



# REPORT



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## AHI HOSTS 40TH ANNIVERSARY AWARDS DINNER



Honorees from left: Aris Melissaratos, Katherine Quinn, Erika Spyropoulos, Gene Rossides, Mariyana Spyropoulos, George Lois

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) hosted its 40th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards Dinner, March 14, 2015, at the Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C.

AHI honored a distinguished set of awardees based upon their important career achievements and contributions to the Greek American community or community at-large. They were: Gene

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## AHI HOSTS ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL SALUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY



Ambassador Christos Panagopoulos, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ambassador George Chacalli, Congresswoman Dina Titus, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, and the students of the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Katherine, Falls Church, VA.

AHI celebrated the 194th anniversary of Greek Independence Day by hosting its annual “Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day,” on April 15, 2015. The common democratic

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## AHI PRESIDENT LARIGAKIS, PRIME MINISTER TSIPRAS MEET IN ATHENS



Larigakis meeting with Prime Minister Tsipras.

AHI President Nick Larigakis completed a three-day visit to Athens, Greece where he met with top officials of the Greek government, including Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, on April 4, 2015. “I thank Prime Minister Tsipras for taking the time from his busy agenda, especially over the weekend, for a substantive discussion on issues of importance to the relationship between longtime allies, the United States and Greece,” Larigakis said. “Greece continues to face many challenges domestically and abroad. AHI looks forward to working with the Greek government to help address these challenges from the perspective of meeting our mission of strengthening relations between the United States and Greece.”

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# AHI GENERAL NEWS

## AHI HOSTS 40TH ANNIVERSARY AWARDS DINNER

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From left: Marilyn Rouvelas, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, and Katherine Van Hollen.

T. Rossides, AHI Founder, with the first-ever “AHI Hellenic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award;” Ted G. Spyropoulos (posthumously), businessman, philanthropist, and champion of Hellenism; George Lois, art director, designer, and author; and Aris Melissaratos, businessman and philanthropist. In addition, a special award presentation was made on the 100th Anniversary of his birth and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the movie, “Zorba the Greek,” posthumously, to actor Anthony Quinn.



Master of Ceremonies Larry Michael.

Larry Michael, “Voice of the Redskins,” and senior vice president and executive producer of Media, Washington Redskins, was the evening’s emcee. AHI Board of Directors Treasurer Nicholas G. Karambelas, Esq., partner in Sfikas & Karambelas LLP, introduced Michael. The Marines of Headquarters Battalion presented the colors and the American and Greek national

anthems were performed by Maria Pierce. Rev. Konstantinos Pavlakos, Saint Katherine’s Greek Orthodox Church, Falls Church, Va., offered the invocation. Apollonia provided the musical entertainment.

Opening the evening’s program were AHI President Nick Larigakis and AHI Foundation President Dr. Spiro Spireas.

### Honorees Humbled, Moved by Accolades

American Hellenic Institute Founder Eugene T. Rossides, accepted the first ever AHI Hellenic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award. For this special honor, AHI commissioned a tribute video to salute the life work of Gene Rossides. In acceptance, Rossides expressed his appreciation to his family and colleagues at AHI. He also provided the historical context that led to the founding

of AHI: “It was July 22nd, 1974, two days after Turkey had invaded Cyprus with the illegal use of U.S. arms. I accompanied President Makarios of Cyprus to the State Department where he met with Henry Kissinger, the Secretary. I met with Bob McCleskey, the deputy to Kissinger, and I said to Bob, whom I knew, ‘Bob, you got to stop the arms to Turkey because the law is clear that if anyone uses our arms for offensive purposes—the aid to arms must cease immediately.’ It was not a question of Presidential discretion; it was mandatory. Bob McCleskey answered that they would look into it. When he said that I knew that they would do nothing and I decided at that point to form an organization which I did. Eight days later we incorporated the American Hellenic Institute, which led the effort for the rule of law embargo against Turkey which was successful during that ‘74 year...”



Nick Karambelas welcoming guests.



Gene Rossides and his family.

