



Ambassador

*Embassy of Turkey
Washington, D. C.*

September 10, 2019

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Thornberry:

Since 1987 it has been the policy of the United States with respect to Cyprus to promote "the restoration of a stable and peaceful atmosphere in the Eastern Mediterranean region" and to "actively support the resolution of differences through negotiations and internationally established peaceful procedures." Further, it has been the policy of the United States to "encourage all parties to avoid provocative actions" and "strongly oppose any attempt to resolve disputes through force or threat of use of force." 22 U.S.C. 2373(b)(1).

According to the current U.S. State Department website, the United States "supports efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Successive U.S. administrations have viewed UN-facilitated settlement negotiations as the best means to achieve a fair and permanent settlement. The United States has urged all parties to implement confidence-building measures and improve bicomunal relations."

Consistent with this understanding, the United States has maintained a policy of denying approvals for the transfer of defense articles or services to any of the armed forces on the island of Cyprus other than those maintained by the United Nations. Starting with the London and Zurich Treaties in 1959, Turkey, Greece, and the United Kingdom have acted as guarantor States for the island of Cyprus. The longstanding U.S. policy has purposefully not taken sides among peoples of the island or guarantor States to avoid promoting an arms race that might lead to an undesired or unintended consequences.

In light of this longstanding policy, I am alarmed to have learned that the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act, with little public debate or notice, includes section 1270I to repeal an important U.S. policy that has been in place for very valid reasons for more than three decades.

Last month, the two Cypriot leaders, Nicos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci, issued a joint statement announcing their intention to continue engaging in efforts undertaken by Ms. Jane Holl Lute, an American citizen who is officially assigned by the UN Secretary-General. The two leaders also announced their readiness to meet with the Secretary-General in connection with the United Nations General Assembly meetings later this month.

I would like to bring to your kind attention that passage of the Cyprus provisions contained in section 1270I could derail attempts aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to this tenuous situation and thus damage irreparably the military balance in the already fragile region.

With this understanding and background, I would like to kindly request the Committee to consider the likely consequences before making such dramatic changes to such a longstanding U.S. policy that needs to be maintained particularly at this critical juncture.

The Turkish Embassy stands ready to provide additional information to your office on this matter, or any other issue of mutual importance on our respective policy agendas. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the on-going negotiations further with you in person at your earliest convenience.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Serdar KILIÇ