



Order of
Saint Andrew
the Apostle

Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

**2007 Annual Report to
His All Holiness Bartholomew
*Archbishop of Constantinople, The New Rome &
Ecumenical Patriarch***



Apostles of Peace

At the Phanar

The Feastday of St. Andrew

November 30, 2006

2006 Archon Pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate

It is with the greatest respect and humility that we offer the 2007 Annual Report to our beloved spiritual fathers His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, the hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne in the United States, as well as to our brother Archons of the Great Church of Christ.

2006-2007 Archon Highlights

- **Clergy-Laity Congress Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; July 2006; Nashville, TN**
 - Ecumenical Patriarchate Religious Freedom Presentations by National Commander at Plenary Sessions of GOA & National Ladies Philoptochos Society
 - Ecumenical Patriarchate Religious Freedom Resolutions pass GOA and National Ladies Philoptochos Society
 - Presentation: The Martyrdom of Honor, The Suffering of St. Gregory the Theologian & St. John Chrysostom; Prof. George E. Demacopoulos, Department of Theology, Fordham University

- **American Carpatho-Russian Sobor / 20th Triennial Council; July 2006; Greenwich, CT**
 - Ecumenical Patriarchate Religious Freedom Presentation by National Commander & Members of National Council at Plenary Session
 - Ecumenical Patriarchate Religious Freedom Resolution passes

- **Archons fight for religious freedom for Ecumenical Patriarchate at OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Europe's largest human rights conference)**
 - 2006 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, organized by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Warsaw, October 2-13, 2006
 - Presentations by Archons Dr. Spiro J. Macris & Dr. Nicholas Loutsion
 - 2007 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, September 24 ~ October 5, 2007
 - Presentations by Archons Constantine G. Caras, Esq. and George Kaludis, PhD

- **2006 Athenagoras Human Rights Award presented to National Vice Commander Nicholas J. Bouras, World War II hero, patriot, humanitarian and successful industrialist for extraordinary philanthropy to Ecumenical Patriarchate, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and charitable institutions throughout United States**

- **Establishment of Patriarchal Education Committee**
 - Chaired by Archon Stephen Yallourakis, MD, DDS

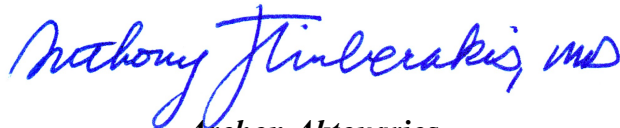
- Mission: to update all Catechism School curriculum in all Orthodox Churches and Holy Cross School of Theology regarding significance of Ecumenical Patriarchate; discovered little material on Ecumenical Patriarchate in Catechism Curriculum in GOA and no dedicated course on Ecumenical Patriarchate at Holy Cross School of Theology
- **Archon Legal Committee establishes alliance with American Center for Law and Justice & its European counterpart, the European Center for Law and Justice; religious freedom summit held in Washington, DC hosted by Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel for the ACLJ/ECLJ; Metropolitan Meliton & Legal Committee deliberate at Summit; develop plans for legal remedies of religious persecution of Ecumenical Patriarchate**
- **2006 Archon Pilgrimage coincides with historic Papal Visitation to Ecumenical Patriarchate; November 25 ~ December 2, 2006; Archon Alexander Pritsos, Chairman**
 - Pilgrims witness historic meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George
 - Unprecedented government and police harassment of Pilgrims participating in Great Vespers and Divine Liturgy at Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George; official protests lodged at State Department upon return to USA (see attachment)
 - Order of St. Andrew commits over \$300,000 towards communications, logistics, Press Conference, Liturgy Books and overall support of historic Papal Visitation and leading role of Archbishop Demetrios of America as Patriarchal spokesman; donations made to patriarchal institutions
 - Order underwrites development of 3-Disc DVD Documentary of Papal Visitation and distributes to all Churches of GOA
- **Archons underwrite full page ad regarding Religious Freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate in New York Times and International Herald Tribune, December 21, 2006 spearheaded by Archon John A. Catsimatidis**
- **National Council hosts Tribute Dinner in honor of Prof. Antonios Trakatellis, MD, PhD, Vice President, European Parliament and *Archon Megas Hartophylax*; NYC January 2007**
- **National Council hosts Tribute Dinner in honor of European Union Commissioner Markos Kyprianou for his work defending for religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate; NYC, March 2007**
- **National Council underwrites Ecumenical Patriarchal Symposium held in Jerusalem entitled "Religious Liberty, and the Relationship Between Freedom and Religion;" Order represented by Dr. Spiro J. Macris; Ecumenical Patriarchate represented by Metropolitan Emmanuel of France; March 2007**
- **Annual Archon Lenten Retreat held at Headquarters of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States located at South Bound Brook, New Jersey led by Retreat Master His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas; March 2007; Archon James D. Speros, Chairman**

