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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

only continues to serve as a fuse between, lit fuse I might say, between two of our NATO allies, Greece and Turkey.

Twice since the 1974 invasion Greece and Turkey have almost gone to war. The most recent incident was in 1996 concerning the Imia Islet crisis. The Aegean Sea is home to the world's busiest shipping lanes. Indeed, Cyprus is in a key strategic position relative to the Mediterranean region and the Suez Canal, which is instrumental in supplying oil and other materials vital to the stability of the entire region.

In this map here to my left, we see actually the country of Greece here and Turkey here, and then the Republic Island of Cyprus in this particular area. And I think it is just very easy to be able to determine the tremendously strategic position of that island.

So it is just imperative that the problems be solved. As such, any conflict between Greece and Turkey could disrupt trade in the region and have extremely serious consequences for many nations, including the United States.

□ 1700

If the situation in Cyprus continues to deteriorate, there could be serious repercussions among other NATO nations and these nations could be forced to choose between two allies, Greece or Turkey. In order for a lasting peace to be forged, the Turkish militarization of the island and of the region must end. Currently there are over 35,000 Turkish troops stationed on Cyprus, and in addition Turkey has a large amphibious assault force located within 100 miles of the island. The proximity of such a significant Turkish presence has led NATO to estimate that the island of Cyprus could fall to Turkish troops within 24 hours should Turkey ever decide to attack.

U.N. reports cited Turkey's lack of motivation as the reason for the stalled peace process. The Turkish Government has stated that it will take all necessary steps including military actions to defend Turkey's interest on the island. Without U.S. leadership, it is unlikely that a lasting peace settlement can be negotiated.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS].

Mr. PAPPAS. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding and once again I commend him for his continued leadership on issues affecting Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey and, most important, the people that live in those three nations. I look forward to continuing to work with the gentleman on these issues and other issues.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to add my voice to the chorus calling for justice in Cyprus. Twenty-three years ago, 6,000 Turkish troops and 40 tanks landed on the north coast of Cyprus and captured nearly 40 percent of the island.

Today 35,000 troops occupy the northern portion of Cyprus; 1,619 people remain missing, including 5 Americans.

A barbed wire fence known as the Green Line cuts across the island, separating towns and people that had lived together for many generations. Mistrust and animosity have spread beyond this island to our NATO partners Turkey and Greece. This is not good.

Efforts are undertaken but they are not enough. The United States, the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations must do more now before this sore develops into a permanent cancer between our NATO partners and the peace and security of southeast Europe. We must remember that this problem started by the violent invasion of Cyprus by Turkey, and lasting peace can only be restored by the removal of the Turkish armed aggressors.

Why has the sad story of the invasion of Cyprus not received more attention in the press here in the United States? Maybe it is because the press is intimidated to report on this. Turkey, which occupies by military force the northern part of Cyprus, has the distinction of leading the world in jailing of journalists. More than North Korea, more than Communist China, more than Iraq and more than Iran. That is why we are here today on the floor and what we are doing is so important, because we in a sense are acting as the journalists for the world, for the people of Cyprus, bringing to the scrutiny of the public what has been censored in Turkey.

As evidence of this, I cite an editorial that appeared in last week's Philadelphia Inquirer, July 9. The article notes, "It is impossible to have other freedoms in a country where there is no freedom of the press."

This past Sunday, the New York Times wrote in an editorial, "Under Turkey's broad antiterrorism law, journalism itself is criminalized and reporters face prison time for doing their job." It goes on to say, "Press freedom is among the casualties of a failed strategy, imposed by the military, which Mr. Yilmaz cannot change overnight."

And then just yesterday the Washington Post weighed in on the subject in an editorial that said, "Journalists who write about Kurdish nationalism from an independent perspective have been at risk of being locked up and censored, harassed and beaten. Article 312 of the Turkish penal code permits reporting and community on other than the government line to be punished as incitement to racial hatred."

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would urge all of my colleagues to join the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY], and many others in cosponsoring House Concurrent Resolution 81, which would show the world that this Congress and this country are committed to seeking a just and peaceful resolution of the situation in Cyprus. Let us not let this problem caused by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus fester in the underbelly of southeastern Europe any longer.

I urge everyone to pray for a peaceful and just end to the Turkish invasion while there is still time to make peace. Again I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I include the text of the articles referred to in my remarks for the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, July 9, 1997]

FREE SPEECH UNDER FIRE—TURKEY LEADS THE WORLD IN JAILING JOURNALISTS.

His name is unfamiliar to most Americans; his newspaper, unknown here. But his case should be a cause for anyone who cherishes the right too often taken for granted in this nation; to publish criticism of the government.

Ocak Isik Yurteu was imprisoned on Dec. 28, 1994, for editing a daily newspaper critical of the Turkish government, and is now serving a 15-year, 10-month sentence under the country's abusive antiterror law. "Nobody in the world has been sentenced to so many years in prison for articles others have written," he said from Sakarya Prison last year.

But then, no country in the world imprisons journalists and smothers press freedoms more egregiously than Turkey. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), for three years running Turkey has held more journalists in prison than any nation on earth. The count is now 78.

Most are charged under an antiterror law that effectively classifies all reports on the Kurdish rebellion other than the government's as either "separatist propaganda" or "incitement to racial hatred." Imagine if the United States had had such a law during the civil-rights movement.

Mr. Yurteu's newspaper published what is considered balanced reporting on the Kurdish conflict, but truth is not what the Turkish government wanted its people to read.

A delegation from CPJ will be arriving in Turkey on Saturday, to champion the cause of Mr. Yurteu and his many jailed colleagues before the nation's top leaders. They will be pushing for the abolition of the repressive laws and the release of the 78 imprisoned journalists.

They will be demanding that a nation that wants desperately to join the European Union and to take part in the Western world's economic and technological advances, adhere to a fundamental precept of democracy: a free press.

The imprisoned journalists deserve the support of anyone here who has published an angry letter about the President—or written such a letter. Or has called a radio talk show and complained about Congress. Or has passed out leaflets knocking the major or town council.

It's worth remembering, as Mr. Yurteu wrote, "It is impossible to have other freedoms in a country where there is no freedom of the press."

[From the New York Times, July 13, 1997]

TURKEY, JAILER OF JOURNALISTS

Turkey has the shameful distinction of imprisoning more journalists than any country in the world. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists has compiled a list of 78 reporters, writers and editors now in jail, and the Turkish Press Council reckons the total may be twice as high. Now that a new Government has assumed power, it has a timely opportunity to open those prison doors. Doing so would lessen a stain on Turkey's reputation and enhance the democratic credentials of Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's secularist center-right coalition.

Most of the journalists in prison are charged with disseminating "separatist propaganda" or with being members of proscribed

pro-Kurdish political groups. In fact, under Turkey's broad anti-terrorism law, journalism itself is criminalized and reporters face prison for doing their job. An emblematic case is that of Ocak Isik Yurtcu, a prominent writer and former newspaper editor who has served 3 years of a 15-year sentence. Mr. Yurtcu's offense was to publish articles about the Turkish Army's scorched-earth campaign against Kurdish insurgents in southeastern Turkey.

Mr. Yurtcu's plight, along with scores of other cases, will be taken up this summer by a visiting delegation of journalists, among them Terry Anderson and Peter Arnett, at the request of Turkish press organizations. By responding favorably, Prime Minister Yilmaz would signal a halt to Turkey's descent into repression. He would begin to answer critics, especially in the European Union, of Turkey's dismal human rights record, and would set a different example from his immediate secular and Islamic predecessors.

This is more than a press issue. For nearly a decade Turkey has relied primarily on force to counter Kurdish terrorists, without opening a parallel political attack for a huge, aggrieved ethnic minority. Press freedom is among the casualties of a failed strategy, imposed by the military, which Mr. Yilmaz cannot change overnight. Yet it is within his power to release jailed journalists and decriminalize free speech, an essential precondition for an end to Turkey's domestic turmoil. Turkey's friends hoped he will not let this moment pass.

[From the Washington Post, July 16, 1997]

TURKEY'S PRESS: TURKEY'S KURDS

It is an irony and an embarrassment that even as NATO imposes high democratic standards on new members, it has given an errant old member, Turkey, a bye. On the litmus issue of imprisoning journalists for what they write, for instance, Turkey is the recognized world champion. The Committee to Protect Journalists, an American defense group, counted 78 jailed Turkish journalists at the beginning of the year. All the more satisfying, then, that the group has not elicited from the new Turkish government of Mesut Yibnaz a commitment to do something about a record that, if a current NATO applicant had it, would exclude it from the West's premier democratic club.

The trouble lies, of course, in Turkey's continuing conflict with a Kurdish minority that has its pacific assimilationist element but its armed separatist element as well. An official policy giving a long leash to an assertive Turkish military has not only failed to curb Kurdish terrorism but has also cost past governments political support. Journalists who write about Kurdish nationalism from an independent perspective have been at risk of being locked up and censored, harassed and beaten. Article 312 of the Turkish penal code permits reporting and commentary on other than the government line to be punished as "incitement to racial hatred."

The Kurdish problem is as tough as any ethnic conflict anywhere. No one has a good solution in the inflamed circumstances in which it is unfolding now. What is certain, however, is that the problem must be addressed in a context in which the Turkish people are fully and fairly informed about the options before them. This is the prospect now opened up by the Yilmaz government. It speaks for a minority coalition and faces parliamentary resistance to its new free-press commitments. But it also has the opportunity to bring Turkey the appreciation rather than the opprobrium of the democratic West. Up to this point, the army has

plainly been calling most of the shots on policy toward the Kurds. The army is manifestly unfit for this role and plays it poorly. Opening up the press is no glib civics textbook prescription. It is a practical way for Turkey to build support for a consensus approach.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I thank the gentleman. He is a rookie, I guess we would call him, a freshman here, but he has already made his presence known in many ways and particularly on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Republic of Cyprus needs active United States support to attain its goal of membership in the European community. This membership would promote stability by permanently linking Cyprus to Europe both economically and strategically. Indeed the European Parliament has indicated its desire for peace on the island. Cyprus has earned its place in the European Union. Now the international community must take steps to move the peace process forward.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Cyprus is ready to become an important trading partner with the United States. The Greek Cypriot community is a democratic society known for its open and efficient economic system. Despite the violent blow dealt by the invasion, the Cypriot economy has strongly rebounded to become one of the strongest economies in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE].

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for calling this special order. I will not take too much time, since I see a number of my colleagues, showing the importance of this very vital issue to many of us in the Congress on both sides of the aisle from throughout the United States of America, because we talk about justice and fairness, we talk about the new era that we live in where we say that we will not allow the big and the strong to take advantage of the smaller.

That was the whole question in the Persian Gulf situation when 28 nations came together to say that the invasion of Kuwait that was imminent was wrong and we came together as a united country of the world, countries of the world, from the Arab community, from Africa, from the West to say that we will protect this little country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Human Rights Subcommittee to join in commemorating this sad day in history of the Republic of Cyprus. On July 20, 1974, 6,000 Turkish troops and 40 tanks landed on the north coast of Cyprus and captured almost 40 percent of the island. More than 35,000 Turkish troops continue to occupy the northern portion of Cyprus.

The Green Line, a barbed wire fence, separating the northern part of the island from the free portion, is the only wall remaining in the world. We brought down the Berlin Wall. We have gone through and have sort of new independent countries in Europe. But this wall still remains.

Thousands of Greek Cypriots from the towns and communities in which

they and their families have previously lived for generations are separated from one another. Today there are 1,619 people whose whereabouts are still unknown, and we have heard already 5 of these are U.S. citizens that we still have not heard about.

The illegal invasion and occupation by Turkey represents over two decades of unanswered questions, human rights violations and cultural destruction. As I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I had the opportunity 2 years ago to visit Cyprus. I had the opportunity to go with a constituent of mine, Andy Comodimos, where we drove up to the Green Line. We were allowed to go up into the Turkish-occupied portion of the island where we went to the street that Mr. Comodimos lived on and went to the house that he was raised in and then went up the to the home of his cousin who lived there.

