



Honorees (L-R): Phil Angelides, Isidoros Garifalakis, Nancy Papaioannou, Tim Tassopoulos.

AHI Hosts 43rd Anniversary Awards Dinner

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) hosted its 43rd Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner, March 3, 2018, Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C.

AHI honored a distinguished set of awardees based upon their important career achievements and contributions to the Greek American community or community at-large. They were: Nancy Papaioannou, President, Atlantic Bank of New York; Isidoros Garifalakis, Businessman and Philanthropist; Tim Tassopoulos, President and Chief Operating Officer, Chick-fil-A; and Phil Angelides, former California State Treasurer, former Chairman of the U.S. Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, and Businessman.

Larry Michael, “Voice of the Redskins,” and chief content officer and senior vice president, Washington Redskins; was the evening’s emcee. AHI Board of Directors Member Leon Andris introduced Michael. The Marines of Headquarters Battalion presented the colors and the American and Greek national anthems were performed by Maria Pearce. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, assisted by Reverend Konstantinos Pavlakos, Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church,

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American Hellenic, American Jewish Groups Hail Third Three-Country Leadership Mission



(L-R) Delegation Heads Stephen Greenberg, Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Nick Larigakis, President of AHI; Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece; Carl R. Hollister, Supreme President of AHEPA; Gary P. Saltzman, International President of B'nai B'rith International.

An 18-member delegation of leaders of the American Hellenic and American Jewish organizations completed a third, three-country Leadership Mission to Greece, Cyprus and Israel, to explore the major political, economic and security developments underway in the eastern Mediterranean and to advance the interests of the United States in the region. Meetings were held with more

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President of the Cypriot House of Representatives, Demetris Syllouris, AHI President Nick Larigakis holding a copy of “The Cyprus Crisis,” and AHI Graduate Fellow Gregory Graves.

“The Cyprus Crisis: A Declassified Dossier” Presented in Greece, Cyprus

Graduate Research Fellow Gregory Graves presented “The Cyprus Crisis: A Declassified Dossier,” addressing the significance of the 4,000 documents he discovered relating to the invasion of Cyprus, to members of the Cypriot House of Representatives, in a closed session setting, March 13th. Graves presented his research findings at the invitation of House of Representatives President Demetris Syllouris, who also honored AHI for its work to raise awareness of the declassified dossier. AHI President Nick Larigakis and AHI Legal Counsel Nicholas Karambelas accompanied Graves to Cyprus. A complete set of the

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AHI President Nick Larigakis offers opening remarks.

Falls Church, VA, offered the invocation and benediction. Apollonia provided musical entertainment.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Jonathan Cohen opened the evening's program with a special presentation, "U.S.: Honored Country—2018 Thessaloniki International Fair." Following the presentation, AHI Foundation President Constantine Galanis and AHI President Nick R. Larigakis, offered greetings. They also reviewed the initiatives and programs AHI and AHIF provide the community.

In addition, the evening's program featured a reflective presentation piece that commemorated the ten-year mark of the AHI Foundation's Foreign Policy Student Trip to Greece and Cyprus program by program alumni Constance Douris, vice president, Lexington Institute, and Elias Gerasoulis, who is enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania.



Larry Michael, "Voice of the Redskins," chief content officer and senior vice president, Washington Redskins serves as the evening emcee.



His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco (left) is assisted by Rev. Konstantinos Pavlakos in offering the invocation.



Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Jonathan Cohen discusses the upcoming 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair.



Constance Douris, Vice President of the Lexington Institute, describes her experience during the AHI Foundation Foreign Policy Student Trip.



The Marines of Headquarters Battalions present the colors.

Honorees Humbled, Moved by Accolades

Nancy Papaioannou received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award in recognition of her tireless championing of the Greek and Cypriot communities in her professional and personal life. She serves as the President of



Nancy Papaioannou receives the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award.

the Atlantic Bank of New York, an affiliate of New York City Group of Banks since July 2013. She holds the distinction of being the first Greek-American female to serve as President of a bank in the United States. Under her leadership, Atlantic Bank has grown to be the biggest Greek-American banking institution in the United States. She has demonstrated her community leadership as now Chairman of the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce, Board Member of Mount Sinai Queens Hospital and National Hellenic Society Board



Isidoros Garifalakis receives the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award.

of Directors, and has been appointed Chairwoman of the 2018 Greek Independence Parade in New York, the largest such parade outside of Greece.

Businessman and Philanthropist Isidoros Garifalakis received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award in recognition of his passionate commitment to integrity and honesty in business, philanthropic achievements, and his support of Orthodoxy.



Tim Tassopoulos receives the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award.

Tim Tassopoulos received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his visionary leadership in business and fidelity to Orthodoxy and youth. Tassopoulos is the President and Chief Operating Officer of Chick-fil-A, Incorporated, where he first began working as an hourly restaurant team member nearly 40 years ago.



Phil Angelides receives the AHI Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award.

Phil Angelides received the AHI Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award for his innovative work in



Dinner attendees.

affordable housing, urban planning and redevelopment and infrastructure investment in smart growth communities. He has served his community as Chairman of the California Democratic Party, California State Treasurer, and Chairman of the U.S. Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission. Angelides now serves as President of Riverview Capital Investments which focuses on clean energy projects and sustainable urban development.

Briefing with Top Greek, Cypriot Diplomats Comprise Weekend's Events



Panelist (L-R): Ambassador Haris Lalacos, Greek Ambassador to the U.S.; Nick Larigakis, President of AHI; Charge d'affaires Andreas Nikolaides, Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus to the U.S.

As part of the weekend's festivities AHI hosted a breakfast briefing with Ambassador of Greece to the U.S. Haris Lalacos and Charge d'Affaires Andreas Nikolaides, Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, on March 3. The relevant topics affecting both countries were discussed by the two top diplomats. AHI President Nick Larigakis moderated the discussion. A lively Q&A session followed.

Moreover, as part of the weekend's festivities, AHI hosted a Greek Night at Kellari Restaurant, the evening before the Gala, March 2nd.

IN MEMORIAM

The American Hellenic Institute mourns the passing of our members, supporters, and friends. May their memories be eternal.

Dr. Pete N. Nicholas, DDS, Westminster, Maryland, passed away September 7, 2017. He was 67. An AHI member, Dr. Nicholas was proud of his Hellenic heritage and it showed as he was an active member of the Greek American community, dedicating countless hours to many Greek American organizations. After graduating from the University of Maryland dental school, Dr. Nicholas served as a dentist in the United States Air Force where he earned the rank of Captain. Following his time in the service, Dr. Nicholas practiced dentistry for 40 years and used his certification in Forensic Odontology to aid law enforcement. AHI's condolences are with his wife, Frances, and the entire Nicholas family. May his memory be eternal.

