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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION
September 5, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: A. Denis Clift *R. Gates*
SUBJECT: Turkish Military Capabilities on Cyprus:
The Second Attila Line

In the light of reports on Thursday that Turkey may resume offensive operations on Cyprus involving the establishment of a "Second Attila Line" running from Nicosia to Larnaca (see map), CIA has provided the following estimate of Turkish capabilities, the strength of Greek Cypriot opposition, and Turkish motives.

Should the Turks decide to establish a new line from Nicosia to Larnaca, the operation should require two days or less, although some small pockets of Greek resistance might hold out longer. In attempting to expand to Larnaca -- reportedly referred to by the Turks as establishing a "Second Attila Line" -- they will encounter little effective opposition. The Greek Cypriot National Guard has been badly battered by the course of the war and is considerably weaker than it was at the beginning of the crisis. The Turks, on the other hand, have taken relatively light casualties and have brought in additional reinforcements. The Greek Cypriots are in no position to stop a Turkish advance.

The Greek Cypriots will receive no assistance from other forces on the island. UN forces have no mandate to resist a Turkish advance. It is also highly unlikely that UK forces will take any action, provided that the Turks continue to respect the British sovereign base areas. There is no reason to believe that the Greek government will be any more willing or able to provide effective assistance this time than they were during earlier stages of the Turkish advance.

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The creation of a "Second Attila Line" would be aimed at further improving the Turkish bargaining position and of stepping up the pressure on the Greeks to return to the conference table. Such an advance would also have the effect of bringing more Turkish Cypriots into Turkish-controlled territory, thus saving them from Greek revenge.

There is still no reason to believe that Turkey wishes to take control of the entire island of Cyprus. If the Turks did attempt to do so, it would probably take them several weeks. The operation would be bloody and they would probably need reinforcements, particularly since it would involve the capture of urban areas such as Nicosia.

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