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<http://www.house.gov/pallone>

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3006

February 15, 2005

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The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

I'm writing to express my deep concern over the Bush administration's blatant shift in policy towards Cyprus after the Greek Cypriots rejected a United Nations proposal offered by U.N. Secretary General Koffi Annan.

The United States Government should not punish Greek Cypriots for going to the voting booth and concluding, rightly, that the Annan Plan forced them to make far more concessions than Turkey. The Cypriot people have the right to determine whether or not a United Nations plan is in the best interests of their homeland without interference or threats from the United States.

And yet, I was disturbed to hear that you're now basing your Cyprus policy on that vote, and plan to find ways to help Turkish-Cypriots as a way to punish the Greek Cypriots for their vote. Earlier this month in Turkey you said: "We are looking at what we can do to ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots because, we, like everyone else, were disappointed that the Annan plan was not adopted. We have taken some steps, direct aid for instance to Turkish Cypriots, but there are probably other things that we should look at doing." The isolation of the Turkish Cypriots derives from the ongoing occupation of the northern third of the island by Turkish troops and our efforts should be concentrated on the withdrawal of these troops.

While the U.S. government should work to make the lives of Turkish-Cypriots better, it's simply unacceptable for our government to help the Turkish-Cypriot "government" that continues to illegally rule the northern third of the island. The Bush administration simply cannot ignore well-established international law as a way to punish the Greek Cypriots for their democratic vote in opposition to the Annan Plan.

Today, I learned that nine U.S. corporations are scheduled to visit the occupied part of Cyprus later this week to explore possible business opportunities in the occupied section, and will be accompanied by the Commercial Attaché of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. They will be entering Cyprus through an "unauthorized" airport in the occupied north. Such actions are unacceptable.

Entering Cyprus from an illegal port of entry constitutes a violation of both Cyprus' domestic law and international law, and perhaps even more objectionable is the involvement of a U.S. official in violating these laws. Moreover, any business activity either in or involving the Turkish occupied section of Cyprus is problematic, since it entails possible use of properties of Greek Cypriot refugees, who were forcibly evicted from northern Cyprus after the Turkish invasion of 1974. In addition, there is no international treaty that protects foreign investments in the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

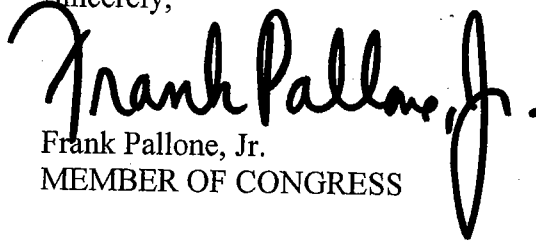
In this respect, U.S. corporations should also be informed before their visit that if they choose to expand business to the occupied section of Cyprus they would not be the rightful owners of any property they acquired, since, the rightful owners remain, to this day, the Cypriots who were forced from their homes and businesses more than 30 years ago.

As you begin your tenure at the State Department, I urge you to take a historic look at the Cyprus problem over the past 30 years. It's important to look at this problem not only through the lens of the Annan vote last year, but also from the perspective of three decades of illegal actions on the Turkish side.

I hope you will then conclude that it's in the best interests of our nation to support a united democratic Cyprus, free of any Turkish occupation or any Turkish troops. I also hope you'll realize that it's not in the best interests of U.S. corporations to explore investment options in the Turkish occupied section of Cyprus and reconsider this ill-advised trip.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank Pallone, Jr.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS