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AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTE, INC.

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Questions Suggested By The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) To The Senate Foreign Relations Committee For The January 19, 2021 Hearing of Mr. Antony Blinken For the Position of Secretary of State

Greece

1. In 2020, Turkey, engaged in 2,060 violations of Hellenic Airspace, including 384 mock dogfights, & 3,025 violations of Greece's territorial waters.
 - a. As Secretary of State, will you publicly recognize Turkey's violations of Greek sovereignty, and that such actions violate both international and U.S. laws, including the Arms Export Control Act (AECA)?
 - b. As Secretary, will you ask Turkey to cease and desist from their violations of Greek sovereignty?

2. Currently, relations between the United States and Greece are excellent. However, Greece has been hit particularly hard economically, having its economy ravaged by COVID just after beginning to recover from years of economic crisis.
 - a. Do you have any thoughts as to how to strengthen U.S.-Greece economic ties, which can help our ally Greece?
 - b. What are your views of a Binational Industrial Research and Development Agreement (BIRD) for Greece?

Cyprus

1. On January 27, 1989, then-Senator Biden stated in a letter to a Greek-American policy organization, the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), "we must urge the new Administration [President George H.W. Bush] to make Cyprus a higher policy priority in American foreign policy...we cannot lose sight of the fact that the rights of Greek Cypriots have been trampled upon, and we must ensure that their claims to ancestral land and property seized during the 1974 invasion are not compromised. Finally, we must send a signal to Turkey that until it has removed every last soldier from Cyprus, it will never be recognized a full member of the international community." Will a Biden Administration, under your leadership as chief diplomat, continue to promote this principle?

2. In October, 2020, Turkey illegally re-opened the beach in Varosha, in an effort to move Turkey towards a permanent partition of the island. During the past few months, President Erdogan has stated that there needs to be an illegal “two-state” solution regarding Cyprus. The long-standing US policy is that the Republic of Cyprus must be reunified. What steps should the US take towards attaining this policy goal?
3. In September, 2020, the State Department announced that it would “waive restrictions temporarily for FY 2021 on the export, re-export, retransfer, and temporary import of non-lethal defense articles and defense services controlled under the International Traffic in Arms Regulation destined for or originating in Cyprus.” However, this is only a temporary one-year measure, and not a permanent lifting of the arms prohibition. Furthermore, Cyprus is still retained on the International Trade in Arms Regulations (ITAR). This means that Cyprus is included on a list of countries such as North Korea & Zimbabwe, both of which are on the ITAR. Would you advocate that Cyprus be unconditionally removed from the ITAR list?
4. During the past few years, Turkey has consistently taken illegal actions to violate Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including sending drillships into Cypriot waters to disrupt hydrocarbon exploration. Will you, as Secretary, tell Turkey to cease and desist from their violations of Cyprus’ EEZ?
5. Turkey’s invasion of Cyprus in 1974 resulted in the disappearance of over 1,000 persons, including five American citizens. Not all missing American citizens have been recovered. How will the State Department ensure the recovery of the remaining four missing U.S. citizens, especially when Turkey obstructs on-the-ground recovery work?

Turkey

1. Prompted by Congressional initiative, President Trump imposed CAATSA sanctions on Turkey in December, 2020. Do you agree with this specific action, and more broadly, with the principle that it is better to hold the Turkish government and its President accountable rather than an overly accommodative approach driven by the fear of “losing” Turkey?
2. Due to the leadership of President Erdogan, Turkey now openly supports Hamas, an anti-Israel U.S.-designated terrorist organization. In addition, it is well-documented that Turkey, during the height of the Islamic State, aided and abetted ISIS, including by allowing the terrorist group to travel freely in and out of the country.
 - a. Do you view Turkey, given the aforementioned facts, as a genuine ally in the fight against terrorism?

- b. As Secretary of State, will you call out Turkey for their ties to and support of terrorist groups?
 - c. Given Turkey's troubling actions and provocative behavior, do you support an official review of U.S.-Turkey relations?
3. The S-400 anti-aircraft missiles are designed to shoot down F-16s. Greek air force is the only country within the immediate range of the S-400s. Other than targeting Greek F-16s, for what legitimate defense purpose does Turkey need the S-400s?

Religious Freedom

1. The 2020 USCIRF Religious Freedom Report highlights the deplorable treatment of religious minorities in Turkey, including prominent religious leaders such as the Ecumenical Patriarch. In a much-publicized display of intolerance, the Turkish government converted the Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO-designated museum, into a mosque, in July, 2020. How will you advance our religious freedom and human rights agenda vis-a-vis Turkey?
2. During recent years, the State Department has moved forward with cultural property MOUs with authoritarian MENA (Middle East & North Africa) governments that result in de-facto US government recognition of those government's seizure of religious and other minorities communal and personal property. Can you assure this committee that any MOU's completed or renewed on your watch will not violate the rights of religious and ethnic minorities to their own property?