

  
*Washington Merry-Go-Round*  
By JACK ANDERSON



WASHINGTON — Public statements to the contrary, Greece is already making plans to shut down every NATO base in the country within a year, thus leaving a gaping hole in the fabric of the Western world's defense systems.

So secret are the new Athens civilian government's plans that even top U. S. officials are unaware of the seriousness of the threat. Just a few days ago, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger was speaking honestly when he said he had "little indication" of such a move.

Our information, however, from high but confidential diplomatic sources who backed up their talk with documents, is that the NATO shutdown is already a matter of Athens policy, barring a radical change in the current U. S. attitude towards Cyprus.

The importance of the Greek NATO bases is difficult to overestimate. Naval, bomber, missile and communications facilities in Greece give NATO a striking power directly beneath the belly of Soviet Russia and her satellites.

At the same time that Greece was setting its course on NATO, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was assuring a private meeting with President Ford and Republican leaders that the U.S. policy on Cyprus is neutral.

"We have made major efforts to elicit concessions from both the Greeks and the Turks," he said, according to confidential minutes of the White House meeting. "We will take a new look if the Turks cross the cease-fire line."

The restive Republicans wondered why Kissinger had not simply halted aid to Turkey. Kissinger replied, according to the minutes, that this "would not have stopped the three-day occupation."

Indeed, Kissinger warned, such drastic action "would have enormous consequences on NATO, Turkish nationalism and (the) possible approach to the Soviet Union." One "possible

solution," Kissinger said, "may be a federalized republic or a Cantonal structure" — in short, a semi-partitioning of Cyprus with Greece and Turkey each controlling part of the island.

Added President Ford hopefully, "I think we'll come out all right as friends of both parties."

Kissinger also met privately with five congressmen of Greek descent who gave him a far more obstreperous going over than the Republican leaders. One of the Greek-American legislators who attended the off-the-record meeting told us they tore into

Kissinger "in a manner to which he is unaccustomed."

The congressmen were Louis Bafalis, R-Fla., John Brademas, D-Ind., Peter Kyros, D-Me., Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., and Gus Yatron, D-Pa. At one point, they told Kissinger he was personally responsible for a "grievous policy....The U.S. has egg all over its face."

The strong-willed Kissinger was "patient" but "stuttered, reeled back and reddened" under the onslaught, we were told. At one point he left the meeting for a telephone conversation with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. But at the end of the meeting, Kissinger courteously invited the lawmakers to come back again.

Despite appearances of even-handedness, we are told by high diplomatic sources that Kissinger tentatively and confidentially agreed in recent meetings with British Ambassador Peter Ramsbotham to a Cyprus plan drawn up in London.

To the distress of the Greeks, it would, in effect, chop Cyprus into Greek and Turkish enclaves. The Turks would make an ostentatious pull-back to a line running across the northern third of the island to pacify world opinion — a move they had intended anyway.

When the plan was delicately put to deposed Cypriot president Archbishop Makarios in London

by Britain's Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Foreign Secretary James Callaghan, the peppery Makarios was outraged, we were told.

In Athens, Greek leaders are also fuming. For years, they have gone along with almost every twist and turn in American policy, while the Turks have often refused to cooperate with Washington. A few weeks ago, for instance, Turkey defied the United States and resumed cultivation of opium.

Meanwhile, we have learned that Athens risked her good relations with the Arabs by secretly permitting the United States to use Greek NATO bases for shuttling supplies to Israel during the Middle East war last October. As a result, Israel is secretly grateful to Greece and hopes it will keep its NATO ties.

During the October War, Greece also allowed U.S. intelligence services to use a communications station outside Athens to monitor Soviet and Arab radio broadcasts. Turkey, on the other hand, reportedly permitted the Soviets to overfly her territory to deliver arms to the Arabs.

Footnote: At the State Department, a spokesman denied Greek bases were used by the United States to resupply Israel. He also said the British initiative was not yet "developed." It does not have any "arms or legs" yet, he said.

**NIXON TAPES:** The Watergate defendants sought postponement of their upcoming trial in part because they have not had time to study the new batch of Nixon tapes released under the Supreme Court's 8-0 ruling.

Sources from the old Nixon White House tell us the tapes will prove a grueling study for defendants and prosecutors alike. They contain many gaps, distortions and unintelligible passages. Some gaps could have been caused by technical difficulties, but other gaps occur at suspicious points in the White House conversations.

One tape, according to our sources, was broken in half and then spliced back together. But the two halves are unrelated to one another.

Another tape was cut in half and presented to Judge John Sirica in two boxes. Nixon's attorney at the time, James St. Clair, opened the boxes in front of prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste. The second box, astonishingly, was empty.

Dismayed, St. Clair mumbled to Ben-Veniste: "Pardon me while I have a heart attack."