Accepting the AHI Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award on behalf of the late Ted G. Spyropoulos was his wife, Erika, and daughter, Mariyana. Spyropoulos was honored for his faithful dedication to Hellenic ideals and values and for a lifetime of generosity to the community. In acceptance, his daughter, Mariyana, stated, “My family and I would like to offer our warm thanks to the American Hellenic Institute, Mr. Rossides, Mr. Larigakis, for today’s tribute to my father, Theodore Spyropoulos. We thank you for honoring his memory...It’s difficult to sum up a life in a work of a few minutes. He embodied what many people of distinction and honor represent in our community and in our society: country, his fellow man, his work, and his family...Let the life of Theodore Spyropoulos and the many who came before him and will follow him to teach us through their lives that humanity is our business.”

In addition, Ted’s wife, Erika, stated, “It is a great honor for me to accept this award for my beloved late husband.” She described her late husband as “generous and patriotic,” “tireless

*40th Anniversary Awards Dinner Honorees Shine*



From left: Dr. Spiro Spireas, Gene Rossides, Nick Larigakis.



From left: Dr. Spiro Spireas, Erika Spyropoulos, Mariyana Spyropoulos, Nick Larigakis.



Maria Pearce singing the national anthems of the United States and Greece during the presentation of the colors.



From left: Dr. Spiro Spireas, Katherine Quinn, Nick Larigakis.



From left: Nick Larigakis, George Lois, Dr. Spiro Spireas.



From left: Dr. Spiro Spireas, Aris Melissaratos, Nick Larigakis.

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with devotion to Hellenism and education,” and “possessed with the great Hellenic value admired in a human being, philotimo.”

In acceptance of the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his extraordinary accomplishments in the field of advertising and visual arts, **George Lois**, remarked that even from a very young age, five, he knew, “*that being Greek was a gift from the gods.*” Lois described his life’s work as it pertained to helping Greece. His saddest, yet proudest project was a protest campaign designed to provoke and raise money to help political prisoners and their families during the horrendous seven-year Junta. Lois also helped the Greek National Tourist Organization in 1985 when tourism suffered following the skyjacking and hostage-taking crisis at the Athens Airport. The campaign, “I am going home to Greece” was born.

In closing, Lois thanked AHI on its “glorious 40th anniversary,” and “for the sweet honor which I dedicate to all our rested forefathers...”

**Aris Melissaratos** received the AHI Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award for his philanthropic commitment to educational and charitable endeavors in the greater Baltimore/Washington area. He is one of the country’s most respected business leaders with a near 40-year career in leadership roles for companies and institutions such as General Electric and Johns Hopkins University as well as a public servant, serving as a cabinet secretary for the state of Maryland.

In acceptance, Melissaratos also spoke of the importance of Greece as “the birthplace of everything, scientific and philosophical,” and he recounted how fortunate he has been to fulfill the American Dream after being born in communist Romania and eventually moving to post-civil war Greece where there was no opportunity. “*I feel very fortunate, that I have been able to come to this country and live the American Dream like all the others that have gone before me,*” he said. “*This country [the United States] brings the best of what the Greeks—our forefathers— offered to the world...It’s this phenomenal mosaic of world’s cultures built on the foundation of the Greek civilization and knowledge that has made this country what it is.*”

In conclusion, **Anthony Quinn** was posthumously awarded the AHI Hellenic Heritage Cultural Achievement Award on the 100th anniversary of his birth, in celebration of his iconic role as “Zorba the Greek,” and in recognition of his vast artistic talent. Katherine Quinn, wife of the late actor, accepted the award.

### **Briefing with Top Greek, Cypriot Diplomats Comprise Weekend’s Events**

As part of the weekend’s festivities AHI hosted a breakfast briefing with Ambassador of Greece to the U.S. **Christos Panagopoulos** and Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the U.S. **George Chacalli** on March 14. The relevant topics affecting both countries were discussed by the two top diplomats. AHI President **Nick Larigakis** moderated the discussion. A lively Q&A session followed.



Attendees at the Embassy of Cyprus on Friday evening.



From left: Ambassador **Christos Panagopoulos** of Greece, AHI President **Nick Larigakis**, and Ambassador **George Chacalli** of Cyprus at the Saturday morning breakfast and policy briefing.

Also as part of the weekend’s festivities, major benefactors and supporters attended a buffet dinner graciously hosted at the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus on March 13.

