

Leave door open to Turkey, US tells EU

By Bruce Clark

Mr Carey Cavanaugh, the US troubleshooter on Greek-Turkish issues, yesterday urged European allies not to slam the door forever on Turkey's aspiration to join the European Union.

He was speaking in London at the start of a hastily organised four of European capitals that

reflects US concern over the worsening atmosphere between Ankara and leading EU members.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany and five other European leaders on the political centre-right agreed at a meeting in Brussels last week that Turkey's poor human rights record, culture and size disqualified it for the EU.

Mr Cavanaugh said comments

like this had led to "growing concern in Ankara that doors may be shut" because of the increasingly open suggestions it might never have the potential to become a member. Washington felt "concerns about the way the EU handles Turkey" and would like Ankara to be offered at least a reasonable prospect of steadily deepening relations with the

European club, he said.

The tour by Mr Cavanaugh, who headed for The Hague last night and will also visit Paris and Bonn, coincides with a formal undertaking by Turkey's foreign ministry to improve the country's human rights record.

"Our goal is to drop the issue of human rights both from the agenda of Turkey and from the

Turkish-EU relationship by the end of the year," said a ministry statement, adding that governors and police chiefs had been told to monitor human rights more closely and stop prisoners being ill-treated.

UK officials said they shared the US feeling that comments at last week's meeting of Christian Democratic leaders had gone too

far in snubbing Turkey, whose wish to join the EU should be "taken seriously" in London's view.

But Britain did not believe the EU should start entry negotiations with Turkey in defiance of the advice of the European Commission, whose most recent pronouncement on Turkey's eligibility, eight years ago, was negative.

Extremists fight on campus

Islamists seek recruits in Istanbul as left and right do battle

Istanbul University, the alma mater of Turkey's elite, has always been an ideological battleground. But recently, fighting between extreme leftwing and rightwing students has become frequent and bloody. Usually it is the rightwingers - some wielding meat cleavers - who come off better.

Police in riot gear patrol the university's Beyazit campus, which dates back to Ottoman times, to prevent clashes. But most students and faculty members say police side with the far-right Islamist movement, even helping them smuggle weapons into the university.

The Islamists say faculty members shield leftists. Mr Mehmet Bülent Karataş, Islamist youth leader, has threatened to "take the necessary measures" against Mr Ulkü Azrak, dean of the political sciences faculty.

The surge in battles between the left and right brings back troubling memories of the 1970s, when Islamists battled for con-

trol of universities, streets and entire neighbourhoods. The Idealists are direct descendants of the Grey Wolves street fighters, recruited in the 1970s by the far-right Nationalist Action party. Fighting claimed hundreds of lives and contributed to the last military takeover in 1980.

Fears of another coup d'état rose during last month's confrontation between the secularist army and Mr Necmettin Erbakan, the Islamist prime minister. The army threatened unspecified "sanctions" against Mr Erbakan unless he cracked down on Islamist organisations.

According to Mr Ersin Durna, a political sciences student, "the university reflects what is going on in the streets. Turkey is boiling over." Mr Kürsat Karataş, a Marxist student, contends: "This not a free democratic society. We want to [be the] spark for the people to rise up. If we stay silent, everyone will be silent."

However, only a small core of activists are drawn into fighting. The hard left has only some 200 activists among the political science faculty's 3,000 students. Mr Azrak reckons the right has just five activists. Students say Islamist fighters are not even enrolled in the university, but enter from outside to attack leftist rallies and demonstrations.

Few think these battles have much wider relevance. They are more worried that confrontation between the generals and Mr Erbakan is radicalising Islamist students who comprise one-fifth of the student body and normally keep a low profile.

The Islamist Samanyolu television station has attacked Mr Azrak for discriminating against Islamist students. He is considering toughening foreign language entry requirements, hoping this will deter the less cosmopolitan Islamists.

Mr Azrak says the Islam-

ists "seemed domesticated [but] are gradually becoming more militant and active". Islamists have begun linking up with extreme Islamists. Clashes during Ramadan, the Moslem holy month of fasting, between non-observant leftists and Islamists chanting Islamist slogans are becoming more violent.

But Mr İdris Sayin, an Islamist student leader, denies this: "We do not get involved in fighting. We think it is artificial." The Islamists concentrate on winning over as many students as possible to their cause through persuasion not coercion.

Mr Sayin says the Islamists will dismantle the "unjust" secular state from within and, preferably, by democratic methods. "At the moment we have a democratic struggle. It is the people who will decide [on secularism]. Will they accept something [Atatürk] wrote 70 years ago or will they accept Allah's laws?" Mr Sayin has no doubt about



Istanbul University: always an ideological battleground

the outcome: "It is a process that is continuing and will grow gradually."

The Islamists are literally working to move this process forward. Unlike most secularist students, they study hard. High marks win them key positions in the judiciary and the powerful bureaucracy, allowing them to work quietly on establishing an Islamic state and turn Turkey away from pro-western secularism.

Mr Oğün Keleş, a secularist student says: "I would get less than a lemon seller in the market if I worked in the state. The Islamists have an ideology and they are ready to suffer for it. Not me. They will take the best places in the state and put their people there."