- **National Council hosts Tribute Dinner in honor of Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia for his efforts fighting for religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate; NYC, May 2007**
- **Order receives *1821 Hellenic Independence Award* during Annual Greek Independence Day Parade festivities; Order elected Grand Marshall of Parade; Theme of Parade: *Religious Freedom*, April 2007**
- **Order makes significant donation to Metropolis of Buenos Aires**
- **Order makes \$100,000 donation to Greek Fire Relief Fund through beneficence of anonymous donor**
- **Three new Regional Commanders appointed by National Commander with blessings of Exarch:**
 - Archon *Depoutatos* Insp. John V. Kassimatis; Long Island
 - Archon *Aktouarios* Cary J. Limberakis, DMD; Philadelphia
 - Archon *Ekdikos* Peter Clyde Papadakos, Esq.; Pittsburgh
- **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PROJECT**
- **The major issues:**
 - Government interference in selection of Ecumenical Patriarch
 - Lack of Legal Personality
 - Non-recognition of title Ecumenical
 - Supreme Court of Turkey criminalizes use of title "Ecumenical"
 - Case of the Bulgarian priest; see attachment
 - Property confiscation
 - Closure of Halki School of Theology
 - Personal and institutional security of His All Holiness and Ecumenical Patriarchate
 - See attachment regarding rogue group of retired officers planning assassination of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
- **ARCHONS FIGHTING FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**
 - **LEGAL COMMITTEE, Archon Christopher Stratakis, Esq., Chairman; actively developing juridical strategy to secure religious freedom for Ecumenical Patriarchate**
 - **Litigation Subcommittee, Archon George C. Rockas, Esq., Chairman**
 - Week-long evidentiary fact finding mission to Ecumenical Patriarchate by Archon Rockas, June 2007
 - Gathered evidence, interviewed local Turkish attorneys, met with human rights attorneys
 - Worked with ECLJ to develop strategy regarding local courts and European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France
 - In process of selecting human rights attorney

- **European Court of Human Rights – consultations regarding Patriarchal Orphanage Confiscation by government of Turkey**
 - Archon Legal Committee and leadership to be present during ECHR hearings on Orphanage Confiscation, November 2007
- **Legal Defense Fund Subcommittee, Archon John Zavitsanos, Esq., Chairman**
- **WASHINGTON INITIATIVES, Archon Andrew E. Manatos, coordinator**
 - **Archon Leadership meetings with**
 - **State Department**
 - Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte
 - Under Secretary of State R. Nicholas Burns
 - US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson
 - US Consul General to Istanbul Sharon Wiener, PhD
 - **Congressional Leadership**
 - Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
 - Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Joe Biden
 - Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee Tom Lantos
 - Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
 - Founder of Congressional Turkey Caucus Robert Wexler
 - **Presidential Candidates**
 - Senators Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, John McCain
 - Mayor Rudy Giuliani
 - 75 Senators sign letter to President George W. Bush calling for religious freedom for Ecumenical Patriarchate (see attachment)
 - 42 of 50 members of House Foreign Affairs Committee sign letter to Prime Minister of Turkey Erdogan (see attachment)
 - Congressional Turkey Caucus Founder Rep. Robert Wexler sends letter to President Bush regarding religious freedom of Ecumenical Patriarchate (see attachment)
 - Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee delivers poignant speech on religious freedom and Ecumenical Patriarchate (see attachment)
- **National State Legislature Religious Freedom Initiative, Archon Stephen P. Georgeson appointed coordinator June 2007; Archon Dr. Nicholas Loutsion, Chairman Regional Commander Liaison Committee**
 - Each of the 50 states has an Archon coordinator to assist in passing state resolutions on religious freedom on behalf of Ecumenical Patriarchate
 - 8 of 50 State legislatures have passed religious freedom resolutions

