U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:32 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Robert Wexler (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. WEXLER. Good morning. The Subcommittee on Europe will come to order. And without objection, all members' and witnesses' opening statements will be included in the record, and all extraneous material also can be included in the record without objection, and it is so ordered.

Let me begin first by welcoming the three witnesses. We have an especially distinguished group of witnesses this morning, and I thank each of the gentlemen. And I will get to their biographies in a proper introduction.

I first want to welcome everyone. This is the first hearing held by the Subcommittee on Europe during the 110th Congress. I want to express my deepest appreciation to my colleague, Mr. Gallegly, who is undoubtedly listening through other forums, but will be here shortly. He served as chairman of this subcommittee, and as the chairman he acted in a fair and bipartisan manner in an effort to promote American foreign policy interests, and strengthen transatlantic relations. It is my intention to lead the subcommittee with the same bipartisan spirit that Mr. Gallegly did, and to work closely with him, as well as members on both sides of the aisle, to advance our nation's interests.

As a true transatlanticist, I fully expect that this subcommittee will be active, aggressive, and deliberate in addressing the difficult challenges facing America and Europe, and will be supportive when opportunities arise to strengthen this historic alliance.

One of the most immediate and serious challenges facing the Transatlantic Alliance lies with that of our ally and democratic partner, Turkey. I am passionate about American-Turkish relations because the bilateral relationship is so important to the essential interests of both countries, and the history of cooperation is so deep. Turkish military forces have fought side by side with American forces from the Cold War to the Balkan Wars, and from Korea to Afghanistan, where Turkey has twice led ISAF forces.

As the only NATO country bordering Syria, Iraq and Iran, Turkey has hundreds of its troops on the ground in Lebanon, main-

tains a strong relationship with Israel and is an essential component to the East-West Energy Corridor providing America and Europe with a critical alternative energy supply route other than gas and oil coming from the volatile Middle East and Russia.

Prime Minister Erdogan's government remains deeply involved in Afghanistan, and is opposed to Iran's nuclear weapon program. Furthermore, Turkish cooperation is essential for our troops in Iraq. The substantial majority of the military assets used by American troops are flown into Turkey, and then transported to Iraq. For example, 74% of air cargo into Iraq transits through Incirlik Airbase.

Despite the high level of cooperation between our two nations, it is undeniable, however, that relations have been strained at times during the recent years. Most alarmingly, a recent pew center poll shows that only 12% of Turks have a favorable opinion of the United States.

The myriad of challenges to the United States-Turkish relationship will be addressed, which will be addressed by our witnesses, are multiple, complex, and intertwined. Despite Turkey's difficult geographic location, the most significant divergence between Turkey and Iraq is Kurdish terrorism. Since 2004, the PKK has killed or injured more than 1500 people in Turkey. Given America's leading role in Iraq, there is a perception in Turkey that America has not done enough to remove the threat of PKK terrorists based in northern Iraq. General Ralston—and I thank you so much for being here—will undoubtedly speak specifically to this issue.

Perceived inaction on the American side has led to a nationalist backlash in Turkey against the United States. It is my view that it is critical that the United States and Iraqi-Kurdish leaders do substantially more to address the PKK threat.

Another significant challenge facing the relationship in the short term is assisting Turkey on its EU path, including removing obstacles to its accession. While I respect my European colleagues and their concerns about possible membership, Turkey's eventually full inclusion in the EU is so clearly beneficial to Europe's long-term interests, as well as those of the United States. I urge the EU and its members not to close the door on Turkey, and create the conditions that will promote further political and economic reform in Turkey.

One of the biggest obstacles in the path to EU accession is resolving the longstanding Cyprus conflict. After the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of the Annan plan to reunify the Island in April 2004, this process has stalled. I am hopeful that the Bush administration and the European Union will fulfill its pledges to the Turkish Cypriots to lift their economic isolation and work with the new U.N. Secretary General to restart negotiations.

In this context I want to offer my praises to the Greek Cypriot Government for its decision last week to tear down a 40-year-old section of the wall that has divided Greek and Turkish Cypriots. I believe this is an important step forward, which I hope will initiate a return to the negotiating table by Mr. Papadopolous and his government.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wexler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT WEXLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

- I want to welcome everyone for the first hearing held by the Subcommittee on Europe in the 110th Congress. I want to express my deepest appreciation to my colleague, Ranking Member Elton Gallegly, who as Chairman of this subcommittee always acted in a fair and bipartisan manner in an effort to promote American foreign policy interests and strengthen transatlantic relations. It is my intention to lead the subcommittee with the same bipartisan spirit that Mr. Gallegly did and to work closely with him, as well as members on both sides of the aisle, to advance our nation's interests.
- As a true trans-atlanticist, I fully expect that this subcommittee will be active, aggressive and deliberate in addressing the difficult challenges facing America and Europe, and will be supportive when opportunities arise to strengthen this historic alliance.
- One of the most immediate and serious challenges facing the transatlantic alliance lies with that of our ally and democratic partner Turkey. I am passionate about American-Turkish relations because the bilateral relationship is so important to the essential interests of both countries and the history of cooperation is so deep. Turkish military forces have fought side by side with American forces from the Cold War to the Balkan wars and from Korea to Afghanistan, where Turkey has twice led ISAF forces.
- As the only NATO country bordering Syria, Iraq and Iran, Turkey has hundreds of its troops on the ground in Lebanon, maintains a strong relationship with Israel and is an essential component to the East-West energy corridor providing America and Europe with a critical alternative energy supply route other than gas and oil coming from the volatile Middle East and Russia.
- Prime Minister Erdogan's government remains deeply involved in Afghanistan and is opposed to Iran's nuclear weapons program. Furthermore, Turkish cooperation is essential for our troops in Iraq—a substantial majority of the military assets used by American troops are flown into Turkey and then transported to Iraq. For example, 74% of air cargo into Iraq transits through Incirlik Airbase.
- Despite the high-level of cooperation between our two nations, it is undeniable that relations have been strained at times during recent years. Most alarmingly, a recent pew center poll shows that only 12% of Turks have a favorable opinion of the United States.
- The myriad of challenges to the US-Turkish relationship, which will be addressed by our witnesses, are multiple, complex and intertwined. The most significant divergence has been in Iraq and particularly as it relates to Kurdish terrorism. Since 2004, the PKK has killed or injured more than 1,500 people in Turkey. Given America's leading role in Iraq, there is a perception in Turkey that America has not done enough to remove the threat of PKK terrorists based in Northern Iraq. Perceived inaction on the American side has lead to a nationalist backlash in Turkey against the US. It is critical that the US and Iraqi Kurdish leaders do more to address the PKK threat.
- Another significant challenge facing the relationship in the short term is assisting Turkey on its EU path—including removing obstacles to its accession. While I respect my European colleagues and their concerns about possible membership, Turkey's eventual full inclusion in the EU so clearly benefits Europe's long-term interests, as well as those of the United States. I urge the EU and its members not to close the door on Turkey and create the conditions that will promote further political and economic reform in Turkey.
- One of the biggest obstacles on the path to EU accession is resolving the long standing Cyprus conflict. After the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of the Annan plan to reunify the Island in April 2004, this process has stalled. I am hopeful that the Bush Administration and EU will fulfill its pledges to the Turkish Cypriots to lift their economic isolation and work with the new UN Secretary General to restart negotiations.
- In this context, I want to offer my praises to the Greek Cypriot government for its decision last week to tear down a 40 year old section of a wall that has divided Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Nicosia/Lefkosa. I believe this is an important step forward, which I hope will initiate a return to the negotiating table by Mr. Papadopolous and his government.
- We have an especially distinguished panel of witnesses this morning, but first I want to call upon the Ranking Member Mr. Gallegly for his opening remarks.

Mr. WEXLER. As I said earlier, we have an especially distinguished panel of witnesses. Mr. Gallegly, I believe, is detained. I would be happy to turn the program over at this point to Mr. Burton, if he wishes to have any opening comments.

Mr. BURTON. Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, did I write that speech for you? That was very good. There is bipartisan support for what the chairman just said. A lot of people think since we just changed from Republican to Democrat control that we are going to have a ton of differences. And we do have differences. But, Mr. Chairman, I agree with everything you just said, and I thought you said it very eloquently.

I am not a member of this subcommittee, but I do appreciate you allowing me to sit in today. Turkey has been a tremendous ally of the United States, a NATO ally, for a long, long time. They have been there through thick and thin, and they deserve the best that we can offer them as a friend, colleague and associate.

So I agree with everything you said. I look forward to hearing the testimony of the witnesses.

And with that, I will shut up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Burton. It is just one vote. I will miss the vote, so I can stay here. You, and any other members that come, can come back, but we will just keep going, if that is okay with you, Mr. Burton?

Mr. BURTON. Sure, great.

Mr. WEXLER. At this point I would like to go to our witnesses. And again, I deeply am appreciative to all three gentlemen for being here.

Our first witness is Ambassador Daniel Fried, the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State. Prior to his current position, Ambassador Fried served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council. His long and distinguished career has included service in the former Soviet Union as a Senior Advisor on European Policy for multiple administrations.

In addition, he served as our Ambassador to Poland, which is where I had the privilege of meeting him, from November 1997 to May 2000.

Our second witness—and then we will go back to Secretary Fried after this—is Mr. Daniel Fata, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy. In this role he is responsible for the formulation and implementation of United States defense policy for Europe, Canada, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and he assumed the position in September 2005.

Immediately prior to this appointment, Mr. Fata was Policy Director for National Security and Trade on the Senate Republican Policy Committee, chaired by Senator Kyle.

And the third witness, as I mentioned earlier, is General Joseph Ralston, Special Envoy countering the PKK, a terrorist organization, designated by the United States, Turkey, and the EU. General Ralston was appointed to the position in September of last year. He continues to serve as Vice President of the Cohen Group.

In 2003 General Ralston completed a distinguished 37-year Air Force career as Commander, U.S. European Command and Su-

preme Ally Commander, Europe, of NATO. In this capacity he commanded over approximately 65,000 troops from 39 NATO and other nations, participating in ongoing operations in the Balkans, along with contributing to the preservation of peace security and territorial integrity of NATO member states.

General Ralston served a unique and distinguished career with many other accomplishments while serving in our U.S. military.

If we can turn to Ambassador Fried, with just one more comment. Please know, Ambassador, and for the world to know, I very much respect your guidance, and your advice and policy wisdom. I think that the country owes you a great debt of gratitude for the service that you provide to our Department of State. And thank you so much for being here.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. FRIED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that kind introduction, and thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Engel, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to speak about how the United States and Turkey can work together to address common challenges in the world.

Secretary Rice instructed me to seek to shift the focus of the United States-Turkey relationship from just managing challenges to finding ways the United States and Turkey can work together in the world on issues where we agree.

Turkey, a majority Muslim state with a tradition of secular governance, a deepening democracy, and a thriving free market is of strategic importance to the United States. Its legacy of modernization can inspire people throughout the broader Middle East.

Washington and Ankara have developed a blueprint to invigorate our bilateral relations. It is the Shared Vision statement that Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Gul concluded last July. We have made progress implementing the statement, though much work remains in Turkey and, as you said, sir, public anti-Americanism remains at a historic high.

We have made steady progress over the past 2 years in elevating United States-Turkish relations from their low point on March 1, 2003, when the Turkish Parliament voted not to allow United States forces to deploy through Turkey to Iraq. Today Turkey does support United States objectives in Iraq, and has urged us not to abandon the Iraqi people. In turn, the United States depends greatly on Turkey to pursue shared objectives in support of the Iraqi and Afghan peoples.

Turkey, for example, provides extensive logistic support to our troops in Iraq. This critical lifeline includes the cargo hub at Incirlik Airbase, through which, as you said, we ship 74% of our air cargo to Iraq.

The land border crossing between Turkey and Iraq at the Habur Gate accounts for delivery to Iraq of a substantial portion of the fuel used by coalition forces, and the fuel, food, and water consumed by Iraqis.

Turkey is the source of many imports of electricity into northern Iraq. Turkey has used technical and financial assistance effectively

to train Iraqi political parties to live in their new democratic world, to rebuild infrastructure and spark commercial development, and to deliver to average Iraqis the necessities of daily life.

Turkey's granting of blanket over-flight clearances to United States military aircraft is of critical importance to our military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan itself, Turkey has commanded the International Security Assistance Force twice, and is now sharing joint rotational command of ISAF, Capital Region Command, with France and Italy.

Turkey also has participated generously in civilian reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. We continue to urge Turkey, a dependable NATO ally, to continue to contribute to Afghanistan, and to remove existing caveats.

In the broader Middle East, Turkey is part of the robust international coalition working to achieve a diplomatic solution to Iran's continuing non-compliance with international nuclear obligations. Turkey has committed itself to implement fully the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1737, which imposes sanctions on Iran, and is helping to apply targeted financial pressure on the Iranian regime.

Turkey is a partner in the search for Israeli-Palestinian peace. Its leaders have conducted their own diplomacy between Tel Aviv and Arab capitals, and have urged the Palestinians to accept Quartet principles.

Turkey has been actively engaged in Lebanon, notably by contributing about 900 troops to UNIFIL last fall. During last summer's Israeli-Hezbollah clashes, Turkey helped evacuate almost 2,000 American citizens from war-torn Lebanon.

On energy security, the United States has offered strong support to help realize the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, working with Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan; and with companies to establish a public-private partnership that has resulted in one of the most complex and successful pipeline projects of all time. A companion natural gas pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline is about to begin delivering Azerbaijani natural gas to Georgia and Turkey.

Over the next decade we hope a trans-Caspian gas pipeline from Kazakhstan and even Turkmenistan will connect with this BTE pipeline. We have also just launched trilateral discussions with Ankara and Baghdad on developing gas production in northern Iraq.

This so-called Southern Corridor can change Eurasia's strategic map by offering Europe its best hope for large volumes of natural gas supplies that will allow diversification away from a deepening European reliance on Gazprom.

We are committed to eliminating the threat of PKK terrorism in northern Iraq, where this terrorist group is headquartered, and from which it continues to launch deadly attacks on Turkey. My colleague and friend, General Joe Ralston, former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, has been appointed by Secretary Rice as the "Special Envoy to Counter the PKK." And obviously he will have more to say on this subject.

The Turkish-American strategic partnership, though, rests on a foundation of Turkey's own democratic development. Turkey remains a secular democratic state, but it is today a very different and far more robust democracy than the Turkey of a generation

ago. Former boundaries of expression and limits upon political options have gone or much widened. Basic freedoms are much more respected.

But with greater democratic freedoms have come deeper debate within Turkey about its strategic course, its identity, and about the role of religion in public life. These debates in turn have brought increased volatility. These intense debates within Turkey take place at a time of a very active political calendar. Turkey will hold Presidential elections in May, and parliamentary elections in November.

Euro-skepticism, anti-Americanism, and tensions over Turkey's identity and strategic course are present, and sometimes growing, as is a popular nationalism. One cause is Turkish citizens' frustration with PKK terrorism emanating from Iraqi territory. Many Turks feel humiliated by what they perceive is a shifting of accession requirements by the EU.

As political tensions mount, additional political strains can undermine America's ability to sustain the recent improvement in United States-Turkish ties. But amid these difficult issues, we have confidence that the Turkish people will address their differences peacefully, and within Turkey's deepening democratic process.

Against this complex background, Mr. Chairman, Turkey now faces the possibility of a Congressional Resolution defining as genocide the mass killings and forced exile of as many as 1.5 million Armenians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

The administration has never denied, nor does it dispute or minimize, the historic facts of these mass murders and this ethnic cleansing. Each year the President has issued a solemn statement on April 24, Armenian Remembrance Day. Our goal is to stimulate a candid exploration within Turkish society of these horrific events, in an effort to help Turkey reconcile with its painful past, and with Armenia.