AHI Hosts 14th Annual Athens Awards Dinner



(L-R) Deputy Minister for Sports Giorgos Vasiliadis, representing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras; AHI Athens Chapter President George Economou; AHI Greece President Ilias Malevitis; Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis, Chief of the Hellenic Armed Forces; Dr. Panagiotis Behrakis; U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt; and AHI President Nick Larigakis.

The Fourteenth Annual AHI-Athens Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards Dinner was held at The Grande Bretagne hotel in Athens on May 18, 2018.

The two honorees who each received the Hellenic Heritage Public Service Award were Dr. Panagiotis Behrakis and the Hellenic Armed Forces, represented by Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis.

AHI recognized Dr. Behrakis for his tireless efforts to combat tobacco usage in the youth of Greece and the Hellenic Armed Forces for its illustrious achievements throughout history in the defense of Greece's sovereignty, their defense and promotion of peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, and their commitment to defense cooperation with the United States and NATO.

Ilias Malevitis, president, AHI-Greece, welcomed the audience. George C. Economou, president, AHI-Athens Chapter, provided greetings.

Ambassador Pyatt: AHI Provides "Immeasurable Help"

U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt provided opening remarks about the strong relationship between the United States and Greece. Ambassador Pyatt also thanked AHI "for its long history of advocating for Greece and Greek Americans." He added that AHI's advocacy "strengthens the U.S. government and the profound partnership and friendship between our two countries."

Ambassador Pyatt remarked: "You have been of immeasurable help over the past couple of months in facilitating some of the most important moments in the bilateral ties between our two countries. Nick [Larigakis] was actually one of the very first representatives of the diaspora community who I had the pleasure to meet two years ago when I was getting ready for this job and also paid an important role in Prime Minister Tsipras visit to Washington last October. In particular, Nick, I want to thank you for enriching Admiral Apostolakis' schedule during his recent visit to the United States which was extremely successful in highlighting the close relationships between our military leaders and the great scope for deepening that cooperation."

In acceptance, the honorees conveyed their appreciation



Olga Bournozi, Master of Ceremonies.



Admiral Apostolakis accepts the AHI Hellenic Heritage Public Service Award on behalf of the Hellenic Armed Forces.



Ilias Malevitis welcomes the guests.



Dr. Behrakis accepts the AHI Hellenic Heritage Public Service Award.



George Economou provides greetings.

to AHI and to those who helped them to reach certain milestones in their lives. Each shared their career experiences and personal stories with the audience.

Admiral Apostolakis acknowledged the overall contribution and cooperation of AHI toward the promotion of relations between the United States and Greece. Furthermore, he commented the award does not reflect personally on him, but to all the personnel of the Hellenic Armed Forces—active and

retired. He pinpointed the men and women of the Hellenic Armed Forces as the key force multiplier, underlining the excellent level of training and professionalism as well as their high morale.

Regarding the role of the Hellenic Armed Forces in the wider area of the Eastern Mediterranean, he emphasized its significant impact in providing stability which are achieved

mainly through the formation of bilateral and multilateral schemes of military cooperation. Furthermore, he highlighted the multilayered support the Hellenic Armed Forces provides in areas of disaster response and relief, firefighting, medevac and others.

In acceptance, Dr. Behrakis stated, "It is a great honor to receive the AHI award of 2018." He also provided an overview of the work that he and his team created in their efforts to prevent the consumption of tobacco in Greece's youth over the past decade.



Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt providing greetings.



Dinner guests.



Nick Larigakis provides remarks.

"Smoking prevalence in Greece has declined and it is now very close to the European average," he said. "Consumption of tobacco has also decreased by 50 percent in the past decade and most importantly the Greek public has changed its attitude towards smoking."

Dr. Behrakis has created a scientific based practice of approaching youth and tobacco prevention without using

negative imagery or fear tactics.

"The award of today is dedicated to George Behrakis, the philanthropist from Boston," he stated in his closing remarks. "A man who has been generously funding our work for the last ten years. Without him nothing would have happened."

Musical interludes were provided throughout the evening by the Light Orchestra of the Hellenic Navy Band, led by Lieutenant Commander Georgios Tsilbaris. Olga Bournozi of Capital Link served exceptionally as Master of Ceremonies. In addition to AHI-Greece President Ilias Malevitis, and AHI-Athens Chapter President George Economou, president, AHI Members Katerina Papathanassiou, Sylvia Gavalla. Special thanks to Vasileios Kyriazis, Rear Admiral (ret.) H.N. who provided guidance throughout the event and AHI Member George Mermelas for his public relations support. Both contributed greatly to the dinner's success.

"We are delighted this special event, now in its fourteenth year, has grown to new heights," Larigakis said. "We would like to thank the AHI-Athens Chapter for its hard work as well as to our generous benefactors and sponsors."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



AHI Responds to Correct the Record on Greek American Lobby's Effectiveness

Kathimerini, a daily newspaper published in Athens, Greece, published the American Hellenic Institute's (AHI) [response](#) to a December 20, 2017 commentary titled, "[Hellenism in America at a crossroads](#)" by Editor Alexis Papachelas, in its electronic edition, Ekathimerini, on January 1, 2018. A condensed version of AHI's response was published in Kathimerini's English print edition, which is inserted as a supplement to the international edition of the New York Times in Greece and Cyprus, on January 5, 2018.

In his letter, AHI President Nick Larigakis states Mr. Papachelas' assessment of the Greek American lobby's role, especially regarding Greece's strategic importance, is flawed and it demonstrates a lack of understanding of what transpires in Washington. Larigakis cites AHI-hosted panel discussions and presentations featuring Greece's top military officials in Washington in addition to AHI collaborations with prominent Washington, D.C. think tanks on the release of white papers detailing Greece's strategic importance, as recent examples of successful initiatives to raise awareness about the topic. Larigakis also presents examples of public policy initiatives and testimonials from U.S. government officials attesting to AHI's efforts and effectiveness in Washington.

AHI Conducts Annual Trip to Greece, Cyprus

An American Hellenic Institute delegation successfully completed the organization's annual leadership trip to Greece and Cyprus where it held substantive meetings with high-ranking government officials with the purpose of strengthening relations and addressing issues of mutual interest. The six-day trip occurred May 13 to 18, 2018.

"We had a very productive series of high-visibility meetings in Greece and Cyprus," President Nick Larigakis said. "We accomplished the objectives we set out to achieve, and the briefings we received on issues of importance to the Greek American community were insightful and informative. We thank all of the leaders who took the time to meet with us to discuss these very important issues."

