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Greek-Turkish Talks on Aegean Off to Bad Start

The attempt by Athens and Ankara to resolve their dispute over the Aegean continental shelf has gotten off to a bad start. Representatives of the two countries were scheduled to begin discussions in Paris this week, but the meeting fell through when the two sides failed to agree on an agenda and on the press release which was to announce the session.

Last February, the Turkish caretaker government agreed in principle to the Greek proposal to take the issue to the International Court of Justice. The Demirel government reaffirmed this, but the Turks have also given strong indications they prefer to deal with most aspects of the dispute in bilateral talks with the Greeks, probably in the belief that they can get a better deal that way.

The Greeks wanted to deal solely with the terms of reference for submitting the dispute to the International Court. The Turks insisted that the Paris meeting also study possible ventures for a joint exploration and development of the continental shelf. Such an agreement, in Ankara's view, might make submission to the Court unnecessary. The Greeks would agree to consider such a joint venture only after the dispute is presented to the Court and tensions over the issue are eased.

The quarrel over the continental shelf began after the energy crunch in 1973 and the discovery of oil by the Greeks in the northern Aegean. Turkish interest in the Aegean was rekindled as a

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result. Ankara claimed that much of the Aegean continental shelf was an extension of the Anatolian Peninsula, and that the dividing line for purposes of mineral exploitation should be equidistant between the Greek and Turkish mainlands. Athens, which has traditionally considered the Aegean a "Greek lake" because of the many Greek islands dotting it, argues that these islands also have a continental shelf. The dividing line should therefore be equidistant from the easternmost Greek islands and the Turkish coastline.

The current effort to follow up on the earlier agreement in principle also ran up against the problem that blocked progress in the recent Cyprus and Aegean air space talks--the senatorial elections to be held in Turkey on October 12. These have temporarily hampered the Demirel government's flexibility in its dealings with Greece. Efforts to resolve the dispute are expected to resume once the elections are over.

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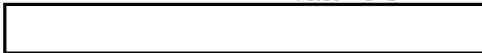
West German Opposition Leader Having Problems  
in Soviet Union

Helmut Kohl, chairman and chancellor-candidate of the West German Christian Democratic Union, has been deliberately challenged during his visit to the Soviet Union.

Kohl, who arrived in Moscow September 22, has cancelled all his appointments scheduled for today and sought an urgent meeting with his official host, the premier of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic, Mikhail Solomentsev. Kohl took this action after the Soviet party paper, Pravda, strongly criticized Christian Social Union leader Franz Josef Strauss. Among other things, Pravda called Strauss, who recently visited China, "detestable."

Kohl faced a dilemma, for he has not been attacked, and his visit, according to German correspondents, was going fairly well. Kohl, however, needs the support of Strauss and the CSU if he is to have a chance to become chancellor next year, and he obviously concluded that he could not ignore the Soviet attack against Strauss.

West German journalists have speculated that if Kohl's meeting with Solomentsev does not go well, Kohl might depart the Soviet Union prematurely. He has not yet met with Premier Kosygin, who was to be his principal interlocutor, but Kohl again may conclude that it is more important to keep his relations with Strauss on an even keel than it is to talk with Kosygin.



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Madrid Worried Over Getting Out of the Sahara

Spain's repeated expressions of concern about the prospects for violence in the Spanish Sahara reflect both Madrid's desire to enlist international support for a peaceful solution and its fear that the chances for an armed conflict are increasing.

Spain delivered a policy memorandum to the US this week which stressed its continuing attempts to involve the UN in the area. Madrid's own efforts to negotiate a settlement with the interested parties--Morocco, Mauritania, and Algeria have failed thus far. The policy statement reiterated Spain's determination to withdraw from the territory and called for a resolution in the UN General Assembly that would permit Madrid to terminate its role and transfer sovereignty to officials selected by the Saharans themselves.

Spain has made it clear it does not want to remain in the Sahara or fight a colonial war. Madrid is concerned, however, that even a unilateral pull out at this point would trigger an armed conflict between those countries contesting the area. Such a development might result in serious casualties to the Spanish army which would be caught in the middle.

Morocco, Mauritania, and Algeria have deferred further action on Spanish Sahara pending the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Moroccan-Mauritanian claims to the territory that is expected in October or November. The Moroccans are nonetheless concerned that the Court's opinion may be ambiguous or unfavorable to Rabat.

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The Moroccans are also annoyed by what they perceive as collusion between Spain and Algeria to set up a puppet government in the Sahara responsive to Algerian political interests and Spanish economic interests. King Hassan, who again vowed last month to recover Spanish Sahara before the end of the year, using force if necessary, is keeping his military option credible by continuing to improve the capability of military units already stationed in southern Morocco.

Algeria has not given any further support to Morocco's Saharan policy since the July 4 joint communique in which it publicly accepted a Moroccan-Mauritanian understanding that would partition the disputed territory. It is continuing to espouse self-determination for Spanish Sahara and to support a pro-independence Saharan political group, the POLISARIO Front. Algiers is clinging to this position so that if the Moroccan campaign fails, it will be in a position to support independence for Spanish Sahara.

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British Labor Party Conference To Feature  
Traditional Left-Right Struggle

The annual Labor Party conference, which begins Monday in Blackpool, promises to be another struggle between the leftwing and the moderate-to-conservative majority over the Wilson government's economic, industrial, and defense policy issues.

Leftist dissatisfaction centers primarily on how to correct Britain's serious economic difficulties. The government's first priority is curbing inflation, while the party's left wing wants strong reflationary measures to alleviate the worst unemployment since the war. Chancellor of the Exchequer Healey has resisted these demands, as was evident in the moderate program he announced earlier this week to combat unemployment.

Energy Minister Benn, one of the most outspoken left wing critics, will lead the faction demanding sweeping reform at the convention. He recently declared that the government must use Britain's economic crisis "as the occasion for fundamental change, not the excuse for postponing it."

Other Laborites, however, argue that the deterioration of the British economy places limitations on government action. They believe that the government should concentrate its limited resources on one or two priority areas, such as housing and transportation, in order to obtain a maximum impact.

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Prime Minister Wilson and his supporters are expected to be able to defeat, or water down, hostile conference resolutions. Should the conference pass motions with which Wilson disagrees, he may disregard them in shaping government policy. Such a course would increase the already considerable stress between some party elements and the government.

The left is likely to increase its representation on the party's National Executive Committee, which it already dominates. Several moderate incumbents who won by narrow margins last year face strong challenges. In addition, the leftists will attempt to force changes in party organization and procedure to enhance the policy-making role of the annual conference at the expense of Labor members of parliament.

These changes will strengthen the left wing of the party and will make the next intra-party confrontation much more serious, particularly if the Wilson government does not make some progress resolving Britain's economic problems.

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