This is not easy. It was not easy for the United States to address its own historic dark spots, either. We will have to be persistent, and we will have to be thoughtful. But after long silence, Turkey is making progress addressing these issues. Dramatically, this year more than 100,000 Turkish citizens of all backgrounds demonstrated at the funeral of an Armenian-Turkish journalist murdered by a Turkish ultranationalist, and they demonstrated in support of tolerance and a candid exploration of Turkey's past.

Political leaders across the political spectrum, including the President, the Prime Minister, and the Chief of the General Staff, condemned this killing.

We are also seeing growing calls, including from Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul, for changes to Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code, which criminalizes insulting Turkishness. We welcome Turkish leaders' and opinion makers' calls to amend or repeal Article 301.

Against this backdrop, we believe that House Resolution 106 would undercut voices emerging in Turkey who call for a truthful exploration of these events in pursuit of Turkey's reconciliation with its own past, and with Armenia.

Members of the Armenian-Turkish community tell us that such resolutions would stifle the dialogue they seek, and would even raise popular emotions so dramatically as to threaten the progress they have made in Turkey. Our goal is an opening of the Turkish mind and the Turkish heart through honest, if painful, self-examination. We fear that passage of any such resolutions would close minds and harden hearts.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary Rice has an ambitious agenda with Turkey over the next 2 years, and we hope to work with you and with Congress to achieve success in these goals. We look forward to continued close consultation with the subcommittee, committee, and other members.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. And when the time comes, I look forward to answering all of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fried follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Wexler, Ranking Member Gallegly, Members of the Sub-Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here. I will speak to you today about how the United States and Turkey are working together closely to address our common challenges, particularly in the Middle East but also more globally.

Secretary Rice has instructed me to shift the focus of the U.S.-Turkey relationship from one of simply managing challenges to one where the United States and Turkey are working cooperatively to advance a broad range of issues, putting in action our shared interests and common values. Our shared interests include stability and freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan, democratic reform in the broader Middle East, energy security across Eurasia, and Turkey's deeper anchoring in Europe. Our common values start from our two countries' deep commitment to democracy. Turkey, a majority Muslim state with a deepening democracy with a tradition of secular governance, is of strategic importance to the United States. Its 160-year legacy of modernizing reform, dating back to the late Ottoman period, can inspire people throughout the broader Middle East who thirst for democratic freedom and market-based prosperity.

Turkey also has a rapidly growing market economy. Over the past five years it has had the highest GDP growth rate of any OECD country, averaging over seven percent a year. The Turkish authorities have tamed inflation from over 25 percent for a generation to under 10 percent from 2004–2006.

Washington and Ankara have developed a blueprint to reinvigorate our bilateral relations. It is the "Shared Vision" statement that Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Gul concluded in Washington in July 2006. This document identifies ten key sectors for cooperation. It also establishes new diplomatic mechanisms to structure our engagements on the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. We have made significant progress in implementing the "Shared Vision" statement, as I'll discuss below. But much work remains, with anti-Americanism remaining at a historic high among the Turkish public and providing a context for Turkey's complex political dynamic.

Iraq and Afghanistan

We have made steady progress over the past two years in elevating bilateral U.S.-Turkish relations from their low point on March 1, 2003, when the Turkish Grand National Assembly voted not to allow U.S. forces to deploy through Turkey to Iraq. Today, Turkey supports U.S. objectives in Iraq and has urged us not to abandon the Iraqi people. Coordination between our embassies in Baghdad is working well, with our Turkish ally offering us insights and support. Turkey actively encourages various Iraqi communities to participate in Iraq's political processes, and provides training to Iraqi political parties, diplomats, and security forces. Most recently, Turkey participated in the first Iraq Neighbors Conference in Baghdad, and has offered to host the ministerial meeting of the Iraq Neighbors group in Istanbul, as we pursue a shared goal of a stable, democratic, and unified Iraq.

Turkey provides extensive logistical support to our troops in Iraq. This critical lifeline includes:

- The cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base, through which we ship 74 percent of all air cargo to Iraq, with six US military C–17 aircraft transporting the amount of cargo it took 9–10 aircraft to move from Germany, saving $160 million annually.
- The land border crossing at Habur Gate accounts for delivery to Iraq of approximately 25 percent of the fuel used by Coalition forces.

Turkey's grant of blanket over-flight clearances to U.S. military aircraft is of critical importance to our military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, KC–135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have flown 3,400 sorties and delivered 35 million gallons of fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More than military support, Turkey's technical and financial assistance has played a crucial role in the economic stability and development of Iraq, particularly of northern Iraq. Turkish businessmen were among the first to arrive in Iraq after U.S. forces, and have played a key role in rebuilding infrastructure and commerce. Turkish truckers have risked their lives plying the roads of Iraq to deliver to Iraqis the necessities of everyday life.

- Turkey supplied a significant portion of Iraq's total fuel supply, primarily for consumers in the northern governorates. Billions of gallons of fuel have entered through Habur Gate in the past year despite occasional Iraqi arrears in payments.
- Turkey has the capacity to export 270 megawatts of electricity to northern Iraq, and averages around 220 megawatts, depending on the season.

Turkey has played a vital role in Afghanistan in combating terrorism and promoting freedom and democracy. After commanding International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) II in 2002 and ISAF VII in 2005, Turkey is now sharing joint rotational command of ISAF Capital Regional Command for two years with France and Italy. Turkey opened a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Wardak province last November. Turkey has also pledged $100 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan's reconstruction and operation of schools and hospitals. We continue to press Turkey, a dependable NATO ally for almost 60 years, to contribute more troops in Afghanistan and to remove caveats to its deployment.

Middle East

Under Secretary Burns spoke to the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week regarding our comprehensive strategy for addressing the challenges posed by Iran. Turkey is part of the robust international coalition working to achieve a diplomatic solution to Iran's continuing noncompliance with its international nuclear obligations. Our cooperation with Turkey on these efforts is evidence of our close working relationship to promote international peace and security. It has stood firm with us and others to counter Iran's threat to regional stability. Turkey has committed itself to implement fully the provisions of UNSCR 1737, which imposes sanctions under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Additionally, Turkey is helping to apply targeted financial pressure on the Iranian regime by restricting banking transactions which support Iran's proliferation and terrorist activities. We will continue to discuss with Ankara how best to make clear to the Iranian regime the costs of its confrontational path. While we may occasionally differ somewhat over tactics, there is no disagreement between us as partners that an Iranian nuclear weapons capability is unacceptable.

Turkey has been a partner in the efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace and, because of its close relations with both Israel and Arab states, has played a helpful role as honest broker in bridging some of the gaps. Turkey has a long history of close military and economic cooperation with Israel. Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul have conducted their own shuttle diplomacy between Tel Aviv and Arab capitals to help advance peace, security, and stability in the Middle East. They have played a helpful role in encouraging the Palestinians to accept the Quartet principles. Another helpful Turkish initiative involves its desire to contribute to the economic development of the Palestinians by developing the Erez industrial zone, creating jobs and providing hope and opportunity for otherwise disillusioned individuals potentially vulnerable to recruitment by terrorists.

One of the most tangible Turkish contributions has involved peacekeeping and safeguarding the integrity of Lebanon. Turkey has been actively engaged in Lebanon, notably by contributing about 900 troops to UNIFIL last fall, helping to bring stability to a violence-wracked region. During last summer's Israeli-Hezbollah clashes, Turkey helped evacuate almost 2000 American citizens from a war-torn Lebanon

and assisted in their repatriation to the United States via safe haven in Turkey. In January, Turkey pledged $50 million in grants for reconstruction at the Lebanon international donors' conference, hosted by French President Chirac, which resulted in an overwhelming global response of $7.6 billion in pledges, including the Secretary's pledge of $770 million in humanitarian, reconstruction and security support.

Turkey is also a key partner in our efforts to empower civil society and advance democratic freedom in the broader Middle East. No state is a model, and certainly no state is a perfect one. But Turkey's example of secular democracy with a Muslim majority population, a burgeoning open economy, worldwide commercial networks, and its long experience with modernizing reform, make it a crucial partner in the Forum for the Future. Turkey is a co-sponsor—along with Italy and Yemen—of the Forum's Democracy Assistance Dialogue, and is making important contributions to advance women's rights and develop non-governmental organizations in a wide range of Muslim societies stretching from North Africa to Central Asia.

Energy Security

During the late 1990s, cooperation on energy security became a cornerstone of the U.S.-Turkey partnership. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline grew from a vision of an energy corridor that would resurrect the Great Silk Road, articulated at that time by Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Many were skeptical, but the United States offered strong support to help realize this vision, working with these governments and with companies to establish a public-private partnership that has resulted in one of the most complex and successful pipeline projects of all time. BTC was inaugurated in July. It will reach full capacity of one million barrels of oil per day over the next few years, and connect oil fields in the Caspian Sea with global markets reached from Turkey's Mediterranean Sea port of Ceyhan. A companion natural gas pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), is about to begin delivering Azerbaijani natural gas from the Shah Deniz field in the Caspian to Georgia and Turkey.

There is also the Samsun-Ceyhan project, a Bosporus Bypass oil pipeline that takes oil from Turkey's Black Sea coast and delivers it to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. This particular project may be already on its way to commercial viability, something we would welcome.

We now stand at the edge of a new generation of Caspian energy investments, which will build on BTC and BTE and help the Euroatlantic community strengthen its energy security. Oil producers in Kazakhstan are negotiating on ways to ship their product by barge across the Caspian Sea and into BTC, whose capacity could be expanded by as much as 80 percent. Perhaps of even greater strategic significance is the prospect for enlarging BTE with expanded gas production and exports from Azerbaijan. We are now working with governments and companies to help Azerbaijan increase its gas production sufficiently by 2012 to 2014 to fill the emerging Turkey-Greece-Italy pipeline and the prospective Nabucco pipeline linking Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria. Over the next decade, we hope a trans-Caspian gas pipeline from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will connect with BTE. We have also just launched trilateral discussions with Ankara and Baghdad on developing gas production in northern Iraq for export to Europe via Turkey.

As these natural gas projects develop, they will emerge as a Southern Corridor of infrastructure that will offer fair and transparent competition to Gazprom's massive network of gas pipelines that is in place—and expanding—in Northern Europe. The Southern Corridor can change Eurasia's strategic map by offering Europe its best hope for large volumes of natural gas supplies that will allow diversification away from a deepening reliance on one supplier or network. Turkey, if it continues to act as a partner with its neighbors, including by reaching a commercially attractive gas transit agreement with Azerbaijan, will be the centerpiece of this grand strategic effort.

Counterterrorism

We are committed to eliminating the threat of PKK terrorism in northern Iraq, where this terrorist group is headquartered and from which it continues to launch deadly attacks in Turkey. We have made progress against PKK operatives and support networks in Europe. As a result of this close cooperation, France and Belgium recently arrested several PKK terror financiers linked to financing attacks against Turkey. But we also must achieve concrete results against the PKK in Iraq. The Secretary last August appointed General (ret) Joseph Ralston, formerly Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, as Special Envoy to Counter the PKK. General (ret) Ralston has been coordinating closely with his Turkish counterpart, General (ret)

Edip Baser, and his Iraqi counterpart, Minister of State Shirwan al-Waili, to end the PKK threat.

Turkey has also made major contributions to our own efforts to combat terror. I have already discussed Turkey's crucial efforts in Afghanistan. Additional counterterrorism support from Turkey came in mid-February when it hosted in Istanbul the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, a U.S.-Russia led initiative, which will seek to prevent such particularly destructive acts.

Domestic Politics: Elections, Trends of Nationalism, Liberalism, and Democracy

Turkish-American partnership must rest on a foundation of Turkey's own democratic development. Turkey remains a secular, democratic state. But it is today a very different and a far more robust democracy than the Turkey of a generation ago. Former boundaries of expression and limits upon political opinions are gone or much widened. Basic freedoms are more respected.

But with greater democratic freedoms has come increased volatility and deeper debate within Turkey about its strategic course, about its identity, and about the role of religion in public and political life. These debates within Turkey are taking place as the country enters a double-election year, with presidential elections in May and parliamentary elections in November.

The volatility of debate has given rise to and coincided with an undercurrent of popular nationalism, frustration with Europe, and even anti-Americanism. One cause of these trends is Turkish citizens' frustration with PKK terrorism from Iraq, and a popular belief that the United States could do more to combat the PKK terrorists, whom Turks view as the greatest threat to their national security. Another cause is the identity crisis dominating Turkish society as Turkey strives for admission in the European Union. Many Turks feel humiliated by what they perceive as the shifting of accession requirements by the EU even as Turkey advanced serious constitutional and market economic reforms, and made significant compromises on the Cyprus question. While it is up to the Turks to meet the EU's requirements for accession, many Turks believe that some in Europe use the complex EU accession process to mask a bias against Turkey.

This political turmoil and the widening boundaries of democratic expression have propelled a new nationalism as one factor common across Turkey's political spectrum. At the same time, a growing and sophisticated middle class also supports the emergence of progressive and liberal ideas in Turkey. The ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party, with its foundation in Turkey's traditional Islamic culture but also including progressive and liberal elements, is one expression of the different strains in Turkish political life today. Turkey's secular elite, rooted in the civilian and military bureaucracies that play a key role in Turkey's democracy, also reflects these trends. And these two diverse political camps are in competition with each other.

As political tension heightens with the advance of Turkey's election campaigns, additional political strains can undermine our ability to sustain our improvement in U.S.-Turkish relations and continue to reap the benefits in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Caspian region that I have described above.

Turkey-Armenia Relations

Against this complex background of shared interests, common values, and political turbulence, Turkey now faces the possibility of a U.S. Congressional resolution defining as genocide the mass killings and forced exile of as many as 1.5 million Armenians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. The Administration has never denied—nor does it dispute or minimize—the historical facts of these mass murders and ethnic cleansing. Each year, the President issues a solemn statement on April 24, Armenian Remembrance Day, recognizing these atrocities and the suffering inflicted on Armenians. The Administration's goal is to stimulate a candid exploration within Turkish society of these horrific events in an effort to help Turkey reconcile with its painful past and with Armenia. This is not easy. It was not easy for the United States to address its own historical dark spots, including slavery and the internment of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent during WWII. We will have to be persistent and thoughtful.

But after a long silence, Turkey is making progress. The terrible murder of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink by an ultra-nationalist accelerated an intellectual opening in Turkish society, with more than 100,000 Turkish citizens of all political, confessional, and ethnic backgrounds demonstrating at Dink's funeral in support of tolerance and a candid exploration of Turkey's past. Their shouts of "We are all Hrant Dink; we are all Armenian" resonate in the ears of millions of people in Turkey and the world over who believe in freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and human dignity for all of Turkey's citizens.

Political leaders across the political spectrum in Turkey condemned the killing. President Sezer said the murder was "ugly and shameful." Turkish Chief of General Staff General Buyukanit called the killing a "heinous act" and said the "shots fired on Hrant Dink were . . . fired on Turkey." We are seeing growing calls, including from Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul, for changes to Article 301 of the Constitution, which, in criminalizing "insulting Turkishness," stifles Turkey's ability to discuss openly the events of 1915. We welcome Turkish leaders' and opinion makers' calls to amend or repeal Article 301.

Against this backdrop, we believe that H.Res. 106 would undercut those voices emerging in Turkey who call for a truthful exploration of these events in pursuit of Turkey's reconciliation with its own past and with Armenia. We hear from members of the 60,000–70,000 strong Armenian-Turkish community that any such resolution would raise popular emotions so dramatically as to threaten their personal security.

This Administration, like the previous Administration before it, opposes any resolution that attempts to define how free-thinking people should term the horrific tragedy of 1915. We believe this question, which is of such enormous human significance, should be resolved not by politicians, but through heartfelt introspection by historians, philosophers, and common people. Our goal is an opening of the Turkish mind and the Turkish heart. Our fear is that passage of any such resolution would close minds and harden hearts.

