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Johnson's 1964 Letter to İnönü and Greek Lobbying of the White House

Jacob M. Landau

**JERUSALEM PAPERS
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A NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

Turkish, whose alphabet was romanized in 1928, is pronounced phonetically. The following symbols, however, merit special attention:

I, i	is pronounced like <i>ee</i> in <i>seed</i>
İ, ı	is pronounced like <i>u</i> in <i>podium</i>
Ö, Ü, ö, ü	are pronounced as in German
C, c	is pronounced like <i>j</i> in <i>jar</i>
Ç, ç	is pronounced like <i>ch</i> in <i>church</i>
ğ	is a glottal stop, barely audible
Ş, ş	is pronounced like <i>sh</i> in <i>shop</i>

The Cyprus conflict¹ is an extremely complex issue with ramifications on four different levels: the intercommunal (on Cyprus itself); the bilateral (between Turkey and Greece); the regional (involving Great Britain and the superpowers); and the international (in the global contest at the United Nations²). These have often overlapped, particularly since 1964 when, with the increasing involvement of the United States and the Soviet Union,³ the conflict became more acute. One of the crucial factors that led to superpower intervention in the Cyprus issue is the exchange of letters between United States President Lyndon B. Johnson and Turkish Premier İsmet İnönü in 1964.⁴

President Johnson's letter to İnönü of June 5, 1964, may justifiably be seen as marking a turning point in Turkish-American relations. Mehmet Gönlübol, Professor of International Relations in the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Ankara, has stated that the letter

became the most important factor since World War II to affect the relations between the two countries unfavorably. This document . . . was

1. This essay is a revised and enlarged version of an article published in *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* (Ankara) XIV, 1974. The research was supported in part by a grant from the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The present essay does not intend to delve into the Cyprus conflict as such, nor to list bibliographical data on it. Of the vast literature on the topic, one of the most recent items, presenting widely divergent views of Cypriots, Turks, Greeks and others, is a special sixteen-page issue of the weekly *Das Parlament* (Bonn) XXV, No. 38 (September 20, 1975).

2. Ingeborg Nikitopoulos, "Aspekte der Selbstbestimmungspolitik in den Vereinten Nationen: Fallstudien zu Zypern und Puerto Rico," Ph.D. dissertation, Heidelberg, 1970.

3. D. Kitsikis, "Le conflit de Chypre," *Revue Française de Science Politique* (Paris) XV, No. 2 (April 1965), especially p. 279. For other views, see Jacob M. Landau, "Some Soviet Works on Cyprus," *Middle Eastern Studies* (London) XI, No. 3 (October 1975): 300-303.

4. See B.M. Potskhvyeriya, *Vnyeshnaya politika Turtsii poslye vtoroy mirovoy voyni* (Moscow: Nauka Press, 1976), pp. 88-89, 219; Metin Tamkoç, *The Warrior Diplomats: Guardians of the National Security and Modernization of Turkey* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1976), pp. 271-273.

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received with great surprise and created strong repercussions, not only in leftist circles, but in public opinion as a whole.⁵

Although it ostensibly led to a temporary decrease in tensions, the letter actually initiated the process of estrangement between the two countries which, despite some indications to the contrary, has been steadily increasing ever since. No less substantively, United States influence over Turkish affairs has declined considerably since then.⁶

In the spring of 1964, President Johnson was informed that Turkish decision-makers as well as the broader public favored intervention in Cyprus on behalf of the Cypriot Turks about whose safety Turkey was extremely apprehensive. Turkish military preparations appeared to confirm this intention to intervene. Johnson's letter of June 5 to İnönü, although couched in those friendly terms favored by the language of diplomacy, strongly endeavored to dissuade the Turkish government from intervening in Cyprus. In brief, the letter warned the Turks not to act without first consulting with the United States government; it reminded İnönü "in all candor that the United States cannot agree to the use of any United States supplied military equipment for a Turkish intervention in Cyprus under present circumstances."

The letter's full impact can be gauged only when juxtaposed with the warning transmitted by Washington two days earlier. In later years, İnönü seldom referred to the entire affair which, evidently, did little to enhance his political career. However, in an interview he granted several days after the events, he said:

The invasion of Cyprus was fixed for June 4, 1964, but one day before, I was warned by Washington not to use American arms for purposes not approved by America. Mr. Johnson said that if the Russians took action, our NATO guarantees might not hold. We might also face the

5. Mehmet Gönübol, "Turkish-American Relations: A General Appraisal," *Dış Politika* (Ankara) I, No. 4 (December 1971), p. 50; Y. Altuğ, "The Cyprus Conflict," *ibid.* VI, Nos. 2-3 (1974), especially pp. 132 ff. See also Nihat Erim, "Reminiscences on Cyprus," *ibid.*, particularly pp. 158-159; and Geoffrey Lewis, *Modern Turkey* (New York and Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1974), p. 205.