### **MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HELD**

AHI President **Nick Larigakis** and Legislative Director **Georgea Polizos** met recently with members of Congress and State Department officials to review AHI’s policy agenda and to provide updates on the latest developments in the eastern Mediterranean. The legislators they met with were: U.S. Reps. **Ed Royce** (R-CA), chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 17; **Gus Bilirakis** (R-FL) and **Carolyn Maloney** (D-NY), co-chairs, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, February 4; **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen** (R-FL), chair, House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, March 17; **Grace Meng** (D-NY), member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 3; **Ted Deutch** (D-FL), co-chair, Congressional Hellenic Israeli Alliance, and member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 17; **Chris Van Hollen** (D-MD), ranking member, House Committee on Budget, February 26; **John Sarbanes** (D-MD), February 4, and **Niki Tsongas** (D-MA), February 4.

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Larigakis and Polizos also met with the senior foreign affairs staff of U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), who is the ranking member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, on February 4. On March 10, 2015, Larigakis and Polizos met with Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Sloat and Greek Desk Officer Nicole Lima Nuccelli. "As part of our ongoing outreach to Congress and to the administration, we provided the officials with an overview of AHI's policy objectives and brought them up-to-speed on developments in the region," Larigakis said. "It is important to raise awareness and continue dialogue with policymakers as well as advising them that AHI serves as a resource of information for them. We thank them for their time and interest in issues affecting the Greek American community."

### AHI FOUNDER HONORED BY THE CYPRUS CHILDREN'S FUND



AHI Founder Gene Rossides, honoree, with organizers and dignitaries at the Cyprus Children's Fund testimonial dinner.

The Cyprus Children's Fund honored AHI Founder Eugene T. Rossides, presenting him with The Cyprus Children's Fund Recognition Award at the organization's testimonial dinner held March 21, 2015, Terrace on the Park, New York City. "I am deeply grateful for this wonderful honor from the Cyprus Children's Fund, which has done so much to help alleviate the plight of underprivileged and displaced children of Cyprus, following the Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation of 37.3 percent of Cyprus," AHI Founder Rossides said. Rossides was honored alongside the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) by the Cyprus Children's Fund. He thanked AHEPA for its financial assistance following the invasion that allowed for a significant grassroots campaign that led to the successful U.S. rule of law embargo of arms to Turkey.

### AHI SUBMITS TESTIMONY TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

AHI submitted testimony to the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs on the Obama Administration's foreign aid proposals for FY2016 on March 23, 2015. In the best interests of the United States, AHI's testimony opposed: any military assistance the administration will request for Turkey until

Turkey removes its troops and illegal Turkish settlers from Cyprus; aid the administration will request for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM); and any reduction that might be introduced in the aid levels for the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. In addition, AHI's testimony presented the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) that were proposed by the Republic of Cyprus prior to the suspension of settlement talks in the fall of 2014 as an example of where United States foreign assistance could be helpful should the talks resume in 2015.

### AHI CO-HOSTS DINNER FOR GREECE'S FOREIGN MINISTER IN WASHINGTON

AHI co-hosted a private dinner in honor of Foreign Minister of Greece Nikos Kotzias, with the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), April 21, 2015, on the occasion of the foreign minister's visit to Washington, DC. "We thank Foreign Minister Kotzias for taking the time from his busy agenda in Washington, to join us for an in-depth discussion on issues of importance to the relationship between longtime allies, the United States and Greece," AHI President Nick Larigakis said. "Greece continues to face many challenges, and we will continue to explore initiatives that will help to strengthen between the United States and Greece." Foreign Minister Kotzias was accompanied by Ambassador of Greece to the U.S. Christos Panagopoulos and the foreign minister's staff. Supreme President Phillip Frangos and Chairman of the Board Nicholas Karacostas represented AHEPA.

### AHI CO-SPONSORS EXHIBIT ON GREEK JEWISH WWII RESISTANCE



From left: Dan Mariaschin, Executive Vice President, B'Nai B'Rith International; Christos Failadis, Press and Communication Counselor, Greek Embassy; Zanet Batinou, Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece; Nick Larigakis, AHI President; and Senior Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig of Washington Hebrew Congregation.