Secretary Rice has an ambitious agenda with Turkey over the next two years, and we hope to work with Congress to achieve success in these goals. We look forward to close consultation with the Subcommittee, Committee and other Members interested in our agenda with Turkey.

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Gallegly, members of the Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak before you, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much, Ambassador Fried. You very eloquently referenced the administration's position on several matters.

I would like to place into the record, because I believe there was some newspaper accounts, so I think it is appropriate to do so, a letter dated March 7 from Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates to a variety of Members of Congress regarding House Resolution 106. So ordered.

Mr. Fata, please.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAN FATA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, EUROPEAN AND NATO AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. FATA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the invitation to address the topic of United States-Turkey relations. This is a particularly crucial and challenging time in the relationship, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you about it.

The United States and Turkey have a broad, historical, and important relationship. For more than half a century, Turkey has served as NATO's southern anchor. From Korea to Kosovo to Kabul, the United States and Turkey have stood together in defense of peace and security.

Turkey has been a strong ally in support of freedom and democracy, and is working closely with the United States in the global war on terrorism. Its contributions to our efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and the broader Middle East are substantial.

In Afghanistan, Turkey's contributions have had a significant impact on the reestablishment of stability. Turkey has twice commanded ISAF, the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan. And in November 2006, Turkey opened its first provincial reconstruction team in the Wardak province, accompanied by a pledge of $100 million in humanitarian assistance. Turkey has also had a rep-

resentative serve as NATO's senior civilian representative in Kabul.

In support of our operations in Iraq, Turkey facilitates the distribution of critical supplies and fuel to coalition forces and materials for the reconstruction effort.

Mr. Chairman, you have accurately stated some of the impressive statistics reflecting the critical role Turkey is playing in assisting United States and coalition forces in Iraq. You mentioned the statistic on air cargo. Another one, as Secretary Fried has mentioned, is approximately 25% of the fuel used by coalition forces enters Iraq from Turkey, via the Habur Gate border crossing, as is 29% of the fuel used by Iraqis.

As important as our cooperation has been in the past, it is even more important today in addressing a wide range of international security challenges, particularly in the Middle East, at the same time our relationship is more complicated in the past due to several challenges. In order to maintain the close United States-Turkey defense relationship, we must confront and overcome these challenges, two of which have particular emotional resonance for the Turkish public.

The single greatest challenge to the United States-Turkey relationship is the continuing presence of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, a terrorist group. With some 30,000 deaths as a result of PKK violence since 1975, there is intense public pressure on the Turkish Government to take action against the PKK, both within Turkey and in northern Iraq.

To address this, we have engaged in a process with the Turks and the Iraqis intended to deal with this threat. This process, led by General Joe Ralston, is complex and difficult, but we are committed at the highest levels of the U.S. Government to working with our Turkish friends to achieve our shared objectives.

Another major challenge to our relationship is the Armenian Genocide Resolution. There are many sides to the debate on this issue, but there is one thing of which I am certain: Passage of an Armenian Genocide Resolution would have a wide range of negative repercussions. A strong emotional response from the Turkish public would likely compel the Government of Turkey to respond to its constituents and take actions that would significantly disrupt operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The response in Turkey to passage of the resolution would also do serious harm to ongoing efforts to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia. More broadly, relations with a crucial NATO and regional ally would suffer a serious blow, which would in turn significantly undermine our ability to achieve our near- and longer-term goals in the Middle East, and damage vital national security interests.

Another challenge to our relationship, Mr. Chairman, with Turkey is the situation in Iraq. In addition to Turkey's strong desire to deal with the PKK presence there, Turkey is deeply concerned about instability in Iraq, increasing Iranian influence, the status of Kirkuk, and ethnic tensions that could cause the country to fragment along ethnic lines, and result in an independent Kurdish state on its border.

The United States and Turkey increasingly share the same strategic vision for Iraq. We need to continue to encourage Turkey-Iraq cooperation, leverage Turkish offers of support, and maximize Turkey's regional expertise and influence.

Finally, in the category of challenges facing the relationship, the state of defense industry cooperation is an issue of concern. While there are a number of promising projects either underway or under consideration, the defense industry relationship has been stagnant for the past several years. We remain concerned that the current approach of Turkey's Defense Procurement Ministry toward contracting prevents United States companies from bidding. It is also hindering Turkey's military modernization, inter-operability with NATO allies, and United States-Turkey defense industry cooperation. A much-needed realignment of Turkey's procurement priorities would reinforce a critical element of our strategic relationship.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the importance of Turkey's regional role, especially as a successful secular democracy, cannot be overstated. Our relationship with Turkey is one of strategic importance; and without it, our operations and objectives in the Middle East would become much more difficult, much more expensive to support and achieve.

We are now at a critical point in our relations with Turkey, and it would behoove us to take well-considered steps to maintain, improve, and cultivate that relationship. We, at the Department of Defense, will continue to work closely with our Turkish colleagues, the general staff and the Ministry of Defense, to increase military cooperation, support United States objectives, and address their concerns.

I also ask that Congress does its part to make sure that Turkey remains a close friend and ally on whom we can depend for support and cooperation in one of the most complicated and challenging regions in the world.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months to reach our mutual goals. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fata follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. DAN FATA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, EUROPEAN AND NATO AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for your invitation. The United States and Turkey have a broad, historical, and important relationship. This is a particularly crucial and challenging time in the relationship and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about it.

U.S.-Turkey Relationship

The U.S. values Turkey as a key ally and a close friend. Our friendship shares a long history. For more than half a century, Turkey has served as NATO's southern anchor. From Korea to Kosovo to Kabul, the U.S. and Turkey have stood together in defense of peace and security. Turkey has been a strong ally in support of freedom and democracy and is working closely with the United States in the Global War on Terrorism. The United States deeply values Turkey's contributions and friendship in support of our common objectives and values.

As important as our cooperation has been in the past, it is even more important today in addressing a wide range of international security challenges, particularly in the Middle East. At the same time, while the United States and Turkey have a shared vision on the most fundamental issues, our relationship is more complicated than in the past.

Mil-Mil Relationship

The U.S.-Turkey military relationship has long provided a solid foundation for the overall relationship. Despite the challenges over the past few years, the fundamentals of our relationship remain intact. Despite sometimes widely publicized differences of opinion, the differences are largely over tactics. Today, U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation is dynamic and produces significant results.

Engagement: A key element of our defense relationship is the annual High Level Defense Group (HLDG) meeting. This past December in Ankara, a milestone was reached as we held the *twentieth* HLDG, co-chaired by then Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman and Turkish Deputy Chief of Defense General Ergin Saygun. These regular consultations are an opportunity for invaluable, in-depth, senior-level dialogue, which is then translated into greater practical cooperation and a stronger military relationship.

Another valuable dimension of our mil-mil relationship is the frequency of senior-level meetings. In Washington, Ankara, and at US European Command in Stuttgart, senior American and Turkish defense officials meet with reassuring regularity, further cementing critical relationships among leaders. For example, within the last four months, Secretary Gates, General Pace, and Admiral Giambastiani all met their counterparts for substantive and productive meetings. Deputy Secretary England, Under Secretary Edelman, and Assistant Secretary Rodman also all met recently with senior Turkish officials and officers.

Defense Industry Cooperation: Another key pillar in our defense relationship is industry cooperation. The Turkish General Staff has long valued compatibility and interoperability with the U.S. Equally as important is the long-term collaboration necessitated by defense industry cooperation.

- Turkey is a partner in the Joint Strike Fighter, with an estimated $175 million already invested and an expected purchase of 106 jets. The total contract would be worth approximately $10 billion.
- Turkey is negotiating to purchase 30 F–16s through Foreign Military Sales at a value of approximately $1.65 billion.
- Turkey is upgrading its 200-plus existing F–16s through FMS at a cost of approximately $1.6 billion to ensure continued US and NATO compatibility.
- The Patriot PAC III Air Defense System, a Raytheon/Lockheed Martin consortium, is expected to be a leading contender for an air defense system for which Turkey is expected to open an estimated $1.3 billion tender in 2007.
- Sikorsky Black Hawks are under consideration for a 52-helicopter purchase (approximately $800 million) by the Turkish Armed Forces and Forestry Service to support the fight against PKK terrorists in southeastern Turkey and search/rescue and fire-fighting operations.
- Boeing and Sikorsky are potential contenders for 10 heavy lift helicopters (approximately $500 million) and related training for use in similar operations.
- Turkey has requested the purchase of dirigibles ($21–26 million) to monitor its border with Iraq for infiltration by terrorists operating in and out of northern Iraq.
- General Electric is the sole provider of over 1,200 aircraft engines to the Turkish Air Force.

Other Military Cooperation: Turkey authorized the temporary deployment of 22 USAF F–16s to Incirlik Air Base during January–February 2007, providing vital training and experience to the U.S. crews. A second rotational deployment is scheduled for May 2007.

Additionally, Turkey welcomed 16 US Navy ships to Turkish ports in 2006, including 9 port calls for US crewmen and 7 fuel deliveries for Coalition forces in Iraq. Six US Navy ships also made passages through the Turkish Straits on their way to/from the Black Sea. Eight to ten port calls are expected in 2007.

Turkish Support for U.S. Policy

Turkey is a key ally in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). As the only NATO member bordering Iraq, Iran, or Syria, Turkey has made consistent, unique, and important contributions.

Afghanistan: Turkey's contributions have had a significant impact on the re-establishment of stability in Afghanistan. Turkey has twice commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and in November 2006, Turkey opened its first Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), accompanied by a 100 million Euro pledge of support. Turkey also shares a rotating command of the ISAF Kabul Region Capital with France and Italy, and in April, will assume command from France.

Iraq: Turkey shares the U.S. goal of a unified, democratic Iraq that is secure within its borders. In support of this, Turkey facilitates the distribution of critical supplies and fuel to Coalition forces and materials for the reconstruction effort in Iraq.

- Approximately 25% of the fuel used by Coalition forces enters Iraq from Turkey via the Habur Gate border crossing. Turkey supplied a significant portion of Iraq's total fuel supply, primarily for consumers in the northern governorates. Billions of gallons of fuel have entered through Habur Gate in the past year despite occasional Iraqi payments of arrears.
- Turkey has the capacity to export 270 megawatts of electricity to northern Iraq, and averages around 220 MW, depending on the season. Turkey has plans to increase that total to 1000 megawatts, which would represent 25% of Iraq's current peak capacity.
- Over 20,000 Turks have worked in Iraq since 2004, and approximately 150 (mostly truck drivers) have lost their lives in insurgent attacks. About 1,000 Turkish companies are active in Iraq.

Incirlik Air Base: Incirlik Air Base serves as a key logistical hub for Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Nearly 60% of air cargo heading for U.S. forces in Iraq transits Incirlik.
- Access to the base allows 6 planes to deliver the supplies it previously took 9–10 planes to move from Germany, saving $160 million per year.
- KC–135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have flown over 3,800 sorties and delivered more than 40 million gallons of fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Other Support for U.S. Operations:

- Turkey continues to provide blanket clearance to the U.S. for military overflights supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan.

Other Turkish Contributions

Lebanon: Turkey demonstrated its commitment to the region and to the U.S. during the fighting in Lebanon last summer by evacuating over 1700 U.S. citizens through Incirlik airbase. Subsequently, Turkey deployed over 900 troops to UNIFIL. Turkey also played a key role permitting hasty transit of Indonesian peacekeepers to UNIFIL via US-chartered and US Air Force aircraft.

Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia: Turkey has also contributed troops to SFOR in Bosnia, KFOR in Kosovo, and EUFOR both in Macedonia, and Bosnia. Turkey contributed five planeloads of humanitarian supplies, including a $5.2 field hospital and related equipment, medicine, and doctors and nurses to staff the hospital.

Black Sea: Turkey plays a key role in Black Sea security affairs as one of six littoral countries and as one of three NATO members on the Black Sea. We look to Turkey to provide regional leadership, particularly through Operation Black Sea Harmony and Black Sea Force, both of which encourage and facilitate regional cooperation.

Challenges to the Relationship

In order to maintain the close U.S.-Turkey defense relationship, we must confront and overcome several major challenges.

PKK: The single greatest challenge to the U.S.-Turkish relationship is the continuing presence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist group in southern Turkey and northern Iraq. Since 1975, there have been over 30,000 deaths as a result of PKK violence, with some 600 civilian and military deaths in 2006 alone. As a result, there is intense public pressure on the Turkish government to take action against the PKK. To address this, we have engaged in a process—led by General (ret.) Joe Ralston, Special Envoy for Countering the PKK—with the Turks and the Iraqis intended to deal with the PKK threat. This process is complex and difficult, but we are committed at the highest levels of the U.S. government to working with our Turkish friends to achieve our shared objectives.

The Armenian Genocide Resolution: There are many sides to the debate on this issue, but there is one thing of which we are certain: passage of an Armenian Genocide Resolution would have a wide range of negative repercussions in Turkey. In particular, the response in Turkey would harm ongoing U.S. efforts to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia, and it would undercut U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and damage vital national security interests.

Passage of the resolution would inflame nationalist and anti-American sentiment at a time when the Turkish public already has a very low opinion of the United

States. Such an emotional outpouring would likely compel the Turkish government to take actions that would cause significant operational disruption for our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as restricting or even denying U.S. access to Incirlik Air Base. As noted above, Turkey's contribution to the Global War on Terrorism and U.S. strategic objectives in the region is significant—it would all be at risk. More broadly, relations with a crucial NATO ally would suffer a serious and lasting blow, which would in turn significantly undermine our ability to achieve our near- and longer-term goals in the Middle East.

Defense Industry Cooperation: While there are a number of promising projects, the defense industry relationship has been stagnant for the past several years. Onerous terms and conditions—liability, work share, technology transfer, and upfront USG approval requirements in Turkey's standard contract—have kept U.S. firms from bidding. Until Sikorsky finalized a sale of 17 Seahawk helicopters last fall, no U.S. firm had won a major direct commercial sale since 2002. We remain concerned that the current approach of Turkey's defense procurement ministry is hindering Turkey's military modernization, interoperability with NATO Allies, and U.S.-Turkey defense industry cooperation.

This element of the U.S.-Turkey relationship has been the core of the overall relationship in the past. A much-needed realignment of Turkey's procurement priorities would reinforce a critical element of our strategic relationship. Both sides need to continue to find creative solutions to ensure the longevity of our defense relationship and the interoperability of our forces.

Iraq: Turkey is concerned about instability in Iraq, increasing Iranian influence in the region, the PKK, and sectarian tensions which could cause the country to fragment along ethnic lines resulting in an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's border. Additionally, Turkey sees Kirkuk as a microcosm of Iraq; conflict over an upcoming referendum to decide Kirkuk's status, as well as Kirkuk's energy reserves, could result in violence.

The U.S. and Turkey increasingly share the same strategic vision for Iraq. We need to continue to facilitate and increase Turkey-Iraq cooperation, leverage Turkish offers of support, and maximize Turkey's regional expertise and influence.

Way Ahead

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the contributions that Turkey makes to U.S. operations and the Global War on Terrorism are considerable. The importance of Turkey's regional role as a successful secular democracy cannot be overstated. And perhaps most importantly, Turkey is a close friend and long-time NATO ally. In short, our relationship with Turkey is one of strategic importance, and without it our operations and objectives in the Middle East would become much more difficult, and much more expensive, to support and achieve.