Cyprus

The AHI delegation received multiple briefings from Cypriot and American officials on the Cyprus problem; Cyprus' efforts to explore for hydrocarbon reserves in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and on Cypriot commerce and tourism sectors. In addition, there were discussions about raising awareness in the United States of the Missing Cypriots issue. All throughout the delegation's meetings in Cyprus, AHI was commended for its past advocacy and



(L-R) AHI NY President Louis Katsos, AHI Board Member Leon Andris, AHI President Nick Larigakis, Cypriot Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides, AHI Board Member Kostas Alexakis, AHI Legislative Director Peter Milios.



AHI Delegation with Cypriot Presidential Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and Overseas Cypriots, Mr. Photis Photiou.

current steadfast efforts to keep the Cyprus issue highly visible with key policymakers in the Obama administration and in the U.S. Congress.

During its stay in Cyprus, May 13 to 15, the delegation met with: U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus Kathleen Doherty, Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Christodoulides, Minister of Defense Savvas Angelides, President of the House of Representatives Demetris Syllouris, Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis, the chief negotiator for settlement talks; Fotis Fotiou, commissioner to the Presidency for Humanitarian Affairs and Overseas Cypriots; His Beatitude Archbishop



AHI Delegation with Greek Cypriot Negotiator, Ambassador Andreas Mavroyiannis.

Chrysostomos II, Dr. Stelios Nicolaides, director, Hydrocarbons Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry, and Tourism; and Lt. General Ili-

as Leontaris, chief of the National Guard General Staff, who also hosted a dinner for the delegation at the Officers Club.

"Our meetings provided us with an update on the prospects for restarting the settlement talks," Larigakis said. "Of course, Turkey must abandon its demand to retain its guarantor power, remove its 40,000 illegally-staged troops, and cease its provocations, if a just and viable solution for all Cypriots is to be reached."

Greece

The AHI delegation visited Athens May 16 to 18, 2018. In addition to briefings with ministry officials, the itinerary included the 14th Annual AHI Athens Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards Dinner at the Grand Bretagne Hotel, May 18 (see news release).

"Our meetings covered a broad range of issue topics under the scope of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Greece in addition to Greece's role in the region," Larigakis said. "We also explored ways in which the



(L-R) AHI Board Member Leon Andris, AHI Member George Mermelas, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, AHI President Nick Larigakis, AHI Board Member Kostas Alexakis, AHI Board Member Nick Karameblas.



AHI Delegation with Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, President of New Democracy.

Greek American community can strengthen cooperation and enhance relations between Greece and the United States."



AHI Delegation with U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt at the Ambassador's residence.

The delegation met Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt, Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Terens Quick, Secretary General for Tourism Policy and Development at the Ministry of Tourism George Tziallas, and Minister of State for Coordinating Government Operations Alekos Flambouraris. The delegation also met with President of New Democracy party Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

AHI Delegation Participants

On the trip, AHI President Nick Larigakis was accompanied by: AHI Board Secretary Kostas Alexakis, Esq., AHI Board Member Leon Andris, AHI-New York President Louis Katsos and AHI Legislative Director Peter Milios. AHI Board Treasurer Nicholas G. Karambelas, Esq., who also serves as volunteer counsel, joined the delegation in Athens.

AHI Presentation Promotes Thessaloniki International Fair

AHI hosted a panel presentation featuring Greece's Minister of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Information Nikos Pappas and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European & Eurasian Affairs Jonathan Cohen, February 9, 2018, at the Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C. The panelists spoke about their five-day, five-city U.S. tour in support of the 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair.



(L-R) Greece's Minister of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Information, Nikos Pappas; AHI President, Nick Larigakis; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European & Eurasian Affairs, Jonathan Cohen.

The United States will be the honored country at the Fair, which will be held September 8-16, 2018. The Fair's theme is "Harnessing the Power of Innovation and Creativity."

Minister Pappas reviewed their U.S. tour to five cities, which included visits to companies such as: Facebook, Lockheed Martin, Netflix, AirBnb, and Electronic Arts, among others, to recruit investors and exhibitors for the Thessaloniki International Fair. He touted Greece's incentive

plan to attract companies in the audio/visual and film sector.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Cohen stated the Thessaloniki International Fair will be the most important event in U.S.-Greece relations in 2018, adding that Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross will attend. He reflected on his experience at Capital Link Forum in New York City in December as an indication the investment community and Wall Street is bullish about Greece's future.

A video of the presentation can be viewed at <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases/>.

AHI Panel Examines U.S. Strategic Interests in Aegean Sea, Cyprus

(AHI) hosted a panel discussion on the topic, "U.S. Strategic Interests: The Aegean Sea & Cyprus' EEZ," April 17, 2018, at the Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C. The panelists included: Cato Institute Senior Fellow Doug Bandow, AHI Legal Counsel and Partner at Sfikas & Karambelas Nick Karambelas, and Trilogy Advisors LLC Principal John Sitalides. AHI President Nick Larigakis moderated the panel discussion, which was followed by a Q&A session with the audience.



(L-R) Nick Larigakis, President of AHI, serves as moderator; Nick Karambelas, Partner at Sfikas & Karambelas; Doug Bandow, Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute; John Sitalides, Principal at Trilogy Advisors LLC.

AHI President Larigakis opened the panel discussion with welcome remarks. He provided the backdrop of the current state of events in the eastern Mediterranean and why it is in the best interests of the United States for the region to be politically, economically, and socially stable and peaceful.

AHI Legal Counsel Karambelas presented on the rule of law of how it applies to the Aegean Sea and to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Cyprus. With regard to the Aegean Sea, the United States was not a signatory to the Treaty of Lausanne, which ceded the Dodecanese islands and islets to Italy from the Ottoman Empire, because the United States did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire. However, under the Treaty of Paris of 1947, to which the United States is a party, the Dodecanese Islands and adjacent islets as well as Kastelorizo along with its adjacent islets were ceded by Italy to Greece. The Treaty of Paris is U.S. federal law and the U.S. is bound to enforce it. Karambelas raised the question as to the role of the president in enforcing treaties to which the U.S. is a party. He added that Congress has the implied power to order the president to comply with such treaties.

Further, Karambelas offered a concept in international

law known as “persistent objector” as a legal explanation as to why Turkey constantly violates Greece’s sovereignty in the Aegean. Karambelas stated that President Erdogan has taken a tact which is different from previous Turkish leaders. They questioned the interpretation of the treaty. President Erdogan maintains that the treaty itself is unlawful and must be discarded.