AHI co-sponsored "Synagonists: Greek Jews in the National Resistance," an exhibit presented by the Embassy of Greece that tells the story of Greek Jewish resistance during World War II. The exhibition officially opened April 21, 2015 at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, DC and ran daily through May 26, 2015. "AHI has always looked to highlight

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Greece's role in World War II and particularly in the resistance against the Nazis," AHI President Nick Larigakis said. "The Greek Jews played one of the most active roles in the fight against Nazi occupation and we are proud to highlight the importance of this fight by helping to support this exhibit. Congratulations to Christos Failadis, press counselor and the Embassy of Greece for organizing such a wonderful event." The embassy presented the exhibit jointly with the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Secretariat General for Communication. In addition to AHI, co-sponsors include: AHEPA, B'nai B'rith International, American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece, and Athina Balta Law Group LLC.

### AHI FOUNDER HONORED BY AHC OF CALIFORNIA



Gene Rossides receiving the Saloutos Award from the Chairman of the American Hellenic Council of California board, Dr. Menas Kafatos.

The American Hellenic Council of California honored AHI Founder Eugene T. Rossides at its 40th Annual Honors Dinner Dance, April 25, 2015, Los Angeles. "I am deeply grateful for this wonderful honor from the American Hellenic Council of California, which has done so much to help Greek Americans advocate in California," AHI Founder Rossides said. "It's also humbling to be honored among a distinguished group of accomplished Hellenes." Rossides was honored alongside prominent Hellenes: John P. Calamos, founder, CEO, and chairman, Calamos Investments; Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis, former U.S. ambassador to Hungary; and Peter Economides, owner and founder, Felix BNI. Demetrios Boutris, former California Corporations Commissioner, served as the event's Master of Ceremonies.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### The Washington Times Publishes AHI's Letter on Turkey's Latest Incursion on Cyprus

The Washington Times published AHI's letter to the editor,

"Turkey's Cyprus incursion nothing new," January 20, 2015 and in its print version, January 21, 2015. AHI President Nick Larigakis wrote the letter in response to a January 11, 2015 "Newsmaker Interview" by Guy Taylor titled, "Cypriot union threatened by dispute over oil and gas rights." Larigakis calls the interview with Turkish Cypriot negotiator Mr. Ergun Olgun a public relations ploy to avert attention away from Turkey's latest violation of international law—its "gunboat diplomacy" in the eastern Mediterranean and incursion into Cyprus' Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ). Larigakis sets the record straight on Cyprus' sovereign rights, especially with regard to exploring for energy resources within its EEZ, and on the position of the Cypriot government with regard to potential sharing of revenue from energy finds.

#### AHI Submits Letter to The Economist

AHI submitted a letter to the editor of *The Economist*, March 2, 2015. The letter, authored by AHI President Nick Larigakis, rebutted a February 28, 2015 article, "A semi-guided missile," that cast doubt on Greece's important role as a NATO ally. Larigakis wrote, "To be clear, despite Greece's economic woes, Greece is only one of four NATO countries to maintain the 2% minimum standard for military expenditures at 2.3%." He added the invaluable role of NSA Souda Bay, Crete, in facilitating NATO and U.S. missions in addition to the importance of NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Center (NMIOTC) and NATO Missile Firing Installation (NAMFI), which are both located on Crete. Furthermore, Larigakis cites Greece's value to security interests in the Mediterranean due to emerging threats caused by greater access to the Mediterranean by ISIS, which presence eerily was felt recently on Libya's Mediterranean coast.

#### AHI President Rebutts Turkish Cypriot's Blog Post

AHI President Nick Larigakis submitted a rebuttal to a guest commentary authored by Mr. Mehmet Mustafaoglu that was published May 1, 2015 in the online version of *The Hill*, a newspaper with a focus on the U.S. Congress. Mr. Mustafaoglu's commentary, "Cyprus: The volatile and oddly forgotten frozen conflict" appeared in the *The Hill's* Congress Blog, a forum for lawmakers and policy professionals. In response to the op-ed, Larigakis set the record straight on Turkey's illegal invasion of Cyprus on July 20, 1974, the recent suspension of settlement talks due to Turkey's incursion of the Republic of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and Mr. Mustafaoglu's ludicrous assertion that Turkish troops are needed on Cyprus. For the latter, Larigakis cites statements made by the former chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and the committee's current chairman, U.S. Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) that call for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus. Although Larigakis' submission was not published, a submission titled, "Turkey is the bad actor on Cyprus," by Hellenic Caucus Co-chair U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis' (R-FL) was published on May 6, 2015.