We rang the bell and we were allowed to come in by this Turkish family who came up from the south to occupy the house. It was heartbreaking for him to see his home, his backyard, the basement of the home that his family grew up in being occupied illegally by people who had illegally taken possession of the home. I speak out with my other colleagues here and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash and Greek Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides in their talks and that our new head of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, is calling for continued talks. We hope that there will finally be a breakthrough.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I thank the gentleman. I daresay that probably this constituent who was able to get to go to his former home probably had not seen it for something like 20, 21 years and would not have been able to do that were it not for the fact that he was accompanying the gentleman. I appreciate the gentleman's support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], who has been an outstanding spokesman and advocate for peace in Cyprus for organizing this special order this evening. Today's special order on Cyprus comes on the eve of the 23d anniversary of the brutal invasion of Cyprus by Turkish troops. As we observe this sad anniversary, the international community is still confronted with the fact that in excess of 30,000 Turkish military personnel still remain on the island to enforce an illegal partition and to protect a self-proclaimed government that has been recognized by only one other country, Turkey itself.

Those of us in the Congress who supported the negotiated settlement to the dispute which has led to the division of Cyprus are painfully aware of the complexities of the issue, of the injustices committed, and particularly

the suffering over these many long years of the Cypriot people on both sides of the Green Line.

Indeed Cyprus has become a code word for stalemate and intractability in international diplomacy.

Just last week there occurred a new and positive development in Madrid, on the fringes of the NATO summit. The foreign ministers of both Greece and Turkey met together, under the auspices of our own government, and agreed on a set of principles to guide the resolution of disputes between our two NATO allies. The essential element of the statement issued by the foreign ministers in Madrid is that disputes between Greece and Turkey are to be settled through peaceful means and will be based on the mutual recognition of their legitimate interests. While this communique was related specifically to disputes in the Aegean, I am hopeful that it is going to inaugurate an era of better understanding on the issues that concern both Greece and Turkey, including Cyprus itself.

Although a resolution of the Cyprus problem depends first and foremost upon the will of the Cypriot people themselves, regardless of their ethnic background, certainly a better relationship between Greece and Turkey can play a critical role in helping resolve this vexing international dispute.

It is gratifying that the Clinton administration seems more interested than in the past in finding a solution for Cyprus. The announcement last month that President Clinton appointed Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as a special envoy for Cyprus is also promising. If Ambassador Holbrooke brings the same energy and determination to Cyprus as he brought to ending the conflict in Bosnia, it is hopeful that he will be able to convince the Cypriot people to put behind them their differences and work out a just and peaceful settlement.

The shape of a possible settlement is out there. I believe that both President Clerides and Mr. Denktash are men who can rise above the recent enmity that has developed between the two communities and find a way to reunite the island based on mutual good will and confidence.

We should all encourage these two leaders to make the most of direct talks which began in New York just last week and which will soon be continuing in Geneva. Old history and grievances must be placed behind us as we seek to resolve the division of Cyprus. Let us hope that both sides will reach within themselves to find the resolve to settle this persistent problem.

The Greek Cypriots have demonstrated flexibility and the spirit of compromise in recent rounds of U.N.-sponsored talks. We now call upon Mr. Denktash to demonstrate this same kind of flexibility. Twenty-three years is too long a time. There are now young people coming of age in Cyprus who know nothing other than the experience of living on a divided island and a divided society.

□ 1715

For this next generation what can be done to guide them in learning to accept life with a neighboring but different culture? Time is running out for the possibility of achieving a peaceful settlement, and the people of Cyprus now have to ask themselves if the enmity between the two communities is truly worth the price of a divided nation.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman who for years and years has done the best he possibly could to try to resolve this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] at this point.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to begin as I do every year by thanking the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for organizing this special order. It has now been 23 years since Turkey invaded Cyprus, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity to join the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] and the other cochair of our Congressional Caucas on Hellenic Issues, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] in keeping this issue in the spotlight.

For almost a quarter of a century now the people of Cyprus have lived on a divided, militarized, and occupied island, and the facts of the situation are well known. I do not want to spend time tonight revisiting them, but I do believe there are important developments on the Cyprus issue that I want to spend the bulk of my time addressing, and I do want to say to those who were murdered during the Turkish invasion and to the 1,619 people who have never been accounted for, 5 of whom are American, that you are not forgotten. Those who have lived through the nightmare of the last 23 years and those who have never known freedom in their lifetime, I want you to know that you have many allies in the U.S. Congress who are determined to see you govern every inch of your own country.

On July 9, this year, as was mentioned by some of my colleagues, these high-level negotiations between some of the key principals involved, once again got underway at the invitation of the Secretary General, the President of Cyprus, and the Turkish-Cypriot leader. They met face to face for the first time in 3 years, and I just want to say this is certainly a very positive development, as my colleagues have said, as was the joint statement which was released by Greece and Turkey the day before the talks in New York in which the two countries vowed to settle disputes by peaceful means, based on mutual consent, and without use of force or threat of force.

But before I discuss the current peace process in further detail, I wanted to draw attention to an unfortunate display of provocation by the Turkish government. Two days ago Turkey's Vice Prime Minister, who was the Prime Minister when Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974, announced that he is

going to visit the Turkish occupied area of Northern Cyprus on July 19, and the stated purpose of his visit is to congratulate the Turkish military for its invasion in 1974 and celebrate the subsequent occupation which is today enforced by some 35,000 Turkish troops.

So while we are here today honoring the memory of those who were murdered and never accounted for as a result of this Turkish aggression and even as the Greeks and Cypriots around the world prepare to do the same, the Turks are planning celebrations and slapping themselves on the back to commemorate these 23 years of brutality.

Mr. Speaker, I am outraged by this behavior, and I know the Cypriot people are as well. Yesterday I had the honor of personally meeting with the Cypriot Ambassador who conveyed to me his disappointment in this uncalled for provocation.

And I think the Vice Prime Minister's visit is deserving for another reason that we mentioned, that Ankara and Athens are releasing a joint statement vowing to settle their disputes peacefully. I mean the purpose of this statement one would presume was to set a good tone for settlement negotiations. But the Vice Prime Minister's visit to Northern Cyprus really belies Ankara's intent to negotiate in good faith, and I think it is really a deliberate provocation and needs to be brought to my colleagues' attention.

It also serves to reinforce the Congress' belief, this Congress' belief, that there are several aspects regarding the U.S. position that I think need to be addressed and reaffirmed as these negotiations get underway. I would just like to state those briefly.

As everyone is aware by now, President Clinton recently signaled his commitment to resolving the Cyprus problem by appointing Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who was the architect of the Dayton Accords, and he is now the special emissary to Cyprus and his record of service has been mentioned by my colleagues, and, I think, the President should be congratulated for signaling his interest in the Cyprus issue through this appointment. But there was some concern following Ambassador Holbrooke's appointment that he might use the Dayton Accords as a model for the situation in Cyprus. To his credit, Ambassador Holbrooke has stated he does not intend to do such a thing and I want to commend him for that statement.

And I just wanted to say and reiterate that the Dayton Accords are not applicable to Cyprus. The roots and causes of the Cyprus problem are without question very different from those of the conflict that began in Bosnia in 1992. The Cyprus situation is a matter of illegal invasion and occupation of a foreign power. By contrast, the conflict in Bosnia was primarily ethnic in nature.

Accordingly, any solution to the situation in Cyprus must reflect the circumstances that are unique to the Cyprus problem's origin, and this problem is clearly one of illegal invasion and occupation.

There are a number of conditions. I think the United States must pressure the Turkish Government to accept conditions that the Cypriot and Greek Governments and certainly all of us here tonight consider nonnegotiable, and these are first, with regard to the issue of sovereignty: Any solution reached must be consistent with U.N. Resolution 750 of 1992, which states a Cyprus settlement must be based on the State of Cyprus with a single a sovereignty and international personality and a single citizenship with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded. Relatedly, any overall settlement must be consistent with all U.N. resolutions on the Cyprus issue.

To facilitate the goal of the State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty, the United States should push for the establishment of a federation with two federated States, one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot administered by a federal government. In other words, the United States should support the establishment of a constitutional democracy much like our own where the States receive their powers from the Federal Government. A rotating presidency under separate sovereignties for the Greek and Turkish communities should be viewed as completely unacceptable.

Second, any solution to the Cyprus problem must be based on internationally accepted standards of human rights. Simply stated, all Cypriots must be guaranteed the three basic freedoms: freedom of movement, property, and settlement.

And third, all foreign troops should be withdrawn from the island. In 1994, President Clerides proposed the demilitarization of the island as a precursor to meaningful negotiations, an offer which has to date been met with nothing but derision from Turkey. In 1995, the House went on record in support of this peaceful gesture when it passed the Cyprus Demilitarization Act, and I believe, and most informed observers of the Cyprus situation agree, that no progress can be made until Ankara withdraws its illegal occupying force.

I just want to stress again, Mr. Speaker, as I did earlier, that the Cyprus situation is one of illegal occupation of a sovereign country by a foreign power. The United States therefore must use its influence to facilitate the removal of the Turkish occupying force in the introduction of NATO or U.N. peacekeeping forces, if necessary, so negotiations can begin in earnest.

And just in conclusion, while these issues do not represent a comprehensive list of concerns, they are, in my opinion, most important. Other matters the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] mentioned, such as the Cypriot accession to the European Union,

have to be pursued. Integrating Cyprus into the framework of the European Union would demonstrate unequivocally to Turkey that its only real option is to accept a sovereign, independent Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that obviously the United States should embrace the opportunity to make progress, but we must not reach an agreement just for the sake of reaching an agreement. It is tragic that Cyprus has been divided for 23 years, but we would have to wait as long as we must to bring true and lasting freedom to the Cypriot people.

Again I want to thank my colleague from Florida. I know he believes very sincerely in this. He has been doing this for many years, and when this finally is resolved a lot of the reason for it, a lot of the reason why the U.S. Government is now more concerned and the President is more concerned, is because of the efforts of Mr. BILIRAKIS and the Hellenic Caucus.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those kind remarks and thank him for consistently year in and year out joining me in this special order, and if I were not leading this, I dare say he probably would be or certainly would still be just as much involved.

Mr. Speaker, in the past, our Nation has pledged its support to developing free, market democracies. The United States should consider offering trade incentives to Cyprus to allow the manufacturing sector to increase, the labor market to improve, and the infrastructure to modernize.

I also welcome efforts in Congress to maintain the traditional \$15 million earmarked for Cyprus. This money funds projects aimed at reunification and reducing tensions between the two communities on Cyprus. I pledge my total support to building a strong trade relationship between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus. The continued growth of their economy will provide for a more stable country, which is a key ingredient in the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, the island has seen a tremendous amount of growth over the years mostly from tourism. However, the heart of Cyprus' potential growth has yet to be tapped. Hundreds of international firms recognize that the island's \$15,000 per capita gross domestic product and the high education level of its people make Cyprus an ideal location for their regional headquarters.

In stark contrast, and I really, I just hesitate to mention it because I do not mean to be throwing stones, but the per capita gross domestic product in the Turkish-occupied region is a mere \$3,500. There is also a significantly higher crime rate in the Turkish portion of the island.

I yield at this time to the gentleman from New York [Mrs. KELLY].

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in marking the tragic events that oc-

curred 23 years ago on the island of Cyprus. On July 20, 1974, the Government of Turkey sent troops to Cyprus and forcibly assumed control of more than one-third of that island. The action displaced much of the Greek Cypriot population creating a refugee problem that exists to this day.

Just think about it, children who are born 23 years ago, are old enough to have families of their own today. Additionally, over 1,600 Greek Cypriots are missing. They are still unaccounted for as a result of this invasion. The children who were born may not have known their own families.

