



# AHI

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November 11, 2008

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Gene Taylor  
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Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Expeditionary Forces  
2340 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write to you on behalf of the nation wide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) regarding two OSPREY mine hunter ships.

We have recently learned that the Navy International Programs Office had submitted legislation to Congress regarding the transfer of two OSPREY mine hunter coastal ships to Greece.

As you know, Congress recently approved House Resolution 7177 (the Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2008), but unfortunately, the legislation did not include the authorization to transfer the two OSPREY mine hunter coastal ships to Greece.

It has further come to our attention that through your initiatives, the OSPREY ships to Greece were stricken from the legislation. No other naval vessel transfers to the other countries included in the legislation were excluded – only Greece.

As you know, Greece, a very important Ally in the fight against terrorism, is a long-time NATO member. Greece's borders are surrounded by water and her task is herculean to the defense posture of NATO as it relates to safeguarding these waters. In addition, the number one commercial fleet in the world is Greek-owned.

Moreover, Greece is currently participating with personnel, means and capabilities, in numerous operations by International Organizations such as NATO, the UN and the EU. In addition, Greece has an active presence in Afghanistan (ISAF), Kosovo (KFOR), Lebanon (UNIFIL), Althea (Bosnia and Herzegovina), EUFOR in Chad and participates in the NATO Training Mission in Iraq as well as in Operation Active Endeavour, monitoring the wider area of the Mediterranean Sea. Further, the Souda Bay Complex Facilities on the island of Crete are invaluable for US and NATO missions.

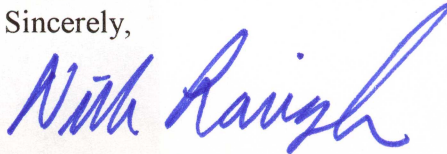
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Mr. Chairman, we feel that the record speaks for itself regarding Greece's vital contributions to the Western alliance. With her resources being continuously stretched to the limits in order to uphold her responsibilities as a NATO member, it would seem that the prudent thing to do is to assist our long-time friend and ally and lift any restriction on the transfer of these vessels to Greece.

If you have any questions or need additional information, we are available to meet with you and your staff.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Nick Larigakis  
Executive Director