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December 19, 2012

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House Committee on Foreign Affairs

2170 Rayburn HOB

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable

Howard Berman

Ranking Member

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Ranking Member Berman:

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On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I am writing to express our organization's opposition to H.R.6649, Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2012, which you have sponsored.

Specifically, AHI is strongly opposed to provision Sec.2(a)(3) which authorizes the transfer of two naval vessels (guided missile frigates) to Turkey. Our opposition is rooted in a fundamental adherence to the rule of law, which Turkey continues to violate on several fronts. In addition, Turkey's provocations in the eastern Mediterranean are well documented.

- Turkey maintains as law the policy of casus belli toward Greece; threatening the latter with war should Greece exercise its right to expand its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles.
- Turkey routinely violates Greece's sovereignty in the Aegean Sea.
- Turkey has not used its navy to stem the tide of illegal immigration into the European Union via Greece.
- Turkey has issued not-so-vague bellicose threats against Cyprus and Israel, which – in collaboration with a U.S. energy company – are developing newly-found natural gas reservoirs in the eastern Mediterranean
- Turkey's threats against Cyprus and in effect, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, and potentially Greece should she claim its full exclusive economic zone (EEZ), regarding the oil and gas exploration agreements puts Turkey in direct violation of the UN Charter preamble and article 2, paragraph 4, and the NATO Treaty Preamble and Article 1.

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, we ask you to be mindful of your very strong statement of September 22, 2011 when you correctly cautioned Turkey on its threats in the eastern Mediterranean and described Turkey's increased military presence as "a clear threat" to U.S. citizens and interests in the region. Therefore, why would the United States agree to a transfer of two guided missile naval frigates to Turkey that can further augment Turkey's threats to allies and friends of the United States?

Finally, we note Turkey illegally occupies the Republic of Cyprus, a European Union nation that is currently concluding the EU rotating presidency with 43,000 of its troops, and Turkey continues to violate international law by transferring thousands of illegal colonists, currently estimated to be well over 180,000, into the occupied area of Cyprus in violation of the Geneva Convention; and violating the religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians.

For all these reasons, AHI strongly contends this is not a proper time to authorize a transfer of naval frigates to Turkey because of the confrontational behavior it has openly displayed toward U.S. allies and friends which are not in the best interest of the United States and are in violation of the rule of law.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Larigakis", is written over the typed name.

Nick Larigakis
President

cc: Members of the Committee