

Congressman Rothman Commemorates the 37th Anniversary of the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus

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Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 37th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and to remember this tragic event for the Greek Cypriot people.

The commemoration of the 1974 Turkish military invasion of the island of Cyprus serves as a solemn reminder for all freedom-loving people to mourn those who lost their lives in the invasion and to condemn the ongoing Turkish occupation. For the past 37 years, Cyprus has endured the illegal military occupation of over one third of its territory by the Turkish armed forces, an occupation which stands in violation of more than 75 U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Turkish troops. Despite this unjust infringement upon Cyprus, both the U.S. and the Cypriot governments remain committed to achieving a peaceful resolution of this dispute through diplomatic negotiations.

The strong relationship between the U.S. and Cyprus is not based solely on a shared interest in ending the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, but also on the fact that both countries share a deep and abiding commitment to upholding the ideals of freedom, democracy, justice, human rights, and the international rule of law. The U.S. and the rest of the international community have a moral obligation to stand with Cypriots as they work to reunify their island and end the Turkish military occupation.

As a friend of Cyprus, I will continue to work with my colleagues to realize a reunification of the island as a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation that will protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots. However, any solution must include a prompt withdrawal of Turkish occupation forces. Cypriot President Demetris Christofias remains committed to negotiating a just, viable solution to this problem in accordance with the many U.N. Security Council Resolutions adopted on this issue since 1974, with the High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979, and on the basis of the ideals and principles upon which the European Union was founded.

Mr. Speaker, today I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 37th anniversary of this violent invasion that

brutally divided the island nation of Cyprus, and to encourage Turkish Cypriot leaders to negotiate in good faith with their Greek Cypriot counterparts to settle this dispute and to develop a plan for reunification that addresses the serious concerns of all Cypriots. The reunification of Cyprus must remain a priority for this Congress and for the international community. On this important anniversary, we mourn the deaths of those killed in the invasion and the lost opportunities for reunification over the years, but we look forward to a future of a reunited and peaceful Cyprus.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.