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July 14, 2014

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The Honorable Chris Murphy
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Senate Dirksen Building Room 444
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senate Dirksen Building Room 444
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murphy and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I write regarding the nomination hearing of the Honorable John R. Bass to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey on July 15, 2014.

We believe the hearing must be utilized as a forum for a critical review of U.S. policy toward Turkey. Turkey illegally occupies EU-member nation Cyprus—an illegal invasion that occurred 40 years ago this July 20—and commits provocative acts that violate the sovereignty of fellow NATO and U.S. ally, Greece. It also has a cozy relationship with Iran, supports Hamas to the detriment of our strong ally Israel, and meddles in Syria and Egypt. In addition, the Turkish government continues to suppress religious freedom and human rights, especially of minority communities, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is in violation of U.S. principles on freedom of religion and U.S. law. Furthermore, Turkey has threatened economic interests as Cyprus and Israel explore hydrocarbon reserves within their Economic Exclusive Zones with the help of a U.S. company.

We contend these issues are in the United States' national interests. As such, we would appreciate it if they are raised during the hearing's deliberation. We maintain the Obama Administration must change the United States' long-standing policy of appeasement with Turkey and demand it respect democratic values, institutions, and the rule of law. This approach will serve the best interests of Turkey, and more importantly, the United States.

For convenience, we have proposed a line of questioning on these issues in the attached document for your review and consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring these issues of critical importance to U.S. interests to your attention.

Sincerely,

Nick Larigakis
President

cc: Committee Members



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AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE, INC.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION DURING THE NOMINATION HEARING OF U.S AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO TURKEY JOHN R. BASS

July 15, 2014

On Turkey-Greece

Turkey has made 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 efforts to achieve complete normalized relations with Turkey, the latter, as 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.

- **Will Ambassador-designate Bass impress upon the Turkish government to adhere to international law and legal procedures with respect to any dispute it has with Greece in the Aegean Sea and immediately abandon its provocative actions in its violations of Greek territorial waters and airspace?**
- **How concerned is Ambassador-designate Bass that Turkey continues to violate Greece's territorial integrity in the Aegean and Greek airspace on a consistent basis?**

On Turkey-Cyprus

Vice President Joe Biden remarked publically at the 42nd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress on July 9, 2014: *"The matter of the fact is that the Government of Turkey, in my view, is coming to understand, not for any noble reasons, but for practical reasons, that the status quo on the island does not benefit them economically, militarily and politically. And there is significant potential benefit for Turkey in a bizonal, bicomunal federation."*

In the same speech, the vice president also stated:

"I opened up and made clear the U.S. position that although it was a Cypriot negotiation, there was and is and can only be one government, one Cypriot, Greek Cypriot government, on the island, with no Turkish troops on the island."

- **Does Ambassador-designate Bass agree with the vice president's remarks? Are the vice president's remarks the position of the United States and President Barack Obama?**
- **Does the Obama Administration:**
 - 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?
 - support the removal of Turkey's 43,000 occupation troops illegally in Cyprus?

- support the return of the more than 180,000 illegal Turkish colonists/settlers in Cyprus to Turkey and for a halt to the illegal act of bringing 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?
- support 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?
- support 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?
- support urging Ankara to normalize relations with the Republic of Cyprus, a member of the European Union (a body to which Turkey aspires to join), as agreed to by Turkey?
- support the Republic of Cyprus's sovereign right to explore for hydrocarbon reserves and other natural resources in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ)?

On Religious Freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Turkish government has tolerated assaults against its Greek Orthodox Christian religious minority and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, continues the illegal closure of the Greek Orthodox Halki Patriarchal School of Theology and has illegally taken 7,000 church properties. These actions violate U.S. principles on freedom of religion and U.S. law as expressed in Section 2804 of the Omnibus Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1998 (PL 105-277). The law states that the "United States should use its influence with the Government of Turkey to suggest that the Government of Turkey:

- recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its nonpolitical religious mission;
 - ensure the continued maintenance of the institution's physical security needs, as provided for under Turkish and international law, including the Treaty of Lausanne, the 1968 Protocol, the Helsinki Final Act (1975) and the Charter of Paris; and
 - provide for the proper protection and safety of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Patriarchate personnel; and reopen the Patriarchal Theological School of Halki.
- **Will Ambassador-designate Bass champion U.S. law (PL 105-277) as mentioned above, as it relates to safeguarding and recognizing the Ecumenical Patriarch and its institutions?**