

Cyprus & Hellenic Affairs Committee

2020 Report

To the Delegates/Alternates of the 99th Supreme Convention:

The AHEPA Cyprus & Hellenic Affairs Committee wishes to thank Supreme President George G. Horiates for his leadership, confidence and support this past year and appreciates the backing of the Supreme Lodge, Board of Trustees, and Executive Director Basil Mossaidis. I also want to especially thank the members of the committee and extend my personal gratitude to our consultant, Andrew Kaffes, without whose efforts, guidance, advice and direction, would have seriously jeopardized our representation before Congress and Federal Agencies. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic derailing in-person plans and activities during almost all of 2020, AHEPA still made the 2019-2020 administrative year a productive one.

Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues

* The Hellenic Caucus stands at 111 members as participation in this valuable caucus has increased since its inception.

Capitol Hill Day

Unfortunately, Capitol Hill Day was postponed due to COVID-19.

Engagement with the Administration

During the past year, AHEPA communicated and met with officials from the U.S. Department of State, in particular, Ambassadors Geoffrey Pyatt and Judith Garber, and officials from the Office of Southern European Affairs, including the office's boss, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Palmer, on U.S. engagement with Greece and Cyprus and Turkey's belligerence in the region. AHEPA conveyed its support for the department's statements on Turkish incursions into Cyprus' EEZ, on Turkey's instigation at the border, and on U.S. foreign assistance via the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The State Department was also briefed on AHEPA's response to COVID-19 in Greece and Cyprus—a testament to positive American influence in the region.

In September 2019, AHEPA alerted the State Department about Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu's defiance of UN Security Council resolutions and became the highest-ranking Turkish government official to enter Famagusta/Varosha. They appreciated our flagging the incident for them. A few weeks later, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned Turkey off planning a reopening of Varosha and sent a letter to Cypriot Foreign Minister Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides on the matter. In a follow-up, the State Department told AHEPA "...we are paying attention to events in Varosha."

In October 2019, Supreme President George Horiates wrote to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to convey gratitude for the secretary's visit to Athens, to applaud the signing of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement (MDCA), and to applaud his public recognition that Turkey's activities in Cyprus' EEZ are "illegal" and "unacceptable." The letter also conveyed the American Hellenic community's outrage at the inability for Western institutions to stop Turkey and to hold it accountable.

In November 2019, Supreme President George Horiates wrote to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to request him to utilize his authority, as delegated to him by President Donald Trump by Executive Order, to work in consultation with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, to impose sanctions on Turkish entities pursuant to Section 231 of CAATSA. The letter was sent the day after press accounts reported Turkey tested the S-400 missile defense system against F-16 aircraft. Supreme President Horiates stated the American Hellenic community continued to be alarmed about Turkey's provocative behavior that challenges American security interests and threatens NATO allies and strategic partners of the United States in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. In a reply, the State Department wrote, "With regards to CAATSA, the U.S. government does not preview sanctions decisions, but as Secretary Pompeo has said, we will follow U.S. law."

In April 2020, Supreme President George Horiates wrote to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the topic of Secretary Pompeo's authority to waive the limitations placed on the transfer of articles on the United States munitions list to the Republic of Cyprus under section 1250A(d) of the NDAA and under section 205(d) of the East Med Act. AHEPA requested the secretary to exercise his authority and waive the two limitations placed on the Republic of Cyprus by each of the two laws thus allowing for the transfer of articles. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Palmer replied, "Regarding Russian military vessels' access, however, the United States continues to urge a halt in Russia's regular navy port calls to the ROC. There is no doubt these vessels contribute to destabilizing actions in Syria."

During the course of the administrative year, AHEPA welcomed, applauded, or commended instances of U.S. government action or statements that bolstered bilateral relations between the United States and Greece via Twitter.

Engagement with Congress

In September 2019, AHEPA apprised Hellenic Caucus staff of an AHEPA letter from March 2019 to the Department of Defense on the finding that NSA Souda Bay, Crete, was included on the Department of Defense's list of at-risk military projects that could be delayed or cut as part of the Section 2808 funding pool for border barrier projects. The Department of Defense wrote back stating the department's support for Greece and the European Deterrence Initiative, which funds improvement to NSA Souda Bay. To date, we understand funding to be intact for NSA Souda Bay.

Supreme President George Horiates sent an October 9, 2019 letter to the heads of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Ranking Member Michael McCaul (R-TX) asking for a hearing to scrutinize the Republic of Turkey's provocative and dangerous operations in northeast Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean. AHEPA also requested

the Committee to explore with witnesses the best course of action Congress can take for the United States to hold Turkey accountable. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs did schedule a hearing on October 23, 2019 on the topic of the betrayal of the U.S.' Syrian Kurdish partners.

* AHEPA submitted Questions for the Record (QFRs) that were accepted by Foreign Affairs Committee Member Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV).

In November 2019, Supreme President George Horiates advocated for the policy priorities of the Greek American community with key members of Congress on Capitol Hill, including the heads of Congress's foreign policy-making committees. During the day, Horiates spoke with: Senate Foreign Relations Chairman James Risch (R-ID), U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee; U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee; House Foreign Affairs Chairman Eliot Engel (D-NY), Hellenic Caucus Co-Chairman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), U.S. Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and U.S. Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD).

