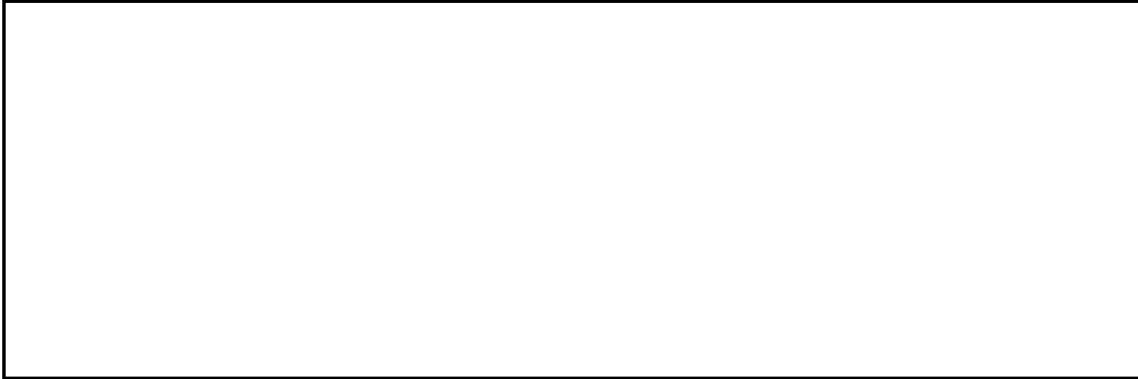


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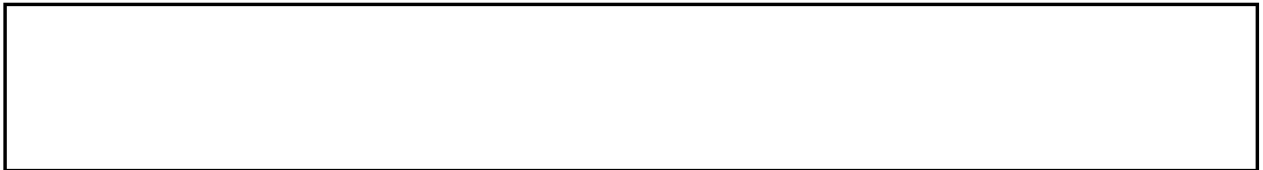


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February 3, 1975

Cyprus Talks Show No Progress

Tensions increased in Cyprus over the weekend, following an outbreak of heavy gunfire between Greek and Turkish forces. Each side also charged the other with bad faith in the intercommunal talks.

The clashes, described by the US embassy in Nicosia as the most serious in several months, began on January 31 in northwestern Cyprus when Greek and Turkish forces exchanged heavy gunfire for about 30 minutes. Heavy firing also broke out on February 1 near Nicosia airport and spread to the UN-patrolled "green line," which separates Greek and Turkish forces in Nicosia.

While there is no information on who initiated the shooting on January 31, UN officials are "reasonably certain" that the two-hour exchange the following day was begun by Turkish forces. UN officials arranged a cease-fire, but more clashes could occur.

The latest incidents came amid Greek and Greek Cypriot charges that the intercommunal talks had made no progress because of Turkish intransigence and delaying tactics. Turkish and Turkish Cypriot officials, on the other hand, insist that some progress had been made despite what they termed the inflexibility of the Greek side.

In fact, the negotiators made no significant progress in their six meetings on substantive political issues last month. They will have a final chance today before the scheduled suspension of US military aid to Turkey on Wednesday.

The lack of progress appears to be the result of Turkish reluctance to make meaningful concessions and Greek unwillingness to accept token gestures which might give the talks an aura of progress and lead to an extension of the cutoff date.

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[REDACTED]

Vietnam Issue Raised at Geneva Conference

The second session of the Diplomatic Conference on International Humanitarian Law Applicable to Armed Conflict--the conference on the law of war--opened yesterday in Geneva. Despite a vote last year that rejected attempts by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam to be seated as a full member at the conference, the issue of PRG participation will be raised again and may be decided as early as today.

Conference rules of procedure specify that the rulings on credentials made at the first session apply to all subsequent sessions of the conference as well. The PRG and its allies--in particular, Algeria--are therefore presenting the PRG accreditation issue as a "new question" that requires a "new" conference decision. An Algerian-sponsored resolution calls on the conference to invite "both the governments in South Vietnam" to participate in the conference's work with full and equal rights.

Estimates of the voting outcome are very close and the issue could again be decided by just one vote--as it was last year. Once the PRG representation issue is out of the way, the conference may be able to get down to its real business--improving the laws governing the rules of warfare laid down in the Geneva conventions of 1949. [REDACTED]

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Belgian Labor Problems

Rising unemployment could cause a government crisis in Belgium. Unemployment reached approximately 150,000 or nearly six percent of the workforce, last month. The number of partially employed also is rising and the outlook for 1975 is for a continuation of this trend.

Unemployment is highest in French-speaking Wallonia, particularly in the depressed Charleroi area. The most immediate problem facing the government is the closure of two glass factories in Charleroi, one a bankrupt plant taken over by the government and the other privately owned. Workers struck the latter plant last month and occupied the premises when it became apparent that the company planned to close the facility after merging with a larger firm. In both cases the workers are looking to the government for a solution; the Ministry of Labor has asked the company planning to close the one plant to delay action until February 15.

Belgian metal workers also threatened to strike when wage negotiations broke down last month. Plant layoffs are the key issue since wages are tied to the cost-of-living index. For this reason union leaders have asked for guarantees that there will be no permanent layoffs in 1975. If negotiations are not resumed, the metal workers plan to strike on February 10.

Because the major problems are centered in Wallonia, the situation could have political repercussions. Three members of the government, including the Labor Minister, are from Charleroi. Additionally, the government's majority in parliament is dependent upon the support of the small Walloon Rally Party which might disassociate itself from the government if these labor issues are not resolved satisfactorily.

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