6. Thomas Ehrlich, *Cyprus 1958-1967* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 85; G.S. Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1972), pp. 114 ff.

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danger of impeachment at the United Nations. In half an hour, we would be left without an ally.⁷

While these are not precisely the terms of Johnson's letter of June 5, his comments would suggest that İnönü interpreted the implications of the presidential communications in this manner.

İnönü's reply to Johnson, dated June 13, 1964, reserved Turkey's freedom of action in Cyprus. Several weeks later, Turkish planes flew over Cyprus and engaged in a strafing attack on the areas of the island populated by Greeks. Although İnönü proclaimed in the Turkish National Assembly that the Turkish nation should prepare for war,⁸ Johnson's 1964 letter had achieved its main purpose by then: averting a massive Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the concomitant rift between two NATO members, Turkey and Greece.⁹ Ten years later, in July 1974 (by which time Johnson and İnönü had died), both the threatened invasion and the rift finally did take place.

The Turkish press learned of Johnson's letter to İnönü immediately and reported on it with front-page banner headlines. *Hürriyet* announced that "the United States has again opposed our setting out [for Cyprus]." ¹⁰ Only vague, hypothetical reports of the content of the letter appeared, but these sufficed to embarrass the government and affect İnönü's Republican People's Party's representation in the Senate after the June 7, 1964, elections. News about the letter from foreign sources began to filter into the Turkish press. The editorial column "Durum" ("The Situation") in *Milliyet* warned: "The last event will be a turning point in Turco-American relations."¹¹ It also protested what it considered the threatening tones of the letter. No less vehemently, the opposition in the National Assembly criticized İnönü and his government harshly, accusing them of "bowing down to Johnson." It then proposed a no-confidence motion; and although İnönü's government did obtain a vote of confidence on the matter in the National Assembly on

7. Charles Foley and W.I. Scobie, *The Struggle for Cyprus* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), p. 163. The authors interviewed İnönü on June 12, 1964.

8. Turkish press accounts, September 9, 1964.

9. See Mehmet Gönlübol, "Nato and Turkey: An Overall Appraisal," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* XI (1971), pp. 1-38, and particularly pp. 21-23.

10. "Amerika, çıkarmamızı yine önledi."

11. June 10, 1964.

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June 19, its margin was very slim (194 supported the no-confidence motion and 2 abstained, while 200 opposed the motion¹²).

In the ensuing months, the issue of Johnson's letter—the full text of which had not yet been made public—reappeared sporadically. It was generally brought up by İnönü's opponents, who raised it again in the electoral campaign of 1965, when the whole of the National Assembly was standing for reelection. The Turkish government finally requested that the United States release the Johnson-İnönü correspondence of June 1964, probably in order to end rumors. The White House did so in mid-January 1966, and the two letters appeared in Turkish and American newspapers.¹³ Their publication stirred up some acrimonious debate in the Turkish press, as well as in the Turkish National Assembly and Senate. The controversy eventually blew over, but it contributed its share to the increasingly anti-American feelings¹⁴ of Turkish officials and public alike. This is well-exemplified by the following excerpt from a letter written to President Johnson by Robert R. Chase, Jr., an American Peace Corps volunteer in Bandırma, dated January 16, 1966:

Mr. President:

I am a member of the Peace Corps serving in Turkey. In recent weeks, as you are undoubtedly aware, the Turkish press has given considerable play to a letter written by you to former Turkish Prime Minister İnönü. The letter written by you as well as İnönü's reply have been published and discussed at length. Hardly a day goes by without one of my fellow teachers bringing up the American Cyprus policy and your letter. I have told my friends time and again that because my Turkish is not good enough to understand the letters as they appear in the newspaper I would rather not get into any arguments; this excuse, however, is no longer accepted as readily as it was several days ago. I have told my Turkish associates that I would write to you and try to get a copy of both

12. Various Turkish press reports cited in C.H. Dodd, *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 91. Cf. Murat Sarica, Erdoğan Teziç and Özer Eskiyyurt, *Kıbrıs Sorunu* (Istanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, 1975), p. 76.

