

focus and dedication to democratic values and regional cooperation.

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 restriction of movement across the ceasefire line that continues to forcibly divide Cyprus. As a result, since April of 2003, more than 13 million Greek and Turkish Cypriots have crossed without incident. Incredible. 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 and its European neighbors.

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 33-year occupation.

Indeed, on July 8, 2006, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agreed to formally begin consultations with the ultimate aim of a peaceful reunification and an end to Turkey's military occupation.

Despite the early successes of what has since been known as the "July 8th Agreement" and the best efforts of the Cyprus government, the Turkish Cypriots have not followed through on their commitment to continue this dialogue and a path to peace.

Let's resolve this issue, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-three years is too long.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, only last week, President Papadopoulos attempted to jumpstart the Island's reunification efforts and resume the July 8 Agreement process. Though he initially accepted this gesture, Turkish Cypriot leader Talat ended up cancelling the proposed meeting.

Mr. Speaker, the United States, and this Congress, should demonstrate its commitment and support for the July 8 Agreement as a way toward ending the Turkish-Cypriot divide on the Island of Cyprus. I have introduced legislation, H. Res. 405, which expresses strong support for the implementation of the July 8 Agreement.

I urge all of my colleagues to act and help this body put our own stamp of support on the July 8 process by supporting this resolution.

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 overflight 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, 33 years is long enough. It is not impossible to conceive one-day having a Cyprus that is unified under bizonal, bi-communal federation with a single sovereignty, single international personality and single citizenship with respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all Cypriots.

America, a friend of the Cypriot people, owes it to them to do everything in their power to support peace and an end to this illegal occupation.

33RD ANNIVERSARY OF INVASION OF CYPRUS

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 33rd year since the invasion and subsequent occupation of the Island of Cyprus.

Since 1974, Turkish military forces have illegally occupied the northern part of the island, forcibly dividing communities, and depriving a nation of its cultural heritage and peaceful existence.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus physically separated the Greek Cypriot community and Turkish Cypriot community along ethnic lines for the first time in the island nation's history. The unlawful occupation of 37 percent of the territory of Cyprus continues unabated to this day. There are currently 43,000 Turkish troops garrisoned in the occupied areas, and Turkey has resettled nearly 100,000 mainland Turkish citizens into those areas.

The continued Turkish occupation of Cyprus stops the Greek and Cypriot communities from building national institutions, from building intercommunal trust, and from promoting the diversity and uniqueness of a truly Cypriot culture. In short, because of Turkey's continued occupation and division of the island nation, the people of Cyprus are prohibited from reclaiming a true Cypriot national identity.

Furthermore, thousands of Cypriots continue to be refugees in their own land, blocked from the homes and the communities they inhabited for generations. Some have been marooned in tiny enclaves, trapped by the occupation forces, cut off from the outside world and basic human rights. A new generation of Cypriots has inherited the terrible dislocation that military occupation brings.

In the face of all this, the Greek Cypriot inhabitants of the Republic of Cyprus have struggled and succeeded in building a strong society, one whose economic progress, development of democratic institutions and capable governance has led to membership in the European Union in May 2004. Sadly, until there is an end to the occupation, the reunification of the island under a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation will be impossible, and the occupied areas of Cyprus will be denied the full benefits of EU membership.

For the United States, there is a clear imperative to resolve the situation in Cyprus as a matter of justice and the rule of law, principles we hold dear. But beyond that, achieving reunification of the island is critical to the strategic interests of the United States.

The Cyprus problem pits American allies against one another. The strategic interest in facilitating a negotiated settlement is significant for the region, but also for the world. Cyprus can either fester as a potential flashpoint, or become a starting point for reconciliation.

Today, we have a new opportunity. The opportunity for reconciliation is real. Since Cyprus' entry into the EU, the borders between the occupied areas have been partially opened, and there have been more than 12 million crossings of Greek and Turkish Cypriots without serious incident. Turkish Cypriots cross into the Republic of Cyprus every day to go to work. Approximately 35,000 Turkish Cypriots have applied for and received passports from the Republic of Cyprus.

The people of the island want reunification to occur. The Turkish government now must demonstrate a legitimate will to participate with good faith in U.S. and U.N. mediated efforts to resolve this conflict. Perpetuating the status quo hurts not only Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but the nation of Turkey and its relation to the United States and to the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have in place, brokered by the U.N., a workable framework for reunification. The so-called "July 8 Agreement" reached in 2006 calls for an immediate initiation of comprehensive negotiations on two different levels; one that addresses everyday issues to build confidence and momentum, and the other addressing more serious disputes over territorial and power-sharing arrangements in the prospective federal state.

This agreement is a real way forward to the reunification of Cyprus within a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. But a year has passed, and the process as laid out by the U.N. has yet to be meaningfully engaged by the Turkish representatives. It should not stall any longer.

As my colleague, Mr. BILIRAKIS, has urged through legislation introduced earlier this year, the United States can and should play a powerful role in moving forward and pushing for immediate implementation of these U.N.-backed negotiations.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRESCRIPTION DRUG USER FEE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Prescription Drug User Fee