

Colin Stewart: Good morning. So, I just had a very good meeting with the Security Council. A lot of questions, a lot of support for the work of the UN in Cyprus. We talked about the work of the peacekeeping mission and as I said, a very strong support for our work. Obviously, there were a lot of statements welcoming the appointment of the new envoy, the personal envoy for Cyprus and as I said, I think a very good support of interventions of all members of the Security Council.

Question (Michael Ignatiou): Did you discuss the situation in the buffer zone?

Colin Stewart: Yes, we did.

Question (Ignatiou): Can you tell us who is responsible for this situation?

Colin Stewart: Well, as you know from the report of the Secretary General (SG), there are a number of issues in the buffer zone that challenge us and this was something that the SG emphasised in his report and that was the basis of the discussion with the SC.

Question (Associated Press): Can you tell us what the prospects are for renewing talks between “northern Cyprus” and the Cyprus Republic and is this something that’s even in the offing in the next year?

Colin Stewart: Well, I wouldn’t want to preempt the work of the envoy because that’s precisely the question she will be focused on. But I can certainly tell you that the UN believes that it is possible to find a mutual acceptable solution to the Cyprus problem. We haven’t given up after 60 years. We are marking 60 years in Cyprus in March, which is a very unhappy anniversary and it’s a reminder that this problem has gone on far too long. We certainly believe that there is potential, which is why the SG has named an envoy and her job would be precisely, I think, to try to move forward.

Question (AP): Just a quick follow-up. What are yourself going to do to promote this?

Colin Stewart: To promote a solution? Well, it’s an excellent question. You know in Cyprus we have two missions. We have a peacekeeping mission and we have what’s

we call the good offices mission and I lead both. Now that there is an envoy, an envoy would be a major considered effort on the good offices side, but the purpose of the peacekeeping mission, is to avoid problems in the buffer zone that could disrupt a political process and ideally to create conditions that would be conducive for such a process. So that's why we have this dual effort. Even on the good offices side a lot of work is done all the time to try to build bridges between the sides, build confidence, create a positive environment, so that the envoy, in her engagement can find some opportunities to move things forward.

Question (Anatolou): Going back to the report of the peace mission, it contains details of the physical intervention by UNFICYP to the Pyla road project and it also makes references to certain violations that were carried out by the Greek-Cypriots, both in Pyla and also other parts of the buffer zone including the large complex of the university of Pyla. And it's also mentioned that UNFICYP has made certain engagements and has protested these violations of the Greek side but to no avail. So, I would like to know what are you continuing attempt to preventing these violations and are you considering a physical intervention like you did in Pyla?

Colin Stewart: Well, our role is to try to maintain the integrity of the buffer zone and, especially, to maintain the military status quo, as all part of all an effort to make sure that tensions don't rise and create problems. At the moment we are facing increased tensions and what that means, is that we have had violation to the buffer zone on both sides, and in fact there has been an escalation in recent months which is well described in the SG's report. That is a knowing situation but it just escalates tensions and creates problems for everybody. The peacekeeping mission looks at every case on its own merits and one of the mistakes that is made is to equate different things in different parts of the buffer zone. There are different issues, there are different historical facts, there are different sensitivities and the reason that we intervened in August in Pyla had to do with these specific sensitivities of that particular area. Every other incident is weight on with its own merits and we protest in different ways according to the situation. But absolutely our purpose is to convince both sides that is not in their interest to undermine the UN's authority in the buffer zone or to degrade the integrity of the buffer zone itself.

Question: Is it safe to assume that none of the violations of the Greek side pertained to any of these sensitivities or there all without any sensitive issues?

Colin Stewart: It's never safe to assume.