

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2005

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We were disappointed to learn that last month you extended a formal meeting invitation to Mehmet Ali Talat, the so-called president of the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," a government that the United States does not recognize. Although Secretaries of State Baker and Powell have met with leaders of the "TRNC" in the past, neither extended a formal invitation because of concerns for the consequences of such an invitation to an entity the United States does not recognize.

Your invitation and meeting with Mr. Talat is counterproductive to the United States policy of supporting the reunification of Cyprus, the island nation that was forcibly divided by an invasion of Turkish troops over 30 years ago. Your action was inconsistent with one United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution which calls on nations to extend no support to the "TRNC." More dangerously, it emboldens the Turkish Cypriot "government" not to negotiate in good faith for a reunification of Cyprus; it instead encourages a separate status for the occupied area. We believe that *formal* dealings with Mr. Talat render our non-recognition policy meaningless.

Since the defeat of the UN's Annan Plan, the Republic of Cyprus has worked to improve the economic situation in the occupied area. The Republic of Cyprus has invested almost \$1 billion in aid and assistances to the Turkish Cypriots, including more than \$43 million in social insurance, more than \$9 million in medical care, and more than \$343 million in free electricity. The Republic of Cyprus is also working to bring the two communities together with actions like removing landmines in the cease-fire zone and issuing birth certificates and passports for Turkish Cypriots.

Your unprecedented invitation and meeting with Mr. Talat provided ammunition needed by the "TRNC" leadership and the Turkish government to incite and promote separatist tendencies, rather than promote your intended goal of reunification. In fact, on the day of your meeting, an editorial in the Turkish Daily News said of the meeting: "[T]he United States is acknowledging the fact that there is not one, but two, Cypriot peoples living on the island . . . the United States is declaring that the Turkish Cypriot people on the island have some sort of sovereignty and the right to elect their leader." Likewise, Prime Minister Erdogan said recently: "One state in the north, one state in the south and a confederation . . . this is what [Cyprus President] Papadopoulos should accept, otherwise we cannot reach an

agreement."

While we appreciate your dedication and attention to helping to make a reunified Cyprus a reality, we feel that your actions are inconsistent with United States policy and counterproductive to the policy of reunification. Therefore, we ask that you please explain your long term plan for Cyprus and where you intend to take United States foreign policy with respect to Cyprus.

Sincerely,

Mike Bilirakis

Carolyn B. Maloney

Robert Menendez

Anna Escobedo Cabral

Thaddeus McCotter

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Robert E. Anderson

Vito Marcantonio

Clay Shaw

Esch L. Engler

Nita Lowery

Ed P. P. P.

Edith L. Bush

Luille Roybal-Allard

Benny Frank

Henry E. Brown, Jr.

Wendell Clark

John E. Sweeney

Donald Payne

Ken Calvert

Sharon Brown

Mary Kaptur

Jim Holt

Rush Holt

James D. Kaptur

Michael McHale

D. Lamb

Stanton

John M. Jones

Red Strickland

John M. Jones

Carl S. Schiff

John A. L. Bush

John L. Bush

John F. Turner

Susan A. Davis

Liane E. Watson

Pete Stark

Joe Bradley

Carolyn McCarthy

John Lewis

Hilda L. Selis

Rail M. Hjalma

Ed Markney

Paul Viscly

W. J. Meek

John Long

Steven A. Nott

Chris Van Holler

Bral Green

Jim Moran

William C. McHenry

Mike McIntyre

Wanda Rind

Charles Brangul

Lois Capps

Dennis J. Weaver

Jim Langewiesche

Jack Ruby

Patricia F. Kennedy

Mike Dwyer

Shelley Berkley

Bob Fulmer