- Process to be fully engaged in 2008 when state legislatures are next in session
- **Meetings with European Union Leadership; coordinated by Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, official Orthodox representative to the European Union**
 - **EU Country of Presidency, Austria; coordinated by Metropolitan Michael of Austria.**
 - Andreas Khol, Chairman of the Parliament of Austria.
 - Dr. Heinz Fischer, President of Austria
 - **EU Officials; coordinated by Metropolitan Emmanuel of France**
 - EU Parliament Vice President Prof. Andonios Trakatellis, MD, PhD
 - EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn
 - EU Commissioner of Cyprus, Markos Kyprianou
 - US Ambassador to EU C. Boyden Gray
 - US Ambassador to Belgium Archon Tom Korologos
 - Numerous other officials, staff and parliamentarians
 - **Angelos Pangratis, Deputy Head of the Delegation, European Union to the United States**
 - **Michael Leigh, Director-General for Enlargement, European Union**

**Respectfully Submitted,
In the Service of the Ecumenical Patriarchate**



**Archon Aktouarios
National Commander
Philadelphia
October 13, 2007**

ATTACHMENTS

1. U. S. Senate letter to President George W. Bush signed by 75 Senators (with signatures)
2. U. S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee letter to Turkey Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed by 42 of 50 Members of Committee (with signatures)
3. Turkey Congressional Caucus founder U. S. Representative Robert Wexler letter to President George W. Bush
4. Speech of Chair of House Foreign Affairs Committee Tom Lantos calling for religious freedom for Ecumenical Patriarchate
5. New York Times Full Page Religious Freedom Ad
6. International Herald Tribune Full Page Religious Freedom Ad
7. Letter protesting mistreatment of American Orthodox Pilgrims during Papal Visit to Ecumenical Patriarchate
8. List of critical problems faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate threatening its survival
9. Sample State Resolution on Religious Freedom
10. New Jersey State Resolution on Religious Freedom signed by Gov. Jon Corzine

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2006

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our deep concern that policies of the Turkish government pose a grave threat to the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual home of the world's second largest Christian Church. The Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul, Turkey is the spiritual head of 250 million Orthodox Christians worldwide and the 269th direct successor of the Apostle Andrew. Only stronger American and European Union support for the religious freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate can prevent a religious tragedy of historic magnitude.

Seventy-five percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties have already been confiscated by the Turkish government. Beyond this, the Patriarchate's dissolution in the coming decades is essentially inevitable if Turkey continues its policy of prohibiting all 250 million non-Turkish Orthodox Christians from becoming Ecumenical Patriarch. Turkey itself only has 2,500 remaining eligible Orthodox Christians and they are a mostly elderly community.

Millions of Orthodox Christian Americans stand to lose their spiritual head and all Christians will give up a crucial link to their history and forefathers. Within the 2,000-year-old Sacred See the text of the New Testament was codified, the canonical structure of the Christian church was established, and the Nicene Creed was created.

The disappearance of the See would also mean the end of a crucial link between Christians and the Muslim world. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered international religious leaders and produced the first condemnation of the attacks as "anti-religious" that included Muslim leaders. At a time when individuals hostile to the United States are attempting to create conflict between Christians and Muslims, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey is a living testimony of religious co-existence since 1453.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's individual importance to America is reflected in the record number of Congressional cosponsors who bestowed on him our country's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal – an award also given to George Washington, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II.

Please help Turkey understand America's close ties to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the importance we attach to its welfare. In doing so, we hope you can help Turkey realize our strong desire that the Ecumenical Patriarchate be accorded the religious freedom it deserves and persuade the Turkish government to abandon policies that will lead to the disappearance of this Sacred See.