We are now at a critical point in our relations with Turkey, and it would behoove us to take well-considered steps to maintain and cultivate that relationship. We at DOD will continue to work closely with our Turkish colleagues in the General Staff and Ministry of Defense to increase military cooperation, support U.S. objectives, and address their concerns. I also ask that Congress does its part to make sure that Turkey remains a close friend and ally on whom we can depend for support and cooperation in one of the most complicated and challenging regions in the world. We look forward to working with you in the coming months to reach our mutual goals. Thank you very much.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Fata. General Ralston, please.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOSEPH W. RALSTON, SPECIAL ENVOY, COUNTERING THE KURDISTAN WORKER'S PARTY (PKK), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

General RALSTON. Chairman Wexler and members of the subcommittee, it is an honor to speak to you today about our efforts during the past 6 months to address the significant threat posed to our longstanding ally, Turkey.

The Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, is a militant group composed of ethnic Kurds who have carried out a separatist campaign of terror against Turkey since the 1970s. PKK attacks on Turkish authorities turned southeastern Turkey into a war zone in the late 1980s and 1990s.

More recently, the PKK has sought to hide its terrorist roots by cloaking its political demands in terms of local culture and linguistic rights. The PKK suspended military action following the capture of their leader, and was forced to regroup between 1999 and 2004. In 2004, the PKK resumed attacks against security forces, innocent civilians, and foreign tourists.

The conflict with the PKK has fostered a permanent state of alarm throughout Turkey. Badly needed outside investment cannot be productively used to shore up under-developed southeastern Turkey until the threat of terrorism recedes. Ironically, the PKK's terrorism has impeded the progress to which Turkish Kurds aspire through economic development and expansion of political and cultural rights.

The PKK uses Iraq as a base to plan, train for, and conduct direct attacks against Turkey. For several years United States and Iraqi forces have lacked the resources to root out this pocket of terrorist camps. Now we have reached a critical point, at which the pressure of continued attacks has placed immense public pressure on the Government of Turkey to take military action.

Mr. Chairman, if I could put this into a U.S. context. How would the American public feel if there was a terrorist group that set up operations 10 miles inside Mexico, came across the border, and blew up hotels in Phoenix, Arizona, and then went back into Mexico? And if we complained to the Mexican Government and nothing was done about it, what would the American people demand? That is the situation that we have in Turkey today.

Ankara understands that military action, even within this small area of Iraq, could be potentially destabilizing, and hurt our joint goal of achieving a stable and strong Iraqi Government. Unfortunately, the PKK terrorist threat is a reality, and the Turks justly take it very seriously.

In August 2006, Secretary Rice asked me to undertake the mission of Special Envoy for countering the PKK. My appointment followed a period in which the Turks seemed poised to cross the Iraq border to destroy these terrorist camps.

I was given responsibility for coordinating United States engagement with the Government of Turkey and the Government of Iraq to eliminate the terrorist threat of the PKK operating in northern Iraq and across the Turkey-Iraq border.

Over the past 6 months, we have explored what options are available with the Iraqis and Turks to remove the threat posed by this terrorist organization, and restore peace to the border zone. The goal was to come up with a set of actions that the United States, Turkish, and Iraqi Governments could take to eliminate the PKK threat.

Since last September I have made half a dozen trips to Turkey, three trips to Baghdad, two to northern Iraq, and met with the most senior Turkish and Iraqi officials. I have stressed in all of these conversations the unacceptability of Iraqi territory being used as a safe haven for the PKK.

The continued existence of the PKK as a terrorist organization works against Iraq's best interest. If the quality of life and economic situation of people on both sides of the border are to improve, then we need to stop the violence.

In conjunction with counterparts General Basher of Turkey and the Iraqi Minister of State for Security, Minister al-Waili, we have tried to achieve movement on a series of steps that have to be taken by all three governments to be more effective in countering the PKK. These steps include, but are not limited to, the Iraqi Government's public condemnation of the PKK presence in Iraq; the order to close all PKK offices throughout Iraq; the facilitation of a PKK declaration of a cessation of hostilities, which has lasted for almost 6 months now; and movement toward closure of the Makhmour refugee camp, which had become a refuge for PKK fighters in the safety of northern Iraq.

We will continue to work with the UNHCR, the Turks, and the Iraqis on how to close the camp, and what sort of assistance will be needed to encourage the residents to either repatriate or resettle.

We have successfully increased the amount of communication between Turks and Iraqis. It is essential to the improvement of the situation that more and better channels of communication be developed.

I took this position, Mr. Chairman, because I believe Turkey is a very important ally of the United States. If we can significantly reduce the PKK threat to Turkey, that will do much to improve the state of relations between the United States and Turkey. Diplomatic progress on this issue has come grudgingly, and with great effort, but there has been progress.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Ralston follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GENERAL JOSEPH W. RALSTON, SPECIAL ENVOY, COUNTERING THE KURDISTAN WORKER'S PARTY (PKK), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Wexler, Congressman Gallegly, Members of the Sub-Committee, it is an honor to speak to you today about my efforts during the past six months to address the significant threat posed to our long-standing ally Turkey by the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party), including its impact on Turkey's relations with Iraq and the potential for Turkish cross-border action. This conflict has endured for more than twenty years and the resulting violence led in the last year alone to the deaths of 600 Turkish citizens. The continued ability of this terrorist group to operate from Iraqi territory is a threat to regional security and an impediment to improvements in the lives of people on both sides of the border.

A Word on the PKK

The PKK or Kurdistan Workers Party, also known as the KGK, is a militant group composed of ethnic Kurds who have carried out a campaign of terror against Turkey since their foundation in the 1970s. The PKK was founded on Marxist principles with the aim of carving out through violence an independent Kurdish state in south-eastern Turkey and neighboring states. Recently, the PKK has sought to hide its terrorist roots by cloaking its political demands in terms of local cultural and linguistic rights. PKK attacks on Turkish authorities turned south-eastern Turkey into a war zone in the late 1980s and 1990s. The group revolved around the cult-like leadership of Abdullah Ocalan until 1999, when he was captured. He remains in Turkish custody.

The PKK suspended military action following Ocalan's capture and was forced to regroup between 1999 and 2004. Turkish government attempts to address outstanding cultural and political demands, as discussed in the annual State Department Human Rights Reports, were unsuccessful at addressing ethnic aspirations. In 2004 the PKK resumed terrorist attacks against Turkish security forces, innocent civilians and foreign tourists. Its actions have been criticized by human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

The conflict with the PKK has diverted Turkey's effort to join the EU and has fostered instead a permanent state of alarm throughout the country. Badly needed outside investment cannot be productively used to shore up underdeveloped southeastern Turkey until the threat of terrorism recedes. Ironically, the continued existence of a terrorist group that cloaks itself in the mantle of Kurdish rights has impeded the progress for which Turkish Kurds aspire through economic development and the cooperation facilitated by EU human rights law.

The PKK in Iraq

Several thousand PKK terrorists are based just over the Turkish border inside Iraq. The PKK has used Iraq as a base to pursue operations, train terrorists, and direct attacks against Turkey. Iraqi and U.S. forces have lacked the resources to root out this pocket of terrorist camps despite the continued insistence of Turkish authorities. We have reached a critical point in which the pressure of continued attacks has placed immense public pressure upon the Government of Turkey to take some military action. Ankara understands that military action, even within this small pocket of Iraq, could be potentially destabilizing and counter-productive to our joint goal of achieving a stable and strong Iraqi government. Unfortunately, the PKK terrorist threat is a reality and the Turks justly take it very seriously.

In August 2006, Secretary Rice asked me to undertake the mission of Special Envoy for Countering the PKK. My appointment followed a period of two weeks in which the Turks seemed poised to cross the Iraq border on a mission to root out PKK fighters and destroy their camps. I was given responsibility for coordinating U.S. engagement with the Government of Turkey and the Government of Iraq to eliminate the terrorist threat of the PKK operating in northern Iraq and across the Turkey-Iraq border.

Turkey is a sovereign state with a responsibility to defend its people. Ultimately, the Turkish government will have to take the steps it thinks are necessary to protect its citizens. Over the past six months we have explored what options are available with the Iraqis and Turks to remove the threat posed by this terrorist organization and restore peace to the border zone. Maintaining a peaceful border between Turkey and Iraq is important to our efforts to continue the reconstruction and development of Iraq. My goal was to come up with a set of actions that the U.S. Government, the Turkish government and the Iraqi government could take to eliminate the PKK threat.

I have made half-dozen trips to Turkey and also met with Turkish officials in Europe and the United States. I met not only with Prime Minister Erdogan, Foreign Minister Gul, and the chief of the Turkish General Staff, but also with the Interior Minister of the Turkish National Police and intelligence organizations. Since last September, I have been to Iraq three times and again had meetings with President Talabani, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Defense Minister, as well as with President Barzani of the Kurdish Regional Government in Erbil.

I have stressed with all of these governmental officials the unacceptability of Iraqi territory being used as a safe haven for the PKK. I have repeatedly pointed out that the continued existence of the PKK as a terrorist organization works against Iraq's best interests. Turkey is the best possible friend that Iraq could have in that neighborhood. There is no question that the economic interests between Iraq and Turkey are critical for both countries. If the quality of life and economic situation of people on both sides of the border are to improve, then we need to stop the violence. Northern Iraq is full of Turkish construction companies building new infrastructure, its shelves are full of Turkish products, and its roads are full of trucks carrying fuel refined in Turkey.

In conjunction with counterparts, General Edip Baser and Iraqi Minister of State for Security al-Waili, we have tried to achieve movement on a series of steps that have to be taken by all three governments to be more effective in countering the PKK. These steps include, but are not limited to:

The Iraqi government's public condemnation of the presence of armed PKK militias in Iraq, the order to close PKK offices in the Iraqi Kurdish region, and the facilitation of a PKK declaration of a cessation of hostilities that has lasted for almost six months.

Movement toward closure of the Makhmour refuge camp, which had become a refuge for PKK fighters in the safety of northern Iraq. An agreement structuring the voluntary return of Makhmour camp residents to Turkey and on the camp's disposition is being worked out between Turkey, Iraq, and the UNHCR. Practical steps have had to be dealt with. The camp needed to be cleared of any PKK personnel, all the arms needed to be removed from the camp, UNHCR needed to register every person in the camp—man, woman, and child—and everyone in the camp needed to

be interviewed to determine their intention to return to Turkey or to remain in Iraq. All of this, except the survey of intentions, has been accomplished. We will continue to work with UNHCR, the Turks and the Iraqis on how to close the camp and what sort of assistance will be needed to encourage the residents to either repatriate or resettle.

On March 5, the three parties held their most recent trilateral meeting to discuss the closure of the camp. Although the discussion did not finalize the agreement, they made substantive progress.

In general, we have successfully increased the amount of communication between the Turks and Iraqis. It is essential to the improvement of the situation that more and better channels of communication can be developed.

Conclusion

I took this position because I believe Turkey is a very important ally of the United States. As the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, I can testify to the superb performance of the Turkish Armed Forces and I hope the Turks will continue to stand by us. I have no doubt that if we can significantly reduce the PKK threat to Turkey that it will do much to improve the state of relations between the United States and Turkey. Diplomatic progress on this issue has come grudgingly and with great effort, but there has been progress. As the snows melt in the mountain passes along the Turkish-Iraqi border in several weeks, we will see if the PKK renews its attacks and how the Turkish government chooses to respond.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much. I will begin.

For my two colleagues that, I think, joined while General Ralston was speaking, I don't know if they heard the analogy in terms of the PKK threat to Turkey. The General made an analogy about how Americans would feel if there was a terrorist group operating within 10 miles of the Mexican-American border, and they blew up a group of hotel facilities in Phoenix, Arizona, and then went back over the border. How would we feel about it?

I very much appreciate the analogy. I would actually take the analogy a little further. How would we feel about it if there was a terrorist operation 10 miles over the border in Mexico, but Mexico was occupied by Spain, and the ability of Spain or the Mexicans previously to operate in a relatively safe haven was guaranteed for 10 years because the United States and Great Britain flew, and demanded a no-fly zone, from our air bases. Because that is, in effect, what has occurred here.

Turkey, for 10 years, permitted American and British Air Force pilots to maintain a no-fly zone in the Kurdish section of Iraq, which allowed the Kurds to prosper in a very difficult circumstance. And I was astonished in my last visit to Turkey, which was just before your appointment, the level of animosity within Turkey leveled at the United States because of our inaction.

And at the time I was taken back, and I thought it was exaggerated, and that maybe we were bearing too great a burden in terms of the criticism. But when I hear your analogy, quite candidly, I understand the emotions of it. I very much appreciate your comment that I think our relationship with Turkey, in terms of public opinion in Turkey, for the great respect, depends on your success. From what I understand both from our side of the equation and the Turks' side of the equation, there isn't anyone in this universe that people have greater confidence in than you to achieve this. So my hat is off to you, and I greatly appreciate your testimony and wish you nothing but success.

Ambassador Fried, if I could ask, following your comments and the letter of Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates, I thought your statement with respect to the Armenian Genocide Resolution and

its consequences was quite eloquent. Whether one supports the resolution in terms of the substance of the claim, or whether one does not, you began, I think, to speak very specifically about the consequences to the American-Turkish relationship should the House of Representatives proceed with passage of the resolution. I think in your written testimony you cited the experience in France, when the French Parliament passed a similar resolution.

Given the recitation of facts regarding the amount of interaction between American and Turkish facilities in the context of our forces in Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, could you describe as well as you can—understanding that the resolution has not been passed and the Turks have not threatened us—your opinion on precisely what would be the impact in terms of our forces in Iraq?

If I could just add one thing. This is not an issue, in my view, about whether one supports the President's position in Iraq or not. I do not support the President's strategy in Iraq. I don't speak for Mr. Burton, I think he has a different view. But I think we both uniformly believe that the worst thing we could do is set up a set of circumstances, whether one is for a surge in troops or whether is for a redeployment of troops, set up a set of circumstances where we undermine the ability of our forces to coordinate, we undermine our ability or make more complicated the ability of our forces to get their equipment and assets. If you could speak to that issue, I would greatly appreciate it.

Mr. FRIED. Mr. Chairman, based on what you said I believe you have a very clear understanding of what is at stake. I should be quite clear myself that the Turkish Government has not threatened the United States.

The Turkish Government, in its contacts with us, has explained that if a resolution such as this passes the Congress, they will be under tremendous public and parliamentary pressure to do something to respond; and that something they fear will damage the United States-Turkish relationship in general, and will damage the United States ability to support our troops in Iraq from Turkey, in particular.

I should also say that the Turkish Government has let us know that they will resist extreme calls for retaliation, but they have—it is their judgment that they will be unable to do so successfully; that the Turkish Parliament would respond with extreme emotion to a resolution such as the one we have discussed today.

They could, for example, shut down or curtail operations at Incirlik. They could slow down traffic at the Habur Gate. They could restrict our overflight rights. They could do so wholly; they could do so in part.

These would have immediate and damaging, an immediate and damaging impact on troops. And, as you said, that is quite beside, that is quite apart from any particular position on the administration's Iraq policy.

It would also damage U.S. standing in broader ways. Unlike France, the Turks have a deep feel, a deep connection with the United States. Turkish anti-Americanism is broad, but it is, in our view, shallow. It would be easily reversed if circumstances such as the PKK situation were changed.

This resolution would take that broad but shallow anti-Americanism, and deepen it. It would confirm for Turks that their best, what they consider to be their best friend in the West had, in fact, turned against them. I am trying to give you a sense of how they would react, not the intention of the sponsors of that legislation.

They would feel that the United States had rejected them; that their Western-looking, secular course had been blocked. And you would find in Turkey, I fear, a resurgence of nationalist and a sort of strategic alternative bubbling up, fueled by this nationalism, which would not be in our interests.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. General Ralston, you have had a wealth of experience dealing with Turkish military officials. Do you have any comments in terms of following Ambassador Fried's remarks?

