



# AHi

## AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE, INC.

July 20, 2021

**Questions Suggested By The American Hellenic Institute To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee For The July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Hearing Regarding U.S. Policy On Turkey With Ms. Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary Of State For Political Affairs**

**Greece**

1. In 2020, Turkey, engaged in 2,060 violations of Hellenic Airspace, including 384 mock dogfights, & 3,025 violations of Greece's territorial waters.
  - a. Will you publicly recognize Turkey's violations of Greek sovereignty, and that such actions violate both international and U.S. laws, including the Arms Export Control Act (AECA)?
  - b. Will you ask Turkey to cease and desist from their violations of Greek sovereignty?
  
2. Currently, relations between the United States and Greece are excellent. However, Greece has been hit particularly hard economically, having its economy ravaged by COVID just after beginning to recover from years of economic crisis.
  - a. Do you have any thoughts as to how to strengthen U.S.-Greece economic ties, which can help our ally Greece?
  - b. Do you believe that the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) should continue to advance strategic investment and development in Greece and the Aegean?
  
3. The US-Greece relationship is currently at an all-time high. In what ways do you think US-Greece relations, especially as it pertains to defense, can be further strengthened? In light of the deepening security relationship, will you support foreign military financing for Greece?
  
4. Greece has been a pillar of stability and western democratic values in the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, in recent years Greece has taken a leadership role, along with Cyprus, in advancing and strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations in the region, including with U.S. ally Israel as well as Egypt and the Gulf States, among others. Will the US continue to support these developments, and if so, how?

## Cyprus

1. On January 27, 1989, then-Senator Biden wrote a letter to a Greek-American policy organization, the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), in which he stated “we must urge the new Administration [President George H.W. Bush] to make Cyprus a higher policy priority in American foreign policy...we cannot lose sight of the fact that the rights of Greek Cypriots have been trampled upon, and we must ensure that their claims to ancestral land and property seized during the 1974 invasion are not compromised. Finally, we must send a signal to Turkey that until it has removed every last soldier from Cyprus, it will never be recognized a full member of the international community.” Will you promote this principle as a senior diplomat in the Biden Administration?
2. In October, 2020, Turkey illegally re-opened the beach in Varosha, in an effort to move Turkey towards a permanent partition of the island. During his recent visit to Cyprus’ occupied area on July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, President Erdogan has re-iterated that there needs to be an “two-state” solution regarding Cyprus. During this time, the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, announced the partial re-opening of Varosha. The long-standing policy of the United States and the European Union is that the Republic of Cyprus must be reunified according to a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Such an arrangement would ensure that a reunified Cyprus would have a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single citizenship Will you support imposing tangible consequences on Turkey for its illegal and provocative actions in furtherance of a “two-state” solution?
3. In September, 2020, the State Department announced that it would “waive restrictions temporarily for FY 2021 on the export, re-export, retransfer, and temporary import of non-lethal defense articles and defense services controlled under the International Traffic in Arms Regulation destined for or originating in Cyprus.” However, this is only a temporary one-year measure, and not a permanent lifting of the arms prohibition. Furthermore, Cyprus is still retained on the International Trade in Arms Regulations (ITAR). This means that Cyprus is included on a list of countries such as North Korea & Zimbabwe, both of which are on the ITAR. Will you work towards removing Cyprus unconditionally from the ITAR list?
4. During the past few years, Turkey has consistently taken actions to violate Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including sending drillships into Cypriot waters to disrupt hydrocarbon exploration. President Erdogan has intimated that this policy will continue into the future. Will you tell Turkey to cease and desist from their violations of Cyprus’ EEZ? If Turkey does not cease and desist, will you support punitive actions to hold Turkey accountable, including sanctions?
5. Turkey’s invasion of Cyprus in 1974 resulted in the disappearance of over 1,000 persons, including five American citizens. Not all missing American citizens have been recovered. Will the State Department work to ensure the recovery of the remaining four missing U.S. citizens, especially when Turkey obstructs on-the-ground recovery work?

## Turkey

1. Supporters of Turkey often cite the fact that Turkey is strategically located and an important country as a primary reason to not hold the Turkish government accountable. Even some critics of the Turkish government at times note Turkey's supposed strategic weight. However, there is a distinction between a nation having strategic importance and being a reliable ally. Whether it be failing to support the United States in both Gulf Wars, or more recently undermining NATO through its purchase of Russian S-400 systems, Turkey has often underdelivered in its dealings with the United States and the Western Alliance, despite its strategic potential. Please highlight to the committee in what specific ways you believe Turkey currently contributes to United States interests, as well as where you think Turkey falls short.
2. Do you agree with the principle that it is better to hold the Turkish government and its President accountable rather than an overly accommodative approach driven by the fear of "losing" Turkey?
3. Due to the leadership of President Erdogan, Turkey now openly supports Hamas, an anti-Israel U.S.-designated terrorist organization. In addition, it is well-documented that Turkey, during the height of the Islamic State, aided and abetted ISIS, including by allowing the terrorist group to travel freely in and out of the country.
  - a. Do you view Turkey, given the aforementioned facts, as a genuine ally, or as an unreliable partner, in the fight against terrorism? In front of this committee, Secretary Blinken has previously stated that "Turkey is an ally, that in many ways... is not acting as an ally should and this is a very, very significant challenge for us and we're very clear-eyed about it."
  - b. Will you call out Turkey for their ties to and support of terrorist groups?
  - c. Given Turkey's troubling actions and provocative behavior, will you support an official review of U.S.-Turkey relations?
4. Turkey has forged a close relationship with Russia in recent years, from the purchase of Russian S-400 weapons systems, which earned Turkey congressional sanctions, to significant energy cooperation, including the establishment of the Turkstream pipeline. Are you concerned about Turkey's close partnership with an adversary and strategic competitor, and will you agree with the assessment that Turkey in recent years has become a purveyor of Russian influence rather than a bulwark against it?
5. According to the State Department website, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) continues to offer a full range of programs in Turkey. In light of the fact that Turkey is under congressionally-mandated sanctions for its provocations and malign activities, should there be a re-evaluation of trade, development, and economic programs, such as the DFC, vis-à-vis Turkey? Will you support the use of economic leverage to pressure Turkey on key issues?
6. The Biden Administration has emphasized democracy, human rights and rule of law as important cornerstones of US foreign policy. In order for this policy to be credible and efficient, it has to be widely and consistently observed. Turkey, a NATO member, fails to comply with even basic standards as it pertains to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. How do you plan to address this issue?

## **Religious Freedom**

1. The 2020 USCIRF Religious Freedom Report highlights the deplorable treatment of religious minorities in Turkey, including prominent religious leaders such as the Ecumenical Patriarch. In a much-publicized display of intolerance, the Turkish government converted the Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO-designated museum, into a mosque, in July, 2020. How will you advance our religious freedom and human rights agenda vis-a-vis Turkey?
2. During recent years, the State Department has moved forward with cultural property MOUs with authoritarian MENA (Middle East & North Africa) governments that result in de-facto US government recognition of those government's seizure of religious and other minorities communal and personal property. Can you assure this committee that any MOU's completed or renewed on the Administration's watch will not violate the rights of religious and ethnic minorities to their own property?