

2020 POLICY STATEMENT: U.S.–GREECE RELATIONS

Turkey's Violations in the Eastern Mediterranean and Broader Region

AHI closely monitors Turkey's provocations and violations in the eastern Mediterranean to keep U.S. government officials apprised of developments that are detrimental to allies and strategic partners, including Greece, Cyprus, and Israel. Turkey's provocations are not in the best interests of the U.S.

The following are examples of the fundamental causes of problems by Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean and broader region:

- Turkey's unilateral claims against sovereign Greek territory in the Aegean which are in violation of international law, and Turkey's refusal to refer its unilateral claims to binding international arbitration;
- Turkey's continuing violations of Greece's territorial waters and airspace, which number approximately **7,000** infringements and violations in 2019. They include:
 - **4,813** Hellenic airspace violations of which **124** are categorized as "Hellenic Territory Over-Flights,"
 - **2,150** maritime incidents, and
 - **384** mock dogfights between Turkish and Greek aircraft.
- Turkey violates Arms Export Control Act (AECA) each time it orders U.S.-supplied F-16s into Greek airspace because the condition under which Turkey received the F-16s is that they be used only for "legitimate self-defense." No one, not even Turkey, alleges that Greece has provoked the F-16 sorties. Turkey also violates international law when its F-16s enter Greek airspace.
- Turkey's aggression against Cyprus which includes its continuing illegal occupation of 37.3 percent of Cyprus;
- Turkey's numerous incursions into Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), illegal drilling in Cyprus' EEZ on three occasions in 2019 supported by Turkish warships and drones, and demonstrated "gunboat diplomacy;"
- Turkey's illegal systematic migration policy that weaponized migrants to create a crisis on the Greece-Turkey land and sea border as a means to undermine the EU and elevate tensions even amid the coronavirus pandemic, and further, is a threat to Greece's economic development; and
- The Turkey-Libya Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on maritime borders, which has been resoundingly dismissed by the international community as null and void and without any legal foundation. Under the MoU, Turkey announced its intention to engage in exploratory drilling, starting in September 2020, from the north of Rhodes all the way to the southeast of Crete in 24 plots, with the Turkish government publishing a map.

In sum, the threat by Turkey of *casus belli* still stands against Greece. Greece continues to register an exorbitant number of formal complaints over continued violations of the Greek airspace and territorial waters by Turkey. Further, Turkey's invasion of northern Syria, its purchase of four divisions of Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles, and its brazen acts of provocation in the eastern Mediterranean that attempt to stymie energy development are all examples of how Turkey acts against U.S. interests.

OUR POSITION

AHI repeatedly urged the Administration and Congress to sanction the Turkish entities responsible for Turkey's illegal actions in the eastern Mediterranean, northern Syria and for its accepted delivery of the S-400 missile defense system.

- The U.S. Senate must pass S.2641, Promoting American National Security and Preventing the Resurgence of ISIS Act – a comprehensive Turkey sanctions package. (The House of Representatives passed S.2641's companion bill in October 2019.)
- The Trump administration must sanction Turkey under the Countering Americas Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

Also, we call on Congress to:

- Enact H.R.4694, United States-Turkey Relations Review Act of 2019.
- Hold Turkey accountable under the Arms Export Control Act (AECA).
- Oppose foreign assistance to Turkey, and any other assistance programs, including most-favored nation trade benefits—as in the best interest of the United States.

Finally, the U.S. government's statements in support of Greece's position on the border crisis, in addition to its statements that have expressed concern about Turkey's incursions into Cyprus' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and have called for a halt to it, are appreciated.

- However, the U.S. government must abandon its talking point that calls on "all parties to avoid steps that raise tensions in the region."

AHI views this talking point as unhelpful as it can be construed as appeasing Turkey. AHI maintains firmly that there is only one country that needs to be called on to refrain from provocations and that country is failed NATO ally, Turkey. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Ranking Member Robert Menendez got it right when he stated, "There's only one set of parties creating problem - that's Turkey."