13. The full English text appears in *The Middle East Journal* (Washington, D.C.) XX, No. 3 (Summer 1966): 386-393; and in *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* VII (1966—published in 1969), pp. 139-141. See Appendix to this paper.

14. On which see data in Jacob M. Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 26-28, 33, 249, 290.

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letters in English so that we could talk about them on equal ground. This brings me to my point. I would like you to send me, by the quickest way possible, a copy of your letter to İnönü and if possible a translation of his answer. I would also appreciate any information on the present U.S. position on Cyprus. This information will be very useful to me, as I am sure it would be to other Peace Corps personnel here in Turkey.¹⁵

From the advantageous perspective of hindsight, it is easier to grasp the critical nature of Johnson's letter and the considerations that prompted the president to write the letter in the first place. American publications have taken virtually no notice of the letter, and Johnson's autobiography makes no mention of it.¹⁶ The same is true of all monographs on Johnson's presidency that we have consulted.¹⁷ Although the files of the State Department are still classified, a large portion of the White House files of the Johnson era are available for research at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin, Texas.¹⁸ The material in this library, which has to date been only insufficiently utilized by scholars, enables us to offer, for the first time, several tentative observations on the background of Johnson's letter to İnönü and on the impact of pro-Greek lobbying on the White House.

It is obvious that the State Department was most interested in maintaining good relations with both Turkey and Greece. Furthermore, the strongest possible motivation for Johnson's letter was the desire to prevent Turkish

15. The original is in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library (hereafter referred to as LBJ Library), Gen CO 296 (box 71).

16. Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 1971).

17. William S. White, *The Professional Lyndon B. Johnson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964); Harry Provençe, *Lyndon B. Johnson: A Biography* (New York: Fleet Publishing Corporation, 1964); Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power - A Political Biography* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967); Robert Sherrill, *The Accidental President* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1967); Hugh Sidney, *A Very Personal Presidency: Lyndon Johnson in the White House* (New York: Atheneum, 1968); Louis Heren, *No Hail, No Farewell* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970); Howard B. Furer, *Lyndon B. Johnson, 1908- : Chronology - Documents - Bibliographical Aids* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Occana Publications, 1971); Richard Harwood and Haynes Johnson, *Lyndon* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

18. The files relating to Turkey and to the Johnson letter are in the LBJ Library, Ex CO 296 (box 70) and Gen CO 296 (box 71). I am grateful for the permission to use these files and quote from them.

military action in Cyprus, which could well have broken down NATO's eastern flank and possibly have brought about a Turco-Greek war. For Johnson, this was a "war-or-peace" issue; and, at a critical moment, he adopted a hard line to press for peace. At the same time, the files at the LBJ Library suggest that Johnson may also have been influenced by the lobbying of Greek-Americans. The files provide valuable information concerning the extensive efforts of Greeks living outside Greece and Cyprus to impress their case upon the White House.

Turkey has long suspected the existence of strong Greek-American pressure on the White House regarding the Cyprus conflict;¹⁹ these claims are raised, time and again, whenever there is on the island trouble that is accompanied by international moves. (The most recent allegation was that of the Turkish press in June 1976,²⁰ to the effect that the head of a Greek-American association, Dr. Aris Dimitriadis, a college-mate of President Gerald Ford, was trying to influence the president on Cyprus.) The following analysis is an attempt to evaluate the nature of this pressure and the extent of Greek lobbying efforts with reference to Cyprus, especially in 1964.

Although the tradition of legislative and executive branch lobbying is generally deplored by the American public and press, who have reacted violently²¹ against it several times in the post-World War II era, lobbying goes on nonetheless. Under federal laws enacted in the early 1960s, only persons lobbying before the legislative branch are required to register as such.²² Perhaps it is because executive branch lobbyists do not have to register that we know so little, relatively speaking, about how White House lobbying works.²³ Interest groups desire access to the chief executive of the United States, hoping for a sympathetic response to their proposals. The president, on the other hand, requires the cooperation and political support that such interest groups can provide. Consequently, executive branch strategy and interest group strategy frequently interact.

The list of ethnic executive lobbies, including those intervening in American

19. See, for instance, Ali Rıza Alp, "Kıbrıs meselesinde Johnson'un hesabı," *Tercüman*, September 4, 1964.

20. See, for example, *Hürriyet*, April 22, 1976.

21. See, e.g., Hope Eastman, *Lobbying: A Constitutionally Protected Right* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), pp. 1 ff.

