



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Written Ministerial Statement
12 November 2009

**Cyprus: Offer of Sovereign Base Territory in Support of the Cyprus Settlement
Negotiations**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Chris Bryant): The UK remains an active supporter of the negotiations between the two Cypriot leaders aimed at reaching a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem. The current round of talks offers the best opportunity yet to solve the Cyprus problem.

The UK has no role in the negotiations but, in order to support the efforts of the two leaders, the Government made a renewed land offer to the UN Good Offices Mission in Cyprus on 10 November 2009 to cede a portion of territory of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs). The extent of the land offer is the same as the offer made in 2003 (modified in 2004). My right hon Friend the Prime Minister announced this on 11 November (see the text of his statement below).

The Government has offered to cede 45 square miles of SBA territory, just under 50% of the total, to a reunified Cyprus. This would make up 1.2 per cent of the area of the reunited island. The SBAs would be able to function as normal within a reduced land area.

As in 2003, the offer is dependent on a successful outcome to the settlement negotiations. It will be up to the two leaders to decide how the land will be allocated and how to incorporate it into a settlement. The offer will become null and void should a comprehensive settlement not be approved by both communities in Cyprus. Legislation would be required to bring the transfer of territory into operation in the event of a comprehensive settlement being agreed.

The UN will include the land offer in future negotiations between the two leaders on the territory issue. It would not be appropriate, therefore, to comment further on the details of the land offer at this stage.

The Government will continue to support the two leaders in their search for a solution. We believe a settlement in Cyprus is vital towards securing peace and stability in the East Mediterranean. We urge all parties to seize this unique opportunity.

The Prime Minister's Statement

My right hon Friend the Prime Minister said on 11 November: "I was very pleased to welcome President Christofias to London today and to have the opportunity to discuss the Cyprus problem with him. This is a critical time for the settlement talks.

President Christofias has shown enormous courage and determination in progressing discussions this far. I know that both Cypriot leaders are fully committed to finding a solution. And today I urged President Christofias to exploit this unique opportunity and move to resolve the issue to the benefit of all Cypriots.

I welcome the deeper co-operation between the UK and Cyprus, and reaffirm my commitment to work together on the basis of previous agreements.

It is important that the solution to the Cyprus Problem is a Cypriot one – a solution by Cypriots for Cypriots.

Nevertheless, as a sign of support for the negotiations, I can confirm today that an offer has been made to the United Nations to make available just under 50% of the territory of the UK's Sovereign Base Areas to a unified Cyprus in the event of a solution. It will be up to the two leaders to negotiate what happens with this land. The Sovereign Base Areas would be able to function as normal within a reduced land area.

Today, my message to Cyprus' leaders and to their people is: you can make history. Be bold, be courageous. The UK will support you.”