

AHI POLICY STATEMENTS

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN TO U.S.

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 discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the eastern Mediterranean reinforces this position. Therefore, it is in the United States' best interest for the region to be politically, economically, and socially stable and that democratic ideals and principles flourish, including adherence to the Rule of Law. An enduring peace based on shared principles and the Rule of Law, as described by President George H.W. Bush in his 1991 State of the Union Address, is vital to U.S. interests and applies to this region.

GREECE

The U.S. should have a "special relationship" with Greece, recognizing its strategic location in southeastern Europe where the U.S. has important political, economic and military interests. The strong bilateral relationship between Greece and the United States was established at the very founding of both countries, and throughout the 20th century, Greece was one of a few countries that allied with the U.S. in every major international conflict. A NATO member since 1952, Greece is an immensely valuable, proven, and reliable strategic ally for the U.S. in the region especially because of key naval and air bases at Souda Bay, Crete, that provided logistical support of NATO operations in Afghanistan and U.S. operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

- With the former, Greece manned at least six posts at Kabul International Airport, including the full command (53 officers) of the airport for six months in April 2010 at an estimated cost of 1.6 million Euros; provided two medical teams consisting of eight doctors/medics each; and allocated at least **90 million Euros** for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan (from 2002 – 2010).

Furthermore, Greece is a pivotal ally for the advancement of U.S. interests that include greater stability in southeastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Recent examples include Greece's support for sanctions on Iran, the NATO mission in Libya, and the significant strengthening of bilateral relations with Israel.

- In addition, 42% of Greece's total military arms sales originate from the United States.

Greece is facing an unprecedented economic crisis.

- Despite the crisis, Greece invested **\$4.6 billion euros** on defense in 2011, comprising **2.1% of its economic output** (other European NATO members average 1.6%; Germany 1.4%).

This demonstrates Greece's unwavering commitment to NATO and Greece's active participation in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations, including the UN, NATO, the EU, and OSCE.

However, most troubling is the fact that a significant portion of Greece's investment in defense is needed to defend and safeguard its territory in the Aegean Sea from NATO ally Turkey, which routinely violates Greek national airspace and territorial waters with military aircraft and vessels in violation of international and U.S. laws. Turkey must adhere to international law and legal procedures with respect to any dispute it has with Greece in the Aegean Sea. The U.S. must 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.

The State Department negated previous U.S. policy when it recognized the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 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 U.S. for decades. It was a disrespectful act toward Greece which is a staunch NATO ally. 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 has no territorial claims against any of its neighbors, and it is a leading source of foreign investment, aid and employment in FYROM. FYROM must negotiate in good faith with

Greece to resolve the name issue and must immediately cease its 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). In addition the United States must continue with the position that FYROM will not join NATO until the name dispute is resolved.

CYPRUS

The Republic of Cyprus is an important nation for U.S. interests in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, and it is a key partner on counter-terrorism and security issues. For example, Cyprus was the first EU nation to sign the U.S.' Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). It shares the U.S.' core values of freedom, democracy and adherence to the rule of law. Cyprus is a Western-oriented country, and it is vital to U.S. interests that it remains so as demonstrated by the 2006 evacuation from Lebanon to Cyprus of 15,000 U.S. citizens during the Israel-Lebanon conflict. Also, Limassol port is used by U.S. military personnel deployed in the region for R&R. Cyprus should be recognized as an important partner for U.S. strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean.

A Cyprus settlement must not reward Turkey's 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, and the European Court on Human Rights. 43,000 illegal Turkish troops occupy the Republic of Cyprus that must be removed to facilitate peace in the region. The 2012 Republican Platform cited the need for additional forces from NATO countries to be deployed in Afghanistan. The removal of 43,000 Turkish troops from Cyprus, where there has been 17 million incident free inter-communal crossings since 2003, to the Afghan theatre is justified.

The United States must support right of the Republic of Cyprus to explore for energy reserves within its sovereign territory and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and to work in cooperation with neighboring countries such as Israel to develop energy reserves in the region. The United States must urge Turkey to cease all activities and plans to further develop energy resources illegally within the territory and EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus and oppose Turkey's threatening statements and bellicose threats to the Republic of Cyprus and Israel.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

In 2012, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended the State Department designate Turkey a "country of particular concern." The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Turkey, is the spiritual home of the world's oldest and second largest Christian Church. Turkey has made minimal progress to safeguard it or its spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide (six million in the U.S.), Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The Turkish government has tolerated assaults against its Greek Orthodox Christian religious minority and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, continues the illegal closure of the Halki School of Theology, and has taken illegally numerous church properties. Turkey must implement and strictly enforce the guarantees of religious freedom and human and minority rights set forth in the Treaty of Lausanne, the UN Charter, and U.S. laws, including the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA).

TURKEY

To address the issues presented, U.S. interests are best served by supporting rapprochement between Greece and Turkey based on the rule of law and democratic norms and by promoting Turkey's emergence as a fully democratic state regardless of whether she accedes to the EU. Furthermore, the U.S., in its own best interests, should critically review and reassess its relations with Turkey because it is an unreliable ally. This assertion was proven most recently during Operation Iraqi Freedom when Turkey refused to allow the United States to use bases in Turkey to open a northern front against the Saddam Hussein dictatorship.

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PREVIOUS DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

On Aegean Sea Boundary

"...my Administration has suggested that the Imia question could be best decided by the International Court of Justice or some other body, and we stand ready to actively assist in this process. We have also spoken out forcefully against frivolous territorial claims, including an assertion by a Turkish military officer that the island of Gavdos might not be Greek." – **Campaign Statement by President Bill Clinton, Clinton-Gore 1996.**

On Greece as NATO Ally

"As an ally in NATO and a key player in the European Union, Greece is helping to shape the future of Europe and the next half-century of our transatlantic partnership. Greek soldiers are also serving with great distinction alongside ours in the NATO-led international force (IFOR) bring peace to Bosnia." -- **Campaign Statement by President Bill Clinton, Clinton-Gore 1996.**

On Cyprus

"The United States and the world community will not accept the permanent division of Cyprus...Such a Cyprus settlement should be consistent with the fundamental principles of human rights and democratic norms and practices. Accordingly, a Cyprus settlement can be just and viable only if it provides for the withdrawal of Turkish occupation forces; satisfactorily accounts for all American and Greek Cypriots missing since 1974; provides for the rights of refugees; ensures the sovereign independence and territorial integrity of the state; and establishes a democratic constitution which respects and guarantees the rights of both communities." – **Clinton-Gore Campaign Statement, October 2, 1992.**

On Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Name Dispute

"I support the recent decision by the European Community which agreed to recognize the southernmost Yugoslav Republic as an independent state provided its name does not include "Macedonia." For many Americans, the question of the use of the name "Macedonia" may seem hard to understand. At the close of World War II, the use of this name for the southern part of Yugoslavia was labeled by our then Secretary of State "as a cloak for aggressive actions against Greece" and could again become a source of instability and conflict." – **Clinton-Gore Campaign Statement, October 2, 1992.**