22. Cf. L. W. Milbraith, *The Washington Lobbyists* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), p. 9.

23. "We would certainly wish to know more about executive branch lobbying" (*ibid.*, p. 23).

foreign policy, is a long one; these lobbyists have frequently been at least as successful as others, such as the Jewish lobby. While it is still impossible, with our present knowledge, to obtain a full picture of the means by which the policies desired by Greek-Americans are fed into the over-all decision-making process of U.S. government agencies, we may examine the process by considering a single case study – the drafting of Johnson's letter to İnönü as influenced by White House lobbying.

The Greeks from the Ottoman Empire were quicker than most other immigrant groups in the United States – who had not previously faced the need of adapting as minority groups in their countries of origin – to develop effective community organizations suited to the American scene.²⁴ At first these organizations were dedicated to maintaining the church, to promoting various intellectual, musical or athletic activities, and to assisting the process of assimilation.²⁵ Two major trends, essentially contradictory in nature, were represented by such groups as the Greek-American Progressive Association (GAPA), striving for the preservation of Hellenic culture among the immigrants, and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), working for smoother and speedier Americanization. Both groups were set up in the early 1920s; the first comprised about 10,000 members in good standing, and the second some 25,000 active members in more than 400 chapters, divided among 24 districts.²⁶

It was only a matter of time before Greek-Americans began to use these and other groups for political purposes, displaying a talent for acquiring the fine art of political pressure, chiefly after 1940. By then, their Americanization had been achieved and was being taken for granted. Since Greece was constantly in sympathy with the United States on international issues, the problem of conflicting allegiances never arose. Philhellenism increased and identification with Greece prevailed: praise of its brave stand against the Nazis, relief work carried out, support offered for the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, and in general through the revived interest

24. B. C. Rosen, "Race, Ethnicity and the Achievement Syndrome," *American Sociological Review* XXIV, No. 1 (February 1959): 47–60; J. W. Vander Zanden, *American Minority Relations: The Sociology of Race and Ethnic Groups*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Ronald Press, 1966), pp. 292–293.

25. See Evangelos C. Vlachos, *The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States* (Athens: National Centre of Social Researches, 1968), pp. 90–98.

26. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 93, 94.

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of Greek-Americans in their mother-country.²⁷ Groups of Greek-Americans fostered pro-Greek public sentiment in the United States after World War II, and even petitioned Congress and the president for the adoption of policies of their preference.

In the late 1950s and during the 1960s, Cyprus became a focal point of lobbying for various Greek-Americans who pressured their senators and congressmen to adopt the Greek position in the Cyprus conflict. However, these efforts were never really successful until 1964.²⁸ In that year the concentrated effort to influence the president himself brought about a breakthrough with his adoption (albeit temporary) of the Greek position in the Cyprus conflict, at least to the extent of preventing Turkey from intervening and creating a *fait accompli*. The Greek-Americans would undoubtedly have preferred to have the United States intervene by force to achieve this goal (e.g., a blockade of Cyprus against Turkey by the Sixth Fleet or the deployment of U.S. Marines on the island²⁹); this, however, was inconceivable, as it would have led to Turkey's withdrawal from NATO and CENTO. Thus Johnson's letter to İnönü was the next best step from the Greek-American point of view.

Greek-American activity was part of a wider effort by Greeks in Greece, Cyprus and elsewhere, directed at influencing policy-makers in Washington on the Cyprus issue. This was expressed by simultaneous lobbying in Congress and (even more strenuously) at the White House. The former does not concern us here; the latter was characterized by the magnitude, frequency, organization, and insistence of Greek communications during the Cyprus crisis of 1964.

Numerous cables, telephone calls, letters and memos reached the White House during the first half of 1964, nearly all of them designed to influence presidential policy towards Cyprus. Much of the correspondence stressed the alleged discrimination or even persecution of Greeks in Turkey. A White House office "route slip" stated that as of June 26, 1964, a total of 2,598 letters concerning this matter had been received at the White House. Thus

27. Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 381-386.

28. T. W. Adams and A. J. Cottrell, *Cyprus Between East and West* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 55-56.

29. For such a hypothetical intervention, cf. T. W. Adams and A. J. Cottrell, "American Foreign Policy and the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus," *Orbis* XII, No. 2 (1968), especially p. 491.

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this lobbying-by-communication relied on the sheer amount of correspondence and intended to impress the White House with the ability of Greek-Americans to mobilize a grass-roots campaign; the veritable deluge of communications was one of the main reasons for their success.