While in the past the Turkish Cypriot community was unwilling to work toward an agreement, I am pleased that both sides have come together in my congressional district to hold their first round of talks in Armenia, NY. It is clear to me that the clean air and beautiful countryside of Armenia has assisted immeasurably in laying a strong foundation for these negotiations since both sides have agreed to continue these talks in Geneva on August 11.

The talks are the first step in a long process that will hopefully lead to a consensus agreement for lasting peace. It is my hope that an agreement will include the removal of the roughly 35,000 Turkish troops from the island of Cyprus and the return of 180,000 Greek Cypriots to the homes that they fled in 1973. We have heard about the anguish that those Cypriots feel when they know that there are other people occupying those homes.

I want to applaud the willingness of the Greek Cypriots in demonstrating their continued commitment to compromise in order to bring an end to this longstanding dispute and also to Rauf Denktash, the President of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a State recognized only by Turkey for making the right move toward the peace table.

While the past efforts have failed to produce any movement toward an agreement, we continue to pray that these talks will bear fruit so that all the people of Cyprus will know the sweet taste of freedom and a lasting peace. While the talks continue, the U.S. Government has to let our position be heard loud and clear by all interested parties to show we are serious about achieving a lasting peace in Cyprus. In this regard, I am pleased to be a cosponsor to the House Concurrent Resolution 81, the concurrent resolution calling for the United States initiative seeking a just and peaceful resolution of the situation in Cyprus.

Additionally, I am going to continue to support legislation in Congress to cut economic support funds and military assistance to Turkey until it withdraws its troops from Cyprus, lifts its blockade of Armenia and makes progress on extending political and economic rights to its Kurdish minorities.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, it is with decisive steps such as these that we can begin to hope

for a brighter future for Cyprus. I wish to commend the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for his steadfast work in this area. I look forward to working with him and all of my colleagues who share our concerns to achieve a unified and peaceful Cyprus for the future. The talks are a long step toward the peace process that we hope will lead to a consensus agreement for lasting peace. I think it is very important that we get that.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for taking the time to come over to join us on this special order, and for hosting those two gentlemen during those important talks.

I yield to the other gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ], who also has visited the island.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. First of all I want to recognize and commend the gentleman for keeping this issue before the Congress of the United States, and for that matter, before the American people, and for organizing this special order.

We do hope there will be a point in time in which this special order will truly be just a commemoration and not a further quest and search for peace and justice in Cyprus. The gentleman has been an outstanding advocate in this respect, and we commend him.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as a member of the Committee on International Relations and as a member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus to join in the commemoration of that unhappy anniversary and tragic circumstances of 23 years, over two decades, of the division of the island of Cyprus. It seems incredible, but for 23 years now the Republic of Cyprus has been artificially divided following an illegal invasion by Turkish troops on July 20, 1974.

On that date over 200,000 Greek Cypriots became refugees in their own country and to this day are denied the right to return to their homes. Today a full 37 percent of the island remains under occupation by Turkish troops, which in defiance of U.N. resolutions, now number over 35,000. This makes Cyprus one of the most militarized places in the world.

I saw that fact firsthand as I traveled with my constituents from New Jersey, the Zambas family, to Cyprus, crossed the green line, which is the division between northern Cyprus and the rest of the country, to the occupied territory to an area called Brastio-Morphu. Clearly to me the militarization was so, so obvious in the process of that visit.

But also what was obvious is that when Turkish Cypriots, those who lived on the island, not those who have been imported from Anatolia but those who live on the island, are given an opportunity to intermingle with Greek Cypriots, that there is the opportunity for coexistence and coalescence. That became clear to me in the conversation between my constituents and the Turk-

ish Cypriots who had lived there before the invasion. They were willing to talk to each other. Only the people who were escorting us, the security forces, refused to let them speak to each other. As an example of that, it is those who occupy the north that create this division.

We remember the over 1,619 Greek Cypriots and 5 American citizens who are still missing as a result of the military operations in 1974. Sadly, we also commemorate this year the deaths of three civilians last summer, two who died from the bullets of Turkish soldiers, they were unarmed, they were simply along the green line, and the other at the hands of a mob of Turkish thugs.

These actions are nothing but barbaric and should be addressed in that way, which is why I was happy to join many of my colleagues at the United Nations in condemning those barbaric actions. Those are not the actions that a civilized country takes. It is not the actions that a country for which we give aid takes against other individuals.

Mr. Speaker, the comments of the former Prime Minister, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, that we will break the hands of those raised against us, signify, contrary to Turkey's stated position, that in fact they consider northern Cyprus Turkey's domain. So after 23 years, the people of Cyprus in both communities deserve a solution which will reunite the island, its communities, and its people.

For too long the Cyprus problem has been a source of tension and instability in an important area of the world. My colleague, the gentleman from Florida, has a map that very well describes that part of the world and the importance of what is happening in the Aegean. Even our Secretary of State Madeleine Albright recently pointed out "U.S. Cyprus relations extend far beyond, far beyond the so-called Cyprus problem. Cyprus is a valued partner against new global threats."

I think that is why we in the Congress are engaged in this issue. A resolution would strengthen peace and stability in the volatile eastern Mediterranean and significantly advance the United States national security interests in the region and beyond. It is in the United States national interest to see such a solution. Cyprus is a bridge between East and West. It is a bulkhead in the sea of Islamic fundamentalism. Its solution would ease the tensions between two very important NATO allies.

President Clinton's appointment of Richard Holbrooke as his Special Envoy on Cyprus has us all refocused again on the attention to a resolution to the Cyprus problem at a crucial time. Last week I was proud to circulate and send a letter, and I know that my colleague, the gentleman from Florida and others, joined with me in a letter signed by 67 of our colleagues in the House to President Clinton outlin-

ing what we believe should be the parameters of any Cyprus solution.

Those parameters are basically those that have been recognized I think by the international community through U.N. resolutions, but specifically they are that Cyprus should be reunited with a strong federal government in which the federated states derive their powers from a federal constitution, a democratic constitution which would ensure the rights of all citizens and all communities, and which would guarantee the right to private property and free travel to all parts of the country.

We have heard much about the Greek Cypriots' willingness to compromise, and they have, time and time again. But there are limitations. Turkey must not be allowed to derail once again the tremendous opportunity for peace that exists on the island. While Turkey has verbally committed itself at appropriate moments during these years to pursue better relations with its neighbors, its actions, however, not what it says but what it does, its actions demonstrate a consistent pattern of hostility and unwillingness.

Even the former U.N. Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said so in a report on Cyprus. So if Turkey is serious about its commitment to a permanent solution, then it must bring its views into conformity with the U.N. framework on issues of sovereignty and political equality.

In conclusion, I want to say that Cyprus will not be a prisoner to Turkey's objections or threats. It will not postpone and it should not postpone its well-deserved entry into the European Union over Turkish objections. If European integration is good for Turkey, then it must be good for all of the Cypriot people.

The world must know that in this small Mediterranean island of Cyprus, there are people filled with hope and expectation that this is the moment in which their divided homeland can once and for all be reunited in accordance with international expectations. We cannot rest until the last boot of the last Turkish soldier leaves Cyprus, until a divided country is reunited, until the last divided city of the world, Nicosia, is rejoined, until peace and justice become a reality for all of its citizens, Greeks and Turks alike.

I again commend the distinguished gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for keeping this before the American people, before Congress, and forging ahead.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I thank the gentleman so much for helping in that regard, and for his energy and support for this cause over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MCGOVERN], who is also one of our freshmen, but very much interested in this subject.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I rise to join my distinguished colleague from Florida and all those who acknowledge today this sad date in the

history of Cyprus. I rise to add my name to the long list of Members of Congress who throughout the past 23 years have decried Turkey's brutal invasion of this Mediterranean island.

After 23 years some might be tempted to throw in the towel, to believe that these 23 years of Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus prove the helplessness of the international community in the face of ethnic strife and injustice. Some might even say that our yearly acknowledgment of this tragic event are wasted words.

I say that now more than ever we need to voice our resolve, our ongoing commitment to build a lasting peace for all the people of Cyprus. As we have witnessed in so many parts of the world, peace-building does not happen overnight. It requires hard work, vigilance, and the very resolve that we have maintained over the years and that will help us undo Turkish wrongdoing in Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let our determination falter. To do so would be to allow the persistence of injustice, and equally as important, harm our own interests. Ethnic conflicts, as those in central Africa have so dramatically shown us, tend to spill over and threaten the stability of entire regions, and threatening markets for American business overseas.

The Republic of Cyprus has worked to develop a stable economy and an important economic role for itself in the Mediterranean and Europe. It attracts millions of tourists to its shores annually, and also serves as an economic focal point for the entire eastern Mediterranean region. Furthermore, the Republic of Cyprus is one of the few countries that has met the tough economic criteria of the Maastricht agreement, indicating its promise as a future actor in European economies.

Yet, can there be real economic stability when 160,000 Greek Cypriots remain displaced and away from their rightful homes? Can there be real economic stability when 35,000 Turkish troops threaten security in the Republic of Cyprus? Can there be real economic stability when the northern half of Cyprus languishes in economic and political isolation under a neo-totalitarian regime?

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that much work remains to be done to guarantee the health of the Cypriot economy and our own interests in the region. This work begins right here in Congress. We Members must follow the lead of our Representatives, like the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL], and the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] in their efforts on behalf of Cyprus.

I pledge my support for the resolution they have introduced, House Concurrent Resolution 81. Further, I urge my colleagues to ensure that the for-

eign aid appropriations bill that we submit to the President will include the \$15 million earmark to help Cyprus in these critical times.

Congressional actions, however, are not the only means to complete the work of building a lasting peace in Cyprus. This month's U.N.-sponsored peace talks in New York between Greek and Turkish Cypriots have shown that the international community shares our determination for peace. The European Union, in selecting Cyprus as one of its next members, has especially proven their commitment to progress. Furthermore, the Clinton administration has taken an energetic and more direct approach to the Cyprus issue, and their efforts clearly contributed to the spirit of optimism emerging from this month's U.N. talks.

I further commend the administration's appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Emissary for Cyprus. The Ambassador will be an important instrument for us to bring about change, most notably, in the following areas.

First of all, human rights. Ambassador Holbrooke should be aware of our objections to Turkey's deprivation of Greek Cypriot possessions, its discrimination against the Greek Cypriot community in Northern Cyprus, its restrictions of liberties in the form of curfews for Greek Cypriots, its confinement of 2,000 Greek Cypriots in detention centers, its imprisonment of Greek Cypriots in Turkey, and finally, its repression of legal recourse for Greek Cypriots living in the occupied areas.

Second, Cypriot unity. We must urge the Ambassador to work for a unified Cyprus, supported by a constitution that provides for proportionate and equitable participation of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Finally, missing persons. We will not abandon the American citizens who count among the 1,619 people who disappeared following the Turkish invasion of 1974. With the continued resolve of Congress, the help of the administration, the cooperation of our European U.N. partners, we will succeed in ending a status quo that fractures Cypriot society and stifles democracy and justice for the people of Northern Cyprus. In doing so, our strategic, economic, and humanitarian interests will be well served.

I want to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for his leadership on this issue, which has been steadfast over the years. When I was a congressional aide here working for the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], I was well aware of all of his efforts, and I appreciate his letting me be part of this special order.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments and support.

The division of Cyprus, Mr. Speaker, is perhaps most obvious in the divided capital city of Nicosia, located here on a map about in the international cen-

ter of the island, a city which after the collapse of the Berlin Wall is the last truly divided city in the world. At checkpoints across the city, armed guards stare at each other across an uneasy no man's land. In the center of the city, bullet holes scar buildings and serve as a powerful reminder of the events of 1974.