General RALSTON. Mr. Chairman, I think Ambassador Fried has very eloquently described the situation. I could only add that a very high percentage of our air support of critical supplies going to Afghanistan also go through Incirlik Airbase, and that it would be a very big blow to NATO and to United States forces operating in Afghanistan should that be disrupted.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, the Kurds in northern Iraq have expressed on television, in ads, how much they appreciate the United States and what we have been doing in Iraq. And I have been told that they have even indicated that they would be willing to help us patrol the border between Iran and Iraq. So I think they feel some empathy and support for the United States right now.

Let me ask you this question: That being the case, is there anything that can be done with the leadership of the Kurds up there to encourage them, or get them to tell the PKK to cut it out? Because there have been so many gains for the Kurds in northern Iraq. And that there ought to be some reward for that, as far as stability in the overall region.

And it is in the United States' best interest for us to continue to have good relations with Turkey, and to stop this resolution, which comes up, gosh, I don't know, every couple of years. And since the Kurds have expressed gratitude for their situation over there, are there any of their leaders that can be contacted that can help deal with the PKK and the problem over there? And encourage and negotiate a settlement between the PKK and the Kurds?

General RALSTON. Mr. Burton, if I may respond to that. I have had several conversations and sessions with Mr. Barzani, the President of the Kurdish Region in the north, as well as President Talabani of Iraq. And in my words, if I could take the committee to northern Iraq today, you would be absolutely stunned at the economic success that is going on in northern Iraq. It is far different than other places in Iraq.

There are hotels being built. There are roads being built, houses being built. And the standard of living of the 5 million Kurds in northern Iraq is far better today than it has been in the past, and is far better than anyplace else in Iraq.

And I have explained to Mr. Barzani that the PKK, these 3,500 terrorists who are in the mountains of northern Iraq, are as much

of a threat to the standard of living of his people, of the Kurds in northern Iraq, as they are to Turkey. I mean, you have got to do something to clamp down on this group.

In fairness, I think pressure from the leaders of the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq is why the PKK declared their cease-fire on the 1st of October. That would not have happened had it not been for pressure from other people.

I have asked them to do more, and they are being cooperative. Because I believe they are also convinced that this group of terrorists is a threat to their lives in northern Iraq.

Mr. BURTON. Let me follow up, if I may. The letter from the State Department, from Assistant Secretary Bergner, lays out the problem very well to our chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. That letter was from Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates. That was just the cover letter.

Mr. BURTON. Oh, okay, I am sorry. From Secretary Rice and Gates, even a little bit higher up the food chain.

Has it been attempted to get the Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq not only to talk to the PKK, but to get them to sit down at a table with the Turkish leaders, and try to work out some historical resolution to this thing, so that the hatred and the attacks will not continue?

Since there is a great deal of goodwill between the United States and the Kurds in the northern part of Iraq, if they would really push the PKK or others to sit down and actually go through the historical things that happened during the supposed genocide, if they could work out some kind of agreement on the kind of terminology that could be put in a position paper, if you will, to settle this thing once and for all, it would be very beneficial.

And I know you have talked to them about stopping the PKK attacks; you just covered that very well. But have you or anybody gone a little bit further and said hey, why don't you sit down at the conference table and try to work this thing out? So historically there is some kind of an agreement on it, and it is put behind them.

General RALSTON. Let me give a short answer before I turn it over to Ambassador Fried to give a more comprehensive one.

But the short answer is yes, we have encouraged both the Turkish side and the Kurdish side in northern Iraq—I am not talking the PKK now, but the Kurdistan Regional Government—to sit down and let us solve some of these problems. There has been some progress in that regard; more needs to be done.

But let me give you an idea of the good thing that is going on here. The economic interdependence between Turkey and the Kurds in northern Iraq is significant. And I tell each of them, I tell the Kurds and northern Iraq, the best friends you have got in the neighborhood are the Turks. It is not the people to the south; it is not the people to the east or to the west. And I tell the Turks, the best friends you have got in the neighborhood are the Kurds in northern Iraq.

One of the things the Kurdish leadership has done, all these hotels that are being built and the houses and the roads and everything, there are 130 Turkish construction companies that are doing

the work for the Kurds in northern Iraq. And that is the ultimate solution here, is for the economic interdependence between the two.

And yes, we do need to encourage, and we have encouraged, more diplomatic talks between the Turkish side and the Kurds. And I turn it over to Ambassador Fried.

Mr. FRIED. Let me just follow that up with a couple of points, if I may.

First, you are right certainly that the PKK problem is embedded in a larger and complicated set of Turkish-Kurdish issues, which ultimately need to be addressed.

Now, the PKK is a designated foreign terrorist organization, and the United States does not talk to the PKK; we go after the PKK. So the dialogue that takes place, the dialogue that needs to take place and is beginning to take place is between Turkey and the legitimate Kurdish authorities in Iraq, and between Turkey and the Iraq central government on a whole host of complicated issues. The status of the city of Kirkuk, the Federal structure of Iraq; Turkey doesn't play in that, but they have views, and they have very strong views that Iraq needs to remain a single country; views that obviously we share.

So in addition to working on the PKK issue in its narrow sense, we do encourage dialogue between Turkey and Iraq, Turkey and the Kurdish authorities, on all of these issues. And as we make progress on the PKK issue, that dialogue will be easier to sustain, and more fruitful.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize, I couldn't be here. I wanted to be here, but so many conflicts with so many briefings and so many committees.

I want to talk a little bit about Cyprus, and I want to thank you for being here, Mr. Ambassador. Where are the negotiations with Cyprus? Are we making some progress? Or are they making progress in the—I understand, somebody explained to me that there is a wall that is coming down on a part of the island.

Mr. FRIED. That is actually true and it is a piece of recent good news. Cyprus is a frustrating issue because we, all the parties accept at a level of generality a solution which will involve a bizonal, bicommunal federation on Cyprus.

The Turkish Cypriot leaders, led by Mr. Talat, accept the need for a reunited island as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. And we, the United States, regret very much that the Annan Plan to reunite the island did not pass muster during the Greek-Cypriot Referendum.

When the Greek-Cypriot turned down the Annan Plan, negotiations were frozen. We are attempting, working with the U.N. and working with the parties, to get technical talks restarted. This has been a slow and, as I said, a frustrating process, but this section of a wall in Nicosia is a piece of good news. It started with some moves by the Turkish Cypriot community to take down a wall on their side, and take down a footbridge that was also a barrier to communication between the two communities. And recently the Government of Cyprus, which we recognize, has reciprocated by taking down a wall on its side.

So this is a piece of good news. And it shows that despite an impasse on the larger issues, progress on the ground is possible. We certainly encourage this. As I said, we want to see a reunited island. We do not believe in separatism; we believe in a single Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation.

Mr. SIRES. How many soldiers do they still have on the island, do you know? The Turks.

Mr. FRIED. I think it is in the realm of 20,000, but I can't stand by that. I will have to check the exact number.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE ALBIO SIRES

The figure of about 20,000 Turkish troops on the island of Cyprus, which I provided in my March 15 testimony, is generally accurate. I will separately provide a classified response with a more accurate number of Turkish troops in Cyprus.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you very much. Somebody also raised an issue about American properties on the Turkish side, owned by Americans, to get compensated for those properties?

Mr. FRIED. The issues of properties in Cyprus in the area administered by the de facto, by the Turkish community, is a complicated legal one. It has been a problem for a long, you know, for over 30 years, and we hope that this is resolved as part of an overall settlement.

We believe that efforts to resolve these issues should advance our overall objective of a reunited island. And we should take advantage of all opportunities to advance the overall objective, so that the island, so that the results of the tragedy of 1974 is not perpetuated into the future. That is our view.

Mr. SIRES. General, I did see a piece on *60 Minutes* regarding the cooperation between the Kurds and the Turks, and it was a very impressive piece. I mean, I almost felt, from what I have seen on television, that that was not that part of the world that I am seeing. There is just so much going on. Do you see it continuing in the future?

General RALSTON. Yes, sir, I do. And I say that, if we are able to get a successful counter to the PKK. And what I mean by that, what I don't want to see is an invasion of northern Iraq by Turkey. Because when invasions happen, bad things happen. You can't always control it, and it would be, I think, detrimental to all the good things that are going on in northern Iraq. That is why it is so important that we solve this PKK problem, so that does not happen.

And if we can do that, I see that economic boom continuing. And by the way, I would like to see the same thing in southeastern Turkey. That is what we really want is to improve the lives of the Kurds on both sides of the border.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. Burton?

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to reemphasize, and I was just talking to the chairman, and the chairman and I are seriously considering, along with many other Members of Congress, to sign a cover letter and send a copy of this to every member of the International Relations or Foreign Affairs Committee, so that they understand the gravity of the situation.

I think the chairman and I and some others understand, and I think the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Lantos, understands. But the leadership in the Congress and all the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee need to understand the gravity of the situation, as well.

I would just like to urge you—I don't have any more questions, Mr. Chairman—but I would like to urge the three of you, from your various positions of leadership, to continue to talk to the Kurdish leaders up there, and ask them to use—I mean, we can't talk, as you said, and we are not going to talk directly to a terrorist organization, the PKK. But the Kurds in the north can, and do.

And if they would talk to the PKK and say, Look, things are moving in the right direction for the Kurds up here, economically and every other way. We owe Americans, as they have said on television, a debt of gratitude, and we really appreciate their expressions of gratitude. But that there ought to be a resolution of this.

You can't go on with hatreds for 100 or 200 or 50 or 90 years, and keep killing people. There is never going to be peace if that occurs, because you can always find—I am sure if I go back in my ancestry, I can find somebody I don't like. And you just can't keep that up.

So if you would continue to urge the Kurds in the north to talk to the PKK and try to get them to the conference table, or somebody to the conference table with the Kurds to resolve this thing, it would be great.

I know it is like untying the Gordian Knot, but you guys have the ability to talk to the Kurds up there, and we don't really, on a regular basis. So keep going, will you? Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. The letter that Mr. Burton was referring to, of course, was the letter from Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates.

If I could follow Mr. Sires' question regarding Cyprus. I have only visited Cyprus once. Mr. Sires asked the level of troops, and Ambassador Fried, I think you responded with high twenties, 20,000. In my opening statement I congratulated the Greek Cypriots for tearing down part of the wall that divides the Greek and the Turk Cypriots. And I think that is a tremendous opportunity to advance upon at this stage.

This conflict, at this stage in time, seems to me to be one of those conflicts in the world that is so resolvable, because you have an enormous flow of people going over the borders. It is so much in the best interests of the peoples of both sides to move forward in total through the EU, and gain greater economic prosperity for the whole island, but especially the Turkish side.

It would seem to me, and I would be curious, Ambassador Fried or any of the witnesses, the number of Turkish troops on the island to me seems to be a bit exaggerated, relative to the threat. I was extremely impressed when Prime Minister Erdogan came to Washington a couple of years ago—I think it was only his second visit as Prime Minister. He came and he met with a group of us. He said on Cyprus, he would remain one step ahead of the Greek side, and to a large degree, he has kept his word. Because following that, Turkey very much favored the passage of the Annan Plan, and en-

couraged the Turkish Cypriot side to pass it, and they did. Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriot side rejected it.

But I would think if Turkey, after the elections, would consider reducing, by some significant show of numbers, the number of Turkish military officials on the island, that that would be an extraordinary statement of goodwill. But it needs to be done simultaneous, and they can't do it alone, it needs to be done simultaneous to the Greek Cypriots ending their at this point totally unreasonable position of economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

I would be curious, Ambassador Fried, if you could speak to that. Is it possible that the Greek Cypriots could end their call for the economic isolation and support of the economic isolation of the Turkish side, and the Turks agree to reduce their military presence at the same time?

Mr. FRIED. What makes the Cyprus issue so frustrating is that it ought to be resolvable. Compared to other issues, other frozen conflicts, other conflicts in the region, conflicts in the Middle East, this ought to be fixable.

The two peoples now mix freely. They cross mainly from the north to the south, and almost entirely without incident. It is frustrating because after years of the Turkish Cypriot leaders being the ones to generally say no, you have Turkish Cypriot leadership that has said yes, yes to a reunified island.

I think you are right in terms of timing. Progress will be more possible after the Turkish election cycle than it is now.

Ending the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots will be complicated, because the Government of Cyprus regards itself as the government of the entire island; and indeed, we recognize it as the Government of Cyprus. They are afraid, when we raise the issues of ending the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots with the Greek Cypriot Government, they express the concern that to do so would be somehow steps toward de facto recognition of a divided island, de facto recognition of the Turkish Cypriots as a government, which is not our intention.

So our job is to try to find ways to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community, without making the mistake of creeping recognition, and to find a way forward with both communities in a way that does not undo our position of one Cyprus.

We are working on this, and we will intensify the efforts after the Turkish elections to take advantage of what is still an opportunity for resolving this terrible problem.

Mr. WEXLER. I would be remiss if I did not point to the position of the Greek Government, which is, as I understand it, and has been extraordinarily forward thinking in terms of Greece has put aside, as has Turkey with respect to Greece, its long-time differences. The Greek Government has said it is in Greece's interest, and it is in Europe's interest, to proceed with allowing Turkey into the European Union; that it is far better to engage Turkey in the context of economic reform and political reform.

I just think it is extraordinary that you have the Greek Government taking this incredibly forward-thinking position of engaging Turkey in the most positive of ways. Yet the Greek Cypriots cannot, or at least yet have not entertained that final push that would enable, as you say, to reunify the island, and also enable Turkey

to proceed at a fairly easier pace with the European Union once Cyprus was taken off the table.

So I think it was important. And I would be curious if any of the witnesses had any comments with respect to the Greek position. Because I think it is quite significant, the position of the Greek Government.

Mr. FRIED. We have worked well with the Greek Government, and it is good to be able to report to you that Greek-Turkish relations have improved considerably, dramatically, compared to where they were 20 years ago. There are still some issues, but their relations are far, far better.

It is also true that Greece has recognized that a Turkey which is on its way to the European Union, which is continuing its reforms, is apt to be a better neighbor for Greece than a Turkey which is rejected. And they have acted in a responsible way.

We work very closely with the Greek Government. We consult with them on issues, including Cyprus. And when we do seek ways forward, we do what we might call a sanity check with our Greek Government friends about this. A diplomatic term of art, sir.

Mr. WEXLER. Do any of my colleagues have any further comments or questions?

Well, with that, I very much want to thank our three witnesses. I think this has been an extremely substantive and very informative hearing, and I want to thank the three gentlemen.

And this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:38 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

MAR 0 7 2007

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Secretary has asked me to transmit to you the attached joint letter from her and Secretary of Defense Gates. Thank you for your consideration of these views and please contact me if we can be of assistance on this or any other issue.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey T. Bergner
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated.

The Honorable
Tom Lantos, Chairman,
Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives.

March 7, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the harm that passage of H. Res. 106 would cause U.S. efforts to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia and to advance recognition by Turkey of the tragic events that occurred to ethnic Armenians under the Ottoman Empire. It would also significantly endanger U.S. national security interests in the region.

In solidarity with all Armenians, the President recognizes annually the horrendous suffering that ethnic Armenians endured during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. The United States has never denied these horrific events. It is our hope that, by both recognizing these events and encouraging Turkey to come to terms with its history, both countries and their respective peoples can move toward reconciliation, bilateral relations, and open borders. We remain actively engaged with both governments to encourage progress as quickly as possible.

The recent murder of Hrant Dink, an ethnic-Armenian Turk, was a tragedy for Turks, Armenians, and all supporters of freedom of expression. More than 100,000 citizens from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds took to the streets of Istanbul to express immense outrage at Dink's murder, shouting: "We are all Hrant Dink. We are all Armenians." From this tragedy, some good may come. Citizens are demanding change, and the Turkish government appears ready to expand freedom of expression. Prime Minister Erdogan stated on January 19 that Turkey will "steadfastly continue along the path toward fully realizing freedom of expression." Foreign Minister Gul called for changes to Article 301 of Turkey's penal code, under which Dink was charged for "insulting Turkishness."