Cables and letters to the White House were sent both by private persons and by various associations connected with people of Greek descent. Among the associations, listed here chronologically according to the dates of their communications, from November 1963 to June 5, 1964,³⁰ are the following: the Cyprus Federation of America (New York City), the Hellenic Society of Constantinople (New York City), the Justice for Cyprus Committee (claiming many branches throughout the United States), the Council for Hellenic Affairs (New York City), the Greek-American Progressive Association (New York City), the United Organizations of Greek-Americans, the Hellenic-American Central Committee for Cyprus (greater New York), the American Friends of Cyprus Committee (New York City), and the Greek-American Democratic Club (New York City).

Of these, only the Greek-American Progressive Association, already mentioned earlier in this paper, was a truly national organization. The United Organizations of Greek-Americans probably did have several branches, but their claim to represent one and one-half million Americans of Greek descent is certainly exaggerated. The other groups were largely based in New York City and were responsible for most of the communications to Johnson – several of them dispatching more than one cable. A cable was also sent on behalf of “the clergy and lay representatives of 72 Greek Orthodox communities of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, meeting in the Holy Trinity Cathedral . . . New York,” perhaps to counter the impression that only New York City Greeks were involved. In addition, Greek organizations in Greece, Cyprus, South Africa and Scotland cabled the White House, expressing their support for the Greek position in the Cyprus conflict, as did numerous individuals in the United States – most of them bearing Greek names.

Some of the above groups and persons kept bombarding Johnson with cables and letters for months after June 5, 1964, commending his letter to İnönü and urging him to continue what they considered to be his justified

30. These communications are now in the LBJ Library, in the files on Turkey: Ex CO 296 (box 70) and Gen CO 296 (box 71); and in those on Cyprus: Ex CO 56 (box 26) and Gen CO 56 (box 27).

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approach.³¹ While it is impossible at present to get a definite picture of how Greek White House lobbying was coordinated, it is most likely that the 1964 recruitment of so many private individuals and associations, for a sustained campaign of sending numerous and similar messages, does indicate some sort of over-all organization.

In order to better appreciate the significance of the messages sent before June 5, 1964, and in order to draw certain conclusions as to the arguments that they raised, we present below two characteristic quotes from among the cables:

Dear Mr. President:

We believe the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister offers a rare opportunity for tempering the crisis over Cyprus. We trust that our Government has informed the Turkish Government that any invasion of Cyprus would violate the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, and would require our Government to stop all military and other aid to Turkey. But a personal statement by you to the Turkish Foreign Minister to this effect would be most helpful in preventing any disastrous adventure by Turkey in Cyprus. We hope that the opportunity will also be used to impress on the Turkish Foreign Minister the fact that his Government's support of the extraordinary veto power of the 17.5% Turkish minority is unreasonable and provocative. The Cyprus problem is a needless tragedy that endangers the Atlantic Alliance, threatens world peace, and inflicts great suffering on the people of Cyprus. Firm action on your part in support of the principle of majority rule will do much to achieve a peaceful solution.³²

The President – The White House:

The Greek-American Democratic Club of Queens Incorporated, during its regular assembly meeting held at its headquarters 104/26 Roosevelt Avenue Corona, New York on April 24th 1964 unanimously passed the following resolution, "Resolved that the Greek-American Club of Queens Incorporated strongly protests the persecution of the Orthodox Church and the unjustified deportation from Istanbul of respected and

31. See *ibid.* for communications by Greek-Americans and Greeks before and after June 5, 1964.

32. *Ibid.*, Gen CO 296, cable from the Council for Hellenic Affairs, Inc., the American Friends of Cyprus Committee, New York, dated April 24, 1964.

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law abiding Orthodox churchmen and Greek-Turkish citizens and fervently requests that strong representations be made to the Turkish Government to cease and desist from any further persecution of the Orthodox Church and the Greek-Turkish citizenry of Istanbul." This resolution was also endorsed by the Northside Democratic Association of the Fifth Assembly District, Queens.³³

From the above, as well as other messages, it is clear that the main argument promoted was the right of the Greek majority to rule Cyprus; this was reinforced by allegations of persecution of Greeks in Turkey. These two points were frequently linked and elaborated upon; others, such as Cyprus' right to self-determination and the bond of friendship between the American and Greek peoples, were often raised. In addition, quite a number of messages implicitly or explicitly referred to Johnson's candidacy for president, thus reminding Johnson of the Greek-American power to raise voter support for the Democratic Party.

