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AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE

2012 POLICY STATEMENTS ON GREEK AMERICAN ISSUES

May 1, 2012

Prepared by AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE

Endorsed by

American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA)

American Hellenic Council of California

Armenian National Committee of America

Cyprus Federation of America

Evrytanian Association of America "Velouchi"

Hellenic American National Council (HANC)

International Coordination Committee-Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA)

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INTRODUCTION

Southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean combine to form an important geopolitical region to the United States due to the significant energy, commercial and communications resources that transit the region. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the United States that the region be politically, economically, and socially stable and peaceful and that democratic ideals and principles, including adherence to the rule of law, flourish.

The policies presented in this document on each Greek American issue are based on the question of what is in the best interests of the United States and the application of the rule of law. Primarily, they address U.S. relations with Greece, Cyprus and Turkey as they affect overall U.S. interests. For ease of presentation, each issue's policy statement is broken down into three sections: 1) The Issue, 2) Developments, and 3) Our Position. Where appropriate, we provide the position of President Barack Obama as demonstrated in his actions as a U.S. senator, as a presidential candidate, or as the president of the United States.

Our web site, www.aheworld.org, will be a resource for the latest developments impacting U.S. interests in the region. Public statements, federal legislation, or policy papers that pertain to our policy statements are easily found on our web site.

Please contact us with any questions about the 2012 Policy Statements. Thank you for your interest in Greek American issues.

Sincerely,



Nick Larigakis
President

CHAMPIONING THE RULE OF LAW

Since its founding in 1974, AHI has consistently advocated for the application of the rule of law as being in the best interest of the United States. As the following presidential statements attest, U.S. interests are best served when American values spearheaded by the rule of law are applied in international affairs.

“There can be no peace without law. And there can be no law if we were to invoke one code of international conduct for those who oppose us and another for our friends.” President Dwight D. Eisenhower, condemning the invasion of Egypt by Britain, France, and Israel in his October 31, 1956, television and radio report to the nation on the Suez Crisis. President Eisenhower’s actions halted and reversed the aggression.

“We are united in the belief that Iraq’s aggression must not be tolerated. No peaceful international order is possible if larger states can devour their smaller neighbors....[W]e are determined to see this aggression end, and if the current steps fail to end it, we are prepared to consider additional ones consistent with the U.N. Charter. We must demonstrate beyond any doubt that aggression cannot and will not pay.” Joint Statement by President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on September 9, 1990.

“We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the rule of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.” President George H.W. Bush, on January 16, 1991, the day the Persian Gulf air war began against Iraqi forces.

“Most Americans know instinctively why we are in the Gulf...They know that we need to build a new, enduring peace based not on arms races and confrontation but on shared principles and the rule of law.” President George H.W. Bush’s January 29, 1991, State of the Union address.

“This is a victory for the United Nations, for all mankind, for the rule of law and for what is right.” President George H.W. Bush’s February 27, 1991 announcement to the nation that “Kuwait is liberated.”

“We seek for Cyprus a constitutional democracy based on majority rule, the rule of law, and the protection of minority rights....I want to see a democratic Cyprus free from the threat of war.” Presidential candidate Vice President George H. W. Bush statement on July 7, 1988 in a speech in Boston.

“A Cyprus settlement should be consistent with the fundamental principles of human rights and democratic norms and practices.” Statement by presidential candidate Governor Bill Clinton in 1992.

POLICY THEMES

The following themes provide the basis for AHI's Policy Statements:

- As clearly set forth in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and other U.S. statutes, U.S. foreign policy is required to foster and embody U.S. values, including human rights.
- The United States should have a "special relationship" with Greece, recognizing Greece's strategic location in Southeastern Europe where the U.S. has important political, economic, commercial, and military interests. Greece's proven reliability as a strategic ally makes Greece a pivotal nation for the advancement of U.S. interests in southeastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.
 - The naval and air bases at Souda Bay, Crete, are the key bases for the United States in the eastern Mediterranean.
- A Cyprus settlement must not reward aggression. A settlement must be based on democratic norms, United Nations (UN) resolutions, the European Union (EU) *acquis communautaire* and the pertinent decisions of the European Commission on Human Rights, Article 6 of the EU Founding Treaty, the European Court on Human Rights and other European courts.
- Cyprus should be recognized as an important partner for U.S. strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean.
 - The evacuation of nearly 15,000 American citizens from Lebanon to Cyprus during the Israel-Lebanon conflict in July 2006 and Cyprus being the first EU nation to sign the U.S.' Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) are prime examples.
- The United States' use of a double standard on the rule of law regarding Turkey, and its appeasement of Turkey, harms the U.S. promotion of the rule of law, human rights, liberty, democracy and freedom in the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and universally.
- U.S. interests are best served by supporting rapprochement between Greece and Turkey based on the rule of law and democratic norms.
- U.S. interests are best served by promoting Turkey's emergence as a fully democratic state regardless of whether she accedes to the EU.

GREECE

Greece is an immensely valuable, proven, and reliable ally for the United States in its region. AHI has always stated that Greece is the strategic, political and economic key for the United States in southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. We call for a special relationship between the United States and Greece for the mutual benefit of both countries.

ADHERE TO INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE AEGEAN SEA

The Issue

Turkey has made outrageous claims devoid of any legal basis to one-half of the Aegean Sea, disputing Greece's sovereignty over the Dodecanese Islands. Turkey refuses to take its maritime boundary claim to the International Court of Justice at The Hague for a binding ruling. Despite the opening of accession negotiations with the EU, and Greece's sincere efforts to achieve complete normalization in relations with Turkey, the latter, as its official policy, continues to threaten Greece with war (*casus belli*) and promotes claims that are unfounded and devoid of any legal basis. These claims disregard all relevant treaties and agreements in force.¹



Also, the United States is a signatory to the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty under which the Dodecanese Islands and adjacent islets were ceded by Italy to Greece. Therefore, the United States is obligated by U.S. law to carry out the treaty's provisions. However, the State Department has refused to declare publicly what the law is. As a result, the Turkish military routinely violates Greek national airspace and territorial waters. These violations are numerous and their reach increasingly deeper over Greek insular territories. They also violate the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the Military Sales Act and terms of the agreements under which Turkey purchases such aircraft.

Developments

The following are the latest in a recent series of incidents that began in November 2008 when a research vessel, acting on behalf of a Turkish Petroleum State Company and accompanied by a Turkish frigate, attempted to conduct research on the Greek continental shelf.²

- **Jan. 7, 2009:** Greece formally protested to Turkey that the latter violated Greece's airspace with flights over two inhabited Aegean Islands, Farmakonisi and Agathonisi.
- **Jan. 14, 2009:** A Turkish frigate sailed in Greek territorial waters just off Greece's mainland near Athens in a manner not consistent with international law.
- **July 6, 2009:** In an interview with *Kathimerini* Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip **Gordon** responded about the airspace violations, "*We have been watching that very closely and frankly we are disturbed by it...it's a dangerous situation which, if it goes on, can lead to an accident...We are disturbed by the recent trend and have engaged already...[we] are asking both [countries] to show restraint and stand down; particularly military over-flights over inhabited islands are something we could do without.*"
- **Nov. 9, 2009:** To provide an example of the excessive violations of Greek airspace by Turkey, on this day alone, a total of 16 Turkish fighters made a total of 20 violations in the northern and central Aegean. There was also one mock engagement.³

¹ The legal treaties with jurisdiction over this issue are: the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, the Italy-Turkey Convention of January 4, 1932, the Italy-Turkey Protocol of December 28, 1932, and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty.

² "Greece Protests Turkish Airspace Violations," January 7, 2009, *Reuters UK* ([web page](#)).

³ "Airspace violations heating up." <http://hellenicdefencenews.blogspot.com/2009/11/air-space-violations-heating-up.html>

- **Jan. 25, 2010:** In a letter to Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then Greek PM George Papandreou suggests the two countries approach the ICJ at The Hague to solve the ongoing dispute regarding the delineation of the continental shelf. He also called for a stop to violations of Greek airspace and territorial waters.⁴
- **Feb. 22, 2010:** To demonstrate how Turkey contributes to the instability of the region, three former Turkish military officers are charged with plotting a coup against the Turkish government. *Their plan was to provoke the Greek air force to shoot down a Turkish jet fighter over the Aegean thus demonstrating the Turkish government's inability to guarantee the nation's security.*⁵
- **Jan. 7, 2011:** Then Greek PM Papandreou raises the violations of Greek airspace by Turkish jets before an audience that included Turkish PM Erdogan and Turkish ambassadors at Erzurum, Turkey.⁶ Just two days prior, eight Turkish planes flew over a Greek island, prompting Papandreou to threaten a pull-out of this event.
- **Nov. 16, 2011:** The Hellenic Air Force announced formation of two Turkish RF-4 fighter – tactical reconnaissance aircraft fly over Kastelorizo at 1,000 feet altitude. This was the fourth time Turkish air fighters fly over Greek territory in 2011.⁷
- **March 21, 2012:** The *Associated Press reports* that Greece's Foreign Ministry says a Turkish research ship entered an area of the Greek continental shelf in the Aegean Sea without having informed Athens, as it should have under the international law of the sea. Greece's Foreign Ministry issued a formal complaint to Turkey's government.