□ 1745

It is no wonder that the people of Cyprus, both Greek and Turkish, are ready for peace. Nese Yahsin, a Turkish Cypriot poet, was recently featured in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Her poem "Which Half?" captures the spirit of the two people. "Which Half?" is the name of her poem.

She writes:

"They say a person should love their homeland,

that's also what my father often says.
My homeland has been divided in two,
which of the two pieces should I love?"

I find it symbolic that a popular Greek Cypriot composer, Marios Tokas, put this simple four-line verse to music which is often sung by Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

Even with the animosity and inter-community conflict, the divided people of Cyprus have made progress toward bicomunal living. Recently several thousand young Cypriots from both communities were able to come together for the first time in over 23 years for a U.N.-sponsored pop concert. Despite much protest, the concert was successful and Cypriots from both sides of the island took one step closer to bicomunal harmony.

A couple of years ago I led a delegation over the green line to Famagusta, located here, Kyrenia, located up here, and to the tip of Karpassas, the area of the enclaved Cypriots. Sadly, this line not only divides a nation but people as well. In order for Cypriots living in the occupied zone to visit the southern side of the island, they must first fly to Ankara, Turkey, then to Athens, Greece, and then to the unoccupied portion of the island. In contrast, a trip between the occupied ghost town of Famagusta, where I have had relatives who are displaced, and the thriving holiday resort of Protaras, which is just below the line, would only take a matter of minutes by car.

However, I believe that the tide may be changing and unity in the island of Cyprus is a real possibility. Just last week, Greek and Turkish leaders pledged to overcome decades of tension and threats of war by agreeing to respect each other and settle disputes by peaceful means. I am hopeful that the United States appointment of Richard Holbrooke, as others have said, as special envoy to Cyprus will accelerate the peace process.

Mr. Holbrooke's appointment was well received in Cyprus, Greece, and especially in Turkey. Perhaps, because of his experience and respect in the international community, he will be in a better position than his predecessors to negotiate with the Turkish Government. It seems rather odd, though, doesn't it,

to be negotiating for land wrongfully taken in an illegal invasion and recognized by only one country on Earth?

The United States must re-examine its goals and interests in the region. We must send a strong message to all parties involved—that a divided Cyprus is unacceptable. Furthermore, Congress must send a message to Turkey stressing our commitment to finding a lasting peace on the island of Cyprus. In fact, I am an original cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 81, which reaffirms that the status quo on Cyprus is unacceptable and detrimental to the interests of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude on a note of urgency. Now is the time to take the next step in the Cyprus peace process. Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and the United States are finally coming together this month in New York to discuss their respective issues. Moreover, Greece and Turkey, with strong pressure from the United States, recently announced their intentions to settle all disputes in a peaceful manner.

However, once the peace process begins, we should only move forward. We must insist that the United States serve as a constructive participant in the peace settlement in order to ensure a just and lasting solution.

As Members of Congress, we must do everything possible to encourage this peace process. It is only through this process that we will achieve our ultimate goal—to reunite the people and the island of Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. SHERMAN].

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I appreciate the efforts of the distinguished gentleman from Florida on this issue. I want to associate myself with the comments that have come earlier.

Those who are watching us have heard the sad story of how this island was divided by force from an invasion of a foreign army 23 years ago today. They have heard how there are nearly 200,000 refugees, over 1,600 missing persons, 5 of them U.S. citizens. Nicosia is today, as the gentleman from Florida pointed out, the only truly divided city and only divided capital in the world.

A few years ago the most famous divided city was Berlin. President Ronald Reagan said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." It is time for Americans to turn to Mr. Yilmaz and say, "Mr. Yilmaz, tear down this wall. Unite this island. Unite the city of Nicosia."

I do want to bring to the attention of my colleagues renewed interest in the State Department and the Defense Department to transferring several frigates to the Turkish Navy. This is something that should not be done without a lot of pause and a lot of consideration. There are those that say that we should help the Turkish military because it confronts Iran and Iraq, but I would ask, in an effort to contain Iran and Iraq, where will the Turkish Navy deploy the frigates? The last ocean-going vessel seen in eastern Anatolia was Noah's ark.

These frigates ought to be viewed as an expansion of the Turkish Navy. The people of Cyprus are familiar with that

organization's work, and these frigates should not be transferred without an awful lot of careful consideration, both in the administration and here on Capitol Hill.

We are all happy to see Mr. Holbrooke given the responsibility and the mission of trying to bring peace and unity to Cyprus. Now, on the 23d anniversary of a terrible division and illegal invasion, we call for the demilitarization of Cyprus and peace and unity on that island.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in commemorating the somber anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus on July 20, 1974. I would like to thank Congressman BILIRAKIS for holding this special order.

In the 23 years since the invasion of the Sovereign State of Cyprus, Turkey has illegally occupied 40 percent of the island, maintaining 35,000 troops and installing 80,000 colonists in properties seized from Greek Cypriot refugees who have lived there for many generations. As a result of this human tragedy, 200,000 displaced persons have lost their homes and livelihood, another 1,619, including 5 American citizens remain unaccounted for and several thousand have lost their lives. The enclaved people who remained in northern Cyprus are denied basic human rights such as freedom of movement, access to education, religious freedom or political rights. Today the "Green Line" separating the Greek and Turkish portions of the island stands as a testament to this ethnic cleansing.

My colleagues and I have called and will continue to call for a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus problem that will reunify the land and its people. In House Resolution 81, recently reported from the House International Relations Committee, we called for the withdrawal of Turkish troops and an early substantive initiative toward a resolution. We welcome the recent diplomatic efforts with the appointment of Richard Holbrooke as a Special Emissary for Cyprus and the heightened attention given to this issue by the President. The proximity talks concluded in Troutbeck under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary General and upcoming rounds of negotiations represent a critical window of opportunity for a peaceful resolution of this conflict. As we have stressed to the President and the parties to the conflict, such a resolution must be based on international law, democratic principles and respect for human rights, property rights and freedom of movement.

The resolution of this conflict and the prompt accession of Cyprus to the European Union will guarantee the extension of democratic principles and the rule of law in Cyprus and contribute to the stability of this region, which is critical to our national security interests.

Let the 23d anniversary of the invasion be the last time we commemorate this tragic event. I hope that next year we gather to mark the first anniversary of the reunification of Cyprus and the conclusion of this tragic chapter in the long and rich history of the Cypriot people.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to commend the distinguished gentleman from Florida for organizing this special order on Cyprus. MIKE BILIRAKIS has truly been a tireless champion for the peaceful resolution of the Cypriot problem.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues this afternoon in observing the 23d anniversary of Turkey's illegal invasion and continued occupation of the island of Cyprus. On July 20, 1974, Turkey unleashed its army on the Cypriot people. Turkey's violent and bloody invasion of this Mediterranean Island State has been rightfully condemned by the United Nations and all peace loving nations of the world.

I would like to applaud Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recent statement to Cyprus' Foreign Minister Loanis Kasoulides when she said, "What we seek is the reunification of Cyprus. We believe that the division of the island is unacceptable." It is clearly in American national security interests to seek a peaceful settlement to this problem. I would also like to commend President Clinton's decision to appoint ambassador Richard Holbrooke as the U.S. Special Emissary to promote a Cyprus settlement. Ambassador Holbrooke is eminently qualified to meet this new diplomatic challenge.

Mr. Speaker, the 23d anniversary of this brutal invasion should weigh heavily on the conscience of all civilized people of the world who share in the belief that states must eschew the destructive path of naked aggression and abide by the rules of international law. It is time for the world to tell Turkey that the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the status quo must be broken. The paralysis in U.N. sponsored negotiations must be broken. And the intercommunal strife that has torn Cypriots apart must be settled peacefully. But none of these worthy objectives can occur as long as Turkey continues to violate international law and flout U.N. resolutions condemning its oppressive occupation of one-third of Cypriot territory.

It is indeed a sad testament to the intransigence of Turkey's position that 23 years after its invasion of northern Cyprus, it still maintains 35,000 troops on the island. The Ankara government must come to the realization that its troops in northern Cyprus stand as an obstacle to a just and permanent resolution of the Cypriot problem.

President Glafcos Clerides deserves to be commended for his honesty, flexibility and good faith efforts to broach the divide that needlessly separates Greek Cypriots from Turkish Cypriots. President Clerides statesmanlike position is a far cry from the inflexibility reflected by Turkish Cypriot Leader Mr. Denktash.

Mr. Speaker, any permanent resolution to this issue must take into consideration the anxieties and legitimate concerns of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. However, the first step toward reconciliation and reunification must be the end of Turkey's illegal occupation of northern Cyprus.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor today, as we have many times before, to commemorate the sad anniversary of the division of Cyprus. I want to commend my friend and colleague from Florida for initiating this annual special order, and express my deep regret that it is again necessary for us to come together to mark this occasion.

The history of this conflict, marked by strong feelings and a lingering threat of violence, speaks to the difficulty of finding a permanent solution. Over 1,600 Greek Cypriots and 5 Americans are among those who remain missing 23 years after the invasion. A generation of Cypriots on both sides of the green line has

grown up knowing only division, hate and mistrust. Over 35,000 heavily armed Turkish troops continue to occupy the upper one-third of this beautiful country, despite the fact that this military occupation is recognized to be illegal and in violation of numerous U.N. resolutions. Turkish Cypriots are being displaced in their own homeland by settlers from Turkey who do not share their Cypriot culture. While the military division of the island has been a tragedy the world has long recognized, the economic divergence between the two communities which is currently taking place not threatens the future of the island in a different way.

Since I stood here on this date a year ago, the Clinton administration and the international community have made strong statements about their resolve to find a solution to the Cyprus problem. Earlier this year, we heard from the Clinton administration that there would be a big push on Cyprus this year. But we are over half-way through 1997 and a Cyprus solution still seems a distant reality. We appoint envoys and we talk about what needs to be done to bring peace and unity to this tiny Mediterranean country, but when it comes time to deal with hard issues, we have no will to take a tough stand against aggression and in favor of international law. The Cyprus problem has been reviewed at least 150 times during the past 23 years to no avail. We cannot let the 151st effort meet the same fate.

I must say, however, that this year I have some hope that this will be the last time that we have to raise this issue in the context of a continuing occupation of over one-third of Cyprus' territory by Turkish troops. The recent appointment of Richard Holbrooke to mediate a permanent solution to this long-running problem indicates a higher level of attention to this issue than we have seen in recent years, and I am hopeful that this interest on the part of the U.S. Government will translate to a greater commitment among the parties to resolve the issues which keep them divided. I know Mr. Holbrooke's abilities are formidable, and it will take all of his diplomatic skills to reach a just solution. I wish him well and urge him to seek a lasting resolution, and not just a quick fix that cannot be sustained. I am also cautiously optimistic about the U.N. initiative that is currently underway, and the encouraging signals that have come out of last week-end's session in New York.

For Cypriots to have a prosperous and secure future, the Turkish troops must leave, enabling Cyprus to once again be whole. Talks are scheduled to begin in 1998 regarding Cyprus' entry into the European Union, and this impending event will be a catalyst for Greek and Turkish Cypriots of goodwill to find a lasting peace and reunite a divided country. I would urge the administration to raise this issue at the highest levels. I also urge our military officials to talk directly with their counterparts in the Turkish military and encourage them to begin withdrawing the troops as a first step toward unification.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, our country cannot and, in fact, should not involve itself in the negotiations themselves—the parties must resolve this problem themselves. But we can and should do everything possible to establish an environment in which agreement can take place.

Twenty-two years is too long to see a divided island and divided people. It is my deep-

est hope, that the next special order on Cyprus will be to commemorate and celebrate a new found lasting peace and unity in Cyprus.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 23d anniversary of the 1974 illegal Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The continued presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus is a gross violation of human rights and international law.