Having become president as a result of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Johnson was at first keenly aware of the need to continue Kennedy's main policies, particularly in the area of foreign relations, where he was less experienced than his predecessor had been. Furthermore, foreign policy for Johnson was inextricably integrated into the process of domestic politics.³⁴ True, Cyprus had never engaged the interest of the U.S. Congress during Johnson's administration to the same degree as had Panama, the Dominican Republic or Vietnam. However, when Cyprus-oriented political pressures in the United States began building up, especially from the Greek-Americans, Johnson acted speedily and decisively.

The letter to İnönü was partially motivated by the swiftly approaching trial of strength, the November 1964 U.S. presidential elections. Johnson was doubtless very aware of the fact that all votes count, but some count more, depending on location. Several pollsters predicted a close contest, and Greek-Americans were not only far more numerous than Turkish ones, but were located in some of the big urban centers that controlled large numbers of electors. The exact number of Greek-Americans depends on the definition of "Greek," and, even so, the statistics show discrepancies.

33. Ibid., cable from the Greek-American Democratic Club of Queens N.Y., Inc., dated May 7, 1964.

34. See Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World* (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 13-14.

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According to the official *1960 Census of Population*, there were then close to 400,000 Greek-Americans in the United States; other sources estimated their number as between 500,000 and 600,000. They were scattered all over the country, with heavy concentrations in the northeastern and north-central states. Very few had settled in rural areas; theirs was an almost exclusively urban pattern of living. They resided mostly in Chicago, New York City and, to a lesser extent, in Boston and Detroit.³⁵ One should remember that one state – Illinois – had been crucial in the 1960 presidential elections.

In addition, it has been shown that ethnic voters in the United States generally vote in blocs. While no study has yet been made of how Greek-Americans tend to vote on the national level, Greek bloc-voting was observed on the local level, when candidates for local office appealed to Greek-American constituents on the basis of common ethnic background.³⁶ Moreover, ethnic groups in the United States have generally voted the Democratic Party ticket; the Republican Party strategy has thus entailed a consistent attempt to break up Democratic bloc votes. Up to 1960 the Republicans had failed; but Democratic strategists remained concerned. Some Democrats, including Johnson, were most probably concerned about how American policy in Cyprus might affect the Greek-American vote in the November 1964 presidential elections. This is evident in a memorandum by Herbert W. Klotz (then Assistant Secretary of Commerce) to Bill Moyers (a trusted aide on the White House staff).³⁷ Dated Washington, D.C., October 15, 1964, it began: "As you know, the Goldwater forces have made a considerable effort to sway American voters of Greek descent by trading on the Cyprus issue." There can be little doubt that messages similar to this one had reached Johnson's desk as well.

The church, too, did its share of lobbying before the president. Religious institutions in the United States have sometimes been used as conduits for ethnic political desires.³⁸ The case of the Greek churches was no exception, although a difference may be observed. Italian-Americans and Irish-Americans

35. Vlachos, *Assimilation of Greeks in the U.S.*, pp. 68–76. Cf. A.Q. Maisel, "The Greeks Among Us," *Reader's Digest* LXVII, No. 399 (July 1955), pp. 114, 116; N.P. Petropoulos, "Social Mobility, Status Inconsistency, Ethnic Marginality, and the Attitudes of Greek Americans Towards Jews and Blacks," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1973, p. 20.

36. Vlachos, *Assimilation of Greeks in the U.S.*, p. 98.

37. LBJ Library, Gen CO 94, Greece (box 36).

38. For examples, see Edgar Litt, *Beyond Pluralism: Ethnic Politics in America* (Glencoe, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1970), pp. 49 ff.

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are almost exclusively Roman Catholic and express themselves politically to a large or even primary extent through the instrument of the Roman Catholic Church. In contrast, Greek-Americans are split into Orthodox and Catholic groups, a factor which makes it almost inevitable that they would express common political interests through voluntary associations rather than through the churches. Nevertheless, church activities were particularly intensified in the months remaining before the November 1964 presidential elections.