Sincerely,

George Allen

Joe Biden

Olympia Snowe

Paul S. Sarbanes

Blanche R. Lincoln

Craig Thomas

Ron Wyden

Mike Crogo

Robert F. Bennett

ASusan Collins

Rick Santorum

Dick Durbin

Dekki Stenow

Chuck Grassley

Ed Johnson

Pat Roberts

Daniel K. Akaka

Barbara Boxer

Herb Kohl

Pete Domenici

Norm Coleman

Byron Dorgan

Bill Martin

Tom Vilsack

Robert Menendez

Jay Byrnes

Robert A. Minkoff

John Conroy

Kent Conrad

George V. Kenosiah

David Vetter

May J. Landis

E. Benjamin Johnson

Bill Nelson

Ken Salazar

P. L. Chafee

Tom F. Kelly

Michael B. Gaji

Chris Dodd

Patrick Leahy

Chuck HABER

John Zsarnar

Patty Murray

Mark Dayton

John E. Sununu

Mike DeWine

APB

Fredy

Jack Gregg

~~Jack~~

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Eric Boyl

Jim Laube

Carl Linn

Frank R. Lautenberg

Harry Reid

Chuck Schumer

Max Baucus

Dianne Feinstein

Neville Feighel

Jon Kyl

John Reed

Shays

Maria Cantwell

Sam Alton

Jeff Blain

Tom Harkin

Ed Kennedy

Elizabeth Dale

Arlin Jett

Mark Boyer

Sam Brownback

Chris

November 29, 2006

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Sincerely,

U.S. Senators Signing (73 of the 100)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) | 26. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) | 51. Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) |
| 2. *Sen. George Allen (R-VA) | 27. Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY) | 52. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) |
| 3. Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) | 28. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) | 53. Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) |
| 4. Sen. Evan Bayh (D-IN) | 29. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) | 54. Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR) |
| 5. Sen. Robert Bennett (R-UT) | 30. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) | 55. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) |
| 6. *Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) | 31. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) | 56. Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) |
| 7. Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) | 32. Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) | 57. Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS) |
| 8. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) | 33. Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE) | 58. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) |
| 9. Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) | 34. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) | 59. Sen. Ken Salazar (D-CO) |
| 10. Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC) | 35. Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) | 60. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA) |
| 11. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) | 36. Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) | 61. *Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) |
| 12. Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE) | 37. Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD) | 62. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) |
| 13. Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) | 38. Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) | 63. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) |
| 14. Sen. Hilary Clinton (D-NY) | 39. Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) | 64. Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) |
| 15. Sen. Norm Coleman (R-MN) | 40. Sen. Herbert Kohl (D-WI) | 65. *Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) |
| 16. Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) | 41. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) | 66. Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) |
| 17. Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND) | 42. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) | 67. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) |
| 18. Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) | 43. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) | 68. Sen. John Sununu (R-NH) |
| 19. Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) | 44. Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) | 69. Sen. Craig Thomas (R-WY) |
| 20. Sen. Mark Dayton (D-MN) | 45. Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CT) | 70. Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) |
| 21. Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH) | 46. Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) | 71. Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH) |
| 22. Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) | 47. Sen. Mel Martinez (R-FL) | 72. Sen. John Warner (R-VA) |
| 23. Sen. Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) | 48. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) | 73. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) |
| 24. Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM) | 49. Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) | |
| 25. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) | 50. Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) | |

* = letter originator

HOWARD L. BERMAN, CALIFORNIA
GARY L. ACKERMAN, NEW YORK
ENI F.H. FALCOMVAEAGA, AMERICAN SAMOA
DONALD M. PAYNE, NEW JERSEY
BRAD SHERMAN, CALIFORNIA
ROBERT WEXLER, FLORIDA
ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK
BILL DELAHUNT, MASSACHUSETTS
GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
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RON KLEIN, FLORIDA

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5021
[HTTP://WWW.FOREIGNAFFAIRS.HOUSE.GOV/](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/)