Fortunately, since the last anniversary of this tragic event, significant and commendable progress has been made toward a peaceful resolution. Foreign Minister of Greece, Theodoros Pangalos, and Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ismail Cem, have made a nonaggression pact. Furthermore, the President of Cyprus, Glafkos Klirides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, met in a first round of United Nations talks. A second round is scheduled for next month.

The United States has also contributed to the region's efforts to reach a settlement. Richard Holbrooke has been appointed U.S. Special Envoy to Cyprus and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was involved in mediating the nonaggression pact between Greece and Turkey. Furthermore, I am pleased with the success that my colleague, Representative BILIRAKIS, and I had in the formation of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues. Only 1 year old, the 62 member caucus has played a leading role in ending the U.S. sale of Seahawk helicopters to Turkey.

The invasion of Cyprus by Turkey was an outrageous show of inhumanity. We must remember that 200,000 Greek Cypriots were expelled from their homes and that 1,614 Greek Cypriots and 5 Americans were seized by Turkish troops and remain unaccounted for to this day. And, consistent with the dictates of human decency, we must strive to reach a peaceful, fair solution without delay.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues rise with me in commemoration of the 23d anniversary of the invasion of Cyprus. Many of my own constituents in Astoria, Queens, continue to suffer as they wait for more information on the fate of their relatives. I am hopeful that a resolution will soon be reached and the pain caused by this inhumane invasion will be alleviated. Thank you.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my distinguished colleague from Florida, Mr. MIKE BILIRAKIS and all those who acknowledge today this sad date in the history of Cyprus. I rise to add my name to the long list of Members of Congress who throughout the past 23 years have decried Turkey's brutal invasion of this Mediterranean island.

After 23 years, some might be tempted to throw in the towel, to believe that these 23 years of Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus prove the helplessness of the international community in the face of ethnic strife and injustice. Some might even say that our yearly acknowledgement of this tragic event are wasted words. I say that now more than ever, we need to voice our resolve, our ongoing commitment to building a lasting peace for all the people of Cyprus. As we've witnessed in so many parts of the world, peace building does not happen overnight—it requires hard work, vigilance, and the very resolve that we've maintained over the years and that will help us undo Turkey's wrongdoing in Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let our determination falter. To do so would allow the persistence of injustice, and, equally as important,

harm our own interests. Ethnic conflicts, as Central Africa has so dramatically shown us, tend to spill over borders, compromising the stability of entire regions, and threatening markets for American business overseas. The Republic of Cyprus has worked to develop a stable economy and an important economic role for itself in the Mediterranean and Europe. It attracts millions of tourists to its shores annually, and also serves as an economic focal point for the entire Eastern Mediterranean region. Furthermore, the Republic of Cyprus is one of the few countries that has met the tough economic criteria of the Maastricht agreement, indicating its promise as a future actor in European economics.

Yet, can there be real economic stability when 160,000 Greek Cypriots remain displaced and away from their rightful homes? Can there be real economic stability when 35,000 Turkish troops threaten the security of the Republic of Cyprus? Can there be real economic stability when the northern half of Cyprus languishes in economic and political isolation under a near totalitarian regime? It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that much work remains to be done to guarantee the health of the Cypriot economy and our own interests in the region.

This work begins right here in Congress. We Members must follow the lead of Representatives GILMAN, HAMILTON, PORTER, BILIRAKIS, ENGEL, and MALONEY in their efforts on behalf of Cyprus, and I pledge my support for the resolution that they have introduced, House Congressional Resolution 81. Further, I urge my colleagues to ensure that the Foreign Aid Appropriations bill that we submit to the President will include the \$15 million earmark to help Cyprus in these critical times.

Congressional actions, however, are not the only means to complete the work of building a lasting peace in Cyprus. This month's U.N.-sponsored peace talks in New York between Greek and Turkish Cypriots have shown that the international community shares our determination for peace. The European Union, in selecting Cyprus as one of its next members, has especially proven their commitment to progress.

Furthermore, The Clinton administration has taken an energetic and more direct approach to the Cyprus issue, and their efforts clearly contributed to the spirit of optimism emerging from this month's U.N. talks. I further commend the administration's appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Envoy for Cyprus. The Ambassador will be an important instrument for us to bring about change, most notably in the following areas:

First of all, human rights. Ambassador Holbrooke should be aware of our objections to Turkey's deprivation of Greek Cypriot possessions, its discrimination against the Greek Cypriot community in Northern Cyprus, its restriction of liberties in the form of curfews for Greek Cypriots, its confinement of 2,000 Greek Cypriots in detention centers, its imprisonment of Greek Cypriots in Turkey, and finally its suppression of legal recourse for Greek Cypriots living in the occupied areas.

Second, Cypriot unity. We must urge the Ambassador to work for a unified Cyprus, supported by a constitution that provides for proportionate and equitable participation of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

And finally, missing persons. We will not abandon the American citizens who count among the 1,619 people who disappeared following the Turkish invasion of 1974.

With the continued resolve of Congress, the help of the administration, and the cooperation of our European and United Nations partners, we will succeed in ending a status quo that fractures Cypriot society and stifles democracy and justice for the people of Northern Cyprus. In doing so, our strategic, economic, and humanitarian interests will be served.

I thank the gentleman from Florida for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. FRELINGHYSEN. Mr. Speaker, for 23 years now, the citizens of Cyprus have had to endure a national divided by a 112-mile barbed-wire fence guarded by thousands of soldiers on either side.

Since the Turkish invasion of the island on July 20, 1974, the Turkish Government has fortified the northern section of Cyprus with hundreds of tanks with more than half a billion dollars per year in military spending for only 175,000 inhabitants. In fact, defense spending accounts for approximately three-quarters of the gross domestic product for the Turkish-occupied section of Cyprus. It is time to send the Turkish tanks home and let the citizens of Cyprus decide the future of their island.

While appeals for self-determination and peace continue to fall on deaf ears in Ankara, there is renewed hope for peace and freedom in Cyprus. United States Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, who brokered the Dayton Peace Accord for Bosnia, was recently assigned to be United States Special Emissary for Cyprus. This is a clear sign that the Clinton administration is finally giving Cyprus the diplomatic attention that it so desperately needs. I have long held the belief that the United States, along with the United Nations, the European Union, and interested countries can play a critical and constructive role in facilitating efforts toward a peaceful, just, and lasting resolution for the Cypriot people.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I, gathered here today, stand ready to do what we can to assist Ambassador Holbrooke in his efforts during the peace process. In fact I recently signed the following letter, along with many of my colleagues, to President Clinton which expresses our hope and support for a just and speedy resolution for the people of Cyprus. I would like to include the text of that letter for the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, July 10, 1997.

THE PRESIDENT,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to welcome your appointment of Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke as your Special Emissary for Cyprus. The decision is certainly a positive development and reflects the high priority the Administration is attaching to the just and speedy resolution of the Cyprus issue.

The remainder of the current year, as well as next year, offers a window of opportunity and new hope for progress on the issue. The meetings this week in New York between President Clerides and Mr. Denktash can be a positive development. We also believe that the prospect of Cyprus' accession to the European Union, with negotiations scheduled to start early next year, can act as a catalyst and reinvigorate efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement. We hope that all sides will recognize the benefits of such a prospect and grasp this significant opportunity.

We, in Congress, have long considered the forcible division and foreign occupation of Cyprus as unacceptable and a continuing

source of tension and instability in an area, which undermines our national interests. We have therefore consistently supported a peaceful, just and lasting resolution of the Cyprus problem that will reunify the island and its people. Such a solution will also strengthen peace and stability in the volatile Eastern Mediterranean and significantly advance our national security interests in the region and beyond.

We firmly believe that the United States, in coordination with the United Nations, the European Union and interested governments can play a critical and constructive role in facilitating efforts towards this end.

We wish to express our views on what the basis of such a solution should be. We believe that the principles of this resolution should include a reunited country, with a strong federal government in which the federated states derive their powers from the federal constitution. A democratic constitution would create such a federal government and would insure the rights of all citizens, including the rights of all communities. The Constitution would also guarantee private property rights and free travel to all parts of the country.

We believe that these principles are based on international law, the provisions of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, our democratic principles, a respect for human rights, and would be in accordance with the norms and requirements for accession to the European Union. A solution that does not encompass those principles would not lead to a lasting peace.

Your appointment of Ambassador Holbrooke, the prospect of the European Union accession negotiations and recent positive developments in the Eastern Mediterranean give all of us hope that we will, at long last, witness real progress towards a final resolution of this tragic problem. We are ready to assist your efforts, and the efforts of your emissary, in the best possible way and look forward to cooperating with you closely during the process. We wish to be kept closely advised of the progress that takes place.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez, Luis V. Gutierrez, Thomas J. Manton, Peter Deutsch, Donald M. Payne, George W. Gekas, Ed Pastor, Robert E. Andrews, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Alcee L. Hastings, Brad Sherman, Bob Clement, Albert R. Wynn, Rubén Hinojosa, Bob Filner, John Lewis, Frank Pallone, Jr., John Edward Porter, Sander Levin, Carrie P. Meek, Patrick J. Kennedy, Gary Ackerman, Maurice D. Hinchey, Bill Pascrell, Jr., William O. Lipinski, Marty Meehan, Tom Lantos, David E. Bonior, Michael R. McNulty, Carolyn B. Maloney, Michael Pappas, Stephen Horn, Michael Bilirakis, Mike Forbes, Curt Weldon, Robert T. Matsui, Eliot L. Engel, Earl Blumenauer, Steven R. Rothman, Sherrod Brown, Tim Holden, Esteban E. Torres, John F. Tierney, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Nancy Pelosi, Joseph P. Kennedy II, Darlene Hooley, Charles E. Schumer, Rod R. Blagojevich, Gene Green, Ed Bryant, Nita Lowey, Ron Klink, Walter Capps, Sue W. Kelly, Jim McDermott, Glenn Poshard, Sam Gejdenson, Owen B. Pickett, Herbert H. Bateman, Jane Harman, Howard L. Berman, Rod Frelinghuysen, Elizabeth Furse, Marcy Kaptur, Dennis J. Kucinich, Mike Doyle.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and frustration that I rise this evening to commemorate the 23d anniversary of an international crisis. On July 20, 1974, Turkish

forces invaded the Island Nation of Cyprus, capturing nearly 40 percent of the country and 70 percent of its economic wealth. The invasion was a craven act of aggression resulting in thousands of deaths, the expulsion of 200,000 Greek-Cypriots from the northern territory of Cyprus and today 1,619 people, including some Americans, are still unaccounted for. The Turkish Government's unjust actions are atrocious violations of human rights.

A permanent reminder of this tragic event is the Green Line, a barbed wire fence that severs the nation, cutting across family and community ties that had been intact for generations. This oppressive occupation is illegal and the Turkish Government's self proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not recognized in the international community. Despite the government of Cyprus making every attempt possible to bring peace to the region, Turkish troops, that number well over 35,000, are still intact. Turkish warplanes continue to fly over Cypriot airspace undeterred by the ban on military planes overflying the island. Turkey simply refuses to cooperate in seeking a compromise and has even threatened war if Greece asserts its legitimate rights.

The United States Government has always supported a solution to the Cyprus crisis and it's important to continue, in fact, it is time for Congress to get even more vocal on the issue. Fortunately, there are signs indicating this is becoming a top foreign policy priority as Richard Holbrooke will be a special envoy to frame a settlement. This is encouraging news as Holbrooke was the key negotiator of the 1995 accord that ended the ethnic war in Bosnia. By pressing Turkey to remove its illegal occupation and to constructively work for a resolution we look forward to celebrating the end of this conflict. Until that happens, the Turkish Government must know the United States will continue to mark this anniversary and speak out for the suffering in Cyprus.

