



STATEMENTS BY TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ON GREECE, CYPRUS, & TURKEY

OCTOBER 2020

Vice-President Pence Quotes on Greece

- “I saw the energy between you and President Trump yesterday in the Oval Office. I saw the friendship between you. And I also saw the common purpose, as Secretary Pompeo just reflected, in President Trump and in you, Prime Minister Mitsotakis. They are two leaders who believe that when you let people keep more of what they earn, when you roll back red tape, when you make government more efficient and you drive low-cost energy, making it available to job creators, economies proposer. And America and Greece are prospering thanks to your leadership and the leadership of President Donald Trump.”
- “The Founding Fathers of our country recognized that Americans would be heirs of the achievements of Greek civilization. We would carry the ideals — the love for freedom and democracy — here. It was on a hill in Athens that the world’s first democratic assemblies were gathered more than 2,500 years ago.”
- “Last year alone, our two nations engaged in nearly \$3 billion in trade. But it’s not economic exchange that defines us. It’s really a shared philosophy of government.”

— Remarks by Vice President Pence at Reception in Honor of the
Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, January 8th, 2020¹

Vice-President Pence Quotes on Turkey

- “One week ago, Turkish forces crossed into Syria. Earlier this week, President Trump took decisive action to call on Turkish forces to stand down, to end the violence, to agree to negotiations. And today, I’m proud to report, thanks to the strong leadership of President Donald Trump and the strong relationship between President Erdoğan and Turkey and the United States of America, that today, the United States and Turkey have agreed to a ceasefire in Syria.”
- “The United States of America did not support Turkey’s military action in Syria. President Trump made that very clear to his friend, President Erdoğan.”
- “But make no mistake about it: President Trump was very clear with our ally, Turkey, about American opposition to Turkish military forces entering Syria. The President made that clear in his discussions, in his correspondence with President Erdoğan. And I believe that the candor and frankness that President Trump applied to this and the strength of his relationship with President Erdoğan both contributed to the ability for this agreement to come about.”

— Remarks by Vice President Pence and Secretary of State Pompeo
in Press Conference, October 17, 2019²

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-reception-honor-prime-minister-hellenic-republic/>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-secretary-state-pompeo-press-conference-ankara-turkey/>

Secretary of State Pompeo Quotes on Greece

- “We’ll keep supporting your prosperity, your security, and your democracy.”
- “It was truly stirring to me to be in the very city where the roots of democracy were put down more than two millennia ago to contemplate how the noble ideas born in the Agora are the foundation of the American Government. It was, too, inspiring when I talked with my Greek friends, the Greek counterparts, was the confirmation of the great relationship between our two countries. It’s been good; it is now fantastic. It is important. We’re expanding our cooperation on energy, together, growing friendships. We’re supporting Greece as a pillar of the security in the Eastern Mediterranean. Our militaries are working together more closely than ever before.”

—Secretary Michael R. Pompeo At Reception in Honor of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Mrs. Mitsotakis, January, 8, 2020³

- “We’ve said all along the way conflict is resolved is not through shows of force, it’s not through demonstrations of power, it’s through dialogue. It’s through international systems, agreement, conversations, dialogue. That’s how these maritime disputes ought to be resolved. We’ve watched the Greeks move in that direction trying to achieve that. We hope the Turkish Government will see it the same way, and we hope the exploratory talks not only get kicked off right, but it’s important that they’re resolved in a way that delivers outcomes that each of the two nations find more than acceptable. That’s – it’s not just talking; we need to get to good solutions. We need to resolve these conflicts in a way that’s reflective of the fundamental rights of the citizens of Greece, as well as people all across the world.”