May 11, 2007

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY
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ELTON GALLEGLY, CALIFORNIA
DANA ROHRBACHER, CALIFORNIA
DONALD A. MANZULLO, ILLINOIS
EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA
STEVE CHABOT, OHIO
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RON PAUL, TEXAS
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J. GRESHAM BARRETT, SOUTH CAROLINA
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JEFF FORTENBERRY, NEBRASKA
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TED POE, TEXAS
BOB INGLIS, SOUTH CAROLINA
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DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR
DAVID S. ABRAMOWITZ
CHIEF COUNSEL

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister
Ankara
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States, and 250 million around the world, are facing the likely elimination of their nearly 2,000-year-old spiritual beacon, the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In our view, this lamentable situation is the result of certain inappropriate practices of the Turkish Government, particularly as they are implemented in an era when the population of Turkish citizens who are Greek Orthodox has shrunk to near-negligible numbers.

We are especially concerned about three aspects of Turkish Government policy toward its citizens who are Greek Orthodox – practices which threaten the viability of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in a direct and urgent manner. The first of these is your longstanding unwillingness to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate as ecumenical – that is, trans-national. As you surely know, the entire world outside of Turkey, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, recognizes the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul as the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Its Ecumenical nature derives from its history and spiritual stature as well as the faith and perceptions of people around the globe. We would hope that you would view the Ecumenical Patriarchate as part of the rich cultural tapestry of your magnificent, vibrant city.

Second, we are deeply concerned by your continued involvement in the process of selecting the Ecumenical Patriarch and by your continued insistence that he be a Turkish citizen. These practices clearly reflect your policy of viewing the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a strictly Turkish institution, when, in fact, it provides spiritual and moral guidance for millions of believers worldwide. Today there are less than 2,500 Greek

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
May 11, 2007
Page Two

Orthodox citizens of Turkey, most of whom are elderly. Accordingly, under present policies, there soon will be virtually no Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey left to qualify as Ecumenical Patriarch.

Third, your expropriations of lands belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as a result of a policy in which the state takes possession of lands not being directly used by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and of lands of those who emigrated or died without heirs, is very worrisome to us. This policy deprives the Ecumenical Patriarchate of both badly needed funds and cultural patrimony.

All Americans and all seekers of peace highly value Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's accomplishments. As you surely know, the U.S. Congress has bestowed on His All Holiness America's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, and it did so with the largest number of cosponsors on record at that time.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate – the Sacred See, which has survived since its establishment by the Apostle Andrew nearly two thousand years ago – will disappear in the foreseeable future, unless Turkey changes its policies. We urge you, in friendship and respect, to do everything possible to preserve the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to end all restrictions on its religious freedom.