The state of Greece's economy has received widespread media coverage and has been a cause of concern around the globe. We note Greece must invest an estimated \$500 million annually to defend and safeguard its territory in the Aegean. If Turkey adhered to international law in the Aegean, and normalized relations with Greece, then Greece would not need to invest nearly as much to safeguard its boundaries.

Our Position

The use by Turkey of U.S. supplied aircraft to infringe on Greek air space breaches the terms and conditions under which Turkey obtained the aircraft and violates U.S. law which applies to the sale and use of U.S. military equipment to foreign countries.

We call on the U.S. government to:

- publicly state that the maritime boundary in the Aegean is the boundary set forth in the treaties listed in Footnote 1 on Page 4 of these Policy Statements;
- urge Turkey to publicly state that it accepts -- as final -- the demarcation of the maritime border between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea as defined by relevant treaties. This will repudiate any challenge by Turkey to the treaty-defined boundary. Past and current U.S. policy has not had this effect; and
- urge Turkey to adhere to international law and legal procedures with respect to any dispute it has with Greece in the Aegean Sea.

⁴ "Papandreou seeks dialogue with Erdogan," January 26, 2010, *Ekathimerini* ([web page](#)).

⁵ "Retired military chiefs held over Turkish coup plot," February 22, 2010, *The Daily Telegraph* ([web page](#)).

⁶ "Greek PM criticizes Turkey," January 7, 2011, *Associated Press* ([web page](#)).

⁷ "Overflight of Turkish RF-4s over Kastelorizo," *defencegreece.com*, November 16, 2011 ([web page](#)).

THE OUTSTANDING NAME ISSUE REGARDING THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)

Background

Since antiquity the name *Macedonia* has referred to a geographical region and not to a nationality. Macedonia was part of the ancient Hellenic world much like Sparta and Athens. Its population worshipped the same Hellenic Gods, spoke the same Hellenic language and participated in the Olympic Games which at the time were open to Greeks only.

Geographic Macedonia is within the borders of at least three countries. Only a small portion of geographic Macedonia lies within the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), whose population is one-third Albanian and two-thirds Slavic in origin. The largest part of geographic Macedonia lies within Greece in the Greek province of Macedonia.

The Issue

When Marshal Tito fashioned the puppet "Socialist Republic of Macedonia" from the southern Yugoslav province of Vardarska-Banovina in December 1944, he did so to foment disorder in northern Greece to further his plan to communize the Balkan Peninsula and gain control of the key port city of Thessaloniki. "Macedonian" nationalism was a product of Tito's fabrications.

In December 1944, the United States vigorously opposed the use of the name "Macedonia" by Tito. **Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.**, in a *Circular Airgram* (Dec. 26, 1944) stated:

"This Government considers talk of Macedonian 'nation,' Macedonian 'Fatherland,' or Macedonian 'national consciousness' to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic nor political reality, and sees in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece.

"The approved policy of this Government is to oppose any revival of the Macedonian issue as related to Greece."

U.S. policy was valid then and it should be valid now. The Truman Doctrine and massive financial aid under the Marshall Plan foiled Tito's hopes for communizing Greece.

The Interim Accord⁸ signed by Greece and FYROM in 1995 required negotiations for a new name for FYROM. However, no breakthrough has been accomplished. Today the negotiations are stalemated because FYROM maintains that the only name that is acceptable to it is its original "constitutional" name of "Republic of Macedonia." In addition, FYROM demands include the recognition of a Macedonian identity and language, which is problematic for Greece.

"On November 1 2010, *Kathimerini* quoted Macedonia's deputy prime minister for European affairs, Vasko Naumovski, as saying that Athens would have to recognise the existence of a Macedonian language and identity to settle the name dispute with Skopje....He added, 'The reality that the existence of a Macedonian identity, nation, language and state cannot change.'"⁹

Moreover, FYROM promulgates propaganda in which it claims portions of Greek territory and usurps Greek national identity and culture (see examples of provocation listed below).

- In contrast, Greece has offered a major compromise of accepting a compound name that will distinguish FYROM from both the Greek and Bulgarian part.

⁸ The Interim Accord is a UN-brokered Treaty signed in New York (September 13, 1995) between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It constitutes the political framework of the bilateral relations between the two countries.

⁹ "Macedonia name dispute 'informal' talks set for January 27," *The Sofia Echo*, January 5, 2011 ([web site](#)).

The State Department negated previous U.S. policy when it recognized FYROM as the “Republic of Macedonia” on November 4, 2004. The policy change was not in the best interest of the United States, and in fact, harms U.S. interests in the Balkans. The decision ignored historical truths recognized by the United States for decades. It was a disrespectful act toward Greece which is a staunch NATO ally in the Balkans. It made FYROM more obstinate in its will to negotiate a new name and emboldened its desire to continue its provocative propaganda against Greece. Moreover, Greece is the paragon of stability in the Balkans. It has no territorial claims against any of its neighbors and it is a leading source of foreign investment, aid and employment in FYROM.

Developments

In April 2008, members of the NATO Alliance agreed not to invite FYROM into the Alliance until a mutually agreed upon denomination for that country had been reached under the auspices of the United Nations. All NATO members urged that a mutually agreed solution be found as soon as possible. Unfortunately, instead of acting in good faith, FYROM generated hate propaganda that depicted the Greek flag with a Nazi swastika in place of the Cross in upper left-hand corner of the flag. Portraits of then Greek Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis dressed in a Nazi uniform were published.

- **Nov. 17, 2008:** FYROM instituted proceedings before the International Court of Justice against Greece for “a flagrant violation of its obligations under Article 11” of the 1995 Interim Accord. FYROM contends that Greece violated its rights under Article 11 by vetoing FYROM’s application to join NATO.¹⁰ We note that there was no veto exercised by Greece and it was a consensus of all the NATO members that stipulated that an invitation to FYROM would be extended when the name issue is resolved.
- **April 5, 2009:** Conservative Gjorge Ivanov won a presidential run-off in FYROM. “Our first task will be to resolve the name issue with our southern neighbour Greece,” Ivanov told *Reuters*. “I am sure we can find common interest and compromise.” However, a recent photo of the president in his office shows him with the outlawed flag of FYROM with the classical Hellenic symbol of the Vergina sun.
- **May 15, 2009:** At a press conference in Athens, the outgoing NATO chief, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer said: “I must add, openly and frankly, that after a visit I paid to Skopje last week, my optimism has not grown, in listening to the authorities in Skopje. And I do hope that also they will realize that, for a solution for the name issue, they have to show flexibility.”
- **Oct. 18, 2010:** Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon stated, “Macedonia will join [NATO] once the dispute over its name is resolved” in a speech at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, Nitze School Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.
- **Sept. 5, 2011:** European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule, on a visit to Skopje, stated, “We are ready to start negotiations with you. However, the name issue needs to be resolved before accession negotiations can begin... Member states in the (European) Council have made it clear that this problem will not be imported into the European Union.”¹¹
- **Dec. 5, 2011:** The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled Greece has breached its obligation by objecting to the admission of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to NATO. In response to the decision, Greece stated the judgment did not satisfy FYROM’s objective. According to Greece’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the judgment did not address the issue of the difference over FYROM’s name, “confirming that this difference should be resolved within the framework defined by the resolutions of the Security Council and through negotiations under the auspices of the UN.” Greece contends FYROM filed the suit as a means to circumvent the UN-sponsored negotiations.
- **Jan. 16-17, 2012:** Two days of UN-brokered talks in New York end without result, but UN envoy Matthew Nimetz described the talks as “helpful.”

¹⁰ <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/142/14881.pdf>

¹¹ “New York talks on Macedonia name dispute ‘helpful’ but produce no result,” *Sofia Echo*, January 16, 2012 ([web site](#)).