In January, Turkey welcomed a high-ranking Armenian official, Deputy Foreign Minister Kirakossian, in connection with Dink's funeral. Armenian and Turkish officials held meetings during Kirakossian's visit to discuss normalization of relations and the two countries' shared historical background. We strongly support the establishment of such Commissions, and we will continue to support efforts by the Governments of Turkey and Armenia, as well as by members of civil society, as they pursue reconciliation. Efforts such as the recent USAID-supported

The Honorable
Nancy M. Pelosi,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

conference in Yerevan entitled "The Social and Economic Consequences of Opening the Armenian-Turkish Border," which was attended by both Armenian and Turkish civil society representatives, demonstrate that the U.S. approach to this difficult issue is, indeed, working. We appreciate the support of Members of Congress for these efforts in their own conversations with officials of both governments.

As we continue to encourage our friends in Turkey to reexamine their past with honesty and to reconcile with Armenia, we also must recognize the important contributions Turkey is making to U.S. national security, as well as security and stability in the broader Middle East and Europe. Turkey remains an indispensable partner to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, helping our troops accomplish their mission to combat terrorism and build security in both of these young democracies. By providing access to Turkish airspace, military bases, ports, as well as its border crossing into Iraq, Turkey is a linchpin in the transshipment of vital cargo and fuel resources to U.S. troops, coalition partners, and Iraqi civilians. Turkey also has provided training for Iraqi diplomats, political parties, military officers, and security forces; contributes to the NATO Training Mission – Iraq; and is active in reconstruction efforts within Iraq. In Afghanistan, Turkey twice commanded the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, supports a Provincial Reconstruction Team, provides both counter-narcotics and military training to Afghan Security Forces, and is active in reconstruction, including building and operating several hospitals. Turkish peacekeeping troops serve shoulder-to-shoulder with distinction beside U.S. and other NATO Allies in the Balkans. Turkey is also a transit hub for non-OPEC oil and gas and remains key to our efforts to help the Euro-Atlantic community bolster its energy security by providing alternative supply sources and routes around Russia and Iran.

When the French National Assembly in October 2006 voted in favor of a bill that would criminalize denial of the events of 1915, the Turkish military cut all contacts with the French military and terminated defense contracts under negotiation. A similar reaction by the elected Government of Turkey to a House resolution could harm American troops in the field, constrain our ability to supply our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and significantly damage our efforts to promote reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey at a key turning point in their relations. We strongly urge you to refrain from allowing the resolution to reach the House floor.

Thank you for your consideration of these views. We request the opportunity to provide you, at your earliest convenience, with a classified briefing to expand, in more detail, on the national security interests at stake.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense

Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
14TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

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March 15, 2007

The Honorable Robert Wexler
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Elton Gallegly
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Europe
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
B-360 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wexler and Ranking Member Gallegly,

Thank you for including the attached statement for the record for the March 15, 2007, Subcommittee hearing entitled, "U.S.-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead." I look forward to working with you in the future on the important issues that will come before your Subcommittee.

Please contact me if you need any additional information regarding my statement.

Sincerely,

Carolyn B. Maloney

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

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Statement of Representative Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)
House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe
Hearing on U.S.-Turkish Relations
March 15, 2007

Chairman Wexler, Ranking Member Gallegly, Members of the Subcommittee on Europe, thank you for the opportunity to submit my statement for the record. The issues you are examining are vitally important to the United States' national interest.

In 1996, former Congressman Mike Bilirakis and I founded the Congressional Hellenic Caucus. I am proud to say that the Caucus now has 128 bipartisan members, and I am pleased that the Bilirakis tradition has continued, with newly elected Congressman Gus Bilirakis joining me as co-chair. In the Caucus, we work to give voice to the more than 1.5 million Hellenic-Americans in the United States. The Caucus has been an important vehicle for promoting democracy, freedom, and the United States' national interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

For the past few years, the Hellenic Caucus has been very engaged on issues of U.S.-Turkish relations. Of principal concern to the members of the Caucus is the continued occupation and division of the Republic of Cyprus. As the Subommittee is well aware, Turkey illegally invaded Cyprus in 1974. Today, more than thirty-two years later, Turkey continues to forcibly occupy more than one-third of Cyprus with more than 43,000 Turkish troops.

The United States and the international community, with the exception of Turkey, recognize only the Republic of Cyprus and its government. Cyprus's sovereignty is confirmed by several United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including Resolution 541 (1993) and 550 (1984), which call upon all States to respect Cyprus's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. These resolutions also reiterate to States not to recognize the so-called 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," set up by secessionist acts, and calls upon them not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforesaid secessionist entity.

For years, our domestic law has echoed these UN Security Council Resolutions. The United States' foreign policy has refused to give either recognition or direct assistance to the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." The Foreign Assistance Act established that the United States supports the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus, the withdrawal of all Turkish forces from Cyprus, and the reunification of the island and its people. Let me reiterate by quoting the Act: "a just settlement on Cyprus must include the withdrawal of Turkish military forces from Cyprus."

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Unfortunately, since the 2004 defeat of the flawed Annan Plan, the Administration has instead undertaken several initiatives that seem to elevate the status of the "TRNC" at the expense of the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. The Annan Plan was unacceptable for many reasons, including permitting the continued presence of Turkish troops on Cyprus, contrary to the Foreign Assistance Act. I have attached a copy of a July 2004 letter signed by nearly 100 members of Congress outlining the inadequacies of the Annan Plan. The Transportation Security Administration deployed inspectors to airports in the "TRNC" that are illegal ports of entry under Cypriot law; the State Department acquiesced to Members of Congress and other U.S. government officials traveling directly and organizing private individuals to travel directly to airports in occupied Cyprus in violation of the Chicago Convention, Cypriot law, and inconsistent with U.S. policy since 1974; the U.S. Agency for International Development offered to give direct financial support to the "TRNC" "Ministry of Finance" (later rescinded because of Cyprus's justifiable objection); USAID funds are currently expended on Cyprus without necessary consultation with the Government of Cyprus; for the first time, a U.S. Secretary of State extended a formal invitation to Mehmet Ali Talat (so-called "TRNC President") whom Secretary Rice met in the State Department's Truman Building; and State Department officials have said the United States supports direct trade to occupied Cyprus, which is contrary to Cypriot law.

These actions are relevant to your hearing today because it appears that the Administration launched them in an effort to strengthen U.S. relations with Turkey. These derogations of Cyprus's sovereignty, however, are not in keeping with the historically close relations between the United States and Cyprus. Moreover, they drive a wedge between the two communities in Cyprus, and contrary to U.S. policy, make reunification unavoidably more difficult. Most importantly, strong relations with Turkey need not – and indeed should not - come at the expense of the Republic of Cyprus.

Cyprus has proven itself to be a solid and consistent ally. It has joined with us on issues of critical importance to our own security, including the fight against terrorism and other forms of international crimes. Cyprus was the first EU member to join the ship boarding protocol of President Bush's Proliferation Security Initiative, particularly important because Cyprus has one of the world's largest commercial shipping registries. A recent example of Cyprus's importance was the critical role it played as the principal transit location for people evacuating Lebanon. Some 15,000 U.S. citizens and tens of thousands of nationals of other countries left Lebanon through Cyprus. Cyprus was also the primary launching point for humanitarian aid to the people of Lebanon, and it is serving as the staging ground for the UN peacekeeping operations in Lebanon and Iraq. As Cyprus developed into a regional financial center, the government moved aggressively and put in place strong anti-money laundering legislation.

Cyprus's policy is to be a full partner in U.S. and international efforts on the war on terror. However, the ability to cooperate in important fields is being blocked by Turkey. Cyprus has attempted to join the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls and the Missile Technology Control Regime, which would enhance transparency in the transfer of arms and dual-use goods. Our government has supported Cyprus's accession to these organizations, but Turkey has defied the United States and repeatedly blocked Cyprus's membership. Likewise, the United States, NATO, and the EU have supported greater cooperation on issues such as the Global War on

Terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but Turkey has blocked NATO's ability to coordinate with the EU unless it is given the extraordinary power to choose which EU members may join the discussion.

Today, Turkey is seeking to join the EU, the most significant development in U.S.-Turkish relations in decades. It is a longstanding tenet of U.S. foreign policy that Turkey should accede to the EU. The Republic of Cyprus, likewise, supports Turkey's EU orientation. Cyprus shares with the United States the common goal of a democratic and secular Turkey as part of the EU, adhering to the values on which the EU is founded. The armed hostile occupation of EU member Cyprus is anathema to the principles of the EU. Despite the occupation and non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey, Cyprus, having the opportunity twice thus far to exercise its veto on Turkey's EU accession path, chose not to. What is being asked of Turkey by the EU as a whole is that it meets the criteria for accession and its commitments and obligations to the EU, including the Republic of Cyprus.

It is because of Turkey's non-compliance and non-implementation of its commitments that negotiations for accession have slowed. In December, the European Council decided to suspend eight chapters of the accession negotiations. The Council stated: "further significant efforts are required [by Turkey] to strengthen freedom of expression, freedom of religion, women's rights, minority rights, trade union rights and civilian control of the military." The Council also noted, "Turkey has not fulfilled its obligation of full non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement" – the agreement whereby Turkey committed to normalize relations and open trade with all EU members. Despite this commitment to extend the Turkey-EU Customs Union to all EU Members, Turkey unilaterally has refused to extend it to Cyprus. This action led the EU to issue a declaration that the original commitments mean what they say – Turkey must normalize relations and open trade with all EU Members if it wants the accession process to go forward.

It is important to remember that Turkey is not being held to a higher standard – the same accession criteria that applied to all other accession candidates apply to Turkey. Moreover, Turkey's obligations are not limited to Cyprus – they apply to the Union as a whole, including Cyprus. Cypriot interest vessels are not allowed to dock at Turkish ports. Cypriot planes cannot overfly or land in Turkey. These restrictions are in clear violation of its commitment to the EU, and Turkey's failure of fulfillment affects all EU members. Turkey made the commitments to the EU so that it could open its accession discussions. Now that discussions have opened, it is long past time for Turkey to comply.

At this impasse, the United States should use its influence to encourage Turkey to meet its commitments and obligations without further delay and adhere to the values and principles of the EU: protect freedom of speech, freedom of religion, minority rights, and ensure civilian control of the military and the supremacy of the rule of law.

It should come as no surprise that I am a staunch advocate for maintaining the principles that have made the United States and the nations of the European Union the world's most successful democracies. We must use our influence to encourage Turkey to reform and provide the basic

legal and human rights protections that are essential to EU membership – it is in the United States' national interest for Turkey to do so.

Turkey should move toward freedom and democracy; amend its laws to strengthen freedoms of the press, religion, and expression; open its ports and airports to Cypriot ships and airplanes, as well as ships and airplanes of other countries that stop in Cyprus before seeking to go to Turkey; restore the possession and enjoyment of their properties to the refugees of the Turkish occupation, including U.S. citizens or permanent residents; end the blocking of Cyprus from multilateral institutions affecting trade, security, and development; and permanently remove its occupation forces from Cyprus.

I also would like to note that just last week, the Cyprus government demolished a wall cutting across Ledra Street in Nicosia with the hope that this goodwill gesture, which I applaud and our government should applaud, would be met with a positive Turkish response. This historic event was praised across the globe. As soon as Turkey removes its occupation forces from the adjacent area and other issues of safety and security have been addressed, the citizens of Cyprus will be free to travel Ledra Street as they had generations ago.

The strength of the Turkish-American relationship puts the United States in a unique position to urge Turkey to move in the direction of peace, security, democracy, and freedom. Urging Turkey to move in that direction is not a question of supporting Cyprus over Turkey or vice versa. Where we do need to take a stand, however, is when the sovereign rights of one country are being threatened by another. As such, the threats by Turkey against the sovereign rights of Cyprus to conduct bilateral agreements with other states regarding oil and gas exploration in the exclusive economic zone of those states, is an issue about which the Administration must be clear and firm. Surely our foreign policy is expansive enough to accommodate good relations with both Cyprus and Turkey based on those cherished U.S. values of the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights.

Members of the Subcommittee, I hope that you will join me in encouraging Turkey to move in the direction of freedom and democracy. A democratic Turkey that subscribes to and applies the values I have discussed is in the long-term best interest of the United States, Europe, Cyprus, Turkey, and the rest of the world.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

On April 24, 2004, the people of Cyprus had the opportunity to speak for themselves and vote on a United Nations settlement plan. The Greek Cypriots' rejection of the suggested settlement plan should not be interpreted as a vote against reunification, but rather, as an important statement by the people about the fundamental principles that must be addressed in any viable and workable settlement.

Many people – including the Greek Cypriots themselves – regret that the plan presented to them did not allow both communities to respond positively. Criticism and anger, however, will only further divide the island at precisely the time when the Cypriot people need the support of the international community to continue on the path toward lasting peace.

Therefore, at this crucial time in Cyprus' history, we urge you to reflect on the legitimate concerns that prevented the Greek Cypriots from approving the Annan Plan. The Greek Cypriot voters have made clear that the suggested settlement plan failed because it did not provide for:

- Guarantees to ensure the complete implementation of commitments under the plan;
- The removal of foreign troops on Cyprus and the elimination of the right of the guarantor powers to intervene in Cyprus;
- A property recovery system that recognizes the rights and interests of displaced Greek Cypriots, and a property compensation system that does not force Greek Cypriots to pay for their own restitution;
- The right of all Cypriots to buy property and to live wherever they choose without being limited by ethnic quotas; and
- A viable, functional government free of built-in deadlocks and voting restrictions based on ethnicity.

The Government of Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot community have emphasized that they are committed to the reunifying Cyprus as a bizonal bicommunal federation with democratic and

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human rights for all Cypriots. We therefore urge you to remain engaged in efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem, and to work toward a fair and lasting reunification of Cyprus.

Your leadership, with the support of Congress, will be necessary in achieving this goal.

Sincerely yours,

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Jim Moran
Member of Congress

Tim Holden
Member of Congress

Robert T. Matsui
Member of Congress

Bobby Scott
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Randy Cunningham
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress

Ruben Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney
Member of Congress

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress

Jim Langevin
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Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Sue Myrick
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Michael A. Arcuri
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Dan Kildee
Member of Congress

Jim Langevin
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Jim McGovern
Member of Congress

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GUS BILIRAKIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Chairman Wexler and Ranking Member Gallegly, thank you for affording me the opportunity to submit this testimony in connection with the hearing on U.S.-Turkish relations. I join in the testimony submitted by Congresswoman Maloney, my co-chair on the Congressional Hellenic Caucus. It is a great honor to have been selected as co-chair of the Caucus, and I am proud to work with Congresswoman Maloney and continue the tradition of bipartisan support for Hellenic issues that she and my father established years ago.

Because of the importance of Cyprus to the national interests of the United States, and the continuing presence of Turkish occupation troops on Cyprus, I would like to provide the Subcommittee with further details on activities inside of Cyprus, particularly the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus to improve the conditions on the island and bring about a just and lasting resolution to the division of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus is dedicated to a solution to the division of Cyprus, and it has undertaken significant initiatives to improve substantially the economic position of the Turkish Cypriots.

Indeed just last week, Cyprus took another important step towards unity by demolishing a wall cutting across Ledra Street in Nicosia. This important gesture of goodwill by the government should be applauded. It is now incumbent on Turkey to take those same necessary steps, particularly the withdrawal of its forces so that the area can be made safe by sweeping for mines and refurbishing crumbling buildings. Only then can Ledra Street, a renowned and symbolic thoroughfare in Nicosia, be turned into a crossing point. Regretfully, this constructive overture by the government has not yet received a positive response from Turkey. As a natural optimist, however, I harbor hope for the future.

