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THE 34TH COMMEMORATION OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, 34 years ago, on July 20, 1974, Turkish troops illegally invaded Cyprus in violation of international law. Thirty-four years have passed since 200,000 Greek Cypriots were expelled from their homes and 5,000 Greek Cypriots were murdered. More than 1,400 still remain missing today. Thirty-four years later, Turkish troops continue to occupy nearly 37 percent of Cypriot territory. There are approximately 43,000 Turkish troops on Cyprus. That's about one Turkish soldier for every two Turkish Cypriots.

The situation remains untenable after 34 years with Greek Cypriots whose homes were taken—the homes where they were raised, where their children were raised, where their parents and grandparents were raised, and where they were never compensated for these homes.

The desecration of the Greek Orthodox churches remains ongoing, many now serving as bars, nightclubs, casinos or hotels. Icons, artifacts and frescoes have been destroyed, looted, vandalized, and sold illegally. Here we are 34 years later, and the situation remains, once again, untenable.

In spite of all of this, the Greek Cypriots have continued to promote peace for 34 years. The Cypriot President is committed to working toward a bicomunal and bizonal federation with a single sovereignty citizenship and international standing.

Indeed, Turkish Cypriots have shown a like commitment. Turkey, however, must show a commitment to this same solution. At a time of increased global destabilization, it is in the best interest of the international community to see that this problem of Cyprus, the injustice in Cyprus, is rectified.

A resolution of this ongoing injustice would, indeed, constitute a reflection of respect for human rights, of the rule of law, of peace and prosperity, of all of these things, which are values that we in this country cherish.

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Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of this injustice and the need to rectify the same, and I urge the Turkish people to do the same. It is my hope that the need to recognize the anniversary of the invasion, which we do yet again for the 34th time, is someday replaced with a cause to recognize the agreement and reunification of Cyprus.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON S. 294, PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees on S. 294:

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the Senate bill and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Messrs. CUMMINGS, CAPUANO, BISHOP of New York, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Messrs. LIPINSKI, BRALEY of Iowa, ARCURI, MICA, PETRI, LATOURETTE, BROWN of South Carolina, SHUSTER, MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, and WESTMORELAND.

From the Committee on Science and Technology, for consideration of secs. 105 and 305 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. GORDON of Tennessee, WU, and GINGREY.

There was no objection.

THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise not only as a Member of this esteemed body, but more importantly, as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and also as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. I stand before you today to recall a somber anniversary that has pained the Cypriot and Hellenic communities for the past 34 years.

Mr. Speaker, even though the tragic events of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus took place as long ago as July 20, 1974, believe it or not, the suffering of the victims has not subsided. This anniversary is a time for America to respectfully remember the brutal Turkish military invasion of Cyprus, to mourn those who lost their lives, and to condemn the continued occupation. Five thousand Cypriots were killed in 1974, and more than 1,400 Greek Cypriots, including four Americans of Cypriot descent, still remain missing.

Since the invasion, Turkey has established a heavily armed military occupation that continues to control nearly 40 percent of the island. Forced expulsions of Greek Cypriots on the occupied land have left nearly 200,000 people displaced. These Cypriots were kicked out of their homes, making them refugees in their own country. Those properties have been unlawfully distributed and are currently being used by the tens of thousands of illegal settlers from Turkey. To this day, Greek Cypriots are prevented by Turkey from returning to their homes and properties.

Another tragic result of this 34-year occupation is the division among Greek

and Turkish Cypriots, who have been forcibly separated along ethnic lines. This unnatural division of the island Nation is a crime against society and the people of Cyprus that can only be resolved by ending this occupation.

Mr. Speaker, 34 years is just too long. On the occasion of this anniversary, we need to take a long, hard look at our own commitment toward helping Cyprus reach a lasting and enduring peace, free from occupation, division, and oppression.

Last year, the U.S. House had the wisdom and foresight to unanimously pass H. Res. 405, a measure I introduced, which expressed strong support from this body for the implementation of the July 8 agreement. This year, a new President was elected in Cyprus. President Demitris Christofias has followed through on his promise to make the solution of the Cyprus problem his top priority and principal concern. The day of his election, he extended a hand of friendship to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Talat, and called on him to meet face-to-face to begin implementing the July 8 agreement.

The Republic of Cyprus has also worked alongside its European neighbors to bring about a stronger integration of Turkish and Greek Cypriot interests for the good of the island. This has included a partial lifting on restrictions of movement across the cease-fire line that continues to forcibly divide Cyprus. As a result, since 2003, more than 13 million Greek and Turkish Cypriots have crossed without incident.

Additionally, the per capita income of Turkish Cypriots has nearly tripled in the last 3 years because of an aggressive integration policy by the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that because of this continued integration between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, and the economic and political successes that the Republic of Cyprus so readily wants to share with its neighbors, it is possible to bring closure to this 34-year occupation.

Cyprus has long been a strong and faithful ally of the United States. It continues to work with us in the global war on terrorism and has supported our efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Aside from providing over-flight rights and port access, the Government of Cyprus has joined only a handful of Nations who have acted on their commitment to cancel Iraq's outstanding debt.

Mr. Speaker, 34 years is long enough. It is not impossible to conceive one day having a Cyprus that is unified under a bizonal, bicomunal federation with a single sovereignty, single international personality, and single citizenship with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Cypriots.