Examples of Provocations against Greece

Since he assumed his duties as the prime minister of FYROM in August 2006, Nikola Gruevski followed a long-term policy of extreme nationalism and provocation against Greece in conflict with European values. His actions are a breach of the U.N.-brokered Interim Accord and erode efforts to build trust and good neighborly relations.

- **Dec. 2006:** Provocations begin when Gruevski renamed Skopje's international airport "Alexander the Great."
- **Jan. 2009:** Gruevski named that nation's main highway after "Alexander the Great"¹² to the dismay of EU officials. *(Note: This highway project is partially financed by Greece, which pledged \$75 million as part of its Hellenic Plan for the Reconstruction of the Balkans.)*
- Gruevski renamed Skopje's main stadium after "Philip II, the Macedon."
- After making a commitment to cease use of the "Sun of Vergina" per the Interim Accord, the FYROM reintroduced this Hellenic symbol as the symbol of its country in television advertising spots currently running internationally, including in the United States.
- Gruevski has been pictured in public ceremonies with a map of his country that included the Greek province of Macedonia all the way south to Mount Olympus as one united political entity.
- Gruevski has erected numerous newly created duplicates of Ancient Macedonian Hellenic personalities and has renamed streets and squares for them in various places of the FYROM. On June 21, 2011, FYROM erected a 40-foot statue of Alexander the Great in the center of Skopje. The controversial project cost \$13 million amid a 30 percent unemployment rate.¹³
- **April 2010:** In a display of meddling in Greece's internal affairs, Skopje issued an unprecedented statement on Greek authorities' arrest of four protesters that obstructed a Greek military convoy near the city of Florina in northwest Greece near the Greece-FYROM border. Skopje expressed concern for the protesters while identifying them as so-called "Macedonians" in an attempt to create a "Macedonian minority" in northwest Greece. Greek FM Spokesman George Koumoutsakos rebuked Skopje's statement, calling it another "provocative attempt to blatantly distort reality."¹⁴
- **April 2010:** FYROM announced plans to use the name "Macedonian Chairmanship 2010" for its chairmanship at the Council of Europe that starts in May 2010.¹⁵ Greek Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gregory Delavekouras identified this act as a "provocative" one in an April 15, 2010 briefing.¹⁶

These provocative acts offend Greece and its citizens. They demonstrate FYROM's continued ignorance of the basic principle of good neighborly relations. Moreover, AHI contends the acts do not embrace policies compatible with EU or Euro-Atlantic values and standards.

President Obama's Position

- While in the Senate, Barack Obama was one of three original lead co-sponsors of S.Res.300 in the 110th Congress, which urged FYROM to work with Greece within a UN framework to reach a mutually acceptable official name for FYROM.
- In a campaign statement released in October 2008, presidential candidate Obama stated: "...[He] support[s] the UN-led negotiations and believe[s] that there can and should be an agreement between Skopje and Athens on a mutually-acceptable name that leads to greater stability in the Balkans."

Our Position

The State Department's decision on November 4, 2004 to recognize FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia" was counterproductive. The immediate settlement of the name issue that is mutually acceptable to both Greece and FYROM will allow the United States' strongest ally in the Balkans,

¹² "EU Rap Over FYROM Road," January 13, 2009, *EKathimerini* ([web page](#)).

¹³ "Macedonia Erects Alexander the Great Statue," by Kole Casule, *Reuters*, June 21, 2011 ([web page](#)).

¹⁴ "Reaction to FYROM Provocation," *Athens News Agency*.

¹⁵ "Greek Reply to 'Macedonian Chairmanship 2010,'" April 13, 2010, *BalkanInsight.com* ([web page](#)).

¹⁶ http://www.mfa.gr/www.mfa.gr/Articles/en-US/160410_F1056.htm

Greece, to be the driving force for FYROM's membership to NATO and ultimately the EU. This will create stability for U.S. interests in the Balkans.

The only practical solution is a name which does not imply that FYROM has or could exercise any form of political sovereignty over any portion of ancient or traditional Macedonia which lies outside the present borders of FYROM. In addition, because of the multi-ethnic composition of FYROM, the nationality and language of it should not include the word "Macedonian," or any word that resembles it. Furthermore, the final name must apply for all internal and international uses (*erga omnes*).

We call on the U.S. government to:

- urge FYROM to negotiate in good faith with Greece to resolve the name issue and to cease immediately their propaganda against Greece; propaganda which violates the U.N.-brokered Interim Accord, as stated in Article 7 paragraph 1 of the Accord, signed in New York, September 13, 1995, between FYROM and Greece;
- continue with its position that FYROM will not join NATO until the name dispute is resolved;
- oppose foreign aid to FYROM for so long as FYROM does not commit to negotiate in good faith with Greece to find a mutually-acceptable solution to the name to be used by FYROM for all purposes. Adoption of H.R.2583, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, in which Section 935, "Limitation on assistance to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," would address this issue. (Note: the legislative language in the bill properly identifies FYROM as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia); and
- pass legislation urging the FYROM to cease its use of propaganda that violates provisions of the UN-brokered Interim Agreement between Greece and FYROM and that further urges FYROM to work with Greece to find a mutually acceptable official name for FYROM under U.N. auspices.

If FYROM refuses to cooperate, the United States must consider withdrawing its 2004 recognition of FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia." Once a mutually acceptable denomination for FYROM has been reached in the UN-sponsored talks, we call on our government to recognize that state by that denomination only.

PROTECT THE GREEK MINORITY IN ALBANIA

The Issue

Under the veil of economic development, the Albanian government led by Prime Minister Sali Berisha, tolerates the organized violation of the rule of law, basic human rights of ethnic minorities, and property rights, including illegal seizures of property.



In 2004, Berisha won re-election, returning to office after his previous regime collapsed in 1997 following widespread systemic corruption. During his initial regime in the 1990s, Berisha targeted the Greek minority with heavy-handed tactics that included harassment and violence by security forces, setting fire to schools, churches, and businesses; and the arrest of the Greek minority's leadership, which was detained for six months before unspecified charges were filed. The United States, due to the efforts of the Greek American community and Greece, worked to reverse these policies.

Recently, Berisha has reverted back to his policy of persecuting the ethnic Greek minority of southern Albania. This time, Berisha's strategy utilizes the assistance of international organizations, for example the World Bank, to legitimize economic development efforts that in effect will diminish or eliminate the ethnic Greek minority of southern Albania near the Ionian Sea. An example is the "Albanian Southern Coast Development Plan," which draws heavily upon tourism as the main thrust of the plan's success.

Furthermore, although Albania successfully sought a census to measure the Albanian minority in the neighboring FYROM, its government resists the demand of the European Union to measure its minorities so it can continue to claim that the Greek minority is small when it constitutes at least 10 percent of Albania's 3.5 million population.

Recent Developments

- **2004:** The Albanian government leased 70 hectares of land in the Cheimarra province of Albania, which has been inhabited by ethnic Greeks for centuries, to Riviera, a private construction company, for 99 years. There are 120 private individuals, and the Albanian Orthodox Church, that claim ownership of parcels that comprise this property.
- **Sept. 19, 2008:** the "Commission for the Return of Properties," a body created by Berisha, rejected applications of the 120 ownership claims of the properties.
- **Nov. 2008:** a series of incidents occurred as truck convoys attempted to bring building and fencing materials into the towns and villages of Cheimarra on behalf of Riviera. Local inhabitants protested, leading to the arrival of the police and a private security squad. Subsequent clashes and arrests followed. Threatened with violence, some inhabitants removed their families for safety reasons.
- **Jan. 9, 2009:** 200 Albanian police riot units raided the town of Kakomaia in the province of Cheimarra in an effort to help Riviera forcibly seize properties claimed by local residents who are ethnic Greeks.
- **Jan. 16, 2010:** A commission of 12 ministers will be established to coordinate the next census in Albania, according to an Albanian State Minister.
- **Feb. 1, 2012:** Omonia, an organization representing the Greek minority in Albania, announced it will carry out a census of ethnic Greeks in Albania. ("Omonia: Albanian census to go ahead," *Athens News* <http://www.athensnews.gr/portal/10/52868#>)

Our Position

We call on the U.S. government to:

- undertake intense diplomatic dialogue with the Albanian government to ensure that the rule of law is observed and that minority rights, human rights, and property rights are protected. An adherence to these basic values and principles are expected of a nation with aspirations to join the EU; and
- call on Albania to conduct a proper accounting, via a census, to measure the ethnic and religious minority populations of Albania.