As founders of democracy, Greece and the United States share a special and unique kinship. The Republic of Cyprus is an example of a country that has maintained its democratic institutions under extremely difficult circumstances. It is for these reasons that I vehemently oppose the continued Turkish occupation of Cyprus. I am a proud sponsor of H.R. 81 the demilitarization of Cyprus proclaiming the status quo unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Florida, Congressman BILIRAKIS, for once again taking a leading role in organizing these annual special orders. Rest assured I will continue to be a supporter of Cyprus' security interests and urge all Members to support peace and reconciliation in the region.

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, as a new Member, it is an honor to participate in this important special order. As a Member of the International Relations Committee who is privileged to represent many Cypriot-Americans, I believe it is imperative to call attention this evening to the 24th anniversary of the tragic invasion of Cyprus.

First, I want to commend the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS], and the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY], not just for organizing tonight's event, but for their leadership as co-chairs of the Congressional

caucus on Hellenic Issues. I am proud to have joined more than 60 of my colleagues on the Caucus, whose goal is to advance our national interests by educating Members on the military, diplomatic and human rights issues that are paramount in this region.

Tonight, as we discuss the beautiful island of Cyprus, we reflect on the past and look with hope toward the future. Sadly, the event we commemorate this evening is one of the most horrifying and tragic in recent history. Twenty-four years ago, Turkish forces invaded Cyprus. As a result, 200,000 Greek Cypriots were evicted from their homes and watched as their property was confiscated. Most tragically, more than 1,600 Cypriots and 5 Americans were captured by Turkish troops and remain unaccounted for to this day.

For almost a quarter of a century, the situation has not demonstrably improved. The Turks still occupy over a third of the island with 35,000 heavily armed troops. Human rights abuses are still common, violent clashes between the two sides flare up with regularity, and the families of the missing still await any news about their loved ones.

Unfortunately, this pattern of behavior on Turkey's part is not restricted to Cyprus. Earlier this year, the International Relations Committee noted in the State Department funding bill that the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul has been the subject to terrorist threats without the protection of the Turkish government. And just yesterday, the Washington Post editorialized about Turkish mistreatment of its Kurdish minority and of journalists who write about this conflict.

But as we lament two dozen years of despair, recent events give us some cause for hope. Mr. Speaker, I believe President Clinton demonstrated his commitment to finding a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus conflict by naming Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as special U.S. Envoy. Mr. Holbrooke's diplomatic skills are legendary, and I know that he will work very hard to bring peace and human rights to this troubled land.

In another development, President Clirides and Turkish-Cypriot leader Denktash met recently for the first time in almost 3 years, and plan to meet again next month. I join my colleagues in urging both leaders to negotiate in good faith so that Cyprus will once again become a united country, free from foreign troops, and a bastion of human rights, peace and serenity. I thank my colleagues for inviting me to participate in this important special order.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Greek-Cypriot people and express my support for the unified Cyprus. For too long, Greek-Cypriots have been living in a divided nation. It is my firm belief that the time has come for a reversal of the unlawful territorial gains made by Turkish forces in 1974, and for a unified Cyprus to once again assume its rightful place among nations.

I am optimistic that a unified Cyprus will begin to emerge in the coming months, especially given the Clinton administration's new commitment to this troubled part of the world. I believe the appointment of Mr. Richard Holbrooke as our Nation's special envoy for Cyprus marks the beginning of this long-awaited transformation.

Greek-Cypriots have always been the majority in Cyprus. Unfortunately, the tragic events of July 20, 1974 created a divided Cy-

prus. When Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960, Turkish-Cypriots aggressively sought to dominate the newly independent state of Cyprus. While Cyprus' 1960 constitution provided for power-sharing between the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot communities, the Turkish-Cypriot community, which constituted 18% of the island's population, gained veto powers over legislation and became entitled to a disproportionate share of governmental posts.

Mr. Speaker, on July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus and declared victory by securing 37% of the island's territory. This unilateral military action led to the flight of thousands of refugees from their ancestral homeland. To this day, over 35,000 Turkish troops remain on Cyprus. That is 35,000 too many troops. That is 35,000 too many war-makers. What we need on the island of Cyprus is not more troops, not more armed forces from the Republic of Turkey, but peace-makers, people who are willing to secure a genuine peace, restoring unity to the proud people of Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, my final remarks concern the solemn memory of the 1,619 Greek-Cypriots, who to this day, remain unaccounted for after Turkey's 1974 invasion. Among these individuals were five Americans, who like the others, share a fate unknown and whose loss pains their respective families to this day. So as the reconciliation process moves forward, I for one, strongly believe that officials from the Republic of Turkey must account for the missing. They must work hard to bring to a close the tragedy born out of their decision to invade Cyprus in 1974.

On behalf of my Greek and Cypriot-American constituents, it is a solemn honor to join with them on this day and stand in solidarity with their cause.

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, July 20th will mark the 23d anniversary of Turkey's illegal invasion of Cyprus and their continued occupation of the country of Cyprus. I rise today to join my colleagues to commemorate this event. I particularly want to thank Congressman BILIRAKIS for arranging this special order.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important event in the history of Cyprus because it marks the end of the Greek Cypriots freedom to practice their religion, educate their children as they see fit and express themselves in an open and free manner.

Since Turkey first invaded Cyprus in 1974, 1,619 people, including five Americans, were last seen alive in the occupied areas of Cyprus and have never been accounted for. We must not let the passage of years weaken our determination to pressure the Turkish Government to provide answers for the families of the missing. We cannot forget that their suffering continues.

Last summer, Cyprus was witness to some of the worst outbreaks of violence in their region since 1974. The two separate hostile incidents left two young men dead and many injured. This illustrates the need to bring to an end the illegal occupation of the island of Cyprus. Although there has been little reescalation of violence since then, an uneasy calm continues to hand over the divided island.

During my time in Congress, I have taken an active interest in Greek issues. As a member of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, I have continuously strived to find a solution to the problem that plagues Cyprus and her people. I have appreciated the opportunity to work

with my colleagues in Congress on a number of other issues which directly impact the Greek and Greek-American communities.

A number of pieces of legislation addressing the Cyprus issue and those related to it have been introduced during the 105th Congress and I am proud to be a cosponsor of these important bills. In particular, House Concurrent Resolution 81 calls for a United States initiative seeking a just and peaceful resolution of the situation in Cyprus. In addition, H.R. 1361 would prohibit economic support fund assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for the Government of Turkey for Fiscal Year 1998 unless they make certain improvements relating to human rights.

This week in the Catskill Mountains a glimmer of hope has emerged through the tension which has hunted the island of Cyprus for over 20 years. The two leaders of Cyprus, Rauf Denktash and Glafcos Clerides, have been enemies in the past, however, their discussions seem to be leading in the direction of finding a solution to the problems they, and their people, have been facing for so many years. I was pleased to learn of the positive feedback given by the leaders and by the United Nations about what has been accomplished during these talks so far and the hope for a positive outcome.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke for becoming the new special emissary for Cyprus. His past success and leadership on the peace process in Bosnia was an asset to Bosnia, the United States and the entire international community. I am confident his expertise and rigorous diplomacy will produce a positive outcome to the situation in Cyprus.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to meet with Rev. Christophorou Christophorou, the president of the Cyprus National Committee of Struggle for the Missing Persons, during the annual conference of PSEKA. We discussed the issue of those missing from Cyprus as a result of the Turkish invasion of the 1974 and other issues important to the people of Cyprus.

Turkey holds the key to ending the Cyprus situation. It is my hope that next year we will be celebrating the end of the strangling occupation of Turkish troops on the island of Cyprus and the people of Cyprus may once again enjoy the freedoms so many of us enjoy and take for granted.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I would like first to thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, for organizing this special order acknowledging the 23d anniversary of the Turkish occupation of the island of Cyprus. It is imperative that we correct Cyprus' situation as a divided state. The people of Cyprus are divided into two states ruled by two governments. The Greek Cypriots in the south are ruled by the Republic of Cyprus, erected in 1960 when independence was granted. The north has been occupied by the Turkish since 1975, when they illegally invaded the island.

The divided Cyprus is a story of two nations; one a well balanced democracy with three thriving parties, the other a militarily occupied area. The economic disparity in the divided Cyprus is even more pronounced. The south's economy is booming as the result of their low trade barriers and free market economies. Their GNP has risen at a record-breaking rate as unemployment falls. Meanwhile,

the economy of the north has stagnated and inflation run rampant at 70 percent as the Turkish close it off from the rest of the world. For there ever to be peace and prosperity on the island of Cyprus, a unified independent government protecting all of Cyprus must be created. A critical part of such an event will be the withdrawal of Turkish troops from northern Cyprus. Only then will Cyprus become the thriving member of the European trade community it has the potential to become.

In my State of Rhode Island we have a strong Greek and Cypriot community, which has brought the plight of Cyprus to my attention. Only when we, in Congress, show our strong support for a unified Cyprus will the necessary changes occur.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in marking a sad day, the 23d anniversary of the Turkish invasion and partition of the Republic of Cyprus. I would like to thank and comment Mr. BILIRAKIS of Florida for his vigilance and commitment to a peaceful resolution of this illegal act which cast a pall on the world stage on July 20, 1974.

This is, perhaps, the first time in 23 years that we can reasonably talk about an end to the standoff on Cyprus. Many of us in the House have long fought for peace, some from the very moment the Turkish army landed on the island nation's northern shores, depositing thousands of troops and armor in a bald-faced land grab. Tragically, it was with U.S. arms in hand that Turkish soldiers committed their brutal acts of atrocity. Today, only Turkey recognizes the Turkish Cypriot state which declared independence in 1983. No other nation has taken that step.

Recently, President Clinton showed us reason for hope. With the appointment of Richard Holbrooke as his special envoy for Cyprus, the President gave every indication that the clock is ticking, and he intends there be peace on Cyprus. Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders sat down in upstate New York only last week to lay the groundwork for future talks. All of this is encouraging, and significant for a region which could explode at any moment. At present Cyprus is a tinderbox: 35-thousand Turkish troops are on the island and stand ready to rip it apart. Despite the tension on the island, and the longstanding animosity between Greece and Turkey, it has been Greece which has shown a desire to move the peace process forward, sounding a conciliatory tone toward Turkey, a move which I commend and support.

While we work for an end to the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, we must do so within the context of a just peace. Peace should come with a full accounting of the atrocities committed against the Greek Cypriot community. Nearly 2,000 people, including 5 Americans, are still missing, unaccounted for, 23 years after the invasion; thousands of Greek Cypriots have been uprooted from their homes. We cannot allow more than two decades of human rights abuses to go uninvestigated.

A just peace, Mr. Speaker, is a lasting peace. The people of Cyprus deserve no less.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today's special order on Cyprus comes on the eve of the 23d anniversary of the brutal invasion by Turkish troops. I congratulate my friend, the gentleman from Florida, [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for organizing this special order. As we observe this sad anniversary, the international community is still faced

with the fact that in excess of 30,000 Turkish military personnel remain on the island to enforce an illegal partition and protect a self-proclaimed government that has been recognized by only one other country—Turkey itself.

Those of us in Congress who have supported a negotiated settlement to the dispute which has led to the division of Cyprus are painfully aware of the complexities of the issue, the injustices committed, and particularly the suffering over these many long years of the Cypriot people on both sides of the green line.

Indeed, Cyprus has become a code word for stalemate and intractability in international diplomacy.

Last week there occurred a new, positive development in Madrid on the fringes of the NATO summit. The Foreign Ministers of both Greece and Turkey met together under the auspices of our own Government and agreed on a set of principles to guide the resolution of disputes between our two NATO allies. The essential element of the statement issued by the Foreign Ministers is that disputes between Greece and Turkey are to be settled through peaceful means and will be based on the mutual recognition of their legitimate interests. While this communique was related specifically to disputes in the Aegean, I am hopeful that it will inaugurate an era of better understanding on all the issues that concern Greece and Turkey, including Cyprus itself. Although a resolution of the Cyprus problem depends first and foremost upon the will of the Cypriot people themselves, regardless of their ethnic background, certainly a better relationship between Greece and Turkey can play a critical role in helping resolve this vexing international dispute.