Finally, Karambelas stated that only one treaty applies to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus, the UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS). Turkey is not a signatory. He explained how the maritime borders and the EEZ’s are delineated under UNCLOS. Karambelas dismissed any Turkish claims that islands do not have an EEZ or continental shelf because under UNCLOS they clearly do. He also dismissed Turkey’s claims that its continental shelf extends into the Cyprus EEZ because Turkish-occupied Cyprus is not a nation-state. It has none of the maritime zones to which a nation-state is entitled. Because islands have EEZs, Kastelorizo which is south of the Turkish mainland has an EEZ which connects to Greek EEZ with the Cypriot EEZ. Turkey asserts that islands do not have EEZs so that the Turkish EEZ to the south of the Turkish mainland and cuts off this connection.

John Sitalides, Principal at Trilog Advisors and a diplomacy consultant to the State Department, addressed the geostrategic implications of the U.S.-Greece relationship, opening with the role Greece played in April’s coalition missile strikes in Syria. Sitalides described an “arc of crisis” ranging from Russia’s occupation of Ukraine, Turkey’s attacks on Syrian Kurds allied with the U.S. and its ongoing occupation of Syria, Iraq and Cyprus; Islamic State’s spread into the Sinai Peninsula, near the critical Suez Canal chokepoint; and the anarchic battlefields of Libya, through which massive numbers of African migrants are crossing into and overwhelming southern Europe.

“Greece is at the heart of these significant geopolitical risk issues throughout the eastern Mediterranean, southeastern Europe and the Middle East for the United States,” he said.

Sitalides spoke about the strategic importance of the Aegean Sea to the modern Greek nation-state and detailed the series of Turkey’s challenges to Greece’s Aegean sovereignty rights since 1973. Greece-Turkey tensions are the larger problem from the United States’ perspective, he stated, emphasizing the importance to Washington of very close relations with both Athens and Ankara. Historically, Washington has sought to play the role of honest broker to foster an environment for Greece and Turkey to mutually resolve their differences. However, Sitalides noted that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has downplayed the most recent Turkish provocations against Greece, including Turkish threats to invade Greek islands, and noted that NATO has no provision to resolve intra-alliance conflict that could occur between allies Greece and Turkey. Sitalides stated that NATO has an absolute obligation to intercede and

dissuade Turkey from any further threats against a fellow NATO member. Further, Sitalides conveyed concern about Turkey’s recent ramping-up of Aegean sovereignty challenges and noted Turkey’s diplomatic leverage: two Greek soldiers in custody and three million Syrian refugees in Turkey which Ankara can send towards the Aegean. Sitalides predicted early Turkish elections would be held in summer 2018, rather than summer 2019, and that efforts to maximize Turkish nationalist voter turnout would likely lead to escalated Turkey’s threats against Greece in the intervening period, and potentially beyond the elections.

Cato Institute Senior Fellow Bandow debunked the notion of Turkey serving as a vital U.S. ally. He noted Turkey’s refusal to grant the United States the ability to open a northern front against Saddam Hussein in 2003, Turkey’s role in giving rise to ISIS, President Erdogan’s threat to U.S. military personnel in Manbij, Syria, Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400 missiles and their interoperability with NATO, and Turkey using refugees as a weapon to disrupt Europe. Bandow asserted Turkey is not a bridge to Europe and that the notion of Turkey becoming an EU member is “fantasy,” adding it would require a change of culture and political leadership.

AHI President Speaks to Naples, Florida, Community



Nick Larigakis, President of AHI.

AHI President Nick Larigakis addressed the Greek American community of Naples, Florida, at two events held on March 28, 2018.

The Men’s Club of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church of Naples invited President Larigakis to be the guest speaker at its annual luncheon, which was held at the Naples National Golf Club. He spoke on the topic, “U.S. Relations with Greece and Cyprus and the Future of Hellenism in America,” before an audience of 60 persons. Gus and Peter Stavropoulos and Tom Kyros sponsored the luncheon. Dr. Harry Dimopoulos coordinated the luncheon but could not attend due to illness. Father Philemon Patitsas introduced President Larigakis.

Later in the evening, President Larigakis presented under the theme, “U.S. Policy Choices: Greece, Cyprus & Turkey,” at an informal dinner hosted by Dr. John Eliopoulos, Dr. Harry Dimopoulos (who was unable to attend), and John Pizzi

and held at the Royal Palm Country Club. Approximately 30 persons attended the dinner which was added-on for individuals who could not make the luncheon.

“On behalf of AHI, I appreciated the opportunity to address the Greek American community of Naples on the policy issues of importance to the Greek American community,” Larigakis said. “I sincerely thank the community for its hospitality and for its strong interest in the topics discussed.”

President Larigakis especially thanked: Father Philemon Patitsas, Archons Gus Stavropoulos, Thomas Kyros, and Dr. John Eliopoulos; Art Katsaros, Spero Manas, Richard Pappas and John Pizzi, for organizing and hosting the day’s speaking engagements.

In his remarks to the audiences, Larigakis provided an overview of U.S. policy in the eastern Mediterranean, especially in light of recent developments pertaining to Turkish aggression in the Aegean Sea. Turkey’s ongoing occupation of the Republic of Cyprus and its suppression of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s religious freedom were also discussed. He encouraged the community to reach out to their members of Congress to advocate on these issues.

AHI Submits Testimony to House Appropriators on FY2019 Foreign Aid to Eastern Mediterranean

AHI submitted testimony to the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs on the Trump Administration’s foreign aid proposal for FY2019 on April 20, 2018.

In the best interests of the United States, AHI’s testimony opposed: (1) any military assistance the administration will request for Turkey until: Turkey withdraws all of its troops and illegal Turkish settlers in Cyprus and Turkey ceases and desists its acts of provocation and aggression in the Aegean; (2) a reorganization of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) that would prevent its authorization from doing business in Greece—a policy shift achieved in 2016 due to Greece’s economic crisis; (3) aid the administration will request for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) until a mutually-agreeable solution to the name-recognition issue is achieved; and (4) any reduction that might be introduced in the aid levels for the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

Also, in keeping with the best interests of the United States, AHI applauded the FY2018 enacted level of funding of \$1 million for NATO ally Greece’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) program and supported a recommended appropriation of \$1.2 million for FY2019.

In addition, AHI’s testimony recommended that appropriations language be included in the bill that addressed how United States foreign assistance can help solidify a reunified Cyprus and its government in the event of reunification.

AHI President Participates at NYC’s Greek Independence Day Celebrations

AHI President Nick Larigakis participated at events held in New York City to commemorate the 197th anniversary of Greek Independence, including the annual Greek Independence Day parade, April 22, 2018. He served as an Honored Guest.