Much has been written about the defeat of the Annan Plan in 2004. An overwhelming number of Greek Cypriots could not accept a fundamentally flawed plan which did not address core issues of concern. The vote was not a vote against reunification, but a rejection of the unacceptable terms of the plan. The Cyprus government's priority remains the reunification of the island and its people. To this end, the government has initiated various programs and actions—the benefits of which, I believe, are clear.

When Cyprus joined the European Union in May 2004, the Government undertook action to facilitate trade and traffic across the cease-fire line. With the support of the Government, the EU's "Green Line Regulation" went into effect on May 1, 2004, and it provides legal procedures for the movement of goods and the passage of individuals across the line. Several crossing points have been opened allowing for Cypriots to cross from the occupied area to the government-controlled area and vice versa. More than 12 million such crossings have taken place without any violent incidents. Every day, thousands of Turkish Cypriots cross from the occupied territory to the government-controlled area for higher paying employment. In 2005, goods valued at more than €1.4 million were traded through the Green Line, up from €360,000 in 2004. Overall, the increased economic activity and trade across the dividing line has contributed to more than doubling the per capita income of the Turkish Cypriot community to approximately $11,000 in 2006—an amount which exceeds that of Turkey's own per capita income.

President Papadopoulos has proposed building on these successes by instituting a confidence building initiative to reopen the port of Famagusta for use by Greek and Turkish Cypriots, coupled with the return of the adjacent fenced city of Varosha to its rightful inhabitants. This proposal would enhance the Turkish Cypriot economy and ability to trade. President Papadopoulos has also proposed opening additional crossing points along the Green Line to enhance further travel and trade. And, as I mentioned, last week the Government took the very tangible step of demolishing the wall at Ledra Street. Unfortunately, the Turkish side continues to inexplicably rebuff these unilateral initiatives.

As a member of the EU, all Cypriots of Cyprus, Greek and Turkish alike, are EU citizens. The Government has worked diligently to ensure that the benefits of EU citizenship do not stop at the Green Line. More than 35,000 Turkish Cypriots have sought and received Republic of Cyprus passports, which enable the holder to travel as an EU citizen and work and reside throughout the EU. Many more Turkish Cypriots have received Republic of Cyprus birth certificates, and approximately two-thirds of all Turkish Cypriots hold Republic of Cyprus identity cards. The Government has also pushed strongly for economic assistance for the Turkish Cypriots.

The Government has undertaken several unilateral actions to benefit the Turkish Cypriots. It has paid €32 million in social insurance pensions to Turkish Cypriots, and more than 20,000 Turkish Cypriots have been provided with free medical care

worth nearly €7 million at hospitals in the Government-controlled area. Full tuition for Turkish Cypriot students in secondary schools in the Government-controlled area is provided. In 2005, the Government unilaterally implemented a program to demine the National Guard minefields in the buffer zone.

As I mentioned earlier, the Cyprus Government's priority is the reunification of the island. On February 28, 2006, Cyprus President Tassos Papadopoulos met with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to discuss future efforts for a Cyprus settlement. At that meeting, it was agreed that "bicommunal discussions on a series of issues . . . will be undertaken at the technical level." Following this initiative, President Papadopoulos met with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat on July 8, and agreed to commence talks concurrently on technical and substantive issues, progress of which would greatly facilitate the commencement of substantive negotiations. The preparations to begin the process are ongoing, and it deserves the full support of our government.

In Turkey's EU accession process, Cyprus has also sought to foster closer ties with Turkey. Despite the continued occupation and non-recognition of Cyprus by Turkey, Cyprus could have vetoed Turkey's bid for EU membership on two occasions, but instead reached out and supported Turkey's bid for accession. Regrettably, one would have expected that this affirmative outreach by the Cyprus government would have led to a change in attitude and policy by Turkey regarding Cyprus. On the contrary, Turkey has hardened its stance and has purposely avoided fulfilling its EU commitments to the Republic of Cyprus and by extension the EU as a whole. As a result, the European Council decided to suspend eight chapters. Since the United States supports Turkey's EU bid, it behooves the U.S. to urge Turkey to fulfill its EU obligations so that it may soon become an EU member and enjoy all of the benefits thereof..

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide you and the Subcommittee with these details on Cyprus's positive policies towards the Turkish Cypriots. I commend its efforts to foster the integration of the island, and achieve a just and lasting resolution to the division of Cyprus.

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March 14, 2007

The Honorable Robert Wexler
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Europe
2241 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20815

Dear Chairman Wexler,

I write to bring to your attention, and to that of your colleagues in the Subcommittee on Europe, the situation of the Turkish Cypriots and the need for a settlement of the Cyprus question.

You will recall that almost three years ago, the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots separately and simultaneously voted on a U.N.- sponsored settlement plan, which would have put all the conflicting ambitions, suspicions and hostilities between the two sides on the island, to rest. Unfortunately, the so-called Annan Plan, which is the most elaborate plan ever produced on the Cyprus issue, failed as a result of the Greek Cypriot "no" vote. The majority of Turkish Cypriots -65%- voted in favor of unification and settlement as opposed to a greater majority of their counterparts, the Greek Cypriots -76%- who voted against it.

The outcome of the referenda created an unjust situation in the island. While the Greek Cypriot side which voted against a solution, joined the EU on behalf of the whole of Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot side which accepted the settlement plan, not only remained outside the EU, but continues to be subjected to isolation.

As you are well aware, the former UN Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council (S/2004/437) pointed out this injustice and stressed that the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots should be removed given that they had voted for a settlement. In the same report, he called upon all States to eliminate the unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development.

Identical sentiments were expressed by all major international organizations and countries, including the USA, involved with the Cyprus issue. The decision of the *EU Council* (26 April 2004), the resolution of the *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (29 April 2004), the resolution of the *Organization of the Islamic Conference* (16 June 2004), all concurred in declaring the need to put right this gross injustice.

Although it has been almost three years since the international community made commitments towards this end, and despite the unanimous conviction that reducing the gap between the economies of the two sides would facilitate the unification of the island, no concrete step has been taken towards easing the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people. The people have not abandoned all hope; yet the prevailing mood in Northern Cyprus is one of disillusionment. The Turkish Cypriots are still waiting for the international community to honor its commitment to lift their isolation so that they can integrate with the rest of the world.

The Turkish Cypriots are steadfast in their resolve to engage in further efforts towards finding a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem and welcome the initiatives carried out under the mission of good offices of the UN Secretary General. If the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, as co-owners of the island, are to be pioneers, in a problematic region of the world, of how different ethnic groups can bridge disparities and live together as neighbors, words should be translated into action.

As the Turkish Cypriot side we have overwhelmingly proved our forward looking position in deed, in 2004, and are still firmly bound to that commitment. We are determined to maintain our pro-settlement stance and to work with the Greek Cypriot side to develop common interests which in turn will contribute to the promotion of peace and cooperation in the region.

We strongly believe that a political settlement is to the benefit of both sides in the island and call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue its policy of holding out against a compromise now, in the hope of being able to dictate its maximalist terms in the future. In order to overcome the current stalemate and achieve the goal of settlement, there is a need for renewed international support for the UN Secretary General's efforts, especially from the USA and EU.

Helping the Turkish Cypriots to prevail over the international isolation in which they find themselves through no fault of their own, will not only be a well-deserved recognition of their constructive and conciliatory stance, but it will also facilitate efforts to find a just and sustainable settlement.

We would like to reiterate our call for the US to continue to lead the way on Cyprus by ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people and by encouraging the Greek Cypriot side to negotiate in good faith for a final settlement which would be consistent with the longstanding policy goal of the US Government aimed at the comprehensive resolution of the differences between the two sides in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated to the esteemed members of the Subcommittee and included in its proceedings.

Sincerely,

Hilmi Akil
Representative
TRNC Washington Office

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ELIOT L. ENGEL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Question:

It has been brought to my attention that the Government of Cyprus has been unable to obtain meaningful consultation concerning U.S.-funded programs on Cyprus, despite Congress' direction. In particular, for activities under the CyPEG program (Cyprus Partnership for Economic Growth), USAID in essence engages in post-hoc notifications of activities. What mechanism exists for advanced notice and consultation with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus concerning U.S. funds expended in Cyprus?

Response:

The USG is committed to consultation and transparency with "the Government of Cyprus (GoC) and other interested parties" on the USG foreign assistance program for Cyprus, in accord with the FY 2006 Senate Appropriations Committee report. Since 2005, Embassy Nicosia has made it a priority to increase the frequency and breadth of consultations. The Ambassador, Public Affairs Officer and USAID Representative have had numerous meetings with GoC officials to discuss USG foreign assistance in Cyprus. Concerns expressed by GoC officials at these meetings have been taken into account in our programs. For example, USG foreign assistance programs are highly sensitive to recognition, property issues, and contractor office locations, all of which have been raised as concerns by GoC in our consultations. These are examples of productive results of our consultations with the GoC. Unfortunately, GoC officials do not always accept consultation meetings sought by Embassy officials. In fact, the GoC has increasingly sought to exercise control over our projects directed at the Turkish Cypriot community. Acceding to such GoC demands would effectively undo the basic premise of over 30 years of bicommunal programming in Cyprus and would discourage Turkish Cypriots from participating in our programs.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE JIM COSTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question:

The Administration claims that Turkey is making progress towards recognizing the Armenian Genocide, yet this argument has been made for decades, including in 2000 when Congress was considering a similar resolution. Yet, the Turkish government's handling of this issue has not improved, but actually deteriorated. Turkey has passed new laws outlawing the discussion of the Armenian Genocide and is persecuting numerous writers for writing about it. Moreover, Hrant Dink, an Armenian-Turkish journalist, who was persecuted under the new laws, was assassinated for his discussion of the Armenian Genocide only a few weeks ago. In Dink's last column, he wrote that Turkish government officials were responsible for his persecution. How can the Administration call that progress?

Response:

In recent years, there has been a more open public debate and greater introspection within Turkey about the terrible events and mass killings of Armenians that occurred in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Honest voices are calling for Turkish reconsideration of the past and reconciliation with Armenia, and 100,000 Turks from diverse ethnic backgrounds—including ethnic Armenians—as well as government officials joined in demonstrations denouncing Hrant Dink's assassination and applauding his commitment to freedom of expression. Many of the participants shouted "We are all Armenians; we are all Hrant Dink," an expression of solidarity that would have been unimaginable even a few years ago.

The Turkish government can and should do more, however, to encourage even more open debate and greater introspection. Indeed, senior U.S. officials routinely press the Turkish government to substantially amend, or repeal, Article 301 (insulting "Turkishness") of the Turkish Penal Code, which would help significantly to expand freedom of expression. We are pleased that Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul, among other senior Turkish officials, have called openly for the amendment of Article 301. The government recently undertook a review of Article

301, and civil society representatives, including writers and journalists who have often been the target of overly zealous ultra-nationalist prosecutors seeking to invoke Article 301, have made recommendations to the government for the article's amendment. Currently, the status of Article 301 is being debated by the Turkish Council of Ministers.

Question:

Does the Department of State direct employees not to use the word genocide to describe the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians starting in 1915? If so, why?

Response:

The President's annual statement on Armenian Remembrance Day makes clear our recognition of the terrible events of that period, and firmly set the U.S. apart from those who would deny or minimize these atrocities. Department employees are expected to carry out the Administration's policies, including the promotion of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. However, as with all issues, we encourage vigorous internal debates on how to best promote Armenian-Turkish reconciliation.

Question:

The Department of State Human Rights Report has consistently reported that the Turkish government continues to suppress Christian religious freedom and expropriate Christian church properties. What is the Department of State doing to end these practices beyond reporting on them?

Response:

The Embassy in Ankara and our Consulate General in Istanbul work closely and constructively with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Christian groups in Turkey to improve relations between them and the government of Turkey and to promote progress on religious freedom and human rights issues. Senior State Department officials consistently advocate on behalf of religious minorities by urging the Turkish government to allow the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious minorities' institutions to operate freely. The State Department has been particularly engaged on pressing the Turkish government to find a legal solution to re-open Halki Seminary and protect Patriarchate and other foundations' property from seizure through spurious and unjust claims. The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom also pressed Turkish government officials for movement on these issues during its successful visit to Turkey last fall.

Question:

In the Administration's recent contact with Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, did he better define what he has indicated to the press regarding "serious consequences" if Congress passes the Armenian Genocide resolution? Please specify what you understand to be possible Turkish responses should Congress reaffirm Armenian and American history.

Response:

Turkish Foreign Minister Gul has not better defined to Administration officials what he apparently characterized to the press as "serious consequences" befalling the U.S.-Turkish bilateral relationship should the Congress pass H. Res. 106.

We believe, however, that passage of H. Res. 106 would damage U.S.-Turkish cooperation on America's top strategic goals, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, at a time when we already face immense difficulties in the region. It could jeopardize the use of Turkish airspace, military bases and border crossing into Iraq, adding to the risks and expenses of our operations there and in Afghanistan. It could potentially compromise cooperation on terrorism, narcotics trafficking, proliferation and other priorities. It could hinder our collaboration on democratic reform and energy security in the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia. And, it could put at risk Turkey's close relations with Israel.

Passage of H. Res. 106 also could derail Turkish-Armenian normalization, reconciliation, and border reopening that are key to ending Armenia's regional isolation. It could produce a nationalist backlash and undercut liberal and honest voices urging reconsideration of the past and reconciliation with Armenians, Kurds, and Greeks, among others. It could halt nascent Turkish-Armenian dialogue, including a proposal to establish a joint commission on the 1915 tragedies and possibly other issues.

Hrant Dink, himself criticized foreign legislatures for attempting to characterize or define the atrocities that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire, saying, "That is why I regard this as an unethical stance and it is also why I am angry at Armenians. How can they allow the tragedy that befell our forefathers to be ex-

ploited so recklessly for political purposes? We should carry this burden honorably on our shoulders as a people and not allow anybody to use it. When we do, things get to the point where we Armenians are exploiting it and it drives me mad."

"The greatest wish of an Armenian in Turkey is the restoration of the spiritual ties between Turks and Armenians. And that can only come about through dialogue. And that dialogue should not be sought in the U.S. Senate or in any other unrelated third locations."

Passage of H Res. 106 could also discredit those calling for openness and liberal democratic values in Turkey, a moderate, majority Muslim country, thereby poisoning the atmosphere for presidential and parliamentary elections in May and November. It could add fuel to xenophobia and nationalist rhetoric by bolstering claims that the West is against Turkey. It also could isolate Turkey's minorities, especially ethnic Armenians, most of whom, like Hrant Dink, strongly oppose foreign parliamentary judgments on genocide.

Finally, passage of H. Res. 106 could fan anti-Americanism in Turkey, potentially reverberating in negative ways throughout the Muslim world. It could provoke hostile, possibly violent public reaction that could jeopardize the safety of U.S. soldiers, diplomats, tourists, and government installations. And, it could threaten the U.S. business presence in Turkey, especially symbols of American culture, at a time when economic success is attracting competitors from other countries.

Question:

Despite numerous calls by the Republic of Turkey to leave the accounting of the Armenian Genocide to the historians, is the Administration aware of successive public declarations by 126 Holocaust and Genocide Scholars who affirmed this crime against humanity and urged Western democracies to officially recognize it on March 7, 2000, and by many of the same scholars, who as part of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, sent a letter on June 12, 2006, to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan criticizing his government for continuing to call for a historical commission, and another missive on October 1, 2006 to those who would deny the Armenian Genocide? The preponderance of the scholarly community has repeatedly affirmed the incontestable fact of the Armenian Genocide and called upon the Turkish government to deal forthrightly with the legacy of this crime against humanity. What has the Administration specifically done to assist Turkey to face history squarely?

