

# Turkey Rebuts Greek Charge Of Incursion

*Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches*

ANKARA — Turkey denied Friday that its warplanes entered Greek airspace on Christmas Day or broke an agreement barring military exercises on holidays.

"Greece's claims that the accord was broken are completely baseless," the Foreign Ministry said. "Turkey has always complied with the agreement."

Greek Defense Ministry officials said 12 Turkish F-16 planes violated Greek airspace Thursday.

Ankara said four Turkish F-16 planes on a training flight were "seriously and dangerously harassed" by 10 Greek planes outside Greek airspace.

NATO allies Greece and Turkey are at odds over territorial rights in the Aegean Sea and over the divided island of Cyprus. They almost came to blows last year over an uninhabited islet in the eastern Aegean.

Tension rose this week when Ankara expelled a Greek diplomat in Istanbul on charges of spying and aiding Kurdish guerrillas; Athens responded by expelling a Turkish diplomat based in the northern city of Salonika.

Greece and Turkey do not recognize each other's national airspace limits in the Aegean. The Greek defense minister, Akis Tsochadzopoulos, said Turkish jet fighters were intercepted Thursday after violating Greek airspace over a number of islands in the Aegean sea.

In Ankara, Colonel Ufuk Arslan, a spokesman for Turkish General Staff, denied Friday that jets from the two neighboring countries had tangled over the Aegean. He accused the Greek press of inventing the reports. (Reuters, AP)