CYPRUS

Cyprus is an important nation for U.S. interests in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Cyprus shares the U.S.' core values of freedom, democracy and adherence to the rule of law. It is a key partner on counter-terrorism and security issues. Cyprus is also a member of the EU, and the first EU nation to sign the U.S.' Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Cyprus is a Western-oriented country and it is vital to U.S. interests that it remains so.



SUPPORT A SOLUTION REACHED BY CYPRIOTS FOR CYPRIOTS

The Issue

On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded the Republic of Cyprus with the illegal use of U.S.-supplied arms and equipment in violation of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the UN Charter article 2 (4), the preamble and article 1 of the NATO Treaty, and customary international law. Turkey occupied about 4 percent of Cyprus during the initial phase of its invasion. Turkish pilots flying American planes dropped American-made bombs (including napalm bombs) on Greek Cypriot communities.

On August 14, 1974, **three weeks after the legitimate government of Cyprus was restored**, Turkey launched the second phase of its invasion of Cyprus. In the second phase, Turkey grabbed another 33 percent of the island, expanding its land grab to nearly 40 percent of Cyprus's sovereign territory; killed innocent civilians, raped women from the ages of 12-71, forced 170,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes and property, and committed mass destruction of property including churches. The Turkish army continues to occupy this territory. Furthermore, to secure its land grab of Cypriot territory, Turkey has illegally settled northern, occupied Cyprus with more than 180,000 Turks from Anatolia in violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949, Section III, Article 4, which prohibits colonization by an occupying power.¹⁷

Developments

- **July 8, 2006:** Then Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos and then Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat reach a UN-brokered agreement to resume direct talks to find a Cyprus solution based on UN Security Council resolutions.¹⁸
- **Sept. 3, 2008:** President Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat begin direct talks.¹⁹
- **July 21, 2009: The U.S. Helsinki Commission** holds a briefing "Cyprus' Religious Cultural Heritage in Peril." As part of that briefing, the Law Library of Congress issued a report that clearly underlined Turkey's legal responsibility as an occupying country for acts committed against cultural property—and Turkey is clearly in violation of international law.
- **Sept. 2009:** The first round of peace talks under the umbrella of the July 8, 2006 high-level UN Agreement concluded with minimal tangible progress made. The chapters that define what a reunified Cyprus will "look like"—from its government to security to economy—are deadlocked after one year. Simply stated, the Turkish Cypriots, with the support of Turkey, continued to present proposals and positions that were outside the parameters of the UN high-level agreement and European Union principles.
- **Jan. 19, 2010:** UK Court of Appeal upholds lower court's decision (**APOSTOLIDES V. ORAMS**) that a judgment of a court in the Republic of Cyprus must be recognized and enforced by all EU member

¹⁷ More historical information on this and all policy issues at www.aheworld.org under "Background & Expanded Discussion."

¹⁸ The UN agreement included a "Commitment to the unification of Cyprus based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions," and an "Agreement to begin a process immediately, involving bi-communal discussion of issues that affect day to day life of the people and concurrently those that concern substantive issues both of which will contribute to a comprehensive settlement."

¹⁹ Summaries of the first round of negotiations can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

states. The ruling reaffirmed the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, and the right of all Greek Cypriot dispossessed owners to their properties in occupied Cyprus was validated.

- **Apr. 18, 2010:** Mr. Dervis Eroglu, a hardliner, becomes so-called “elected” leader of Turkish Cypriot community.
- **Nov.- Dec. 2010:** Commentaries are published, one by former American Ambassador to Greece and former U.S. Special Coordinator to Cyprus Tom Miller; and one by Dr. Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president, Defense and Foreign Policy Studies, Cato Institute; that strongly dismiss and rebut former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw’s call of partition for Cyprus.
- **Sept. 28, 2010:** The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.Res.1631, which called for the protection of religious sites and artifacts from and in Turkish-occupied Cyprus as well as general respect for religious freedom.
- **Dec. 7, 2010:** Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) stated, “**Turkey must fully support a Cypriot solution to reunification of the island and immediately withdraw its troops from northern Cyprus**” following a meeting with Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. Namik Tan.
- **Dec. 25, 2010:** “Police officers” of the illegal Turkish Cypriot regime interrupted and cancelled Christmas Day services at Agios Synesios Church at Rizokarpaso; an egregious act that evoked concern from the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom**²⁰.
- **Jan. 25, 2011:** Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), chairman, U.S. Helsinki Commission and senior member of the foreign relations committee, calls for the removal of restrictions on religious freedom in occupied-Cyprus and calls the disruption of Christmas liturgy in Rizokarpaso “appalling.”²¹
- **Jan. 22-24, 2012:** UN-backed talks are held in New York and include UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alexander Downer, President Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu. Issues addressed are the Executive, property and territory.
- **Feb. 10, 2012:** At an AHI event, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ros-Lehtinen described the “overwhelming military force” used by Turkey in the invasion of Cyprus and emphasized her repeated efforts to press for the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Cyprus in communications with the Obama administration and meetings with Turkish officials, including most recently Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.
- **July 1, 2012:** The Republic of Cyprus will assume the presidency of the European Union.

President Obama’s Cyprus Position

- In a campaign statement released October 2008, presidential candidate Obama stated: “*As president, [he] will show U.S. leadership in seeking to negotiate a political settlement on Cyprus. [He] believe[s] strongly that Cyprus remain a single, sovereign country...within a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation...A negotiated political settlement on Cyprus would end the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus and repair the island’s tragic division while paving the way to prosperity and peace throughout the entire region.*”
- April 6, 2009: In his address to the Turkish Parliament, President Obama affirmed the rule of law as the basis for reunifying Cyprus. He did not mention Turkey’s continued occupation of Cyprus.

Our Position

We specifically endorse the following statement by **Vice President George H. W. Bush**, made in a presidential campaign speech in Boston on July 7, 1988:

“We seek for Cyprus a constitutional democracy based on majority rule, the rule of law, and the protection of minority rights...I want to see a democratic Cyprus free from the threat of war.”

²⁰ “Cyprus: USCIRF Faults Turkish Cypriot Authorities for Closing Church on Christmas.” ([web site](#))

²¹ Congressional Record, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?r112:S25JA1-0031>:

Furthermore, we call on the U.S. government to:

- support a settlement of the Cyprus problem through negotiations based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in a state with a single sovereignty and international personality, incorporating the norms of a constitutional democracy embracing key American principles, the EU *acquis communautaire* and EU Founding Treaty, UN resolutions on Cyprus, the pertinent decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and of other European Courts -- as is the best interests of the United States;
- call for the withdrawal of Turkey's 43,000 occupation troops illegally in Cyprus;
- call for the return of the more than 180,000 illegal Turkish colonists/settlers in Cyprus to Turkey and for a halt to the illegal bringing of more colonists/settlers from Turkey to occupied Cyprus to illegally change the demographics of the island and of the Turkish Cypriot community, all of which is in violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949;
- call for the restoration of property illegally taken in the northern-occupied area of Cyprus to their rightful owners, and payment by Turkey to the owners for deprivation of the use of their property;
- call for the return of the sealed-off section of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants by Turkey as noted in UN Security Council resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) and the 1979 High Level Agreement between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, which stated that priority should be given to the resettlement of Famagusta under the UN auspices. This position was recently reaffirmed by the European Parliament in a written declaration issued February 2012;
- urge Turkey to tear down the green line barbed wire fence across the face of Cyprus that makes Nicosia the last divided capital in Europe;
- urge Ankara not to manipulate the direct talks or restrict during negotiations;
- urge Ankara to normalize relations with the Republic of Cyprus, a member of the European Union (a body to which Turkey aspires to join), and as agreed to by Turkey;
- to monitor the enforcement of the law, 22 U.S.C. sec. 2373(e), which prohibits the transfer to Cyprus of arms which are supplied by United States;
- introduce and pass legislation that calls for the removal of Turkish troops from Cyprus, the return of the illegal settlers/colonists to Turkey, and a solution to the Cyprus problem based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in a state with single sovereignty and international personality. (See S.Res.331/H.Res.320; H.Res.407 in the 110th Congress); and
- to pass H.R.2597, the American Owned Property in Occupied Cyprus Claims Act, which sets forth two distinct and separate processes by which U.S. nationals can seek the fair rental value of their property in Turkish occupied Cyprus.