Response:

The Administration is aware of these letters. For its part, the Administration has continually and routinely pressed the Turkish government at the highest levels to evaluate and come to terms with the atrocities that occurred in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Already, there is more open public discussion of these terrible events, and liberal Turkish intellectuals are leading this introspection and reassessment. We are pleased that Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul have publicly committed to seek the amendment of Article 301 (insulting "Turkishness") of the Turkish Penal Code, which has stifled freedom of expression and been at the root of ultranationalist prosecutors' ability to charge those who question what occurred to the Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Part of being able to confront and debate the mass killings that occurred during the final years of the Ottoman Empire squarely will depend upon Turkey's ability to expand freedom of expression by amending or repealing Article 301.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question:

At a recent press conference, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used the term "Kurdistan." How does the State Department define the term "Kurdistan"? Is it an entity with geographic boundaries, and if so what are they?

Would you describe the Kurdish leaders in Northern Iraq as strong allies of the United States?

Response:

The State Department defines Kurdistan as a federally recognized region in the northern part of Iraq, in accordance with Article 117 of the Iraqi Constitution.

The boundary of Iraqi Kurdistan was defined by the Iraqis based on the limit of control of Saddam Hussein's regime in the 1990s after the Gulf War. The definition was continued in practice after Iraq's liberation in 2003. Article 58(B) of the Transi-

tional Administrative Law noted that the Saddam Hussein regime changed administrative boundaries for political ends. Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution calls for the government to undertake certain steps that could change the internal administrative boundaries of Iraqi Kurdistan.

We enjoy excellent relations with the Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

Question:

I have seen some recent media reports of Turkish politicians and military figures who have asserted that Turkey has a right to militarily intervene in Northern Iraq. Such action, were Turkey to undertake it, would further destabilize an already fragile part of the world. Is there any veracity to these press reports? Is the State Department taking steps to ensure that Turkey does not take any military action against Kurds in Northern Iraq?

Response:

Turkey's people and government alike are eager to see an end to the violence in Iraq and fear Iraq's further destabilization by radical elements. However, the situation is complicated by the presence of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), a terrorist organization which has been fighting the Turkish government for nearly thirty years. The PKK are Kurds from Turkey who have traditionally sought to carve a homeland out of the Kurdish areas of south-eastern Turkey through terrorist means. Many Turkish officials and citizens have spoken in favor of military action against the PKK bases in northern Iraq. The PKK has taken advantage of the situation in Iraq to strike at Turkey from those bases.

As a NATO ally and close partner, the U.S. is dedicated to the end of the PKK security threat to Turkey, but we have repeatedly cautioned the Turks against becoming embroiled in Iraq. Instead, we have worked with Turkey and our European allies to combat the PKK networks in Europe that support the terrorists' activities, and worked with the Iraqi government to curtail the PKK's activities in Iraq. It was for this purpose that Secretary Rice appointed General (ret'd) Joseph Ralston to serve as the Special Envoy of the Secretary of State for Countering the PKK. The Special Envoy has responsibility for coordinating U.S. engagement with the Government of Turkey and the Government of Iraq to eliminate the terrorist threat posed by the PKK.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Question:

Given the Republic of Cyprus offers Turkish Cypriots opportunities afforded to EU citizens and the possibility of trade through legal ports, does the so called "economic isolation" of the Turkish Cypriots correspond with the reality on the ground or is it simply used by Turkey in efforts to upgrade the illegal regime in the north?

Response:

It is true that the Government of Cyprus does extend to Turkish Cypriot businesses some opportunities to ship through Limassol and Larnaca ports, and we believe that Turkish Cypriot businessmen who choose to avail themselves of those opportunities should face no obstacles in doing so. At the same time, Turkish Cypriot businessmen cite a number of reasons why they do not want trade to pass solely through Government-controlled ports. These include the cost of shipments, lack of trust and the limited scope of goods.

Cost of Shipments: Generally the distance and time needed to haul goods across the UN-patrolled Green Line to Government-controlled ports is much greater than that to Turkish Cypriot ports, adding significantly to the cost of any shipment. This is compounded by current Government restrictions on the use of Turkish Cypriot commercial vehicles in the Government-controlled area. Using Greek Cypriot trucks and drivers is significantly more expensive.

Lack of trust: Turkish Cypriot businessmen still remember the period before 1974, when, they say, Turkish Cypriot businesses were often openly discriminated against. They are afraid to invest in any venture that requires the continued goodwill of the Government of Cyprus for its success. They are also afraid that, should they become successful and competitive with Greek Cypriot exporters, the Government will find ways to place bureaucratic obstacles in their way, or somehow use its bureaucratic control over the flow of commerce as a means of taking political advantage.

Scope of goods: Currently, the scope of goods allowed under the European Union's Green Line Regulation is rather limited, although we understand that consideration is now being given to broadening this scope. Many goods the Turkish Cypriots traditionally export, such as dairy products and fish, are not permitted to cross the Green Line or, in the case of olive oil, are subject to prohibitive levies and thus cannot be shipped out of Government-controlled ports.

We support the easing of the economic and social isolation of Turkish Cypriots as a way to reduce disparities between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and thereby facilitate reunification of the island. That view is shared by the European Union, which committed itself to developing direct trade with the Turkish Cypriots in 2004 after the Turkish Cypriot community voted in favor of reunification under the United Nation's "Annan Plan."

Our overarching objective on Cyprus is to help foster a comprehensive settlement that reunifies the island into a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. We recognize the Government of Cyprus as the only government on the island; we do not recognize any other entity.

Question:

As a country which values the rule of law and human rights, including the right to property, should we not be urging the Turkish government to abide by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and adhere to the rule of law and practices as required of any country aspiring to join the European Union? Is it not the case that Turkey's policy of illegally exploiting the property belong to Greek Cypriot refugees, some of whom are US citizens, makes a solution to the Cyprus problem even more difficult?

Response:

The Cyprus problem has spurred a massive dislocation of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. For example, many Turkish Cypriots, dispersed relatively evenly throughout the island in the pre-independence period, had to abandon rural plots and take shelter in urban enclaves during the 1963–64 inter-communal clashes. Displacement reached its zenith following the conflict in 1974, when approximately 170,000 Greek Cypriots fled to the Government-controlled south and 70,000 Turkish Cypriots relocated to the Turkish Cypriot-administered area north of the Buffer Zone. To cope with this massive influx, authorities in both communities constructed "refugee" housing, often on land belonging to members of the opposite community. The dispute over property returns is perhaps the most complex element of the Cyprus problem. Only a comprehensive political settlement can hope to untangle the web of competing ownership claims.

In the meantime, residents of both communities have turned to the courts for relief. Greek Cypriot claims represent the vast majority of cases filed, with plaintiffs arguing that Turkey and Turkish Cypriots must immediately honor the rights of pre-1974 owners seeking restitution and/or compensation for properties in the north. One factor that complicates the situation is the Republic of Cyprus' own "Guardianship Law," which holds in trust most Turkish Cypriot property in the Government-controlled area, pending a solution to the Cyprus problem. While the Republic's Supreme Court has found that the law does not violate Turkish Cypriots' property rights, legal experts on both sides claim it might not stand up to scrutiny by international tribunals.

Members of both communities have scored victories in the courts. Greek Cypriot courts have returned property in some cases and paid compensation in others; to date, the Turkish Cypriots have offered only cash payments. The sheer volume of potential cases, their associated financial cost and the time and lawyers' fees required to bring them to conclusion mean that court battles cannot replace political negotiations, which we are urging the sides to begin as a means of resolving the property element of the Cyprus problem.

Question:

What are the United States' top foreign policy priorities with Turkey and where do concerns over human rights, such as religious freedom and free speech fall within those priorities?

Response:

Human rights and religious freedom are among our top priorities with Turkey, along with combating terrorism, energy security, helping to contain Iran, and promoting stability and democracy in a unified Iraq and Afghanistan. We discuss these issues regularly at the highest levels with the Government of Turkey (GoT). The GoT has made significant progress in improving human rights, including recent efforts to improve religious freedom, in part due to outside pressure by the EU to har-

monize its laws with EU standards. Turkish Economic Minister Ali Babacan noted in his recent statement to the European Parliament that the GoT will announce in April a 2007–2013 program to increase the pace of domestic reforms and change the way Article 301 on "insulting Turkishness" is implemented. Last year, as reported in our 2006 Human Rights Report, the GoT's overhaul of the criminal code helped reduce torture and improve due process for defendants, although more remains to be done on implementation.

Question:

Has the Department of State met with the writers who are being persecuted for their discussion of the Armenian Genocide? Will the Department of State commit to meeting with such writers and report to the Committee on its findings?

Response:

Embassy Ankara and Consulate General Istanbul officers indeed meet frequently with writers, editors, translators, and others who are being investigated or prosecuted under Turkish Penal Code Article 301 (insulting "Turkishness") or other legal provisions used to suppress freedom of expression related to Turkish-Armenian history. We follow closely their trials and prosecution process, the substance of which often is included in reports to Congress. We also actively press the Government of Turkey to amend or repeal Article 301 and any other legal provisions used to suppress freedom of expression. Although individuals have been prosecuted and convicted by a few ultra-nationalist zealous prosecutors, many more cases have been dismissed, and no one has served a sentence for "insulting Turkishness." Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul have called for Article 301 to be amended. We would welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on findings from these discussions.

Question:

For over six years, senior officials from the Bush Administration have continually assured Congress and the American public they have urged Turkey to open its border and normalize relations with the Republic of Armenia. What additional steps does the Administration plan to take to secure an open border with Armenia and normalized relations? Moreover, would regional security be enhanced and American interests furthered if Turkey lifted its now fourteen-year blockade against Armenia?

Response:

Senior Administration officials routinely press Turkey and Armenia to work together toward reconciliation, normalization of relations, and an open border. The United States believes that regional security would be enhanced if all countries within the region maintained normal relations and open borders. Numerous issues, notably the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, influence the state of relations between Armenia and Turkey. While a Turkish decision to open its border with Armenia is one that only Turkey, as a sovereign state, can make, we will continue to urge both governments to take the necessary steps to promote trust and understanding at official and public levels so that relations can be normalized. Recent steps by both governments have given us hope that they are on a path toward reconciliation.

Question:

Is the Administration's opposition to H. Res. 106 driven by the Turkish government's demands to do so, or by the Administration's doubts regarding the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide?

Response:

The Administration has never denied or minimized the terrible events that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The President annually issues his April 24 Armenian Remembrance Day statement, in which he recognizes the mass atrocities against Armenians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Up to a million and a half Armenians were killed or forcibly and brutally exiled, as the President has recognized. The Administration believes, however, that passage of H. Res. 106 could stifle the ongoing debate and introspection within Turkey, about these events, and cut off the nascent efforts at reconciliation we see between Turkey and Armenia. These efforts are reflected in several recent developments. Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Kirakossian attended the January funeral of slain Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink in Istanbul, Turkey. On March 29, Turkey reopened the historically-significant Cathedral of the Holy Cross Armenian Orthodox church on Akhdemar island as a museum and Armenian Deputy Cultural Minister Gagik Gyurgian led a delegation to the opening celebration.

Passage of H. Res. 106 would have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship with Turkey, one of the United States' strategic partners and a long-standing NATO ally. Moreover, passage of H. Res. 106 could have an immediate negative effect on our ability to support U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Question:

Have Turkish officials threatened or "warned" retaliation against the United States for passing the Armenian Genocide resolution? What have been those specific threats or "warnings?" If so, what message does it send, if the United States responds to these threats or "warnings?"

Response:

The Administration is unaware of any threats of retaliation made by Turkish officials, in the event of the passage of H. Res. 106.

As I stated in my March 15 testimony, "I should be quite clear myself that the Turkish government has not threatened the United States."

"The Turkish government in its contacts with us has explained that if a resolution such as this passes the Congress, they will be under tremendous public and parliamentary pressure to do something to respond. And that something, they fear, will damage the U.S.-Turkish relationship in general, and will damage the U.S. ability to support our troops in Iraq from Turkey in particular."

"I should also say that the Turkish government has let us know that they will resist extreme calls for retaliation but it is their judgment that they will be unable to do so successfully, that the Turkish parliament would respond with extreme emotion to a resolution such as the one we have discussed today."

It is important to recognize that there could be consequences. Turkey plays a highly significant logistical support role for NATO operations in Afghanistan and for coalition forces in Iraq. Turkey's cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base is responsible for 74% of air cargo into Iraq. Six U.S. military C–17 aircraft based at Incirlik move the amount of cargo it took 9–10 military aircraft to move from Germany, saving $160 million per year. KC–135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have flown 3,400 sorties and delivered 35 million gallons of fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Approximately 25% of the fuel used by Coalition forces enters Iraq from Turkey via the Habur Gate border crossing. In addition, 29% of the fuel used by Iraqi consumers—250,000 tankers and 1.6 billion gallons of fuel since 2003—enters through Habur Gate, despite Iraqi arrears that have approached $1 billion. Turkey provides through Habur Gate a significant amount of the food and water that Iraqis consume.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM GENERAL JOSEPH W. RALSTON, SPECIAL ENVOY, COUNTERING THE KURDISTAN WORKER'S PARTY (PKK), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Question:

U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Moseley recently stated we do not need Incirlik air base to conduct operations in Iraq. He noted the U.S. Air Force is already using three main bases in Iraq and the Baghdad airport for such operations. Moreover, U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf have been conducted successfully twice without Incirlik. In both 1990 and 2005, Turkey refused to allow the use of Incirlik, even though the Department of State and Department of Defense successfully defeated previous Armenian Genocide resolutions. Do you disagree with Moseley's assessment of Incirlik not being essential to U.S. operations in Iraq?

Response:

The U.S. can conduct operations in the region without Incirlik air base. However, if Turkey were to deny U.S. access to Incirlik, it would impose a serious and increased logistical burden on U.S. forces operating in Iraq and Afghanistan and a significant and increased financial burden on the U.S. Securing access to an alternative airbase would take time, scarce additional resources, and would disrupt the timely delivery of the fuel and supplies that our troops need to do their jobs. Incirlik Air Base serves as a key logistical hub for U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 60% of air cargo heading for U.S. forces in Iraq transits Incirlik. Access to the base allows 6 planes to deliver the supplies it previously took 9–10 planes to move from Germany, saving $160 million per year. KC–135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have flown over 3,800 sorties and delivered more than 40 million gallons of fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Question:

We seem to have an ironic situation in the Middle East when it comes to the Kurdish population. Kurds in Iraq are generally considered to be our friends and allies, while Kurds in Turkey are regarded less warmly. Indeed, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) has been designated by our government as a terrorist organization. Can you explain this apparent dichotomy? For what reasons does our government continue to label the PKK as a terrorist organization?

Response:

There are many Kurdish organizations, with vastly different goals and political philosophies, scattered across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Our relationship with these groups is based on their activities and what they advocate.

The USG has officially designated the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party also known as Kongra Gel or KGK) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization because the PKK has committed a wide range of terrorist acts responsible for deaths of thousands of innocent people since PKK's inception thirty years ago. The PKK operates several base camps along the border in northern Iraq from which it coordinates attacks in the predominately ethnic Kurdish areas of southeastern Turkey and provides logistical support to forces that launch attacks into Turkey, primarily against Turkish security forces, local Turkish officials, and villagers who oppose the organization. Turkish authorities suspect the PKK/KGK is responsible for dozens of bombings since 2004 in western Turkey, particularly in Istanbul and increasingly in resort areas on Turkey's western coast where foreign tourists have been among those killed.

PKK/KGK attacks in 2006 killed and wounded hundreds, and at least two hostages have been taken by the PKK/KGK as of September 2006. For more on the group's history of terrorism, I refer you to the State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism.

The U.S. is sympathetic to Turkey's Kurdish population, which is entitled to peace and prosperity and to live free from the terrorist violence that has made them the chief victims of the PKK. The United States, in cooperation with Turkey and other allies, will continue to oppose this terrorist organization.