

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

The 2012 Republican Platform indicated hope that the Northern Ireland peace process can be replicated in Cyprus. 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 the 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, a body the 2012 Republican Platform "salutes," 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.

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## PREVIOUS REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

### **On Aegean Sea Boundary**

*“As to the disputed territorial claims regarding the Aegean continental shelf, the best course in this situation would be to submit the claims to final and binding arbitration by an international tribunal, as has been done by other nations in similar situations.” – Campaign Statement of Reagan-Bush, September 26, 1980.*

### **On Greece as NATO Ally**

*“The reintegration of Greece into the NATO military command structure is of vital importance to the security interests of NATO and the United States.” – Campaign Statement of Reagan-Bush, September 26, 1980.*

### **On Cyprus**

*“The present tragic situation in Cyprus is another example of the failure of the Kissinger-Ford foreign policy. President Ford should have taken action to prevent the unlawful use of U.S.-supplied arms by Turkey in Cyprus. I believe in the right of self-determination for the people of Cyprus. My position is that the Turkish invasion troops and colonists should leave Cyprus and all refugees should return to their homes and land. If I am elected president I will uphold the Rule of Law at home and abroad and I will use my office to bring about that result.” – Statement of Presidential Candidate Gov. Ronald Reagan , May 14, 1976, Detroit, Michigan.*

*“I support the full implementation of unanimously approved United Nations Resolution 3212 of November 1974 which ‘Calls upon all States to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Republic of Cyprus and to refrain from all acts and interventions directed against it; Urges speedy withdrawal of all foreign armed forces and foreign military presence and personnel from the Republic of Cyprus, and the cessation of all foreign interference in its affairs.’” – Campaign Statement of Reagan-Bush, September 26, 1980.*

*“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.*