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TRAVEL UPDATE

Traffic Controllers Call Strike in Greece

ATHENS (Reuters) — Greek air traffic controllers announced that they would stop working this weekend, and seamen extended their strike against the government's 1997 budget and tight income policy, union representatives said Wednesday.

Controllers will strike on Friday and Sunday from 1200 GMT to 1600 GMT, disrupting flights at Greek airports.

The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation said Tuesday it would extend its strike, which has kept ships tied up at Greek ports, for another 48 hours, until Thursday night.

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Cyprus Mission Ends

ANKARA — A U.S. envoy met with a Turkish Foreign Ministry official Wednesday on the final leg of a mission to defuse tensions over Cyprus's decision to buy Russian missiles.

Before the meeting, the envoy, Carey Cavanaugh, repeated his prediction that the missiles would never be deployed by the Greek Cypriot government.

(AP)

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OPINION/LETTERS

Why NATO Expansion Stirs Fear of a New 'Yalta'

By William Pfaff

PARIS — Washington sees NATO enlargement as a problem in U.S.-Russian relations. It worries about the effect on Russian internal politics and reform. In Europe, NATO enlargement makes people think about Yalta.

Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt's division of Europe into spheres of influence, while meeting at the Black Sea resort of Yalta in February 1945, put "Yalta" into the polemical vocabulary of the Cold War, with symbolic power that exists today.

The symbolism has rested a distorted understanding of what actually happened at Yalta. But symbolism frequently makes history into something other than what it really was, and NATO expansion is loaded with symbolism.

When the Yalta conference took place, the Soviet Army had already overrun Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, a part of Czechoslovakia and much of Germany. Winston Churchill's ambition was to limit Soviet influence, and in particular to get leaders of Poland's London-based anti-Communist government in exile back into their country to

counter the influence of the Polish Communists already installed by the Russian army.

Franklin Roosevelt was more disposed to accommodate Stalin, but even had this not been true, neither he nor Churchill would have had popular support in their own countries for confronting Russia over the fate of Eastern Europe. Russia was in power there, and was to remain in power for the next four decades. Nonetheless the myth of a Western sellout to Russia at Yalta was born, and endured, and endures today.

To draw a new line across Europe today, between new NATO members and those left out of NATO expansion (even temporarily), looks to those in the second group like another "Yalta." Worse, it seems an entirely invented and unnecessary Yalta, cooked up in Washington and Bonn, pressed upon Russia even though Russia has given no sign of wishing to redivide Europe. It seems perversely to invite the Russians to do just what the West does not want them to do, which is to attempt to re-establish their

influence in the countries left out of the new NATO.

Those who will be the first into the new NATO — Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, at a minimum — are those who are already secure.

Those left out — the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine — are those in po-

What's needed is a major renegotiation of European security.

tentially difficult situations, and leaving them out automatically worsens their condition.

Germany is a driving force in NATO expansion simply because Germans want to stop being the eastern frontier of the West. The Germans want NATO states with NATO guarantees on their eastern border. The United States has acted under electoral pressures inside the United States, and because the American

government rightly sees NATO as the major agency of U.S. influence in Europe, and perhaps beyond.

Washington and Bonn insist that they are not redrafting Yalta, and that NATO expansion is not anti-Russian. Washington speaks of NATO's evolving into a regional peacemaking or security agency, with a role outside Europe. It wants Russian cooperation with NATO on tasks of common interest, as in Bosnian peacekeeping today.

Germany's foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, has proposed a new consultative group of 17 "equal partners" — the existing 16 nations of NATO plus Russia. He wants all the European political and security institutions woven together: NATO, plus the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Western European Union ("Working Together to Build Europe's New Security Framework," *Opinion*, Dec. 24).

But well-intentioned as this is, it cannot obscure the fact that all the former members of the Warsaw Pact, and the Baltic republics, want to belong to NATO because they are afraid that in the future there might be pressure from Russia to reincorporate them into a Russian sphere of influence.

This is a perfectly reasonable concern. Any responsible political leader in this region must take into account the possibility that today's turbulent Russian democracy, all but totally engrossed in its internal problems, might become something different tomorrow.

Similarly, any responsible Russian leader is necessarily concerned over political instabilities on Russia's frontiers. Every Russian knows that the mortal threats to the country have in the past all come from the West.