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## AHI IN THE NEWS

### [New Greek TV Features AHI President](#)

New Greek TV featured AHI President Nick Larigakis as its “Greek of the Week.” The profile interview by Maria Athens, titled, “AHI President Nick Larigakis: ‘Take Pride & Have Passion In What You Do’” ran in the January 30, 2015 edition. In the interview, Larigakis discusses his roots and career path, his drive to become an advocate, and his vision for the American Hellenic Institute. A large portion of the interview is dedicated to AHI’s evolution since its founding and the challenges Larigakis faces of attracting young Greek Americans and Philhellenes as members to the organization.

### [Arise TV Interviews AHI President](#)

Arise TV, an emerging 24-hour news channel with hubs in London and New York, interviewed President Larigakis in March about the new government in Greece and the country’s economy. Larigakis made it a point to address why Greece maintains 2.3% of its GDP on military expenditures, a question presented to a previous interviewee who did not see why Greece needed to do so. Larigakis informed the journalist that Greece maintains this level of military spending to defend and safeguard its sovereign territory in the Aegean from Turkey’s violation of Greece’s air-space and territorial waters.

### [Parapolitika: AHI President is “Our Man in Washington”](#)

*Parapolitika* newspaper profiled AHI President Nick Larigakis, calling him “Our Man in Washington” and “an influential figure in the Greek-American community” in an April 25, 2015 news report that picked-up on President Larigakis’ visit to Athens in early April. The news report also describes AHI as always having been “one of the most important Greek-American organizations, with great influence on the other side of the Atlantic.” *Parapolitika* filed its report on Larigakis following his brief visit to Athens, Greece, in April 4, where he met with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The news report recapped the 45-minute meeting between Prime Minister Tsipras and President Larigakis as well as other meetings Larigakis held with officials of the new Greek Government. *Parapolitika* also compliments AHI and its leadership for its prompt actions over the years when it comes to defending the interests of the Greek American community, citing letters written to U.S. government officials.

## NOON FORUM

### [AHI Forum Examines Greece’s Tourism Industry](#)

AHI hosted a noon forum titled, “The Myths and Realities of Greece as a Tourism and Conference Destination,” on April 1, 2015, at AHI’s Hellenic House. The forum featured Tim Ananiades, area manager, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Greece/Cyprus/Balkans and managing director, Hotels Grande Bretagne and King George.

“As the tourism season is upon us, the importance of the industry to Greece cannot be underscored enough, especially as Greece battles through an economic crisis,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said.

As part of his presentation, Ananiades touched upon Greece’s affordability as a tourist destination, the myths of the impact of the civil disobedience upon tourism, and he examined Greece’s appeal as a business conference destination, including its ability to accommodate large numbers of delegates. He also discussed ways in which the Greek American community and Greek American organizations can help to increase tourism to Greece.

## STATEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### [AHIF Releases Spring 2015 Issue of Online Policy Journal](#)

The American Hellenic Institute Foundation (AHIF) announced the third volume release of its *Spring 2015 Online Policy Journal*. “With this issue, we again seek to enhance the quality of American foreign policy regarding the eastern Mediterranean, particularly Greece and Cyprus. Our essayists combine historic analysis with recent events and place them in broad cultural contexts,” said Dan Georgakas, editor of the Online Policy journal and Director of the Greek American Studies Project, Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Queens College (CUNY). “We believe key factors in enriching American policies are the activities of the Greek community and its allies, and we seek to empower them in whatever way we can. We think it especially important to work with Greek Americans still at the onset of their careers. In all our endeavors, we advocate the need for a commitment to the principle of Rule by Law coupled with a commitment to rendering an authentic historic record stripped of ethnocentric bias.”