“It was an honor to participate at the New York City Greek Independence Day Parade,” Larigakis said. “I enjoyed celebrating the 197th anniversary of Greek Independence with the community of the Tri-State New York City metropolitan area. On behalf of AHI, I commend the organizers and thank everyone who attended and participated.”



Nick Larigakis, President of AHI; Carl Hollister, Supreme President of the Order of AHEPA; Demitrios Halakos, AHI Board Member.



Nick Larigakis speaks at the pre-parade reception in New York.

In his remarks to audiences at a dinner hosted by the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York on April 21, and at a pre-parade gathering held Sunday morning, Larigakis reminded the community that its work is not done as long as Turkey continues its aggression in the Aegean Sea, its occupation of the Republic of Cyprus, and its suppression of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s religious freedom. He added all of these acts are in violation of international and U.S. law, and because of the latter, the community must reach out to their members of Congress to advocate on these issues.

AHI Celebrates Greek Independence Day at the White House

AHI celebrated Greek Independence Day at the White House on March 22, 2018. AHI President Nick Larigakis, AHI Board Members Dr. Athina Balta and Demitrios Halakos, AHI Foundation Board Member John Alahouzos, and AHI Legislative Director Peter Milios attended the ceremony officiated by President Donald J. Trump, and His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America.

“We thank President Trump for hosting this event to honor Greek Independence,” Larigakis said. “The event served to reaffirm the strong bonds of friendship between Greece and the United States, including Greece as a valued NATO ally; and to bring attention to the fact that this relationship is etched intrinsically by virtue of the noble democratic ideals and principles that guided our Founding Fathers in establishing our own country.”

AHIF President Serves as Grand Marshal of Tarpon Springs Greek Independence Parade



AHI Board Member Demetri Halakos, AHI Board Member Athina Balta, AHI President Nick Larigakis, AHI Foundation Board Member John Alahouzos.

AHI Foundation President Constantine Galanis served as one of several Grand Marshals at the Tarpon Springs, Fla., Greek Independence Day parade held March 18, 2018. AHI President Nick Larigakis participated as an Honored Guest of the parade committee.

“It was an honor for AHI to be recognized in this esteemed manner by the organizers of the Tarpon Springs Greek Independence Day Parade,” Larigakis said. “We enjoyed celebrating the 197th anniversary of Greek Independence with the historic community of Tarpon Springs and surrounding areas. We commend the organizers and thank everyone who attended and participated.”

Galanis added, “It was a pleasure and a privilege to participate in the Greek Independence Day Parade in Tarpon Springs. The sea of Greek flags on both sides of the streets held by the people was inspiring and made my conviction even stronger to continue to participate and support all activities that support and promote Hellenism throughout the United



(L - R) Constantine Galanis; Rear Admiral Ioannis Paxivanakis; Nick Larigakis; Captain Charalampos Pegklidis, Greek Naval Attaché; Colonel Panagiotis Kavidopoulos, Greek Defense Attaché.

States. Greece and Cyprus need our support during these days and our struggle will not cease until Greece is no longer threatened by its neighbors and until Cyprus is freed.”

While in Tarpon Springs, Rear Admiral Ioannis Paxivanakis, deputy chief of the Hellenic Navy General Staff, presented Larigakis and Galanis each with an honorary plaque at the annual Greek Independence Day dinner. AHI also commended the efforts of AHI member George Mermelas, who served as chairman of the parade’s Public Relations Committee and who helped with the parade’s organization.

AHI Hosts Annual Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day



Captain Charalampos Pegklidis, Greek Naval Attaché to the U.S.; Nick Larigakis, Colonel Panagiotis Kavidopoulos, Greek Defense Attaché to the U.S.; Colonel Stefanos Ampouleris, Greek Air Attaché to the U.S.

AHI celebrated the 197th anniversary of Greek Independence Day by hosting its annual “Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day,” April 11, 2018. The common democratic ideals held by Greece and the United States were reaffirmed by several members of Congress at the event which was held in cooperation with the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, U.S. Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

AHI President Nick Larigakis served as Master of Ceremonies. He welcomed the guests and thanked Representatives Bilirakis and Maloney for their support to organize the reception and for their ongoing efforts to promote Greek American issues in the U.S. Congress.

Members of Congress who addressed the audience included (in order of appearance): U.S. Reps. Charlie Crist (D-FL), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), John Sarbanes (D-MD),

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and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL). Special guest speakers were: Greek Ambassador to the United States Haris Lalacos, and on behalf of the Embassy of Cyprus, Charge d'affaires Andres Nikolaides. Basil Mossaidis, Executive Director of AHEPA also provided remarks.

The speakers emphasized their admiration for Hellenic culture and for the valiant and inspirational struggle for Greek Independence achieved in 1821. They also expressed their support for a proper settlement of the Cyprus issue, a proper resolution to the FYROM name-recognition issue, and religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

During the evening, there was a presentation of traditional Greek dances performed by Byzantio Greek Dance and Cultural Arts Program under the direction of Aris and Anna Yortzidis. Maria Karageorge sang the American and Greek National Anthems.



Ambassador Haris Lalacos, Rep. Gus Bilirakis and Nick Larigakis with the Byzantio Greek Dance and Cultural Arts Program.



Rep. Carolyn Maloney and Nick Larigakis with the Byzantio Greek Dance and Cultural Arts Program.

American Hellenic, American Jewish Groups...continued from page 1

than 20 high-ranking government and military officials—in addition to policy analysts and community leaders—from the three countries and the United States. The participating organizations included: the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA), the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), B'nai B'rith International, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

In a post-mission statement, the groups noted: “Our meetings clearly revealed that the trilateral relationship between Israel, Cyprus and Greece is on a sustained course and is expanding on all levels. We believe the relationship has developed into a partnership, helping to foster peace and stability in the eastern Mediterranean and the broader region where instability exists. Further, the partnership possesses the potential to allow the eastern Mediterranean to become a community of nations based on shared common values and aspirations. To this end, we hope the trilateral partnership blossoms into a multilateral one. We applaud the leaders of these three countries for their ongoing and increasingly close cooperative relationship, and we look forward to a fourth Trilateral Summit in 2018. The American Hellenic and American Jewish communities are committed to advancing the trilateral partnership. We will continue to work to foster closer cooperation with the United States and support the common efforts to achieve tangible and measurable outcomes. For example, we are optimistic about initiatives involving youth exchanges. Finally, we are grateful to the many leaders who afforded us the opportunity to exchange views and ideas. The friendship and hospitality shown to us made the trip even more meaningful and productive.”