The elements in the situation are simple. The countries formerly dominated by Russia want, and deserve, reliable guarantees of their independence. Russia needs, and deserves, assurance of its own security, and predictable and nonhostile relations with

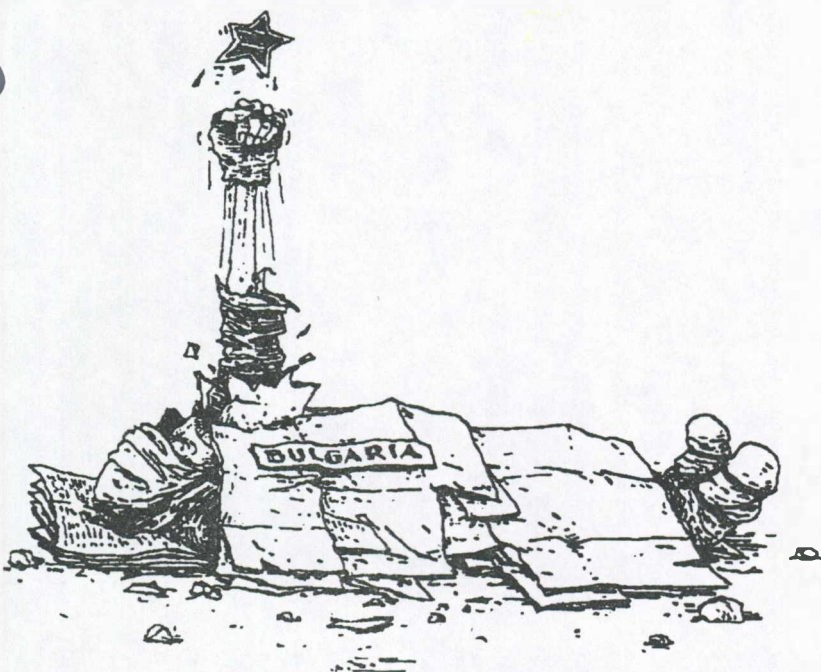
its neighbors and with the NATO powers.

Surely the answer lies in a major renegotiation of European security in which Russia, the existing NATO powers, and the non-NATO states formally guarantee existing frontiers against any change that has not been peacefully negotiated and condoned by international consensus. This guarantee, furthermore, should engage the NATO alliance as it exists today.

The actual prospect is of a NATO expansion stripped of its security content by Western congressional or parliamentary unwillingness to extend Article 5 guarantees beyond NATO's present membership. It is dangerous to pretend that this is not so. And that would leave even the countries newly brought into NATO worse off than they were before.

Redividing Europe, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact finally reunited it, will produce results opposite to those wanted. Madeleine Albright, born in Czechoslovakia, is surely too clever not to see that.

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Cypriots see omen in 'weeping icon'

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

A 15TH-CENTURY icon of the Virgin and Child which has been shedding what appear to be viscous, fragrant tears for more than a week has brought tens of thousands of people to a monastery in the snow-capped central mountains of Cyprus.

Many see it as a sign of divine displeasure and some view it as an ominous portent for the island's future, linking it to the recent missile dispute with Turkey.

"Something terrible will happen, we don't know what. It could be a war with Turkey or a long drought," said Chrysoulla Neophytou, a 68-year-old widow in black. "The Virgin is crying because she wants her Son to intercede on behalf of the people."

There were tumultuous scenes last Sunday when Archbishop Chrysostomos, head of the independent Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, travelled to Kykko monastery in the pine-clad Troodos mountains to offer prayers over the icon. Worshipers spilled out of the

church into a terraced courtyard while the narrow, winding roads leading to the monastery were clogged with trucks from distant villages and cars from the cities.

The local media estimated the number to have made the pilgrimage to Kykko at 50,000 — or nearly one in eight Greek Cypriots. Not since Archbishop Makarios, the island's first President, was buried on a nearby hilltop in 1977 had so many flocked to the 11th-century monastery.

Archbishop Chrysostomos said that the icon's tears were a sign of sorrow and love and a warning of possible dangers to come. He called on the Virgin to help to liberate the northern part of the island from Turkish occupation and for rainfall.

Veneration of icons, a typically Byzantine form of religious art, is common in Cyprus where reports of miracles associated with them surface about once a year and are mostly treated by the media without a hint of scepticism.