Advancing these positions will underscore support for the rule of law and respect for international law. It will demonstrate that the United States is serious about fostering a solution to the 38-year-old Cyprus problem.

The U.S can play a crucial role by getting realistic with Turkey and eliminating its double-standard policy that has rewarded Turkish aggression and ignored countless violations of the rule of law in Cyprus—a valued ally of the U.S. on counter-terrorism and security issues in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It does not serve the United States' best interest to continue with failed policies and the appeasement of Turkey,

TURKEY'S CONTINUED THREAT TO PEACE

The Issue

The Cyprus government signed an agreement with Egypt on February 17, 2003, for joint exploration of oil and natural gas in an area 125 miles wide between Cyprus and the Mediterranean's southern coast (a similar agreement was signed with Lebanon but is pending ratification by Lebanon's parliament). On December 17, 2010, Cyprus and Israel sign an agreement delimiting the maritime boundary between the two nations which opens up cooperative exploration of hydrocarbon exploration in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Exploration began late September 2011.

The Turkish government threatened (and continues to threaten) to block exploration asserting -- incredibly -- that it has rights in the area and the Republic of Cyprus does not because 1) Turkey does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus, and 2) Turkey has not ratified the Law of the Sea²² and therefore can maintain that the Republic of Cyprus has no such thing as a continental shelf or EEZ to delimit. In an interview with *Today's Zaman*, Turkey's Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bagis stated, "*Doing this [exploration] in waters where they have no jurisdiction is illegal,*" and in response to a question about sending the Turkish navy he replied, "*All options are on the table; anything can be done.*"²³ Turkey, which is 40 miles from the northern coast of Cyprus, has no rights in the continental shelf of Cyprus or in the area because it has not ratified any of the three treaties on the Law of the Sea. Also, concerns about Turkish threats to block Israel and Cyprus from exploration were shared by Dr. Alon Liel, an Israeli foreign affairs expert.²⁴

Turkey's threats against Cyprus and in effect, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, and potentially Greece should she claim its full exclusive economic zone (EEZ)²⁵, regarding the oil and gas exploration agreements puts Turkey in direct violation of the UN Charter preamble and article 2, paragraph 4, and the NATO Treaty Preamble and Article 1. In fact, should Greece assert its EEZ it would constitute a *casus belli*.²⁶

Developments

On March 5, 2007, former **U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Ronald Schlicher** made a forthright statement that Cyprus is a sovereign country and has the right to conclude agreements with Lebanon and Egypt. In response to questions regarding Turkey's comments on Cyprus' right to exploit possible oil and gas reserves in its economic zone, Ambassador Schlicher said:

"It is clear that the Republic of Cyprus is the sovereign authority, they have the right to conclude agreements such as the one concluded and anyone who challenges that right should do so finding legal peaceful ways to approach the issue.

"Discussion on this issue by all parties concerned should be in the spirit of how can the possibility of this new national wealth be used in a way that is going to facilitate the reunification of the island and not deepen the divisions on the island.

"So, that is the position of my government and I hope that the source of discourse that we hear on this issue focuses on that question of reunification."

- **March 29, 2007: Then Senate Foreign Affairs Chairman Joe Biden (D-DE)**, stated on the Senate Floor: "*The Government of the Republic of Cyprus, ROC, is working to establish partnerships with foreign companies and countries in an effort to bring these energy resources online. This process is being needlessly complicated, however, by individuals in Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community who are discouraging foreign partners from working with the ROC....I believe it is important to affirm the ROC's right to search for and develop resources located under Cyprus' continental shelf.*

²² http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_historical_perspective.htm

²³ "Turkish minister warns Greek Cypriots about oil exploration in Mediterranean," by Servet Yanatma, *Today's Zaman*, September 4, 2011 ([web site](#)).

²⁴ Expert deems Turkish threat on Cyprus drilling serious," by Sharon Udasin, *The Jerusalem Post*, September 22, 2011 ([web site](#)).

²⁵ "Kastelorizo: Mediterranean flash point," by Daniel Pipes, *The Washington Times*, February 8, 2012, ([web site](#)).

²⁶ Ibid.

He continued: ***“Under international law, there is no question about the legality of the Cypriot Government’s activities...There is simply no juridical basis to dispute Cyprus’ claims or actions.”***²⁷

- **Nov. 24, 2008:** Cyprus reported Turkey interfered with an offshore oil-and-gas survey conducted by two Norwegian-owned survey ships, ordering the ships to leave the area.²⁸
- **Dec. 17, 2010:** Cyprus and Israel sign an agreement delimiting the maritime boundary between the two nations. Turkey criticized the agreement in part to its diplomatic fallout with Israel and because it was agreed to without the participation of “northern Cyprus.”²⁹
- **Sept. 22, 2011: House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen** (R-FL) issues a statement cautioning Turkey on its threats in the eastern Mediterranean and describes Turkey’s increased military presence as **“a clear threat”** to U.S. citizens and interests in the region³⁰
- **Sept. 29, 2011: U.S. Department of State Deputy Spokesman Mark C. Toner** stated: *“The United States supports Cyprus’s right to explore for energy. Having a U.S. company involved in developing the energy resources of Cyprus is also positive. The United States continues to support strongly the Cypriot-led negotiation process, conducted under UN good offices, to reunify the island into a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. That has not changed. We continue to believe that the island’s oil and gas resources, like all of its resources, should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. And we don’t believe that developing offshore energy resources need hinder those reunification talks.”*³¹
- **Sept. 30, 2011:** As an example of escalated tensions in the region, Israeli jets allegedly “buzz” a Turkish ship that was ordered to explore for gas off the eastern Mediterranean off the coast of Cyprus.
- **Dec. 28, 2011:** U.S.-based firm Noble Energy announces a discovery off the coast of Cyprus that may hold as much as 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.³²
- **Feb. 13, 2012:** Cyprus announces a second round of licensing for offshore gas, oil exploration.

Our Position

We call on the U.S. government to:

- condemn Turkey’s threats; and
- commend Israel and Cyprus for concluding an agreement with Cyprus on the delineation of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of each nation.

²⁷ Congressional Record, March 29, 2007.

²⁸ “Cyprus: Turkey harassed oil exploration,” *International Herald Tribune*, November, 24, 2008. ([web site](#)).

²⁹ “Cyprus and Israel reach agreement for maritime delimitation,” Durham University’s International Boundaries Research Unit ([web site](#)).

³⁰ “Ros-Lehtinen Cautions Turkey on Threats to U.S. Commercial Ships in Cyprus Gas Dispute,” http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press_display.asp?id=1983

³¹ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2011/09/174815.htm#CYPRUS>

³² “Noble Announces Natural-Gas Discovery Off Coast of Cyprus,” *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, by David Wethe and Stelios Orphanides, December 29, 2011 ([web site](#)).

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE AND THE HALKI PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

The Issue

The Turkish government has tolerated assaults against its Greek Orthodox Christian religious minority, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and continues the illegal closure of the Greek Orthodox Halki Patriarchal School of Theology in Istanbul. **These actions violate U.S. principles and law on freedom of religion as expressed in Section 2804 of the FY98 Omnibus Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (PL 105-277). This law calls for the Turkish government to safeguard the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its personnel, and its property, and to reopen the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology.**

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in North America, led a panel discussion at the U.S. Helsinki Commission on March 16, 2005, which presented a clear picture of how religious human rights violations by the Turkish government have been working to exterminate the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Christian community in that country. The panel briefing “highlighted Turkey’s systemic efforts to undermine the Orthodox Church, violating numerous international treaties to which it has agreed.”

Archbishop Demetrios and Dr. Anthony Limberakis, national commander, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, “detailed the severe restrictions on property ownership which have allowed the government to confiscate nearly 7,000 properties from the Ecumenical Patriarchate since 1936,” according to the panel briefing. It added: “Behind them stood placard-size photos of the most recently seized property, an orphanage on Buyukada island which once housed hundreds of homeless children.”

Former U.S. Helsinki Commission Co-Chairman Congressman Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) stated: *“The concern of this Commission is the protection of religious rights and freedoms. Turkey’s treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate violates its obligations under international human rights law.”*

Under the **International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA)**, the president of the United States is obligated to oppose violations of religious freedom in any country whose government “engages in or tolerates violations of religious freedom and promote the right to religious freedom in that country.” The Act further obligates the president to take one or more of 15 enumerated actions with respect to any such country. IRFA created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. For the past three years (2009-2011) USCIRF has placed Turkey on its “Watch List.”