### [AHI Releases 2014 Annual Report](#)

AHI announced the release of its 2014 Annual Report on March 18. “All of AHI’s policy-based programs and initiatives for 2014 that advance the best interests of the United States on issues of importance to the Greek American community are encapsulated in this report,” President Nick Larigakis said. “We are proud to highlight our successful programming, which includes our ‘Future of Hellenism in America’ conference, foreign policy trip abroad for college students, and several policy forums, among other initiatives and events.”

### [AHI Releases Updated Fact Sheet on Greece’s Security Contributions](#)

AHI announced it has released an update to its 2013 fact sheet that details Greece’s contributions to United States interests in the eastern Mediterranean and to NATO. The fact sheet is titled, “Greece: Valued Ally. Strategic Partner.”

“When it comes down to it, Greece is a proven, reliable, and invaluable ally of the United States and an integral contributor to NATO, taking its obligations to the Alliance seriously despite the well-chronicled economic crisis it has endured,” AHI President

## AHI STATEMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nick Larigakis said. “Our fact sheet presents data, provides testimonials from current and former U.S. government officials, and highlights examples of how Greece has contributed to United States security interests and international peacekeeping operations over many decades. We strongly encourage the community to utilize the fact sheet as an educational tool when speaking or meeting with policymakers and share it widely.”

### **AHI Welcomes WSJ Opinion Piece**

AHI welcomes an opinion piece published February 23, 2015 in *The Wall Street Journal* titled, “*When Islamic State Starts Hitting Ships.*” Seth Cropsey, director, Center for American Seapower, Hudson Institute, and former deputy undersecretary of the Navy, authored the piece which raises concern about greater access to the Mediterranean by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the increased risk of military conflict it poses in central and eastern Mediterranean. For deterrence to the potential for increased attacks by ISIS, Cropsey touts the United States’ agreement with Greece as demonstrated through US NSA Souda Bay at Crete as the “focal point for America’s Mediterranean naval forces”

### **AHI Congratulates President Obama’s Proclamation for 194th Anniversary of Greece’s Independence**

AHI thanks President Barack Obama for issuing a Presidential Proclamation for Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2015 and congratulates the president for acknowledging the historical bonds between the United States and Greece as well as expressing support for Greece, “our friend and NATO ally.”

### **Indiana Senator Lifts Hold on Greek Independence Day Resolution; AHI Commends Community’s Advocacy**

AHI is pleased that U.S. Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN) lifted his hold on S.Res.105, a resolution recognizing the 194th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States, after receiving a letter of clarification from Ambassador of Greece to the United States Christos Panagopoulos. The senator had placed a hold on the resolution based upon comments made by Greece’s Minister of Defense Panos Kammenos. After Senator Coats lifted his hold, the resolution, which was sponsored by U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), passed by unanimous consent on March 27, 2015 with 28 co-sponsors.

“We congratulate the entire Greek American community for coming together to advance the resolution,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. Larigakis commended the Coordinated Effort of Hellenes (CEH), and its executive director, Mike Manatos, for bringing the legislative hold to the community’s attention; AHEPA, and its executive director, Basil Mossaidis, for its grass-roots mobilization; and the Hellenic American Leadership Council, and its executive director, Endy Zemenides, for creating awareness through its social media network.

AHI had sent a letter to Senator Coats expressing disappointment that the senator had placed a hold on the resolution.

### **AHI Releases Annual Policy Statements; Positions Advocate for the Rule of Law**

AHI announced the release of its updated Policy Statements today. The policy statements discuss issues affecting the Greek American community as they pertain to United States relations with Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey. In addition, the statements include in its appendices AHI’s fact sheet detailing Greece’s contributions to United States interests in the eastern Mediterranean and to NATO and other resources, including full-length statements from government officials. “We strongly urge everyone to utilize the policy statements to their full potential, educating policymakers and creating awareness of the issues to the community at-large,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “The positions presented advocate for the application of the rule of law and are in the best interests of the United States. We also sincerely thank the large number of organizations that have endorsed the policy statements.”