It is gratifying that the Clinton administration seems more interested than in the past in finding a solution for Cyprus. The announcement last month that President Clinton has appointed Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Envoy for Cyprus is also promising. If Ambassador Holbrooke brings the same energy and determination to Cyprus as he brought to ending the conflict in Bosnia, it is hopeful that he will be able to convince the Cypriot people to put behind them their differences and work out a just and peaceful settlement.

The shape of a possible settlement is out there. I believe that both President Clerides and Mr. Denktash are men who can rise above the recent enmity that has developed between the two communities, and find a way to reunite the island based on mutual goodwill and confidence. We should all encourage the two leaders to make the most of the direct talks which began in New York last week.

Old history and grievances must be placed behind us as we seek to resolve the division of Cyprus. It is hoped that both sides will reach within themselves to find the resolve to settle this persistent problem. The Greek Cypriots have demonstrated flexibility and the spirit of compromise in recent rounds of U.N. sponsored talks. We call upon Mr. Denktash to demonstrate the same flexibility.

Twenty-three years is too long a time. There are now young people coming of age in Cyprus who know nothing other than the experience of living in a divided society. For this next generation what can guide them in learning to accept life with a neighboring but different culture? Time is running out for the pos-

sibility of achieving a peaceful settlement, and the people of Cyprus now have to ask themselves if the enmity between the two communities is truly worth the price of a divided nation.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 23d anniversary of the invasion of Cyprus by Turkish military forces, and to express my support for U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan as he strives to bring a long awaited peace to this troubled island.

After 23 years, the people of northern Cyprus continue to be ruled by Rauf Denktash, who assumed control on July 20, 1974, with the assistance of 6,000 Turkish troops. There are still 1,619 people whose whereabouts remain unknown in the wake of the Turkish assault that captured 40 percent of the island. Of the 1,619 missing, 5 are United States citizens.

The United Nations has always recognized the Greek Cypriot Government as the legitimate government of the island, while Turkey remains the only country that recognizes Denktash's government and supports it with 30,000 troops scattered at military posts throughout the north of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot Government has continually refused to make progress toward a solution to the conflict.

In the past years, the international community has attempted to pressure Turkey to pull its hand away from the Cyprus conflict. Last year, the Clinton administration made an attempt to ease tensions by sending Special Presidential Emissary Richard Beattie to the region. Beattie's efforts were unsuccessful because neither Turkey or the Turkish Cypriot Government seemed willing to work toward facilitating change.

Last week, the United Nations brought the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders together in upstate New York for several days of talks. President Glafco Clerides of Cyprus and Rauf Denktash are meeting face to face for the first time in 3 years. The aims of the talks are to achieve a bizonal, bicomunal federation between the two sides. It is my belief that the United Nations, the European Union, and the United States should continue to keep pressure on the Turkish Cypriot leaders and the Turkish Government in order to facilitate a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

Mr. Speaker, the Cypriot people deserve peace and prosperity. Let us send a clear message that the United States Congress supports the United Nations efforts to bring peace to the people of Cyprus.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, July 20, 1997, marks the 23d anniversary of the illegal invasion and occupation of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey. The legacy of this invasion and subsequent division of Cyprus continues to this day, making Cyprus the only country in the world divided by a wall. Constructed by the invading Turks in an effort to divide the island, the Green Line, as it has become known, is a symbol of the ugly face of naked aggression.

This aggression came on July 20, 1974, in the form of 6,000 Turkish troops and 40 tanks. Turkish forces successfully seized 40 percent of the island which represented 70 percent of the Nation's economic health; 200,000 Greek Cypriots were forced from their homes by the invading forces, and to this day, 1,619 people remain unaccounted for—5 of them American citizens.

Turkey has since fortified its illegally obtained gains by placing 30,000 troops and 65,000 settlers in the land that rightfully belongs to the forcibly ousted Greek Cypriots. We simply cannot validate an unwarranted, unprovoked invasion of a peaceful, self-governing republic by allowing Turkish occupation to continue. The presence of the Turkish troops represents the continuing shackles of occupation and oppression and also demonstrates a gross violation of human rights and international law.

I am encouraged by the undaunted spirit and courage of the Greek Cypriots in the face of this occupation. That is why I hope that the 23d anniversary that July 20 signifies will rekindle American and international intolerance of aggression and inspire us to nullify the rewards Turkey has reaped as a result of this illegal action. The Greek Cypriots deserve this justice and I remain committed to efforts to deliver this to them.

Ms. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay tribute to a dubious anniversary. As we sit here, after 23 years of Turkish occupation of Cyprus, it is especially appropriate to recognize the struggle for the freedom of all Cypriots that has been waged for more than two decades.

It was over two decades ago that 6,000 Turkish troops and 40 tanks landed on the north coast of Cyprus, and more than 200,000 Cypriots were driven from their homes and forced to live under foreign occupation. Over two decades ago, and still Turkey has thousands of troops on the island. Over two decades ago, and we still don't know what became of the 1,614 Greek Cypriots and 5 American citizens missing since the Turkish invasion.

That is why I'm pleased that we have this opportunity today. Today, we remember what happened in Cyprus 23 years ago and we pledge to fight to end the occupation. Today, we also look toward the promise of the future. President Clinton recently demonstrated his commitment to solving this difficult issue by appointing Richard Holbrooke as the special envoy to Cyprus. I applaud the President for this decision and I hope that it will lead to a real solution for Cyprus. I hope that this time next year we will be standing here on the House floor celebrating the end of the Turkish occupation.

We must continue to fight against injustice in Cyprus. We must continue to provide aid to Cyprus to help that country deal with the terrible problems caused by more than two decades of Turkish occupation. And, above all, we must continue to keep the plight of the Cypriots on the minds of everyone around the world.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, July 20, we will be commemorating the 23d anniversary of a tragic day for the democratic people of Cyprus. That was the day in 1974 that a foreign army invaded and occupied the northern one-third of the island.

Since that time the Cypriot people have been struggling to regain their freedom and the House of Representatives and the American people need to be aware of the plight and the suffering of the people of Cyprus. Therefore, I am very pleased that Congressman BILIRAKIS has called this special order so that I may join with him and my other colleagues to bring the suffering of Cyprus to the attention of the general public.

We should note that there are encouraging signs of a growing commitment to find a peaceful resolution to this problem. The President has appointed Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Envoy on Cyprus. Ambassador Holbrooke played a key role in bringing the warring factions in Bosnia to the peace table and to agreement on the Dayton peace agreement. Ambassador Holbrooke, along with the ongoing effort by the United Nations and the European Union member countries, will try to finally bring the 23-year-old dispute to a peaceful resolution.

A peaceful resolution to the Cyprus problem is not just in the interest of the Cypriot people. As a country at the cross roads of the great civilizations of Europe and the Middle East, Cyprus has long been an island where people from all these civilizations and cultures mingled freely and in harmony. Cyprus can and needs to play a stabilizing role in this volatile region of the world, as it once did before. That would be in the United States interest, as well as in the interest of the Cypriot people.

But no peaceful resolution will ever succeed while a foreign military force occupies the northern one-third of the island.

The people of Cyprus understood their cultural diversity and were able to live peacefully together for hundreds of years. Outside forces intervened and then invaded Cyprus, caused the division of the island by barbed wire.

Many thousands of Cypriots were forced to leave their homes and have since been prevented from returning. Hundreds, called the enclaved, remain in the military occupied northern part of the island and are suffering many human rights violations under police-state conditions. They are prevented from freely communicating with or meeting with each other or the outside world. These Greek Cypriots, many of whom are elderly, are forced to send their children away to school and suffer many deprivations and hardships and human rights violations.

I filed legislation in the last Congress and am prepared to refile it if a peaceful resolution is not found to relieve the suffering of the enclaved. This legislation would this redirect United States foreign assistance away from the country who maintains a military force in northern Cyprus and redirect that assistance to the suffering people of the enclaved.

Within the last 12 months, the situation had temporarily become very tense and threatened to escalate which could have set off an international chain reaction, causing many deaths. Thanks to the efforts of cool heads, tensions were reduced. But the world can ill afford to allow the forcibly divided Cyprus situation to continue much longer. We must find a way to find a peaceful, lasting, and real resolution to this problem.

I thank the Greek-American community for bringing the plight of people of Cyprus to our attention and for their ongoing efforts to reunite the island of Cyprus. Recent signs are encouraging but a resolution to the CYPRUS problem remains elusive. We must all keep up the pressure on the Clinton administration and the United Nations and the European Union.

I wish to commend Ambassador Holbrooke and the administration for their efforts thus far and urge them to continue their good work on the crucial problem of Cyprus.

I congratulate my fellow Floridian Congressman BILIRAKIS, for being the guiding force in Congress to bring this issue of peace and true

freedom for all of Cyprus to the attention of the House and the general public.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 23d anniversary of Turkey's invasion, and subsequent occupation, of Cyprus.

In 1960, Cyprus gained its political independence from the British Empire. Fourteen short years later, however, this independence was shattered when 6,000 Turkish troops and 40 tanks invaded the north coast of Cyprus and proceeded to occupy nearly 40 percent of the island. The ensuing fighting killed thousands of Cypriots and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes. Today, there are 1,619 people still missing, 5 of whom are U.S. citizens.

Twenty-three years after the invasion, we gather to remember those who died and to ensure that the world never forgets that Cyprus is a land divided. More than 35,000 Turkish troops continue to occupy Cyprus in violation of international law. A barbed wire fence cuts across the island, separating families from their property and splitting this once beautiful country in half.

I am pleased that President Clinton has taken positive steps to resolve the situation in Cyprus, including his recent appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as a special envoy to Cyprus. I strongly encourage Ambassador Holbrooke to hold Turkey accountable for its brutal occupation of Cyprus and to ensure that the island is returned to its rightful owners.

The occupation of Cyprus is one of the reasons that I offered an amendment to the Fiscal Year 1997 Foreign Operations appropriations bill that would have effectively cut \$25 million in United States economic aid to Turkey. This amendment, which the House overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 301 to 118, sends a clear message to Turkey that its illegal and immoral occupation of Cyprus will not be tolerated by this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleagues in standing up against Turkish oppression in Cyprus. I would especially like to extend my thanks to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for his tireless work to ensure that the people of Cyprus are not forgotten. Twenty-three years is a long time to wait, but it is my sincerest hope that our actions will help persuade Turkey to end its unlawful occupation of Cyprus.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 23d anniversary of Turkey's invasion of the peaceful, self-governing island of Cyprus. For 23 years, Turkey has tried to make the island its own. It has attempted to do this by installing 80,000 illegal colonists, by maintaining over 30,000 heavily armed troops on the island, and by moving 200,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes. Through 23 years of hardship, the people of Cyprus have held on to a hope for peace and for the return of their island. Their purpose has not been revenge, but negotiation and reconciliation. Here in the House of Representatives, we have the opportunity to help the cause of justice. Several colleagues and I sent a letter recently to the President outlining our concern for the delicate peace process in Cyprus. We wrote welcoming the appointment of Ambassador Holbrooke as Special Emissary for Cyprus, and what we believe a lasting and peaceful solution should look like: a reunited country, with a strong federal system; a democratic constitution which would insure the rights of

the minority; and guaranteed property right and free travel. I then went one step further and wrote directly to Ambassador Holbrooke and asked him the following two questions: First, if the Turkish Government fails to negotiate in good faith, what actions, sanctions or otherwise is the United States prepared to take? Second, if the Turkish Government fails to negotiate in good faith, what incentives will the United States provide Turkey, in recognition of this major step forward? While I have not yet received a response to my questions, there is no doubt in my mind that this Congress can have a positive effect on the outcome of peace for the island nation.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 388, legislation I have introduced that would cut off all economic and military assistance to Turkey until that country complies with several conditions, including progress toward withdrawal from Cyprus. As saddened as I am by their plight, as dismal as their treatment by a foreign force has been, we should all be inspired by the patience, courage and faith shown by the people of Cyprus. Let us make this the year when the people of Cyprus once again can govern themselves with peace and dignity.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my esteemed colleague from Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS for organizing this special order on the 23d anniversary of the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus.