We, Americans, as friends of the Cypriot people, owe it to them to do everything in our power to support peace and an end to this illegal occupation.

34TH BLACK ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 34th anniversary of the invasion of Cyprus, also known as the Black Anniversary. The occupation of Cyprus is an injustice that has gone on for too long, and the Cyprus question can no longer be ignored.

I am encouraged by meetings over the last several months between President Christofias and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Talat. Their efforts to implement the July 2006 agreement are helping to lay the framework for talks about a final solution to the Cyprus question. With the recent establishment of working groups and technical committees to discuss substantive and day-to-day issues between the communities, I am hopeful that the meeting on July 25 between President Christofias and Talat will bring about full negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, 13 million crossings have taken place between the Greek and the Turkish Cypriot communities without incident, and yet, there are still 43,000 Turkish troops on the island. That is one Turkish troop for every two Turkish Cypriots.

Last year, I introduced House Resolution 620, expressing the sense of the House that Turkey should end its occupation of the Republic of Cyprus. I believe this is an occupation that has divided Cyprus and the Cypriot people for far too long. This occupation stands in the way of a final solution to the Cyprus question, as well as Turkey's accession into the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, last November I led a congressional delegation to Greece and Cyprus where I toured the buffer zone in Nicosia. I saw the barbed wire, and I saw with my own eyes an area where time has stood still for 34 years. As we rise today to commemorate the events of July 20, 1974, we must remain committed to working together to end the occupation and to bring down the 113 miles of barbed wire fence that continue to divide Cyprus.

THE ROLE GOD AND FAITH HAVE PLAYED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GREAT NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, many of us have been discussing the role God and faith have played in the development of our great Nation and how this foundation is ever present today in our Nation's capital.

Washington is replete with examples of how our founders viewed faith as an integral part of our culture. The subtle

manner in which our faith history is portrayed in our monuments and landmarks underscores the fact that faith is a part of who we are. That these references often go unnoticed is simply a testament to the fact that faith in God has been inextricably woven into the fabric of our Nation. As a Nation and as a people, we believe in God.

The Washington Monument, a tribute to our first President, contains in its very cornerstone a copy of the Holy Bible, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution. The symbolism is simply profound. From the beginning of our founding, we have paid homage to the ideas of freedom and liberty under God. The presence of these sacred documents, housed together in what can be viewed as the metaphorical cornerstone of the United States, transcends the simplicity of separation of church and State, and reclaims for us the fact that our Nation was indeed founded with faith as our guiding light.

As a Member of Congress and a man of faith, I am encouraged by the presence of faith in our daily rituals. We here in this body, as we enter the Chamber of this House, we are greeted by the inscription, "In God We Trust," inscribed above the Speaker's desk. We seek favor in His grace and pray His blessings upon our work each day, and we open with the Pledge of Allegiance, acknowledging "one Nation under God."

The universal nature of faith and the acknowledgment of our goals as a Nation of faith are often the unifying force that brings Republicans and Democrats together. Across the table, we bow our heads in prayer, and we readily accept the spirit of the Almighty working through us.

Throughout Washington, we can easily find examples of our Judeo-Christian roots. If we step across the street to the Supreme Court, we are presented with the image of Moses bearing the Ten Commandments, often considered the basis for much of modern law. Its presence within the halls of the Supreme Court recognizes the origins of our modern day laws and serves as a reminder that we are a Nation seeking justice in the eyes of God.

One of my favorite buildings is the Library of Congress. As you enter the Great Hall, you are greeted by two permanent displays. The first is the handwritten Giant Bible of Mainz. The second is the Gutenberg Bible, the first mass printed book. These Bibles are coupled with the inscribed scripture passage from Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore, get wisdom and with all thy getting, get understanding."

Mr. Speaker, last week one of my constituents, a young high schoolgirl, came in and expressed her concern that she had heard there was an effort underway to remove God from these

walls. And I told her I certainly prayed that was not the case, but I was concerned because we are about to open the new Capitol Visitor Center which, in many respects, is an extension and a reflection of the Capitol that it will be the entrance to, in many ways, in many respects, but not in its reference to God, as part of our founding.

Faith is the underpinning of this great Nation. Thomas Jefferson's words, seen in the Jefferson Memorial, remind us of the importance of that underpinning: "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a Nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

That, Mr. Speaker, is the question.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. CON. RES. 362

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 362.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

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34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1974 ILLEGAL TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. As co-chair and cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I wish to extend my support to Cypriots of Hellenic descent here in our country, on Cyprus, and all around the world as we mark the tragic 34th anniversary of the 1974 illegal Turkish invasion of Cyprus. I have commemorated this day each year since I became a Member of Congress.

For the past several years, the Hellenic Caucus has been very engaged on the issues facing this divided island. Many members of the Caucus remain concerned about the continued occupation and division of the Republic of Cyprus.

Turkey illegally invaded Cyprus in 1974. As a result of the Turkish invasion and occupation, 160,000 Greek Cypriots, amounting to 70 percent of the population of the occupied area and over a quarter of the total population, were forcibly expelled from their homes, and approximately 5,000 Cypriots were killed. More than 1,400 Greek Cypriots, including four Americans of Cypriot descent, remain missing and unaccounted for since the Turkish invasion.

Famagusta was a thriving port city in Cyprus until 1974. Its industrial sector supplied vital jobs to the nearby