—Secretary Michael R. Pompeo With Sofia Papadopoulou of Athens News Agency, September 28, 2020⁴

- “We’re working to advance things that we did about a year ago with the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreements. It’s come to life here in Crete, in Larissa, in Stefanovikeio, in Alexandroupoli. Today I have an announcement that the prime minister foreshadowed, where the USS Hershel “Woody” Williams, the U.S. Navy’s newest expeditionary sea base, will call here – will call Souda Bay home. It’s literally the perfect choice in light of the facility’s strategic location and it’s symbolic of a defense partnership that will continue to expand and to grow.”
- “Today I’m in Crete to showcase one of America’s strongest military relationships throughout all of Europe. We, the Americans, look to Greece as a true pillar for stability and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean, and we are incredibly proud to support its leadership. Our security cooperation has grown tremendously – indeed, by leaps and bounds”
- “On energy, we had a great discussion yesterday. I reiterated the United States support for Greece’s ongoing efforts to diversify energy routes and supplies throughout the region. Free markets should make decision about energy supplies instead of Russia’s Gazprom.”

—Secretary Michael R. Pompeo And Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Joint Press Statements After Their Meeting, September 29, 2020⁵

³<https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-at-reception-in-honor-of-greek-prime-minister-kyriakos-mitsotakis-and-mrs-mitsotakis/>

⁴ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-with-sofia-papadopoulou-of-athens-news-agency/>

⁵<https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-and-greek-prime-minister-kyriakos-mitsotakis-joint-press-statements-after-their-meeting/>

Secretary of State Pompeo Quotes on Cyprus

- “I daresay that our relationship has never been better, and I am proud of that. As just one example, security cooperation between our two countries is growing. On September 1st I announced the decision to temporarily waive export controls on direct commercial sales of non-lethal defense articles and services for the Republic of Cyprus, and in July we invited Cyprus to participate in our military training program known as IMET. That’s a big deal and it’s great. We’ll welcome your service members.”
- “We remain deeply concerned by Turkey’s ongoing operations surveying for natural resources in areas over which Greece and Cyprus assert jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Republic of Cyprus has the right to exploit its natural resources, including the right to hydrocarbons found in its territorial sea and its economic – exclusive economic zone. We also believe that the resources of Cyprus should be shared equitably among the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots communities.”
- “Today the foreign minister and I just signed an MOU to create a new training center to be funded by the United States and built here in Cyprus. It will provide expertise for the rest of the region on border security and nonproliferation. It will be known as the Cyprus Center for Land, Open-seas, and Port Security, or CYCLOPS.”

—Secretary Michael R. Pompeo at the Cyprus Center for Land, Open-seas, and Port Security Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony, September 12, 2020⁶

Secretary of State Pompeo Quotes on Turkey

- “We have seen no credible evidence against Mr. Brunson, and we call on Turkish authorities to resolve his case immediately in a transparent and fair manner.”

— Press Statement by Secretary Pompeo, July 25, 2018⁷

- In speaking about Turkey’s incursion into northern Syria after the withdrawal of US forces, Pompeo stated “The Turks had a legitimate security concern...They have a terrorist threat to their south. We’ve been working to make sure that we did what we could do to prevent that terror threat from striking the people in Turkey, while trying to achieve what is in America’s best interest: the threat from radical Islamic terrorism emanating from Syria.”

— Secretary of State Mike Pompeo interview with PBS NewsHour anchor and managing editor Judy Woodruff, October 9, 2019⁸

- “The United States views a change in the status of the Hagia Sophia as diminishing the legacy of this remarkable building and its unsurpassed ability—so rare in the modern world—to serve humanity as a much-needed bridge between those of differing faith traditions and cultures. We seek to continue to work with the Government of Turkey on a broad range of issues of mutual interest, including the preservation of religious and cultural sites.”⁹

— Secretary of State Pompeo Statement on the Status of the Hagia Sophia, July 1, 2020

⁶<https://www.state.gov/at-the-cyprus-center-for-land-open-seas-and-port-security-memorandum-of-understanding-signing-ceremony/>

⁷<https://tr.usembassy.gov/press-statement-by-secretary-pompeo-pastor-brunson-moved-to-house-arrest/>

⁸<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/turkey-had-legitimate-security-concern-in-attacking-syrian-kurds-pompeo-says>

⁹ <https://www.state.gov/the-status-of-the-hagia-sophia/>

- “I think this recognizes the reality that the Gulf states have all recognized. It shouldn’t go without notice; not only have these nations chosen to recognize Israel, but when the Gulf states all got together and the Palestinians demanded that there be a statement denouncing what took place, that did not occur. Frankly, the only two countries that have vehemently denounced this were Iran and Turkey.”

