on to point out that the same issue relates to the use of ports around the world by our nuclear powered ships. Some NATO nations are hesitant about port visits by U.S. nuclear powered ships but they do want the protection of the United States Navy.

Shifting the discussion from the base agreement issue, Minister Averoff suggested that



In conclusion, Averoff made the point that eight out of ten Greeks are concerned only about Turkey and would not be receptive to information on the Communist bloc (Warsaw Pact) activities. He also said that Caramanlis would be coming to the United States, to which Secretary Rumsfeld replied that he would be looking forward to seeing the Prime Minister.

Alan Woods

Alan Woods
The Special Assistant

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