Perhaps the most articulate of the Greek-Americans who sent messages to Johnson was Iakovos, Archbishop of the Greek-Orthodox Church of North and South America. He was based in New York City and published a regular *Press Release from the Greek-Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America*. In addition to sending the press release to the White House, Iakovos wrote or cabled President Johnson repeatedly, demanding an interview with him; this was eventually granted in March 1966. The following quotations are taken from two representative examples of his lobbying efforts prior to the 1964 elections. One cable began with the following phrase: "We, five thousand Americans of Hellenic descent"³⁹; and a letter alleging persecution of the Greek-Orthodox in Turkey ended with the words: "You can be assured that your intervention will win you the gratitude of the Greek-Orthodox all over the world, as well as of the vast American community of Greek extraction."⁴⁰

The issue remained relevant even later in that Johnson was still planning to run for reelection. In a White House memorandum, Robert W. Komer, in 1966 a Johnson aide and later the American ambassador to Turkey, stated:

This is one of those tough cases where our domestic and foreign interests clash. The Turks have been harassing – always within the letter of the law – the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch in Istanbul in retaliation for Greek-Cypriot harassment of the Turkish minority on Cyprus. We get a small but steady stream of letters from Greek-Americans, naturally upset by these affronts . . .⁴¹

39. LBJ Library, Ex CO 56 (box 26). The cable is datelined New York City, October 26, 1964.

40. Ibid. The letter is dated October 28, 1964.

41. Ibid., Ex CO 296 (box 70), R. W. Komer to Marvin Watson, dated March 9, 1966.

Johnson's letter to İnönü, of course, was not motivated solely by White House lobbying, the number of Greek-Americans, or the approaching presidential elections. However, these factors evidently combined to influence the timing of the letter and probably account for its no-nonsense tone. The perseverance of Greek lobbying had its effect particularly when contrasted with the virtually inexplicable Turkish silence. With the exception of official messages from the Turkish embassy in Washington or from Turkish-Cypriot leader Fazıl Küçük, there was scarcely any plea for the Turkish side of the Cyprus conflict at that time. True, a cable to Johnson, datelined Denver, Colorado, February 22, 1964, did arrive from the Turkish Association of Colorado, signed by its president, Halil Gerger.⁴² Later, a cable from a Turk named Hüseyin Yeltepe, from Şişli (Istanbul), and dated December 20, 1965, also arrived.⁴³ However, these two instances merely serve to emphasize the absence of any serious attempt by the Turks to influence the policies of President Johnson. Such an effort by the Turks was far from impossible: although there were fewer Turkish-Americans than Greek-Americans in the United States, the former nevertheless numbered more than a hundred thousand.⁴⁴

In conclusion, it may be said that, in order to be effective, lobbyists must interact with their target—in this case, the White House—frequently and on a regular basis.⁴⁵ According to our evidence, Greek-Americans do not seem to have a regular, active lobby; rather, they act energetically, both through their associations and privately, whenever the need arises. Their public and private communications, persistent and insistent, have proven quite rewarding. The emphasis in their efforts appears, however, to be placed on an indirect, impersonal approach—mass letter and telegram campaigns—although intermediaries, such as senators, are occasionally employed to pass their views on to the president. In this decisional setting, the pre-June 5, 1964, Greek lobbying efforts were indeed successful, particularly in the absence of any organized Turkish counter-activity.

42. Ibid., Ex CO 56 (box 26).

43. Ibid., Gen CO 56 (box 27).

44. *1960 Census of Population*, table 162.

45. See the data in Harman Ziegler and Michel A. Baer, *Lobbying: Interaction and Influence in American State Legislatures* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1969), especially pp. 146 ff. Cf. J. M. Berry, *Lobbying for the People: The Political Behavior of Public Interest Groups* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), especially pp. 286–292.

APPENDIX

President Johnson's Letter to Prime Minister İnönü

June 5, 1964

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am gravely concerned by the information which I have had through Ambassador Hare from you and your Foreign Minister that the Turkish Government is contemplating a decision to intervene by military force to occupy a portion of Cyprus. I wish to emphasize, in the fullest friendship and frankness, that I do not consider that such a course of action by Turkey, fraught with such far-reaching consequences, is consistent with the commitment of your Government to consult fully in advance with us. Ambassador Hare has indicated that you have postponed your decision for a few hours in order to obtain my views. I put to you personally whether you really believe that it is appropriate for your Government, in effect, to present a unilateral decision of such consequence to an ally who has demonstrated such staunch support over the years as has the United States for Turkey. I must, therefore, first urge you to accept the responsibility for complete consultation with the United States before any such action is taken.

It is my impression that you believe that such intervention by Turkey is permissible under the provisions of the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960. I must call your attention, however, to our understanding that the proposed intervention by Turkey would be for the purpose of effecting a form of partition of the Island, a solution which is specifically excluded by the Treaty of Guarantee. Further, that Treaty requires consultation among the Guarantor Powers. It is the view of the United States that the possibilities of such consultation have by no means been exhausted in this situation and that, therefore, the reservation of the right to take unilateral action is not yet applicable.

