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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

THE INVASION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, once again, it is my sad privilege to address the House to remind all of America of the invasion of the Republic of Cyprus.

As we know, 1997 is the 23d year of divided rule on the island; 1997 has also been hailed as the year of Cyprus. Although I am greatly saddened that the northern portion of the island remains occupied by Turkish troops, on this map here, actually, this is called the green line, and in actuality, in order to see it better, we have it colored in blue here and you can see that the northern part of the island is separated from the southern portion.

I do remain hopeful and optimistic that we are 1 year closer to a just solution. It is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to build upon the progress that was made during 1996, referred to in some quarters as the year of the big push.

The divided island of Cyprus is certainly ready for peace. There are families who are certainly ready for answers as well. They want answers to what happened to their loved ones who disappeared 23 years ago during the Turkish invasion.

To this day, there are still five American citizens among the 1,619 people still missing from the invasion. These families want to end sleepless nights of wondering whether or not their loved ones are still alive. Hopefully, these questions will be answered and these families will finally be given peace of mind.

Our ultimate goal should be peace for all citizens of Cyprus. However, peace will not come without the strong and active leadership of the United States. The United Nations has unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the differences between the two Cypriot communities.

Since 1974, the United Nations has stationed over 1,000 troops on the island to prevent violence from spreading throughout Cyprus. Yet the violence has not abated. I strongly support U.N. Resolution 939, which calls for a bizonal, bicomunal single state of Cyprus. However, I submit we will not achieve this goal by maintaining the status quo.

I yield at this time to my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY].

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, once again, as I have every year that I have been a Member of Congress, it is my honor and sad privilege to stand with the gentleman from Florida and remember and commemorate the 23d anniversary of the 1974 illegal Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The continued presence of Turkish troops represents a growing violation of human rights and international law.

On the positive side, I am pleased with the success that the gentleman in Florida and I have had in the formation of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues last year. We now have 62 Members from both parties and from all regions of the country. Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and conservatives have all joined together to pursue our common objectives of justice, human rights, and stronger ties between the United States and its strong democratic allies, Cyprus and Greece.

Earlier this year, many of the members of the Hellenic Caucus joined us in signing a letter to the President to stop the sale of Seahawk helicopters. We were successful. No helicopters were sold to Turkey. Over the last week, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright mitigated a nonaggression pact with the Foreign Minister of Greece and the Foreign Minister of Turkey.

Now that Greece and Turkey have come to a peaceful agreement, it will allow the focus to be concentrated on a more peaceful solution, hopefully, in Cyprus. Last weekend, the President of Cyprus, Glafkos Clirides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, met in a first round of U.N. talks, and they have agreed to a second round of talks in August.

The appointment of Richard Holbrooke as United States special envoy to Cyprus shows the United States' commitment to a settlement in the region. In fact, he met with both sides this past Monday. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 81, introduced by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], that calls for a United States initiative seeking a just and peaceful resolution in Cyprus.

I am hopeful that we will reach a peaceful solution soon, but it must be a fair solution. Turkey must withdraw its troops. Imported settlers must be returned to their countries of origin. The island must be unified without a

green line. The almost 200,000 Greek Cypriots who were expelled from their homes must have the opportunity to return home. We must know what happened to the 1,614 Greek Cypriots and 5 Americans which were seized by Turkish troops and remain unaccounted for to this day.

The pain of some of my constituents in Astoria, Queens, whose beloved family members are still missing, must be put to rest. On this issue, there can be no compromise. We will never give up the demand to know the fate of people like Chrisaci Loizoi, Andrew Kassapis, and George Anastasiou. We must have them accounted for.

I have many constituents who do not know what happened to their brothers, their fathers, their sisters, their mothers. For all they know, they are still suffering in some brutish Turkish prison. Human decency demands an accounting.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed tremendous changes around the world: The fall of the Berlin Wall, the beginning of steps in the Middle East toward peace, and the end of apartheid. It is my sincere hope that soon we will be able to add Cyprus to that list of places where peace and freedom have triumphed.

I would like to bring to the attention of my friend, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], and to other Members of Congress that there will be a meeting and concert in Bryant Park, located in Manhattan, NY, this coming Friday to further observe the invasion of Cyprus.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I really have to commend the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], my friend and colleague from the other side of the aisle, who has worked extremely hard on this issue. Both of us have visited Cyprus and we have seen firsthand the green line that separates this country; and we both hope that in the coming talks, this line will be erased and that finally there will be peace and justice in Cyprus.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY]. I dare say that there are not many people, within or without Congress, who have put more time into this issue on behalf of those great people, and I thank her so very much. It is such a pleasure and honor to work with her on this issue and so many others.

Continuing with my remarks, Mr. Speaker, last year some of the worst human rights abuses occurred on the island since the Turkish invasion. Four unarmed Greek Cypriots and one unarmed Turkish Cypriot were shot and killed while protesting the division of the island. Nearly 100 protesters and 14 U.N. peacekeepers were injured throughout the year, as well.

We ask ourselves sometimes, why is an end to the division of Cyprus in America's best interest? International stability is a key factor to our increasingly global economy. A divided Cyprus