Although Turkey has signaled the need to address the issue of religious freedom among its minorities there is still much more that needs to be accomplished—namely the recognition of the Patriarch’s “ecumenical” title, the reopening of the Halki Seminary, the return of all confiscated properties by the Turkish government, and ensuring the succession of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Developments

- **July 2008:** the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in **FENER RUM PATRIKLIGI (ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE) v. TURKEY**, issued a unanimous verdict in favor of the Ecumenical Patriarchate which condemned Turkey for improperly seizing property (in this case the historic Patriarchal orphanage located off the coast of Istanbul) without compensation. Moreover, the ruling is extremely important because it confirms that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has an international legal personality, a status which the Turkish government denies. Religious minorities in Turkey are not recognized as legal personalities, and therefore, cannot own property. The unanimous verdict of 7 out of 7 votes included that of the Turkish judge on the ECHR.
- **December 2008:** A Turkish foreign ministry report submitted to the Turkish parliament denigrates the “minority” presence of the Greek Orthodox community in Turkey and refuses to recognize the “ecumenical” character of the patriarchate. It also excluded the possibility of reopening the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology in the name of state secularism.

- **March 3, 2009:** ECHR unanimously ruled, in **BOZCAADA KIMISIS TEODOKU RUM ORTODOKS KILISESI VAKFI v. TURKEY**, that Turkey violated the property rights of a Greek Orthodox Church on the Aegean island of Bozcaada. The court said Turkish authorities illegally prevented a Greek Orthodox foundation, which is the rightful owner of the Kimisis Teodoku church, from registering its property. Judges ordered Turkey to pay the foundation 105,000 Euros in compensation. The unanimous verdict of 7 out of 7 votes included that of the Turkish representative.
- **Nov. 2-5, 2009:** The Ecumenical Patriarch visits Washington as part of a broader visit to the United States. His All Holiness meets with President Barack Obama on November 3 at the White House.
- **Dec. 20, 2009:** The Ecumenical Patriarch is interviewed on *60 Minutes* where His All Holiness states that he personally feels “crucified.”³³
- **July 21, 2010:** Turkey makes available citizenship to foreign Orthodox archbishops to help with succession. Clerics must have Turkish citizenship to be able to succeed the Ecumenical Patriarch.
- **Aug. 15, 2010:** For the first time since 1922, the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos at the ancient monastery of Panagea Sumela in Trapezounda, Turkey, was held.
- **Oct. 28, 2010:** 78 Christian graves were desecrated in the graveyard of Panagia, the capital of the island of Imvros.
- **Nov. 29, 2010:** Turkey complies with a European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling and returned a 19th century orphanage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- **Dec. 7, 2010:** Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) expressed concern about the “restrictive policies” placed on the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Turkish government. She stated, **“I asked that these policies be substantially changed to allow the Church to re-open the Halki Seminary and to remove the restrictive criteria for Patriarchal succession”** following a meeting with Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. Namik Tan.
- **Jan. 2, 2011:** Turkish Deputy PM Bülent Arınç, following a meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, stated that Turkey is considering the demand to reopen the Halki Theological School by trying to meet the issue from a legal perspective. Arınç is the highest-ranking Turkish government official to visit the Patriarchate since 1952.
- **Dec 13, 2011:** U.S. House of Representatives passes by voice vote H.Res.306, urging Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.
- **Feb. 20, 2012:** Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said Turkey’s new constitution should grant equal rights to minorities and safeguard religious freedoms when he met with members of a Turkish parliamentary subcommittee.³⁴
- **March 20, 2012:** The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) cites Turkey for “systematic and egregious limitations” on religious liberty and designated Turkey a “country of particular concern.” The USCIRF recommended the Secretary of State to designate Turkey as such. From 2009-2011, Turkey was placed on USCIRF’s “Watch List.”³⁵

President Obama’s Position

- In a campaign statement released in October 2008, presidential candidate Obama stated: *“[He was] one of 73 Senators who signed a letter to President Bush in 2006 urging him to press Turkey to restore full rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate...[And that he had sent] Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice a personal letter on the same matter. [He called on] Turkey to respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s rights and freedoms, including its property rights. Turkey should allow the reopening of the Patriarchate’s school of theology on Halki Island and guarantee the right to train clergy of all nationalities, not just Turkish nationals.”*

³³ The *60 Minutes* interview can be found at <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6001717n&tag=api>

³⁴ “Turkey Urged to Allow Greater Religious Freedom,” by Suzan Fraser, *Associated Press* as reported by *ABC News*, February 20, 2012 ([web site](#)).

³⁵ <http://www.uscifr.gov/reports-and-briefs/annual-report/3706-2012-annual-report.html>

- April 6, 2009: President Obama stated before the Turkish parliament: *“Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like **reopening Halki Seminary** will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond. An enduring commitment to **the rule of law** is the only way to achieve the security that comes from justice for all people. Robust minority rights let societies benefit from the full measure of contributions from all citizens.”*

Our Position

We call on the U.S. government to:

- urge Turkey to implement and strictly enforce the guarantees of religious freedom and human and minority rights set forth in the Treaty of Lausanne, the UN Charter, other international agreements, and U.S. laws;
- urge Turkey to grant legal personality to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, recognize the ecumenical role of the Patriarch and the Patriarchate, and safeguard it;
- urge Turkey to immediately reopen the Halki School of Theology with the right to determine its administration, faculty and course of study and lift restrictions on the elections of the Patriarch;
- urge Turkey to promptly return the many illegally confiscated properties from the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Turkish government since 1936;
- urge Turkey to respect human and minority rights;
- implement provisions of the IRFA if these actions are not implemented by Turkey;
- adopt legislation urging the Turkish government to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Christian Church. (See H.Res.180, S.Res.196, H.Res.506); and
- to pass S.392, the companion resolution to H.Res.306, urging Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage.

RECOGNIZE TURKEY'S GREEK PONTIAN GENOCIDE & MISTREATMENT OF GREEK MINORITY ON IMBROS & TENEDOS

The Issue

On May 19, 2010, the Pontic communities around the world will commemorate the 91st anniversary of the Genocide of the Pontic Greeks. From 1914-1923 the outright slaughter and expulsion by long death marches to exile caused the death of more than 500,000 Pontian and Anatolian Greeks. These genocidal policies, first ordered by the Young Turk regime and then completed by Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, brought a tragic and catastrophic end to the three-thousand-year presence of Hellenism in Asia Minor, today's Turkey.

For Background

We refer readers to Thea Halo's book *Not Even My Name*, a remarkable memoir of her Pontic Greek mother's life, which recounts her ancient way of life in the Pontic mountains, her 10-month-long death march to exile at the age of 10 -- an exile ordered by Mustafa Kemal that took the lives of her family and neighbors and left her bereft, even of her name.

Specific Example of Turkish Violation of Minority Rights

Dr. Van Coufoudakis, rector emeritus, University of Nicosia, Cyprus and dean emeritus of the School of Arts and Sciences, Indiana University-Purdue University, authored "International Law and Minority Protection: The Fate of the Greeks of Imbros and Tenedos." The article details a long neglected human rights issue in Turkey involving the fate of the population, Greek in origin, of two Turkish islands Imbros (Gokceada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada). Turkey deliberately and systematically ethnically cleansed both islands despite the provisions of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, an international treaty that Turkey has signed and ratified. The fate of this ethnic and religious minority raises important questions about Turkey's compliance with international law and with the European Convention on Human Rights at a time when Turkey is engaged in accession talks with the EU.

Developments

In a groundbreaking move, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) voted overwhelmingly to recognize the Greek genocide on December 15, 2007. The IAGS resolution stated: ***"it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks."***

In addition to being internationally recognized by Greece and Cyprus, the Pontian Greek genocide has been recognized by the South Australia State Parliament in April 2009 and by the Swedish parliament in March 2010.

Moreover, on October 28, 2010, 78 Christian graves were desecrated in the graveyard of Panagia, the capital of the island of Imbros.

Our Position

President Obama must affirm his campaign pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide and to end America's silence on Turkey's denial of this crime of genocide and include the recognition of the Assyrian, Pontian and Anatolian Greek Genocides as defined by the U.N. Genocide Convention.

The Republic of Turkey must acknowledge the genocide committed against Armenians, Assyrians, Pontian and Anatolian Greeks, and call for Turkey to issue a formal apology and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution.

We call on the U.S. government to:

- adopt legislation recognizing the Pontian and Anatolian Greek Genocide as part of the genocides inflicted against the Armenians and Assyrians, which took the lives of more than two million of Turkey's Christian population.