AHI President Nick Larigakis added: “We are grateful to all our hosts. In Greece, we were extremely grateful for the hospitality provided by several government officials. We sincerely thank Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis, chief of the

Hellenic National Defense General Staff, who hosted us for a reception and dinner at the Hellenic Armed Forces Officers’ Club upon our arrival to Greece. Also, he graciously provided us with escort transportation during our visit. We also thank his staff, Brigadier General Angelos Choudeloudis, director of the Public Relations Directorate for the Hellenic National Defense General Staff; and Mrs. Nora Spiliotopoulou, for her assistance with logistics. Further, we sincerely thank Defense Minister Panos Kammenos for hosting us for a luncheon with several high-ranking military officials at the Ministry of Defense. Additionally, we are very grateful for the hospitality of Mr. Dimitri Contominas, who opened up his home and hosted us for a luncheon.”

For a full list of the mission’s participants and meetings held in each country, please visit <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases/>.

Delegation Visits Patriarchate of Jerusalem



(L-R) Demetri Halakos, AHI Board Member; Nick Larigakis, AHI President; Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem; Kosta Alexakis, AHI Secretary; James Lagos, Vice President of AHI.

The AHI delegation visited the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and had a two-hour audience with His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine, on January 19. The discussion included the recent chal-

lenges and issues facing the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Christians in the Holy Land. Following the audience with Patriarch Theophilos, the AHI delegation visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

AHI Urges President Trump to Condemn Turkish Aggression

AHI sent a letter to President Donald J. Trump in the wake of acts of Turkish provocation and aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that have dire implications to U.S. security interests.

In the February 27, 2018 letter, AHI President Nick Larigakis requests President Trump to condemn strongly Turkish aggression and acts of provocations that have been directed at the United States, Greece, Cyprus, and international oil and gas companies—all of which have occurred in the month of February. Larigakis cites: a Turkish coastguard vessel colliding with a stationary Greek coastguard vessel, the harassment of Italian oil company Eni's surveying vessel by Turkish warships, which threatened to sink Eni's surveying vessel because it was on its way to survey for energy resources in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus; and Turkish President Erdogan's threat of an "Ottoman slap" to United States military forces if they continued to partner with Syrian Kurds in Syria. In addition, Larigakis raised the concern among NATO allies about Turkey's purchase of four divisions of S-400 missiles from Russia and how it potentially subjects Turkey to U.S. sanctions.

To read the letter, please visit https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases/.

Congressman Bilirakis Submits AHI Letter into Congressional Record

U.S. Representative Gus M. Bilirakis (R-FL), co-chair, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, and co-chair, Congressional Hellenic Israeli Alliance, submitted into the Congressional Record, American Hellenic Institute's (AHI) February 27, 2018 letter to President Donald J. Trump that urged the U.S. government to condemn strongly recent acts of Turkish provocation and aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and the broader region, which present dire consequences to U.S. security interests.

In his March 13, 2018 Extension of Remarks, Congressman Bilirakis stated: "Mr. Speaker, I include in the Record a letter from the American Hellenic Institute regarding Turkey's continued dangerous actions in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region that threaten regional

security and U.S. interests. As one of the co-chairs of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, I have advocated for the rights of Greece and Cyprus against the intimidating actions of Turkey. Since Turkey's Presidential referendum vote, Erdogan's government continues to ignore and violate long-standing international law and treaties--a threat to regional security and an impediment to regional interests, stability, and prosperity."

In addition, as he has done previously, Congressman Bilirakis stated the United States, and its regional allies, should be better prepared to respond with targeted sanctions and foreign aid restrictions for any nation that transgresses international law, including NATO ally Turkey.

AHI President Nick Larigakis stated, "We applaud Congressman Bilirakis for his staunch advocacy of Greece and Cyprus and for calling out Turkey as a threat to regional security and condemning Turkish aggression. We sincerely thank the congressman for entering our letter into the Congressional Record and his support."

AHI Urges NATO Secretary General to Address Turkey's Behavior

AHI sent a letter to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to convey strong concern regarding the actions and behavior of NATO member Turkey toward fellow Alliance member countries. AHI also expressed profound disappointment with NATO's inability to address intra-Alliance conflicts because it lacks a provision or mechanism to deal with such an issue.

In the May 8 letter, AHI President Nick Larigakis contends Turkey continues to demonstrate it is not a true and dependable NATO ally. Larigakis cited numerous examples, including: Turkish threats directed at the United States military in Manbij, Syria, Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 missiles, Turkey's countless violations of Greece's sovereignty in the Aegean, and Turkish aggression toward the surveying vessel of a multinational oil company (Eni) headquartered in NATO-member Italy that was preparing to survey in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus.

"Clearly, Turkey does not share NATO's core purpose or best interests. Numerous foreign policy and defense policy analysts and journals have called into question Turkey's actions as a NATO ally. It is unbecoming of a NATO member to act in the aggressive and provocative manner as it has toward fellow Alliance-member countries, United States and Greece. We believe it is time for NATO to explore how to ease tensions and address Turkey's intra-Alliance unproductive behavior," Larigakis concludes.

Small text block containing a letterhead and the beginning of a letter to President Trump regarding Turkey's actions in the eastern Mediterranean.

Huffington Post Greece Interviews AHI President



Nick Larigakis and Journalist Emi Livaniou Zisiopoulou.

Huffington Post Greece interviewed American Hellenic Institute (AHI) President Nick Larigakis on: AHI's policy work in Washington, United States relations with Greece and Cyprus, and the latest developments in the eastern Mediterranean, including recent acts of Turkish provocation and aggression that have raised tensions in the region.

Journalist Emi Livaniou Zisiopoulou, head of *Huffington Post Greece's* "Special Edition" report, conducted the interview. Zisiopoulou is also the publisher of "I DINAMI THS RPOFORAS," hosts a weekly radio show on *Athens 9.84* radio station and is a former anchorwoman at *Star Channel*.

"I appreciated the opportunity to speak with Ms.

Zisiopoulou to discuss the current state of relations between the United States, Greece and Cyprus, and AHI's work on these important policy matters."

The interview can be viewed at <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases/>.

Kathimerini Publishes Interview with AHI President

Ekathimerini published an interview with American Hellenic Institute (AHI) President Nick Larigakis, January 15, 2018, on the occasion of the Institute's joint three-country International Leadership Mission with Greek American and Jewish American community leaders to Greece, Cyprus and Israel. The article, "Greece among US's 'most dependable' East Med allies," also appeared in *Kathimerini's* English print edition, which is inserted as a supplement to the international edition of the *New York Times* in Greece and Cyprus. President Larigakis gave a preview of the Mission and Washington's perspective of the trilateral partnership and discussed other Greek American policy issues with *Kathimerini* Senior International Correspondent Tom Ellis.

