

Arkansas don't have to choose between keeping gas in their cars and meeting the needs of their families.

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.

□ 2015

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.