TURKEY

Turkey is the main cause of the problems in its region, the northeastern Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, the northern Middle East and in the southern Caucasus. Turkey is hardly a model for the Muslim world or for any nation to emulate.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD TURKEY NEEDED

The Issue

Turkey is an unreliable ally. This assertion was proven during the George W. Bush administration when Turkey refused to allow the United States to use bases in Turkey to open a northern front against the Saddam Hussein dictatorship. Turkey's reasoning was that it wanted \$6 billion more -- in addition to \$26 billion irresponsibly offered by the Bush administration through then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz -- for a total of \$32 billion. A former Bush administration official called Turkey's negotiating tactics "**extortion in the name of alliance.**"³⁶

The United States' successful prosecution of the war against Iraq without access from Turkey proved Turkey's limited value as a strategic military resource in the region. Today, the United States has access to alternative military facilities in the region including countries in the Eastern Balkans, Middle East, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and in Iraq itself.

Turkey's unreliability is not new. During the Cold War, Turkey actively aided the Soviet military to the serious detriment of the United States.³⁷

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI), chairman of Republican House Policy Committee, said as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats:

"It's my belief in the larger picture what the United States has to do is fundamentally reexamine its relationship with the nation of Turkey. If the United States comes to the realization that our interest, as it has always been, is in dealing with other just nations to advance the cause of constitutional government and human rights, I believe that this course of action will be beneficial to everyone."

Moreover, Turkey's foreign policy direction has continued to drift away from the United States and the West and has instead taken policy positions in opposition to the United States. For example:

- Turkey voted against sanctions on Iran by the UN Security Council and publically supports its dictator Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,
- Turkey continues to publically support the genocidal-denying President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, who is under indictment by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur, and
- Turkey continues to publically attack Israel for its actions in Gaza, including the flotilla incident, which has lent instability to the Middle East.

U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY), then chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, upon learning that Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu would be the recipient of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Public Service Award stated:

³⁶ *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2003; A1; col. 6.

³⁷ See Exhibit 2 on Page 23

“Turkey’s foreign policy under Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s leadership is rife with illegality, irresponsibility and hypocrisy...”

“A foreign leader who represents and defends this kind of foreign policy, one who has championed Turkey’s most odious efforts to deny to others the human dignity that Turkey rightly expects for its own people, is not a worthy recipient of the WWC Public Service Award.”³⁸

Turkey’s unreliability as an ally and its wayward foreign policy direction led to a national discussion scrutinizing Turkey’s membership in NATO during one Republican presidential debate held January 16, 2012 in South Carolina. During the debate, *Fox News* Anchor Bret Baier raised the following question to Republican Presidential Candidate Governor Rick Perry:

“Governor Perry, since the Islamist-oriented party took over in Turkey, the murder rate of women has increased 1,400 percent there. Press freedom has declined to the level of Russia. The prime minister of Turkey has embraced Hamas and Turkey has threatened military force against both Israel and Cyprus. Given Turkey’s turn, do you believe Turkey still belongs in NATO?”

AHI also cites American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Resident Scholar Michael Rubin’s blog entry on the issue titled, “Was Perry wrong on Turkey?”³⁹ Rubin points out:

- Prime Minister Erdoğan endorsed an Al Qaeda financier.
- Turkey also helped supply Al Qaeda in Iraq.
- Erdoğan had repeatedly embraced Hamas and acted to supply it.
- Under Erdoğan’s watch, the murder rate of women in Turkey has increased 1,400 percent.
- Under Turkey’s Islamist government, press freedom has plummeted.

Finally, at an AHI policy forum held February 6, 2012, Keynote Speaker Daniel Pipes, president, Middle East Forum and Taube Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, offered that Turkey’s NATO membership should be “suspended” or “terminated.”

Examples of Turkey’s Disloyalty to the United States

Examples of Turkey’s disloyalty and unreliability over the past decades as a NATO ally for U.S. strategic purposes include:

1. During the 1973 Middle East War, predating the Turkish invasion of Cyprus by one year, Turkey refused the United States military overflight rights to resupply Israel and granted the U.S.S.R. overland military convoy rights to resupply Syria and Iraq, and military overflight permission to resupply Egypt. A member of the Turkish Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara wrote:

During the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, Moscow’s overflights of Turkish airspace were tolerated. On the other hand, during the same Middle East conflict, Turkey refused to allow the United States refueling and reconnaissance facilities during the American airlift to Israel.⁴⁰

2. In the 1977-78 conflict in Ethiopia, Turkey granted the Soviets military over-flight rights to support the pro-Soviet minority of Ethiopian communist insurgents, led by Colonel Mengistu, who eventually prevailed and established a Marxist dictatorship directly dependent upon the Soviet Union. Giant Soviet Antonov-22 transport aircraft ferried Cuban troops, Soviet weapons and other assorted needs to Ethiopia. During the peak months of the conflict (December 1977 --January

³⁸ “Ackerman Dismayed over Plan to Honor Turkish Foreign Minister,” Statement by U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman, June 15, 2010. ([web site](#))

³⁹ “Was Perry wrong on Turkey?” by Michael Rubin, <http://blog.american.com/2012/01/was-perry-wrong-on-turkey/>

⁴⁰ Karasmanoglu, “Turkey’s Security and the Middle East,” 52 *Foreign Affairs* 157, 163, Fall 1983.

1978), the Soviet Union greatly increased the number of overflights through Turkish airspace with the direct acquiescence of Turkey's regime. The Soviets ferried in 2,000 Cuban troops by the end of the first week in December. By late December, 17,000 Cuban troops were in Ethiopia. The Cuban troops were immediately moved to the fighting front against Somali and anti-Communist Ethiopian forces. They effectively turned the tide in favor of the communists.⁴¹

3. Over NATO objections, Turkey allowed three Soviet aircraft carriers, the *Kiev* on July 18, 1976, the *Minsk* on February 25, 1979, and the *Novorossiisk* on May 16, 1983, passage rights through the Bosphorous and Dardanelles Straits into the Mediterranean in violation of the Montreux Convention of 1936. The Soviet ships posed a formidable threat to the U.S. Sixth Fleet.
4. In 1979 Turkey refused to allow the United States to send 69 U.S. marines and six helicopters to American military facilities at Incirlik in Turkey for possible use in evacuating Americans from Iran and protecting the U.S. embassy in Tehran.
5. Again in 1979 Turkey refused the U.S. request to allow U-2 intelligence flights (for Salt II verification) over Turkish airspace "unless Moscow agreed."⁴² This position was voiced over a period of months by Turkish officials, the opposition party and the military chief of staff, General Kenan Evren.⁴³
6. In January of 1981, President Carter tried to obtain a commitment from Turkey for the use of Turkish territory for operations in cases of conflict in the Middle East. The January 20, 1981, *New York Times* reported that Turkey was not in favor of "the United States using Turkish bases for conflicts not affecting Turkey." In the spring 1983 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, Harry Shaw pointed out that Turkey is unlikely to become involved in, or allow U.S. forces to use Turkish territory in a Middle East war that does not threaten her territory directly.
7. As an example of the above, in 1980, Turkey refused to permit the United States to use the NATO base at Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey as a transit point for the purpose of conducting a rescue mission into Tehran, Iran, to free the American hostages held in that city. The distance from Diyarbakir to Tehran is 450 miles as opposed to the actual route taken, which was over 900 miles.
8. In May 1989, Turkey rejected an American request to inspect an advanced MIG-29 Soviet fighter plane, flown by a Soviet defector to Turkey.⁴⁴
9. The Turkish government refused repeated American requests for the installation of antennas in Turkey concerning 11 transmitters whose broadcasts would have been directed primarily at the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites. As reported in the July 22, 1983, issue of *Newsweek*, the initiative by the State Department sought to improve reception of programs broadcast by Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Voice of America.
10. Turkey further damaged NATO by vetoing NATO's effort to put military bases on various Greek islands in the Aegean for defensive purposes against the Soviet navy.

Our Position

The United States, in its own best interests, should critically review and reassess its relations with Turkey.

We call on the U.S. government to consider economic sanctions, an arms embargo, and removing trade and other benefits if Turkey refuses to:

- remove its 43,000 illegal occupation forces illegally in Cyprus;
- end its illegal 37 years of occupation of nearly 40 percent of Cyprus;
- remove the Turkish barbed wire fence across Cyprus;
- restore the property illegally taken in the northern occupied area of Cyprus to its rightful owners;

⁴¹ C. Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA*, pp. 276-80, 1980.