"...in order to be able to project effectively its interests in the region, the US needs to have allies and partners in the region that share the same values and concerns; dependable allies that provide a front line for the advancement of democratic principles and that help to promote peace and stability in this important region," Larigakis said. "Greece, Israel and Cyprus are countries that fit this description."

"**The Cyprus Crisis: A Declassified Dossier**"...Continued from page 1 dossier was formally presented to President Syllouris.

"Greg has done exceptional work to uncover the previously classified day-to-day dialogue of the U.S. government during the Cyprus crisis," President Larigakis said. "This extensive thirty-one volume set will provide unique insight into the policy decisions of the U.S. government during the Cyprus crisis in July and August of 1974."

Mr. Marinos Sizopoulos, MP, former Chair of the House Committee on the Dossier of the Cyprus Problem, coordinated the discussion. Special thanks to Evi Hadjiyanni Director for International Relations Services, Cypriot House of Representatives and Vasilis Kiliaris, International Relations Office, Cypriot House of Representatives for their invaluable assistance in organizing the event.

Additionally, Lt. Gen. Ilias A. Leontaris, chief, Cypriot National Guard, hosted the AHI representatives, who provided a presentation about AHI's work in a closed session.

Also, while visiting Cyprus, AHI President Nick Larigakis met with U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Kathleen Doherty.

University of Piraeus Presentation

AHI Graduate Research Fellow Graves made his presentation to an audience at the University of Piraeus, March 14, 2018. Professor Aristotle Tziampiris, chair of the Department of International and European Studies at the University of Piraeus chaired the event and provided an introduction. AHI President Larigakis, provided opening

remarks. Special thanks to Evaghoras L. Evaghorou, Lecturer of International Relations at the University of Piraeus for helping to organize and coordinate the event.

Additionally, Graves made a two-hour, closed session presentation to Greece's Ministry of Foreign Affairs A2 Department for Cyprus, chaired by Ambassador George Dimitriadis. A two-hour Q&A discussion followed.

Also, while visiting Athens, AHI President Larigakis met with U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt. The Hellenic Association of Entrepreneurs (EENE) hosted Larigakis for a luncheon at the Athens Club, attended by close to thirty members of EENE. Presiding over the discussion was their Chairman, Dr. Vassilis G. Apostolopoulos, and their President, Christian Hadjiminias.

Background

Graves has assembled thirty-one volumes of research and the dossier includes compilations of day-to-day declassified documents from the U.S. government and other foreign archives. Graves' research will help historians to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Cyprus crisis by providing a chronological dossier of declassified documents. Refraining from introducing his own biases, Graves instead provided the facts regarding U.S. policy decisions during the crisis, which will allow others to draw their own, more informed conclusions.

Visitors To Hellenic House

Hellenic Armed Forces Chief Visits Hellenic House

Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis visited Hellenic House to meet with American Hellenic Institute (AHI) President Nick Larigakis and members of the Board of Directors, May 2, 2018.



Nick Larigakis giving the Admiral a tour of the E. John & Cleo Rumpakis AHIF Library.



Outside of Hellenic House.

“We thank Admiral Apostolakis for taking time from his itinerary in Washington to meet with us,” President Larigakis said. “We appreciated the opportunity to be briefed on developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and the close-working cooperation between the militaries of longstanding NATO allies, Greece and the United States.”

Admiral Apostolakis’ visit to Washington comes at a critical time in U.S.-Greece defense cooperation as Greece approved the upgrade of 85 F-16 fighter jets this week. In Washington, the admiral also met with his U.S. counterpart, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford, held meetings on Capitol Hill, and made a presentation at a roundtable discussion hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Admiral Apostolakis thanked AHI for the great work it does to promote Greece around the world. He also discussed the daily multi-faceted challenges that Greece faces in the Eastern Mediterranean including from its NATO ally, Turkey.

AHI Board Members Athina Balta and Peter Bota, and AHI Legal Counsel and Board Treasurer Nick Karambelas, joined AHI President Larigakis at the meeting.

AHI Hosts University of Piraeus Students from Greece

AHI hosted 60 students from the University of Piraeus (Athens) in two separate groups, at the Hellenic House on Tuesday, February 6, 2018. The students were in Washington



Nick Larigakis speaks to the graduate students from the University of Piraeus.

to explore possible career opportunities and professional development in fields of economics and law.

Staff members from the University of Piraeus were also in attendance including: Professor Victoria Economou, Director of Postgraduate Programs, Law and Economics; Aristotle Tziampiris, Chair of the Department of International and European Studies and Director of the MSc Program in Energy: Strategy, Law & Economics; Athanasios Platias, Professor of Strategy, Department of International and European Studies; John A. Paravantis, Associate Professor of Global Politics in Technology, Energy and the Environment; Sofia Tampouri, Career Office Manager; and Sofia Mastrokoulou, Education and Career Counselor.

AHI President Nick Larigakis spoke to the students about AHI’s history and its mission. He spoke about the advocacy process in the United States and the role of Greek-Americans in educating their elected officials on policy issues. The students shared their perspectives of the United States, as well as their interest in future career opportunities.

AHI Applauds Boost to Greece's IMET Program for FY2018

AHI applauded the enactment of the FY2018 Omnibus appropriations bill that was signed into law, March 23, 2018.

"The fiscal year 2018 appropriations bill will bolster relations between the United States and Greece, especially in defense cooperation," AHI President Nick Larigakis said.

AHI worked with Congress to secure a much-needed boost for Greece's International Military Education and Training Program, after the Administration submitted an FY2018 budget request of \$150,000. AHI recommended an increase in the investment to Greece's IMET program to House and Senate appropriators in written testimony AHI President Larigakis submitted in March and June 2017. AHI worked with Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs; to secure an initial appropriation of \$425,000 in the U.S. Senate's FY2018 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, in September 2017.

Separately, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who chairs the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, visited with Greek and U.S. government officials in Washington and Athens, to gain firsthand knowledge about defense cooperation between NATO allies Greece and United States.

"As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Graham was instrumental in the final appropriation of \$1 million for Greece's IMET program," Larigakis said. "We thank Congress, especially Senators Graham and Van Hollen, appropriators whose lead helped to secure this funding for Greece's IMET program. It will bolster the number of Hellenic officers who are able to receive training in the United States to the benefit of relations between longtime NATO allies, United States and Greece."

Report Language Included on Greece's F-16 Upgrade Request

Also, AHI welcomes report language that accompanies the legislation that also requires the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress recommending how Foreign Military Financing can be used to support Greece's purchase of F-16 upgrades.