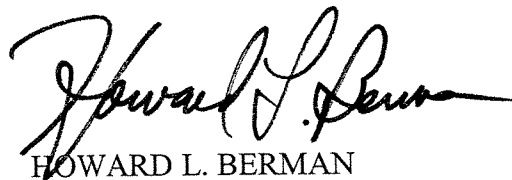
Sincerely,



TOM LANTOS
Chairman



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Ranking Republican Member



HOWARD L. BERMAN



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH



GARY L. ACKERMAN

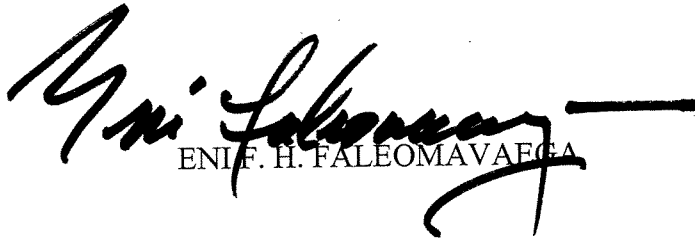


ELTON GALLEGLY

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan

May 11, 2007

Page Three


ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA


DANA ROHRABACHER


DONALD M. PAYNE


DONALD A. MANZULLO


BRAD SHERMAN

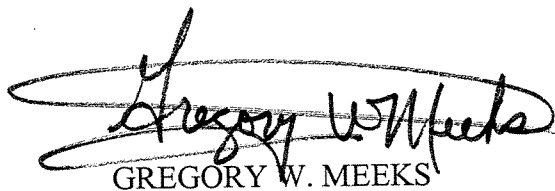

EDWARD R. ROYCE


ELIOT L. ENGEL

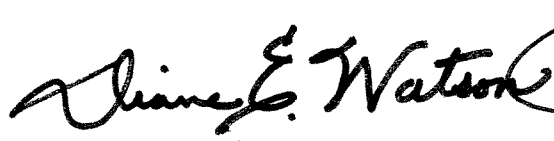

STEVE CHABOT


WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT



THOMAS G. TANCREDO


GREGORY W. MEEKS


JEFF FLAKE


DIANE E. WATSON


JO ANN DAVIS




ADAM SMITH



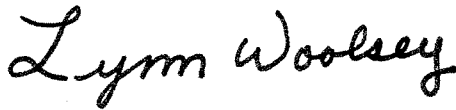
MIKE PENCE



RUSS CARNAHAN



JOE WILSON



LYNN C. WOOLSEY



J. GRESHAM BARRETT



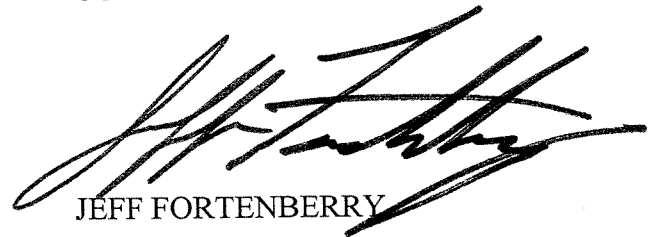
SHEILA JACKSON LEE



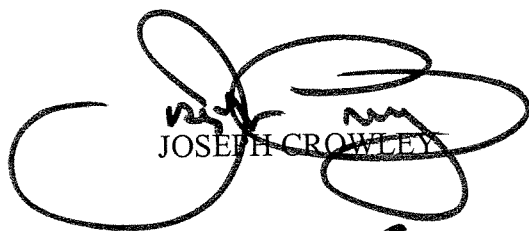
CONNIE MACK




RUBEN HINOJOSA




JEFF FORTENBERRY



JOSEPH CROWLEY



MICHAEL T. MC CAUL



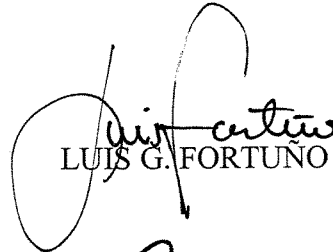
BRAD MILLER



BOB INGLIS

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
May 11, 2007
Page Five


LINDA T. SANCHEZ


LUIS G. FORTUÑO


DAVID SCOTT


GUS M. BILIRAKIS


JIM COSTA


ALBIO SIRES


GABRIELLE GIFFORDS


RON KLEIN



ROBERT WEXLER

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

May 16, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Bush:

I want to bring to your attention the following letter that was recently sent to the Prime Minister of Turkey Tayyip Erdogan by members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The fact that this letter is initiated by the Chairman and Ranking Republican, Tom Lantos and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen respectively, signed by 42 of the 50 members of the Committee, by far a record number in anyone's memory, is an indication of how important to that Committee and Congress is the "religious freedom" of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey.

It is my sincere hope that through your contact as well as that of your Administration with officials of Turkey will help Prime Minister Erdogan as well as the Turkish public fully understand the importance of the Ecumenical Patriarch to our government and to millions of Americans. Further, as an ally and friend of Turkey, we have an obligation to explain why it is in the interest of Turkey to guarantee unequivocally "religious freedom" to the spiritual head of the second largest Christian Church in the world. Ensuring religious freedom is essential to Turkey's accession to the European Union and to its growth as a democratic nation that fully respects human rights.

As the Member of Congress charged by my colleagues in the House of Representatives with overseeing American's relationship with Turkey, as Chairman of the Europe Subcommittee and as Co-Chair of the Turkey Caucus, I will be doing what I can to address this issue. You can rest assured that in my travels to Turkey and in my contacts with Turkish officials, I will strongly emphasize the above-mentioned points.

President Bush, I strongly believe that proper handling of this issue by you and your Administration in conjunction with the government of Turkey can only serve to strengthen our two nations' long-term bilateral relationship.