In 1974, Turkey launched an invasion of the island of Cyprus that resulted in thousands of deaths, the displacement of over 200,000 people from their homes, and the occupation of 38 percent of the island of Cyprus by Turkish armed forces.

Today, over 35,000 Turkish soldiers and 80,000 Turkish "colonists" occupy the northern portions of the island. They are divided from the Greek-Cypriots by a barbed-wire fence referred to as the "Green Line." This buffer zone is patrolled and maintained by a 1,160-strong U.N. peace keeping force. Periodic outbreaks of violence have broken out along this dividing line. Just last year, an unarmed Greek teenager bled to death after being shot by Turkish troops within sight of peacekeepers. The peacekeepers attempted to rescue the youth, but were fired upon from the Turkish side.

The United States must work to put a stop to this cycle of violence and separation.

I am encouraged by President Clinton's appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as our Nation's Special Emissary to Cyprus. It is my hope that this, along with renewed efforts by the United Nations and the European Union, will help bring an end to the long entrenched disputes that separate the two sides.

I am also encouraged by the renewal of talks in New York between Greek Cypriot President Glafcos and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash. While the two remain far from an agreement, the leaders have at least resumed a dialogue and agreed to additional talks in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, and in Geneva later this year.

According to U.N. Special Envoy Diego Cordovez, the two agree that a settlement is necessary for Cyprus to survive, but still disagree over the particulars of what should be included any final agreement. My hope is that the talks will result in a settlement that includes the complete removal of all foreign forces from the island and the establishment

of a free and fair democratic government that represents the interests of all the island's citizens.

In the absence of such an agreement, I would urge the two parties to again consider the option of demilitarization of the island. This could be used as a first step to build confidence between the two sides and remove negative foreign influences from the equation.

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, today marks the twenty-third anniversary of an extremely troubling event; the invasion and occupation of the northern part of Cyprus. This takeover was an escalation of unrest and violence that Cyprus had been experiencing since it gained independence from Great Britain in 1960.

As a result of this tragic event, 1,614 Greek Cypriots and five Americans have been missing since the 1974 invasion. In 1996 the Turkish Cypriot President Rauf Denkash, reported that the missing Greek Cypriots had been handed over to Turkish Cypriot fighters who carried out revenge massacres, killing all of those who were missing.

Turkish troops now occupy thirty-eight percent of Cyprus, a segment that is recognized only by the State of Turkey. This occupation has led to the displacement of thousands of Greek Cypriots from their hometowns, friends, and families. This is an unacceptable situation, and our Nation should act decisively to right this wrong.

The situation in Cyprus continues to get worse. In 1996, the violence in Cyprus reached its worst level since the 1974 invasion. Violence in the buffer zone increased in 1996 as many supporters from both sides were killed throughout the year. In addition to the increase in violence, the Greek Cypriots have begun purchasing SA-10 missiles from Russia, which they will begin receiving in February 1998. This has increased tensions, as the Turkish Cypriots insist they will maintain their troops in Cyprus as the level and the rate of increase of arms in Cyprus continues to increase.

Tolerance and reconciliation needs to be stressed to find a solution to this crisis. Again, I urge that we take the necessary steps to obtain a favorable constitutional and territorial settlement.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate an unhappy anniversary—the Turkish military invasion of the Republic of Cyprus in July 1974. Mr. Speaker, it has been twenty three years—the occupation remains in place and the suffering of the people of Cyprus continues.

When the Turkish armed forces invaded Cyprus twenty three years ago, the people of Cyprus were driven from their homes and villages, brutalized, and over 1,600 people—including 5 American citizens—were never heard from again. Since that time, the Turkish military has maintained a barbed wire border, with an occupying force of 35,000 troops, called the green line that cuts through miles of countryside.

Mr. Speaker, Greek-Americans in my home town of San Diego and across the United States also share in the agony created by the occupation of Cyprus. They agonize about missing friends and family, the destruction of the Greek-Cypriot culture and the denial of access to ancestral homelands now occupied by the Turkish army.

These people have suffered too long. It is time for the Turkish occupying force to leave

and it is time to allow the people of Cyprus to establish a true and united democracy.

The momentum for a real solution to this tragic situation is developing. Negotiations between the parties are proceeding and President Clinton recently appointed Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke as his Special Emissary for Cyprus. I agree with him that the time for a peaceful solution to this problem is long overdue. We must work to put an end to this occupation and I urge the parties to continue their talks until a peaceful settlement is agreed to. The time for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus is now and the need is urgent. The green line that separates the people of Cyprus must be erased forever.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 23d year since the brutal partition of Cyprus, yet the focus of the international community and the Congress on a resolution to this tragic separation has not lessened. If anything, attention on the plight of Cyprus has heightened recently. In 1996 we unfortunately witnessed the worst outbreak of violence since the invasion in 1974. In January of this year the Clerides government signed a contract to purchase Russian S-300 air defense missiles. These factors combined threaten to introduce a new and destabilizing element in the mediation process, and has generated a sense of urgency in the efforts towards achieving a viable settlement. Indeed, the role of the United States in pressing for peace on the island has become even more vital to ensuring the creation of a stable, secure and free Europe.

On June 4, President Clinton named former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Richard Holbrooke, as Special Presidential Envoy for Cyprus. I wholeheartedly welcome that appointment. As one of our most capable negotiators, Mr. Holbrooke's appointment demonstrates the United States' commitment to help support a final political settlement on Cyprus. I also want to commend the Clinton Administration's announced determination to support the peace brokering efforts of the United Nations, as well as ensuring that 1997 is the year of the "Big Push on Cyprus." I am also delighted to note that the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot leaders, Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denkash, convened recently for U.N.-sponsored direct peace talks. This step can only serve to bear further positive fruit.

There is no doubt about the necessary role that the U.S. Congress must play in assisting the parties in reaching a just and peaceful resolution. That is why I cosponsored House Concurrent Resolution 81, introduced by International Relations Committee Chairman BEN GILMAN. This bill reaffirms that the status quo on Cyprus is unacceptable and detrimental to U.S. interests. The resolution also calls for the complete demilitarization leading to the withdrawal of foreign occupation forces, as well as the cessation of foreign arms transfers to Cyprus—all necessary and vital actions that must be undertaken before any settlement is reached.

The time is ripe for one of the world's most intractable conflicts to disappear into the dustbin of history. In fact, NATO's efforts to expand and redefine its role in the post-cold-war era require that the Cyprus conflict be resolved. As a worrisome source of friction between Greece and Turkey, NATO's anchors in the eastern Mediterranean, it serves as a thorn in the side of the greatest alliance ever forged.

I conclude by reiterating Secretary Albright's remarks that Cyprus is a valued partner in the fight against the new global threats of proliferation, terrorism, illegal narcotics, and international crime. Cyprus and the United States share common values and are committed to building a world based on open markets, democratic principles and the rule of law. These ties demand that the United States continue to work towards assisting the two Cypriot communities in reaching a just and secure peace.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1031

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1031.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2169, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

Mrs. MYRICK (during the special order of Mr. BILIRAKIS), from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-189) on the bill resolution (H. Res. 189) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2169) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

A MESSY DAY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, it has been a messy day here in the House of Representatives. Today is July 17. We are certainly midway through the work of this first year of the 105th Congress, and it was most unfortunate that we started the day by pulling a bill which would have reauthorized vocational education assistance, and stopped the forward movement of that bill because there was an amendment on the bill which called for a retention of provisions in the bill which would have encouraged local governments and local education agencies to continue to emphasize vocational-technical education for women.

It was most unfortunate that with the overwhelming support that that amendment seemed to have, which merely wanted to continue what was going on already, that it led to the majority suddenly pulling the bill from the floor and refusing to let the House

work its will on a bill which would have provided fair treatment for women in vocational education and technical education programs. In an era when technical education is very much in order, and women certainly can do as well as men in some of the high tech areas that offer the most opportunities for the future, the highest pay, we are not willing to have our own Vocational Education Assistance Act reflect the fact that we want maximum opportunities for women.

So that was an unfortunate start of the day. It has been an unfortunate week in that same manner.

Two days ago we refused to allow the House to work its will on a vote, up or down, on the National Endowment for the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts seems to upset a small band of Members in the House of Representatives. They insist on harassing and pursuing the National Endowment for the Arts, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the American people support the National Endowment for the Arts and support the National Endowment for the Humanities, overwhelmingly.

And the Members of Congress, if given a chance to vote yes or no on the funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, would certainly keep its funding at the present level. We were not allowed to do that. This is a week that the majority chose to use its overwhelming powers, because it is the majority, to manipulate the process, and by one vote we lost on a procedural vote that would have given us the opportunity to vote up or down on that important matter.

Later on today we also experienced the intense annoyance and anger of the minority, the Democrats in the minority of the House, because in the agricultural appropriations bill that was about to come up, the same kind of treatment we had received in some other bills this year and in the NEA vote was being manifested. The ranking member of the agriculture subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, the ranking Democrat was not allowed by the Committee on Rules to present an amendment that she had requested.

The power of the majority is certainly great enough to stop on this floor most of what they want to stop and to promote and push what they want to push, past it, but we ought to at least have the opportunity to go on record on certain votes, and we are being denied that. So we had a very messy end to the day, at a point where really we do not have much time left before we adjourn on August 1st.

We are moving to pass appropriations bills. Appropriations bills are most important bills, probably, that we pass, in that they are the ones that provide the funding to keep our government activities going, and we are going to be rushing through those things in the next 10 working days of Congress.

We also have in the background negotiations going on which are very im-

portant, vitally important negotiations on the expenditure plan that was passed by both Houses, negotiations on the tax package. That is ongoing.

We know that those important processes are in the works, and worry about the fact that we are going to be pushed against the wall and stampeded at the last minute on those packages if we do not change the way this House operates. The majority does not, again, respect the will of the minority.

There is another problem also beyond the procedural questions, and that is, I lament the fact and a number of my colleagues lament the fact that the tax and expenditure package, the appropriations bills, as they come up are zeroing out or refusing to even discuss and consider certain important matters that ought to be on the agenda. In this 105th Congress, when we enter a situation where we started out with a lot of talk about bipartisan cooperation, especially in the area of education, I suppose one of the most disappointing absences is the fact that the education initiatives that have been proposed have been watered down so and some are not even on the agenda.

The most important, disappointing absence, in my opinion, is the one related to the school construction initiative. That is not even in the tax package or the expenditure plan which the President and the two Houses are negotiating now. We are grateful for the fact that the President at least has kept the school construction initiative alive by listing it among his priorities. The trouble is that the President has a long, long list of priorities, and we wonder how high on the list the school construction initiative will be.

We also wonder about the fact that the empowerment zones which mean so much to our urban areas, since nothing else has been offered in the last 10 years to deal with very pressing problems in our urban areas, the empowerment zones were considered to be a reasonable answer because both parties would support it since it was a combination of the private sector, the government sector and there was a lot of talk about this is the way of the future, but empowerment zones are not in the package either at this point, except for the President's priority list.

So I guess we will have to be grateful for the President at least keeping these things in the discussion. They are not in the House bill or the Senate bill. Therefore, they would not be on the conference table. So the fact that the President has tax incentives for school construction on the list of items for his tax cut proposals, and he has deductions for K through 12 computer donations on his list, and he has brownfields empowerment zones and enterprise zones, expansion of these in his package, we are grateful for that. We are holding on by a thread.

These are very important matters and I think to shift to the most important area, that is the area of education, not only the most important but the