⁴² *New York Times*, May 15, 1979, at A1, col. 3.

⁴³ See *The Washington Post* and *New York Times*, April—September 1979.

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, May 28, 1989, at A12, col.1.

- return the 180,000 illegal Turkish colonists/settlers in Cyprus to Turkey and halt the illegal transfer of more colonists/settlers from mainland Turkey to occupied Cyprus the effect of which illegally changes the demographics of the island and of the Turkish Cypriot community;
- open its ports and airports to Cypriot vessels and aircraft as required by documents Turkey signed in order to commence EU accession talks;
- stop its violations against Greece's territorial integrity in the Aegean and in Greek airspace;
- implement and strictly enforce the guarantees of religious freedom and human and minority rights set forth in the Treaty of Lausanne, the UN Charter, other international agreements, and U.S. laws;
- grant legal personality to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and safeguard it;
- immediately reopen the Halki School of Theology and lift restrictions on the elections of the Patriarch;
- promptly return more than 1,000 illegally confiscated properties from the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Turkish government since 1936; and
- respect human and minority rights in Turkey.

EXHIBIT 1

TURKEY'S COLLABORATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION DURING THE COLD WAR

As long ago as 1974, Edward Luttwak, the noted strategic analyst, discussed Turkey's cooperation with the Soviet military during the Cold War. He wrote at that time the following:

No longer presenting a direct threat to the integrity of Turkish national territory, and no longer demanding formal revision of the Straits navigation regime, the Soviet Union has nevertheless successfully exercised armed suasion over Turkey, even while maintaining a fairly benevolent stance, which includes significant aid flows. Faced with a sharp relative increase in Russian strategic and naval power, and eager to normalize relations with their formidable neighbor, the Turks have chosen to conciliate the Russians, and have been able to do so at little or no direct cost to themselves. It is only in respect to strategic transit that Turkey is of primary importance to the Soviet Union, and this is the area where the concessions have been made. Examples of such deflection, where the Russians are conciliated at the expense of western rather than specifically Turkish interests, include the overland traffic agreement (unimpeded Russian transit to Iraq and Syria by road), the generous Turkish interpretation of the Montreux Convention, which regulates ship movements in the Straits, and above all, the overflight permissions accorded to Russian civilian and military aircraft across Turkish air space. The alliance relationship in NATO and with the United States no doubt retains a measure of validity in Turkish eyes, but it is apparent that its supportive effect is not enough to counteract Russian suasion, especially since the coercion is latent and packaged in a benevolent, diplomatic stance.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1974, pp. 60-61.

ROSTER OF ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA)

AHEPA was established in 1922 by visionary Greek-Americans to protect all from prejudice emanating from the KKK. In its history, AHEPA has joined with the NAACP and B'nai B'rith International to fight discrimination. Today, its mission is to promote the ideals of ancient Greece to include philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism. It has grown to become the largest membership-based association for Hellenic-Americans and Philhellenes in the world. For more information, please visit www.ahepa.org.

American Hellenic Council of California

Since its inception, the American Hellenic Council has been the focal point of political activities of Greek Americans in California. The AHC has become an effective and respected political lobbying group whose purpose is to lobby the U.S. Congress for the protection and promotion of Greek-American interests. During its existence, the American Hellenic Council has supported numerous Hellenic issues, has made political donations and raised significant contributions for members of Congress who support Hellenic issues.

American Hellenic Institute (AHI)

AHI, founded in 1974 following Turkey's illegal invasion and occupation of 37.3 percent of Cyprus, is an organization with members throughout the nation. AHI's missions are to promote American values and the rule of law in U.S. foreign policy and to strengthen relations between U.S. and Greece and Cyprus as being in the best interests of the U.S. AHI supports legislation to promote American interests in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean and is registered with the Congress under Lobbying Act. The AHI Foundation is the first think-tank devoted exclusively to the study of the issues confronting the Greek American community. These organizations sponsor conferences, seminars and publish books and other materials on the issues. For information visit www.aheworld.org.

Armenian National Committee of America

ANCA is a national grassroots advocacy organization representing the views and values of the Armenian American community. The ANCA fosters greater civic awareness among Americans of Armenian heritage, encourages increased Armenian American participation in all aspects of the democratic process, and facilitates increased engagement by Armenian American with their elected officials, the government, media, academia, and the broader public policy community. The ANCA has national headquarters in Washington, DC, regional offices in Los Angeles and New York, more than local 50 chapters around the country, and dozens of affiliates around the world.

Cyprus Federation of America

The Cyprus Federation of America was founded on April 12, 1951, in New York City in a spirit of brotherhood and benevolence by a group of early immigrants. The Cyprus Federation currently consists of twenty-five chapter members located throughout the United States. Its primary goal is to coordinate and promote the cultural, educational and social activities of the Cypriot American community and to foster the continued friendship between the peoples of Cyprus and the United States. Since 1974, following the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus, the Federation has assumed a key role in keeping U.S. elected officials and the American public well informed of Cyprus' continuing tragedy.

Evrytalian Association of America "Velouchi"

The Evrytalian Association began October 23, 1944 in Charlotte, North Carolina, to assist several fellow Evrytalianians still living in their homeland. The Association's mission includes the preservation of heritage by strengthening ties among the members. The association's efforts fill philanthropic, educational, patriotic, social and cultural goals, by expanding established activities/projects, by increasing its membership/chapters, and by supporting the Evrytalian youth with scholarships both here and abroad.

Hellenic American National Council (HANC)

The Hellenic American National Council (HANC) was established in 1992 to serve as an umbrella organization for the numerous Greek American federations and associations across the United States. HANC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and charitable organization devoted to honoring, protecting and preserving the Hellenic and American ideals. HANC is also dedicated to supporting the interests of the U.S., Greece, and Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan regions.

International Coordination Committee-Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA)

The International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus", also known as PSEKA, was founded in 1975 by the late President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. The organization, with headquarters in Nicosia, Cyprus, has chapters all over the world. Its North American headquarters are located in New York City. Today PSEKA is staffed by professionals and volunteers working together in cities all over the United States and Canada. Over the last years, PSEKA and its Board of Directors has begun a push via the Internet, to raise awareness over the plight of the people of Cyprus. We will never forget, we will never cease. Our mission is to see Cyprus free of occupying forces, and a member of the European Union. This is a fate its people, both Greek and Turk deserve.

Pancretan Association of America

As of its formation on October 14, 1929, The PanCretan Association of America established itself as a leader among ethnic organizations worldwide in its belief that education, cultural preservation and philanthropy were its top priorities. Since those early days, all chapters have followed these guidelines and have distinguished themselves as members of one of the most inspiring and legendary organizations.

Pan-Pontian Federation of U.S.A. and Canada

The PAN-PONTIAN FEDERATION OF U.S.A.- CANADA, with its 14 Chapters, across the U.S. and CANADA, was founded, on December 14, 1980, by American and Canadian Greeks, who trace their origin to Pontos, an area located on the southeastern part of the Black sea. Hellenic presence in the area began with the establishment of coastal cities including Sinope (785 b.c.) and Trapezounta (756 b.c.). Our primary goal is to preserve, protect and promote our unique culture and to strive for recognition of Turkey's Genocide of the Pontian Greeks by Turkey and the international community.

Panepirotic Federation of America

The Panepirotic Federation of America was founded in Worcester in 1942 by Greek immigrants from that region. It was created to improve the economic situation and quality of life of the people living in Epirus as well as to protect the human rights of ethnic Greeks living in Southern Albania. One of the main goals of the Panepirotic Federation has been protecting the human rights of the Greek minority of Albania, a goal that began coming to fruition with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

United Chios Societies of America and Canada

The Chios Societies of America & Canada was organized in December 1939, with a Supreme Lodge opening in Pittsburgh, Pa. in January of the following year. Currently, The Chios Societies of America & Canada consists of chapters in New York, Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Warren, Steubenville-Weirton, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and New Orleans. There are also chapters in Montreal, and in Toronto, Canada, and prospective chapters for New Jersey, the Greater Washington DC area, and for the young adults "Next Generation Chapter." Throughout its 72 years, the Chian conventions have reflected social, political and cultural attitudes reflective of their times. In 2006, the 52nd National Chian Convention was hosted by the newest chapter of the CSA&C, the Chian Society of California. For the first time in their history, the Chians of North America had finally accomplished the goal of becoming organized and united from coast to coast.



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