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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION NEA-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3229

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PERSONAL FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO FROM HANDLEY

SUBJ: OPIUM PRODUCTION

REF: ANKARA 1265

1. AS SOON AS APPROPRIATE AFTER PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL RECEIVES A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS GOVERNMENT, I INTEND TO TRY TO STIR THE GOT TO NEW ACTION ON THE OPIUM QUESTION. MY LAST CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY GENERAL ERALP (REFTEL), IN WHICH I BORE DOWN VERY HEAVILY, LEFT ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT WE MAY BE IN ACTUAL NEGOTIATION WITH THE GOT IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, ASSUMING THE POLITICAL SITUATION DOES NOT SERIOUSLY DETERIORATE.

2. IT HAD BEEN MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE STRATEGY WORKED OUT WHEN I WAS IN WASHINGTON IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY, WHICH INVOLVED HIGH LEVEL PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOT, WAS STILL IN EFFECT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THEREFORE, I WAS ASTONISHED TO READ IN THE PRESS THAT DIRECTOR INGERSOLL OF THE BNDD HAD CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH WHAT COULD ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS THE OBJECTIVE OF PUTTING TURKEY AND TURKEY'S PRIME MINISTER ON A PUBLIC HOTSEAT. THIS MOVE WAS UNEXPECTED, UNTIMELY, MALADROIT AND, IN MY OPION, UNNECESSARY, SINCE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE VERY SENSIBLE STRATEGY WORKED OUT EARLIER HAS YET RUN ITS COURSE. THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT DOES, OF COURSE, HAVE PROBLEMS. THESE PROBLEMS CANNOT BE LIGHTLY DISMISSED AND IN FACT INVOLVE PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY AND THE FUTURE AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS OF 70,000 TURKISH FARMERS AND

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THEIR FAMILIES.

3. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE CROP THAT IS NOW IN THE GROUND WILL NOT BE HARVESTED BEFORE MAY. THEREFORE WE HAVE TIME FOR FURTHER PROBES WITH THE GOT. IF THE WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONCERNED HAVE DETERMINED THAT A NEW STRATEGY IS NOW REQUIRED AND THAT THIS INVOLVES EMBARRASSING THE GOT PUBLICLY, I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION.

4. SO FAR THE STORY OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN GIVEN QUIE WIDE PUBLICITY, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT YET AND POSSIBLY THERE WILL NOT BE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOT AND VERY ESPECIALLY THE PRIME MINISTER CANNOT HELP BUT RESENT THIS ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS THEM AT A TIME WHEN THEY ARE

FUNDAMENTALLY ENGAGED IN SOLVING A SERIOUS POLITICAL CRISIS THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. FORTUNATELY, IF I AM QUESTIONED ABOUT THIS, I CAN SAY WITH THE STRAIGHTEST OF FACES THAT I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT, EVEN THOUGH I DOUBT I WILL BE BELIEVED.
GP-3
HANDLEY

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