Like most Turks he despairs that mainstream political leaders are too corrupt and discredited to stop the Islamists. Some students

are tempted to put their trust in the army to prevent an Islamic state. But few are ready to give up on democracy.

Mr Durna, the student says: "This country is not totally democratic but no one wants to lose democracy even if it is weak. Everyone wants it to be strong. No one wants to lose what the have."

John Barhan

Branson waits to see if Hydra can be Virgin territory

By Kerin Hope in Athens

Greece's government is trying to attract foreign investment but the Virgin Group is still struggling to win a permit from the state archaeological service to build a \$30m luxury hotel on the island of Hydra.

delayed for over three years and has become a test case for the government's commitment to removing obstacles to investment and improving the quality of tourism, Greece's biggest industry.

In Athens yesterday, Mr Branson tried to quell fears that the 50-suite hotel

year-old mansions, would cause environmental damage. Modern buildings are banned on the island, there are no roads and transport is by donkey.

"The hotel will be built by Hydriot craftsmen. We'll have the materials carried by donkey, and there's no question of building a road"

Virgin Hotels has persisted with the project although its earlier applications to build a hotel in the rocky valley outside the island's port were rejected in 1993 and 1994. The archaeological service said the valley's "natural and archaeological character must be protected and

at Greece's new "one-stop-shop" for promoting foreign investment have been trying to persuade the archaeological service to rule on the current plan for the site.

But the Central Archaeological Council, a group of scholars and architects with a reputation for resisting

new archaeological and environmental study of Hydra which is not due to be completed before the summer.

Mr Branson said that "probably 99 per cent" of Hydra's 2,000 residents were in favour of the project. But plans for the mayor and other islanders to back him

vented ships from sailing.

Several Greek environmental groups have come out against the project, but only two protesters were on view yesterday. Mr Joseph Efraimidis, an architect and town planner, stood outside the hotel where the news conference was held with a

Berisha appoints Socialist PM

Financial Times 12.3.92

By Guy Dinmore in Tirana

Albania's embattled President Sali Berisha yesterday appointed a new prime minister from the opposition Socialist party in an attempt to contain a mass insurrection in the south which is spreading towards the capital, Tirana.

But while political parties wrangled over the composition of a government of "national reconciliation", which will call elections in June, Albanians loyal to Mr Berisha seized weapons from two military arsenals in his northern home town of Tropoje, raising fears of a civil war. It was the first time unrest had been reported in northern Albania.

State television said the new prime minister was Mr Bashkim Fino, the former Socialist mayor of the south-east rebel-held town of Gjirokastra. The more powerful position of interior minister went to Mr Berisha's ruling Democratic party.

Rebels in the south, who have seized control of a third of the country, insist that Mr Berisha resign and have rejected offers of an

amnesty. The fragmented opposition parties in Tirana admit they have little control over the rebels.

Several countries, including Britain, Germany and Italy, advised their nationals to leave Albania as soon as possible. Diplomats feared the crisis was spiralling out of control.

"We political parties are making blah, blah, blah but we are not really representative of the rebels," said Mr Perikli Teta, a former defence minister and leading member of the opposition Democratic Alliance.

Air force pilots at a major base in Kucove said 25 pilots, along with 19 MiG fighter planes, had handed over the airfield and its arsenal to rebels after refusing to carry out government orders to "scare" rebels. "We are the revolution. We are the people," one pilot said. The pilots kept guard over their planes and said they did not want to be drawn into war.

Defecting army units have also handed over tanks, heavy weapons and thousands of guns to the rebels. Residents said people had started

looting weapons from Mjekes near Elbasan, Albania's third largest city lying just 55km by road from the capital. The loss of Elbasan, which lies across the north-south ethnic faultline dividing Albania, would be a serious blow to the government.

But more alarming were reports from residents in the far north-east that 9,000 people loyal to Mr Berisha had seized weapons from military depots in Tropoje. They vowed to defend Mr Berisha if needed. One person was wounded in an explosion. Telephone lines to Tropoje were later cut.

Mr Genc Pollo, adviser to the president, accused defecting army officers of having more allegiance to the old Communist party that ruled Albania for 47 years. Diplomats pointed out that conscripts were paid only a few dollars a month and that many had also lost their savings when fraudulent pyramid investment schemes collapsed in January, triggering the mass revolt in the south.

The rebel leader in Gjirokastra is a retired general, Mr Agim Gozhita,

who has organised a defence committee to take weapons from everyone under the age of 18 and stop looting of shops and hospitals.

Rebel representatives from the south-west town of Vlore who held talks with the Italian ambassador on a warship in the Adriatic on Monday yesterday denied reports they had signed an agreement to persuade townspeople to hand in their weapons. They told residents they were simply seeking aid for the town, which is running out of food.

Mr Pollo said the president would resign only if the opposition won the parliamentary elections planned for June. Mr Berisha imposed a state of emergency last week and was then appointed by parliament for a second five-year term. His rightwing Democratic party won an overwhelming majority in parliament last May in heavily rigged elections.

Western military intervention may be needed to ensure the June elections are carried out fairly and to disarm supporters and opponents of the government, western observers said.