Two bipartisan year-end legislative packages that became law included legislative victories for the AHEPA family. Of vital importance to the AHEPA Cyprus & Hellenic Affairs Committee was its Investment in the U.S.-Eastern Mediterranean Partnership. One of the packages included The Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act (Senate version S.1102, as amended), which is comprehensive legislation that provides the framework for enhanced United States relations with Greece, Cyprus, and Israel; and counters Russian influence in the Eastern Mediterranean.

* AHEPA expressly advocated successfully for the Act's inclusion of an authorization of appropriations sustained over three fiscal years (2020 to 2022) with meaningful increases in authorized investment each of those fiscal years - an AHEPA priority. That authorization of appropriations is as follows:

? FY2020 authorization: \$1.3 million for Greece; \$200,000 for Cyprus

? FY2021 authorization: \$1.5 million for Greece; \$500,000 for Cyprus

? FY2022 authorization: \$1.8 million for Greece; \$750,000 for Cyprus

The legislative packages also included a provision that states no funds from the Act are to be used for the sale of defense articles to the Turkish Presidential Protection Directorate (TPPD), who were responsible for the May 2017 assault on American protesters on U.S. soil, unless Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reports to Congress that they have returned to the United States to stand

trial; and included report language that "prohibits the transfer of F-35 fighters to Turkey to prevent the exposure of cutting-edge U.S. technology to Russian missile systems."

However, our concern with The Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act was its inclusion of a provision that placed two conditions on the lifting of the arms prohibition on Cyprus.

H.R.5182, To Prohibit the Department of Defense from deploying strategic assets of the United States to the Republic of Turkey. AHEPA wrote a support letter to the sponsors of the legislation, U.S. Reps. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL).

In November 2019, Supreme President George Horiates wrote to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to request that legislation that serves to uphold American security interests and values each to be brought to the Senate Floor for a vote. Supreme President Horiates specifically cited S. 2641, Promoting American National Security and Preventing the Resurgence of ISIS Act of 2019 and S.Res.150, A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance.

FY2021 NDAA. At the time of writing this report, AHEPA has outreached to the staff of Senate Foreign Relations Chairman James Risch (R-ID) regarding the prospects of his proposed amendment to sanction Turkey under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) being accepted for a vote on the Senate floor as part of the deliberations on the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Additional Issues and Action Taken

Action Alert. We issued an Action Alert on the historic House of Representatives vote on H.Res. 296, a resolution affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide, that was held October 29, 2019.

Action Alert. We issued an Action Alert on March 10, 2020 that reiterated the call to sanction Turkey following Turkey's instigation of its forced migratory policy that led to a border crisis. The alert advised advocates to urge their U.S. Senators to support bipartisan-backed legislation that places strong sanctions on Turkey by encouraging Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to bring S. 2641 to the Senate floor for a vote.

Sanction Turkey Webpage. AHEPA created the ahepa.org/sanction-turkey webpage to keep advocates updated on the status of legislation to hold Turkey accountable for its actions. A unique advocacy graphic was designed to adorn the advocacy campaign. It appeared on the Sanction Turkey webpage, AHEPA enews, and action alert.

H.R.1044/S.386, the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019. AHEPA monitored the legislation and previously had stated its opposition to it to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. In sum, AHEPA is concerned about the legislation's impact on the U.S.-Greece relationship at a time when the relationship has strengthened significantly across many sectors and opportunities have been identified for future growth and enhancement. AHEPA contends

the legislation would impose unintended consequences upon non-backlogged countries such as Greece, and instead, tilt the scales in favor of countries with a heavy backlog, such as India and China.

H.Res.644. We helped raise awareness of H.Res.644, a resolution which supports the designation of October 28, 2019, as Oxi Day, and encourages related celebrations and commemorations across the country, that led to congressional support. U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH) introduced the resolution.

Visa Wavier Program. With Congress and the Administration, AHEPA continuously and closely monitors Greece's standing in the United States Visa Waiver Program.

Discussion Draft. We provided feedback on a discussion draft of a legislative resolution that expressed solidarity with Greece regarding the migrant crisis and condemnation of Turkey's role in the crisis. The resolution was not introduced.

Advancing Relations with the American Jewish Community

AHEPA continues to build upon the foundation it laid in fall 2010 with its colleagues in the American Jewish community. The Fourth International Leadership Mission took place January 11 to 18, 2020. As Chairman of the Cyprus & Hellenic Affairs Committee, it was a great pleasure to participate and be a part of a stellar delegation of colleagues and leaders from the Greek American and American Jewish communities.

During the administrative year, AHEPA issued four joint statements with the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), B'nai B'rith International, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, including one that outlined our post-Mission findings. These joint statements welcome or applaud tangible progress that is being made by the Greece, Cyprus, and Israel trilateral partnership, or when appropriate, the trilateral plus the United States (3+1).

* Also, representatives from AHEPA, AHI, and B'nai B'rith International debriefed the professional Senate Foreign Relations staff of Ranking Member Robert Menendez about the Mission's findings.

We continue to be in communication, and when appropriate, work with leading American Jewish organizations on issues of mutual concern or interest. We also remain in communication when matters arise regarding the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which we visited on the sidelines of the Mission.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve the Order of AHEPA. It has been a great honor to work on behalf of this important committee alongside such dedicated and passionate AHEPANS.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Zenon Christodoulou
Chairman