

Erdoğān sends a tough message to Greek Cyprus

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Visiting northern Cyprus to attend ceremonies that mark the anniversary of the 1974 Turkish military intervention, PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğān delivers a crystalclear message to Greek Cyprus and the EU : If the Cyprus issue is not solved in a short period of time, the dreams of a unified island may come to an end

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğān visited Northern Cyprus yesterday for the first time since the 61st government was established in Ankara. AA photo

Visiting northern Cyprus on Wednesday, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğān gave two sets of important messages, one to Greek Cypriots and the other to Brussels.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the anniversary of the 1974 Turkish intervention, Erdoğān expressed anger with how the Greek Cypriot church and radical groups had responded to a move from Turkish Cypriots against an energy crisis.

“Don’t consider Turks as your enemies ... Your enemies are within yourself,” Erdoğān said in response to statements by the church and other groups that they would rather live under candlelight than getting electricity from Turkish Cyprus.

Greek Cyprus has been facing a serious energy shortage due to the damage caused to a key power plant by a blast at a naval base. This is the first time the Greek Cypriot community has been suffering such an acute shortage. Turkish Cypriot settlements, however, were without electricity and even running water for most of the 1960s and until the 1974 Turkish intervention. Energy shortages remained a serious problem until four years ago, when an electricity station constructed with Turkish assistance was put into service.

Erdoğān also disclosed that Turkey might link northern Cyprus to the Turkish energy grid by laying down an energy line next to the deep-sea-suspended water pipeline set to be completed in March 2014. The Turkish Cypriot energy minister was invited to Ankara this week for further talks on that subject.

Would Greek Cypriot radicals go berserk if they also start consuming water from Anatolia ? Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Erođlu only grinned in response to this question.

However, Erdoğān’s real message to Greek Cypriots was on a far more important issue.

To the joy of Turkish Cypriots, he warned that the Turkish Cypriot-Turkish “hand in peace and reconciliation” would not remain stretched out for ever and that if no settlement for the island is reached by the end of 2011, the prospect of a united Cyprus might slip away altogether.

This was perhaps the first time a Turkish PM had stressed with such clarity that if by a certain date, there was no settlement, the game might be over. Within that context Erdoğān delivered a strong message to the European Union that Turkey would under no condition accept talks with an EU under the term presidency of Greek Cyprus. “There is no ‘Cyprus republic’ for us,” he said.

The PM received support from conservatives, some devoted federalists were not so positive about his remarks. Cenk Mutluyakalı, the editor of Yeni Düzen, said Erdoğān’s remarks regarding Varosha, a contested suburb of Famagusta, and Morphou town being out of territorial concession were “unacceptable”

and “provocative.”

‘We need parameters’

Speaking with the Daily News, a top executive in the Turkish Cypriot government complained that critics of the prime minister in particular, and Turkey’s image problem in northern Cyprus in general, was a product of “colonial-style” governance that has become more and more dominant in relations between the “motherland” and the “kinderland.”

The official, conceding that in fear for his own position in government he cannot speak on these issues publicly, complained that unless parameters were introduced in Turkey’s budgetary and investment budget assistance, radical or marginal elements would voice such complaints. k HDN

Sources

Source : Hurriyet.com.tr, Wednesday, July 20, 2011