### **AHI Commends Pope Francis’ Recognition of Armenian Genocide**

AHI commends Pope Francis for calling the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks the first genocide of the 20th century during Mass held April 12, 2015. According to *The New York Times*, “Francis said it was a duty of everyone not to forget the ‘senseless slaughter’ of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Turks from 1915 to 1923.” “We commend Pope Francis for demonstrating leadership by publically recognizing the Armenian Genocide as genocide,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “We call on the United States government to follow the pope’s lead and to describe and recognize the killing of 1.5 Armenians by the Ottoman Turks as genocide.”

### **Monograph Published by Hudson Institute Demonstrates Importance of Eastern Mediterranean**

AHI welcomes a monograph published by the Hudson Institute titled, “U.S. Policy and the Strategic Relationship of Greece, Cyprus, and Israel: Power Shifts in the Eastern Mediterranean” by Seth Cropsey, director, Center for American Seapower. The monograph is the culmination of Hudson Institute’s work on a project centered on research conducted for the past year and a half about security in the eastern Mediterranean, specifically energy security. “We welcome the monograph published by the Hudson Institute and applaud the organization for its very thorough research and overall body of work,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “The monograph must be distributed broadly as it confirms and reinforces just how important the eastern Mediterranean region has become for United States interests. AHI is proud to have been a strong supporter of the Hudson Institute’s work on the project from the beginning.”

### **AHI Welcomes Bipartisan Policy Center’s Report on Turkey as Undependable Ally**

AHI welcomes a report published April 2015 by the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Turkey Task Force titled, “*Turkey: An Increasing-*

## ACTION ALERTS & MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

ly *Undependable Ally*.” The BPC’s Turkey Task Force is co-chaired by Ambassador Morton Abramowitz, former U.S. ambassador to Turkey; and Ambassador Eric Edelman, former U.S. ambassador to Turkey.

“We welcome the report published by the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Turkey Task Force,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “It draws much-needed added attention and facts to a theme that we have been communicating in Washington via our policy statements and that is Turkey’s unreliability as an ally of the United States. However, we are disappointed the report lacks focus on core issues of the Greek American community, especially with regard to Turkey’s illegal invasion and subsequent forty-year occupation of the Republic of Cyprus.”

One of the report’s recommendations is to look to other nations to play important roles as regional partners. “Unfortunately, the Task Force failed to recognize Greece or Cyprus as nations that can play important regional roles,” Larigakis said. “Greece is a loyal and dependable NATO ally and the relationship between the United States and Cyprus received a significant boost following Vice President Biden’s historic visit there a year ago.”

According to the report’s executive summary, since the BPC Turkey Task Force’s original report in 2013, “the rift between Washington and Ankara has only widened.” This rift is not only widening because of Turkey’s wayward foreign policy that runs opposite to the United States, but the rift is also becoming larger due to Turkey’s worrisome domestic policies that include the “dismantling of Turkey’s democratic institutions.”

### ACTION ALERTS

**March 25, 2015**

AHI Members and Friends and particularly the Greek American community of Indiana were urged to contact U.S. Senator Dan Coats and urge him to remove his hold on S.Res.105.

### MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

STAVROULA KOTROTSIOS was sworn in as an Assistant District Attorney for the Delaware County District Attorney’s Office in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on January 5, 2015. The Honorable Judge Richard M. Capelli of the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas swore in Kotrotsios. District Attorney Jack Whelan and other county officials attended the ceremony. Kotrotsios’ family and friends were also in attendance. Kotrotsios was born and raised in Delaware County. As an undergraduate she studied at Villanova University and also attended the University of Oxford as a visiting scholar. She graduated *Cum Laude* from Villanova and received her Juris Doctorate from Temple University Beasley School of Law in 2014 where she was admitted to the Rubin Public Interest Honor Society. Kotrotsios’ internships with the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office as a law student inspired her to become a prosecutor.

HELEN ABADZI was selected as one of the five new members of the International Jury for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes. The Secretariat of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes received applications from many highly qualified individuals around the world. Subsequently, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, selected five new Jury members, based on the recommendations made by the selection panel.

### IN MEMORIAM

The American Hellenic Institute mourns the passing of our members, supporters, and friends. May their memories be eternal.

