



AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE



AHI FOUNDATION

## *Message from the Presidents*

Dear Members and Friends:

As AHI begins its 49<sup>th</sup> year as the only Greek American think tank and public policy center advocating for the rule of law, AHI members and supporters can take pleasure with the Institute's commitment to meeting its mission to the fullest. As we exited the worst of the pandemic, we would like to thank again our dedicated board members, members, and staff, who ensured we did not miss a beat during an unprecedented time.

In 2022, we were excited for the return of popular in-person special events that brought the community together, such as our **Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards** dinner and **Greek Heritage Night** at the Philadelphia Phillies, even as we maintained our popular virtual programming because of their ability to attract broader audiences effectively. Also last year, we were pleased to welcome three prominent members to the AHI Board of Directors, a new president of the AHI-Athens Chapter, and an outstanding editor to AHIF's *Online Policy Journal*. We also held our second productive joint retreat for AHI and AHIF board members to discuss organizational matters and to engage with policy influencers. Working together, AHI and AHIF continued to make a difference.

**The majority of AHI's efforts focus on advancing U.S. relations with Greece and Cyprus as in the best interests of the United States.** The need to hold Turkey accountable for its belligerence and illegal provocations in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, and broader region, and its atrocious record on human rights and religious freedom, also remained at the forefront of AHI's policy agenda. In this regard, AHI engaged with policymakers in the Biden administration and Congress through meetings with high-ranking administration officials and members of Congress and their staffs, policy letters, and written testimony. **AHI also maintained its consistent presence on Capitol Hill.** For example, AHI successfully fought for increased funding for Greece's International Military Education and Training (IMET) program and executed an issue advocacy campaign to oppose the sale of arms, namely F-16 fighter jets and their modernization kits, to Turkey.

AHI also is proud of its contributions to commemorate events of importance to our Hellenic history. We virtually hosted (as the U.S. Capitol Complex had not reopened fully) our annual "**Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day**" that featured 16 legislators and our annual commemoration to mark the **48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus** with 15 legislators from the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. We also marked **OXI Day, the Battle of Crete,** and the **Asia Minor Catastrophe.**

Additionally, AHI and AHIF representatives were proud to have been actively engaged during the visit of **Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic Kyriakos Mitsotakis** to Washington in May where he delivered a historic address to a Joint Meeting of Congress and belatedly celebrated the bicentennial of Greek Independence at the White House, in pre-pandemic fashion.

Popular programs familiar to our audience also met with success. The **AHIF College Student Foreign Policy Trip to Greece and Cyprus** concluded a 14th season, bringing firsthand experience about the foreign policy issues that concern U.S. relations with Greece and Cyprus to our community's next generation of leaders. Our presence in Athens remains strong as the **18<sup>th</sup> annual Athens Dinner** honored a former Greek President of the Hellenic Republic Prokopios Pavlopoulos and our AHI-Athens President Emeritus George C. Economou and December's policy panel discussion placed emphasis on Greece as regional hub for commerce, energy, and defense. The number of visitors to Hellenic House also returned to pre-pandemic levels. We were thrilled to welcome high-level State Department officials as well as Greek and Cypriot government officials and military officers, among other dignitaries.

Furthermore, although it was delayed until May to avoid any possible ramifications from traveling during a winter spike in Covid infections, we were pleased to proceed with a Fifth Leadership Mission with our successful collaboration with the American Jewish community leaders in support of the burgeoning Greece-Cyprus-Israel partnership. In an increasingly dangerous and geopolitically significant part of the world, it is important for us to do our part to ensure the trilateral partnership continues to expand across all sectors, lending stability to the region.

To keep audiences and stakeholders informed, AHI issued statements, most of which condemned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for outlandish and incendiary rhetoric; published fact sheets, issued action alerts, circulated op-ed pieces and articles in a weekly e-news, and hosted our ongoing "**Virtual Speakers Forum**" series. Further, AHI is an important resource for media outlets seeking the Greek American perspective on U.S. policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. As such, journalists sought AHI's take on Prime Minister Mitsotakis' visit to Washington, the fight in Washington to oppose F-16s to Turkey, and the outcome of the November midterm elections. Moreover, the AHI Foundation published the 13th volume of its online journal, the ***American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues*** now under the editorial oversight of Dr. Constantine Hatzidimitriou, that provides expert policy analysis and commentary.

Sadly, AHI and AHI Foundation lost a tremendous contributor, dedicated board member, and most importantly, devoted friend, with the passing of James L. Marketos, Esq., in May. Jim always was there for AHI and the AHI Foundation. He was a key contributor to our panel discussions, especially about the Smyrna Catastrophe, and at our special events. He leaves an irreplaceable void for AHI and AHIF, the Greek American community, and for us, personally. May his memory be eternal.

## **2023: A New Congress Awaits**

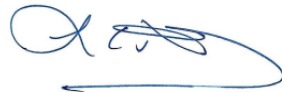
The Eastern Mediterranean is immensely important to U.S. interests. Greece is a democratic, reliable, and trusted NATO ally-- a frontline state in the fight against terrorism. U.S.-Greece relations remain at an "all-time high." Further, the Republic of Cyprus is a proven strategic partner of the U.S. and EU member nation that unacceptably remains under illegal occupation by 40,000 Turkish troops. Going forward, U.S. relations with Greece and Cyprus must remain on the upswing. The instability for which Turkey is responsible includes constant aggression in the Aegean, which unnecessarily places lives in harm's way, and inflammatory rhetoric from its president directed at Greece and Cyprus as well as the United States and its strategic partners in the region. Moreover, religious freedom in Turkey remains under assault. The plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the conversion of Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque, despite condemnations from U.S. and international bodies, remain. Turkey is a

failed NATO ally, and it must continue to be held in check and accountable for its actions. We must not take anything for granted.


A new 118<sup>th</sup> Congress awaits us. As advocates for the rule of law, we must work harder. New members must be educated about our policy agenda. We must continue to be strong and resourceful advocates for our champions on Capitol Hill and cultivate new ones on both sides of the aisle. As the Biden administration enters the second half of its first term, we must work with the Administration and Congress to press for more accountability for Turkey. It must not come into possession of F-16s, or any other arms, for its violations of the Arms Export Control Act and as it is rightfully imposed sanctions by the U.S. for violating the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). This policy matter will be at the forefront in 2023, and we must be ready for any new ones that arise.

Finally, as we reflect on 2022, we are deeply grateful and appreciative of the members, board officers and staff for their dedication. Everyone worked together in a safe and healthy manner to make it another productive year. Alongside our own activities in Washington, and abroad, AHI's and AHIF's strength relies on the many significant contributions and generous support of our members and sponsors. We also look to you to communicate your suggestions, share your knowledge, and provide your insights so that we can continue to fulfill the needs of our most valuable asset—our members. Thank you.

With warm regards and gratitude,



Leon Andris  
President  
AHI Foundation



Nick Larigakis  
President and CEO  
American Hellenic Institute