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Honorable Dan Coats
U.S. Senator
493 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Coats:

On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I write to express my disappointment with your hold of S.Res.105, A resolution recognizing the 194th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

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. The recent discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the eastern Mediterranean reinforces this position. ISIS's presence on Libya's Mediterranean coast is a new security threat to the region. Therefore, it is in the United States' best interest that the region is politically, economically, and socially stable and democratic principles flourish, including adherence to the rule of law.

Greece is a pivotal ally to advance these interests, which is why we are dismayed by your action.

Greece Contributes Significantly to NATO, U.S. Missions

A quick reference to the Fact Sheet that accompanies this letter will attest to the following facts about Greece's contributions to NATO and United States missions. To highlight a few:

- Greece is only one of four NATO countries to maintain the 2% minimum standard for military expenditures: 2.3%¹
- **US NSA Souda Bay, Crete**, successfully implemented joint USN/USAF reconnaissance missions and air refueling support for **Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.**²

¹ <http://www.wsl.com/articles/SB10001424052702303802104579449571957045910>

² <http://www.cnrc.navy.mil/SoudaBay/About/MissionAndVision/index.htm>

- **Libya:** 400 U.S. Marines deployed at US NSA Souda Bay, Crete, were “part of contingency planning to provide the president flexibility on full range of option regarding Libya” along with the amphibious assault ships USS Kearsarge and USS Ponce.³ Tens of thousands of civilians were also evacuated to Athens.
- **Afghanistan:** Tens of thousands aircraft use Greek airspace, including 30,000 allied flights during one, two-year period. Greece offered personnel for training and security purposes and donated equipment, transportation services, and millions of Euros.

Also, I want to bring to your attention the following statement from NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg made October 30, 2014, “*We thank you for all the contributions you make to our shared security. This commitment has been sustained despite difficult times. Throughout, Greece has remained an active and effective member of our Alliance and for over 60 years, NATO has been committed to keeping Greece safe.*”⁴

Clearly, all of these examples demonstrate Greece’s unwavering commitment to the best interests of the United States and NATO and alleviate any concern about a flippant comment made by Greece’s Minister of Defense.

Sincerely,



Nick Larigakis
President

³ "U.S. troops arrive in Greece in Libya buildup," *USA Today* as reported by the Associated Press, March 3, 2011.

⁴ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_114242.htm