SAVVAS SAVOPOULOS, 46, Washington, DC, who was murdered along with his wife, Amy, son, Philip; and housekeeper, May 14, 2015. Savopoulos was the chief executive of American Iron Works, a metalworks company based in Hyattsville, Md. He donated his time and money to Starlight Children’s Foundation, Children’s National Medical Center, the National Child Research Center and St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

PANAGIOTIS “PETE” THOMAS SILIS, 85, Alexandria, Va., passed away January 15, 2015. Panagiotis was extremely active in the Greek Orthodox community where he served as an Archon. He spent years working tirelessly in support of numerous Greek philanthropic societies. Panagiotis was well respected in the Alexandria community where he and his wife ran several successful restaurants.

GEORGE ANGELAKIS, 80, Pennington, N.J., passed away March 5, 2015. George opened his own company, Ariston Airline Catering in Wrightstown, NJ, and became a well-respected leader in the airline catering industry. He served his home parish of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Trenton, N.J., for over 55 years. George was on the parish council for over 40 years, serving in various positions, including president for six years; and was an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

### ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL SALUTE TO GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

*Continued from page 1*

ideals held by Greece and the United States were reaffirmed by several members of Congress at the event which was held in cooperation with the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, U.S. Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

AHI President Nick Larigakis served as Master of Ceremonies. He welcomed the guests and thanked Representatives Bilirakis and Maloney for their support to organize the reception and for their ongoing efforts to promote Greek American issues in the U.S. Congress.

Members of Congress who addressed the audience included (in order of appearance): U.S. Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-

## AHI HEADLINE NEWS



From left: Ambassador George Chacalli, Ambassador Christos Panagopoulos, Congressman Ed Royce, Congressman Gus Bilirakis, Nick Larigakis.

FL), former chairman and current member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Dina Titus (D-NV), Carolyn Maloney (D-

### **PRESIDENT LARIGAKIS, PRIME MINISTER TSIPRAS MEET**

*Continued from page 1*



Larigakis meeting with Prime Minister Tsipras.

The 45-minute Saturday meeting between Prime Minister Tsipras and President Larigakis included detailed discussion on a number of issues impacting the relationship between the United States and Greece, including Greece's economic crisis and the potential for Greece to foster an environment friendly to attracting investment. For the latter, Larigakis presented the prime minister with an AHI memo titled, "U.S. Government Programs to Assist Greece." It presented ideas on how Greece can advance business and commerce between the United States and Greece through existing U.S. government programs that have the potential to assist Greece. Other areas discussed were the tourism sector and Larigakis emphasized the need for more direct international flights into Greece from the United States. Larigakis shared with the prime minister that during

NY), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Ed Royce (R-CA), chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Brad Sherman (D-CA), member, Committee on Foreign Affairs. U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), who is the ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, stopped by and chatted with AHI staff prior to the beginning of the event, but could not stay.

Special guest speakers were: Ambassador of Greece to the U.S. Christos Panagopoulos, Ambassador of Cyprus to the U.S. George Chacalli, and AHEPA Supreme President Phillip Frangos. The speakers emphasized their admiration for Hellenic culture and for the valiant and inspirational struggle for Greek Independence achieved in 1821. They also expressed their support for a proper settlement of the Cyprus issue, a proper resolution to the FYROM name-recognition issue, and religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

During the evening, there was a presentation of traditional Greek dances performed by the Return to Origins Greek Folk Dance Troupe under the direction of Rena Papapostolou. The Greek School students of Saint Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church, Falls Church, Va., sang the American and Greek National Anthems.

the past two years, AHI and partnering organizations have engaged with United Airlines to request that a direct (non-stop) airline route be established between Washington, DC and Athens, Greece.

In addition to Prime Minister Tsipras, Larigakis had meetings on April 7 with Minister of Defense Panos Kammenos; General of the Hellenic Army Michail Kostarakos, who is the chief of staff for the Hellenic National Defense; Lt. General Christos Vaitzis, chief, Hellenic Air Force General Staff; and Vice Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis, chief, Hellenic Navy General Staff to receive briefings about Greece's latest military developments. Larigakis also met with Michali Kokkinou, general director, General Secretary Greeks Abroad. "Undoubtedly, Greece is a proven, reliable, and invaluable ally of the United States, an integral contributor to NATO, and an crucial player to ensure the security of the region," Larigakis said. Larigakis also met with U.S. Ambassador to Greece David Pearce.

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