"As U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt has described in recent interviews, Greece's role as 'a regional pillar of stability,' and 'a builder of bridges,' especially in defense cooperation, has been evident," Larigakis said. "The fiscal year 2018 spending bill sends a strong message that the United States appreciates its alliance with Greece."

AHI Supports Legislation to Limit Transfer of F-35s to Turkey

AHI supported the introduction of legislation aimed to limit the transfer of F-35 fighter jets to Turkey and commends the bill's three original sponsors, U.S. Senators

James Lankford (R-OK), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Tom Tillis (R-NC).

"We thank the bill's sponsor, Senator Lankford, and the bill's original co-sponsors, Senators Shaheen and Tillis," AHI President Nick Larigakis said. "The transfer of such sensitive technology to the Erdogan regime, which has purchased the S-400 missile system from Russia despite U.S. and NATO objections, is a threat to U.S. interests and security. We urge Congress to pass this legislation."

Larigakis sent letters to each of the three senators thanking them and conveying AHI's strong support for the legislation, S.2781. The letters outlined several reasons for AHI's backing of the legislation, including Turkey's blatant disregard for the rule of law as it pertains toward Greece, Cyprus, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In addition, Larigakis cited the Turkish government's threats toward the United States military and Turkish nationals working for the U.S. Embassy and the wrongful imprisonment of Pastor Andrew Brunson.

To view the letters and the legislation, please visit <https://www.aheworld.org/press-releases/>.

Subsequent Congressional Action Welcomed

In a May 29, 2018 announcement, AHI welcomed further congressional action in a response to Turkey's behavior, which has not met the principles and standards of a NATO member nation, via the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (NDAA). NDAA is legislation Congress passes each year that sets policy and funding levels for the Department of Defense. This year, the legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate each contains provisions that aim at Turkey's participation in the F-35 program.

As we have stated all along, Turkey does not share NATO's core purpose or best interests," AHI President Nick Larigakis said. "It is unbecoming of a NATO member to act in the aggressive and provocative manner as it has toward fellow Alliance-member countries. It is time to hold Turkey accountable, and we are encouraged Congress is taking measures to do so."

He added, "We thank Senators Thom Tillis and Jeanne Shaheen, who are members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, for their initiative and hard work to secure their amendment that targets Turkey's participation in the F-35 program," Larigakis said. "We also thank the House Armed Services Committee for drafting and advancing a bill with a strong provision that passed the U.S. House of Representatives."

In the announcement, AHI provided its audience with a thorough analysis of where the legislation stood in the House of Representatives and Senate at the time.

AHI Statement on Turkish aggression in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone

AHI issued a February 13, 2018 statement on Turkish aggression in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone (EEZ):

News reports of Turkish warships blocking a rig belonging to Italian energy firm ENI from reaching Cypriot

waters to start exploring for gas is the latest in a recent string of Turkish aggression in the eastern Mediterranean, which AHI strongly condemns. In recent years, Turkey has violated international law by practicing “gunboat diplomacy” in the eastern Mediterranean with incursions into Cyprus’ exclusive economic zone. To further illustrate Turkey’s history of provocation, Turkey issued a Navtex in April 2017, stating its coverage not only included Cyprus’ EEZ, but it also extended into a part of Cyprus’ territorial waters. Adding to these examples is Turkey’s intensified military presence in an area stretching south from Rhodes to the coast of Paphos in Cyprus and the issuance of three consecutive Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) for military exercises over Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus.

The Republic of Cyprus has the sovereign right under international law to explore and exploit its natural resources within its exclusive economic zone. The United States has stated repeatedly it supports Cyprus’ sovereign right to explore energy in its offshore areas. In addition, Turkish aggression in Cyprus’ EEZ presents an endangerment to U.S. companies, such as ExxonMobil and Noble Energy, who have been, or will be, working to explore for hydrocarbons in the eastern Mediterranean.

Egypt and the European Union have rebuked Turkey’s most recent action to block ENI’s rig from reaching Cypriot waters. Today, Turkish President Erdogan threatened that Cyprus, Greece, and the companies, which are in the process of exploring for energy resources, should not “step out of line” and that Cyprus’ strength will only last until “they see our ships and our planes.” Therefore, we call on President Donald Trump to condemn, in the strongest terms, Turkey for its series of aggressive actions that have occurred in the island’s exclusive economic zone during the past year, and its president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for his bellicose rhetoric to Cyprus, Greece, and international companies.

Emirates Airline Report Noting “Healthy Demand” on Newark-Athens Service Welcomed

AHI welcomed Emirates Airline’s announcement that marked the one-year anniversary of its Newark service via Athens, Greece, calling the first year a success.

According to Emirates, the airline reported “healthy demand” from Greek American communities and leisure

travelers with over 160,000 passengers carried on the only year-round service between New York and Athens. In addition, Emirates noted the service helped increase the number of passengers on the route by 50% during the summer months between April and August 2017, a statistic reported by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

“We welcome Emirates Airline’s report and congratulate the airline for a banner first year, providing an invaluable service to the marketplace,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “The report confirms our position, which has been that a direct, year-round service between a United States hub and Athens is warranted. It is not a surprise that a direct flight between two of the world’s premier destinations, New York and Athens, would yield ‘healthy demand.’”

AHIF Releases Spring 2018 Issue of AHIF Online Policy Journal

The American Hellenic Institute Foundation (AHIF) is pleased to announce the release of its ninth volume of its policy journal. The online journal is available gratis at *AHIF Policy Journal* website, <http://www.ahifworld.org/journal-issues>. The policy journal of the American Hellenic Institute Foundation is a forum for commentary and scholarship on issues of vital importance to Greek Americans. In his introduction to the current issue, Editor Dan Georgakas writes of the pressing foreign policy issues facing the United States, Greece and Cyprus.

Georgakas states, “The focus of this particular issue is on Turkish behavior and statements that have rendered Turkey the most dangerous country in the eastern Mediterranean for the United States, Greece and Cyprus.”

AHI Releases 2017 Annual Report

AHI announced the release of its 2017 Annual Report on March 1, 2018. “All of AHI’s policy-based programs and initiatives for 2017 that advance the best interests of the United States on issues of importance to the Greek American community are encapsulated in this report,” President Nick Larigakis said. “We are proud to highlight a few milestone events as well as our successful programs, which include our ‘Future of Hellenism in America’ conference, foreign policy trip abroad for college students, and several policy forums, among other initiatives and events.” Visit <https://www.ahifworld.org/press-releases/> to download a copy.



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