I must call to your attention, also, Mr. Prime Minister, the obligations of NATO. There can be no question in your mind that a Turkish intervention in Cyprus would lead to a military engagement between Turkish and Greek

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forces. Secretary of State Rusk declared at the recent meeting of the Ministerial Council of NATO in The Hague that war between Turkey and Greece must be considered as "literally unthinkable." Adhesion to NATO, in its very essence, means that NATO countries will not wage war on each other. Germany and France have buried centuries of animosity and hostility in becoming NATO allies; nothing less can be expected from Greece and Turkey. Furthermore, a military intervention in Cyprus by Turkey could lead to a direct involvement by the Soviet Union. I hope you will understand that your NATO Allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO Allies.

Further, Mr. Prime Minister, I am concerned about the obligations of Turkey as a member of the United Nations. The United Nations has provided forces on the Island to keep the peace. Their task has been difficult but, during the past several weeks, they have been progressively successful in reducing the incidents of violence on that Island. The United Nations Mediator has not yet completed his work. I have no doubt that the general membership of the United Nations would react in the strongest terms to unilateral action by Turkey which would defy the efforts of the United Nations and destroy any prospect that the United Nations could assist in obtaining a reasonable and peaceful settlement of this difficult problem.

I wish also, Mr. Prime Minister, to call your attention to the bilateral agreement between the United States and Turkey in the field of military assistance. Under Article IV of the Agreement with Turkey of July 1947, your Government is required to obtain United States consent for the use of military assistance for purposes other than those for which such assistance was furnished. Your Government has on several occasions acknowledged to the United States that you fully understand this condition. I must tell you in all candor that the United States cannot agree to the use of any United States supplied military equipment for a Turkish intervention in Cyprus under present circumstances.

Moving to the practical results of the contemplated Turkish move, I feel obliged to call to your attention in the most friendly fashion the fact that such a Turkish move could lead to the slaughter of tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots on the Island of Cyprus. Such an action on your part would unleash the furies and there is no way by which military action on

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your part could be sufficiently effective to prevent wholesale destruction of many of those whom you are trying to protect. The presence of United Nations forces could not prevent such a catastrophe.

You may consider that what I have said is much too severe and that we are disregarding of Turkish interests in the Cyprus situation. I should like to assure you that this is not the case. We have exerted ourselves both publicly and privately to assure the safety of Turkish Cypriots and to insist that a final solution of the Cyprus problem should rest upon the consent of the parties most directly concerned. It is possible that you feel in Ankara that the United States has not been sufficiently active in your behalf. But surely you know that our policy has caused the liveliest resentments in Athens (where demonstrations have been aimed against us) and has led to a basic alienation between the United States and Archbishop Makarios. As I said to your Foreign Minister in our conversation just a few weeks ago, we value very highly our relations with Turkey. We have considered you as a great ally with fundamental common interests. Your security and prosperity have been a deep concern of the American people and we have expressed that concern in the most practical terms. You and we have fought together to resist the ambitions of the Communist world revolution. This solidarity has meant a great deal to us and I would hope that it means a great deal to your Government and to your people. We have no intention of lending any support to any solution of Cyprus which endangers the Turkish Cypriot community. We have not been able to find a final solution because this is, admittedly, one of the most complex problems on earth. But I wish to assure you that we have been deeply concerned about the interests of Turkey and of the Turkish Cypriots and will remain so.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister I must tell you that you have posed the gravest issues of war and peace. These are issues which go far beyond the bilateral relations between Turkey and the United States. They not only will certainly involve war between Turkey and Greece but could involve wider hostilities because of the unpredictable consequences which a unilateral intervention in Cyprus could produce. You have your responsibilities as Chief of the Government of Turkey; I also have mine as President of the United States. I must, therefore, inform you in the deepest friendship that unless I can have your assurance that you will not take such action without further and fullest consultation I cannot accept your injunction to Ambassador Hare of secrecy and must immediately ask for emergency meetings of the NATO Council and of the United Nations Security Council.

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I wish it were possible for us to have a personal discussion of this situation. Unfortunately, because of the special circumstances of our present Constitutional position, I am not able to leave the United States. If you could come here for a full discussion I would welcome it. I do feel that you and I carry a very heavy responsibility for the general peace and for the possibilities of a sane and peaceful resolution of the Cyprus problem. I ask you, therefore, to delay any decisions which you and your colleagues might have in mind until you and I have had the fullest and frankest consultation.

Sincerely,

Lyndon B. Johnson

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