— Remarks by Secretary of State Pompeo to the Atlantic Council, September 15, 2020¹⁰

- “You’re referring to the reporting that said that [Erdogan] brought Syrian fighters to Azerbaijan. I’ve seen that reporting too...You’ll have to ask President Erdogan why he would make that decision, but our view has been pretty consistent. When there’s – when there are rubs, when there are political ethnic tensions and they rise – this is a longstanding conflict in this border space – when those tensions rise, internationalizing this – right – third parties bringing ammunitions, weapon systems, even just advisors and allies joining, you increase the complexity, you increase the risk of loss of lives, you decrease the capacity for peace.”

—Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Briefing with the Traveling Press, October 2, 2020¹¹

Secretary of Defense Esper's Quotes on Greece

- “Greece is a close friend & ally to the US & one of the few @NATO members who spend over 2% of GDP on defense. Today I thanked Minister Panagiotopoulos for his leadership & encouraged Greece to join the international effort to protect critical infrastructure in the Gulf Region.”

— Twitter, October 3, 2019¹²

- “Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper spoke by phone today with Greek Minister of Defense Nikos Panagiotopoulos to reaffirm the strong defense relationship between the United States and Greece.

The Secretary thanked Minister Panagiotopoulos for hosting U.S. forces at Souda Bay, and for our strong bilateral cooperation. This is marked, most recently, by the updating of the U.S.-Greece Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement last October, which enables opportunities to further deepen U.S.-Greek defense cooperation and advance regional security and stability.

The leaders also discussed mutual security concerns in southeast Europe and across NATO's Southern Flank, including Russian malign influence and growing concerns from China. Regarding the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, the two leaders agreed on the need for all parties to abide by international norms and maintain restraint. Secretary Esper recognized Greece for exceeding NATO defense spending goals, which is a vital investment into strengthening our alliance.”

— Readout of Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper's Phone Call With Greek Minister of Defense Nikos Panagiotopoulos, July 21, 2020¹³

¹⁰<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/transcript/transcript-a-conversation-with-us-secretary-of-state-michael-r-pompeo-trump-strategy-on-iran-china-israel-middle-east/>

¹¹ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-briefing-with-the-traveling-press/>

¹² <https://twitter.com/EsperDoD/status/1179807750932647936>

¹³ <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2281893/readout-of-secretary-of-defense-dr-mark-t-espers-phone-call-with-greek-minister/>

Secretary of Defense Esper's Quotes on Turkey

- "Despite the opposition and repeated warnings from the United States and the international community, Turkish President Erdogan ordered a unilateral invasion of northern Syria that has resulted in widespread casualties, refugees, destruction, insecurity, and a growing threat to U.S. military forces.

This unacceptable incursion has also undermined the successful multinational "Defeat ISIS" mission in Syria, and resulted in the release of many dangerous ISIS detainees.

Due to Turkey's irresponsible actions, the risk to U.S. forces in northeast Syria has reached an unacceptable level. We are also at risk of being engulfed in a broader conflict. Therefore, at the President's direction, the Department of Defense is executing a deliberate withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from northeast Syria.

Turkey's unilateral action was unnecessary and impulsive. President Erdogan bears full responsibility for its consequences, to include a potential ISIS resurgence, possible war crimes, and a growing humanitarian crisis. The bilateral relationship between our two countries has also been damaged.

I will be visiting NATO next week in Brussels, where I plan to press our other NATO allies to take collective and individual diplomatic and economic measures in response to these egregious Turkish actions."

— Statement by Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper
Regarding Turkey, Syria Border Actions October 14, 2019¹⁴

¹⁴ <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/1988372/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-dr-mark-t-esper-regarding-turkey-syria-border/>