Sincerely,

Robert Wexler

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Remarks to “The 23RD Annual Cyprus, Hellenic, and Orthodox Issues Conference in Washington, D.C.”

Congressman Tom Lantos

Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs

U.S. House of Representatives

May 17, 2007

Among the most gratifying developments of the post-Cold War world has been the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey. It was initiated in the late 1990s by the former Greek foreign minister George Papandreou and has evolved since then. Both sides have benefited enormously. The mutual rewards have extended to politics and to economics – on both sides of the Aegean. Greece’s far-reaching vision in this matter earned the praise and admiration of the world.

Now it is time for Turkey to take the next major step forward in relations between Greeks and Turks. Ankara needs to show a new resolve and a renewed energy in addressing some of the longstanding, difficult problems between the two sides. What is needed now is willpower and goodwill.

As many of you already know, I have just written a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan urging that he take a number of steps to liberalize Turkey’s policies toward the Ecumenical Patriarchate once and for all.

First, and most important, Turkey must recognize that the Patriarchate is indeed ecumenical. Its ecumenical nature exists in the hearts of Orthodox believers everywhere, and it is absurd for Turkey to try to deny it.

Second, Turkey must cease all interference in the process of selecting the Ecumenical Patriarch, particularly its maddening insistence that the Patriarch be a Turkish citizen. It is simply beyond the bounds of religious freedom for a state to impose such requirements. If Turkey persists in these

policies, the Ecumenical Patriarchate will cease to exist: sadly, there are now less than 2,500 Orthodox citizens left in Turkey. The demise of this solemn spiritual institution – with a tradition spanning two millennia – is intolerable to Orthodox worshippers, to the world at large, and to me personally. All Orthodox, regardless of citizenship, should be eligible to become the Ecumenical Patriarch. It is the Church, not the Turkish state, that should determine who becomes Ecumenical Patriarch.

Third, Turkey must cease expropriating land that belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This unethical and illegal policy deprives the Ecumenical Patriarchate of both badly needed funds and cultural patrimony. This land was handed down through generations and generations.

I am far from alone in these views in the U.S. Congress. A remarkable 84% of the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which I chair, agreed to sign my letter urging the Turkish government to stop bullying the Ecumenical Patriarchate nearly into extinction. That's a bipartisan coalition of 42 out of the Committee's 50 members. I'm very proud of that, particularly in this era when it is difficult to get a bipartisan consensus on much of anything in the United States Congress.

Turkey's policies regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate are anachronistic and inappropriate, and I will underscore that point in all my future meetings with Turkish leaders – until Turkey changes those policies. Turkey should recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate for what it is -- a spiritual beacon to 250 million Orthodox believers around the globe, millions of whom live right here in the United States.

Turkey wants to be a fully modern European state, and I believe it will be. It has already made some strides in that direction. But Turkey can only mature fully if it implements modern values. And that starts with real religious freedom. There is no better way for Turkey to begin this process than by taking the long overdue and morally imperative step of recognizing the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate is one of the world's oldest and greatest treasures. I look forward to working with you to save it and to ensure that it thrives, throughout this century and well beyond, in a manner commensurate with its spiritual stature.

APOSTLES OF PEACE



Pope Benedict XVI, the 265th successor of the St. Peter, joining hands in solidarity with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the 269th successor of St. Andrew, the first called Apostle and the older brother of St. Peter, at the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George, Istanbul, Turkey, November 30, 2006 during the historic Papal Visitation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS OF AMERICA THANK POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF HIS FELLOW APOSTLE OF PEACE, ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW.

In this season of goodwill, we are thankful that two of the most revered spiritual leaders of the Christian world, Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, at their historic meeting last month in Istanbul provided such a moving and powerful demonstration of the desperate need for peace and understanding in the world today.

Their efforts to bring Christians closer together, to reach out to Moslems and to show that violence in the name of religion is violence against religion itself, proved that they are vital forces for peace and reconciliation between different faiths and cultures.

We appreciate the support the Pope declared for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the second largest Christian communion in the world. The efforts the Pontiff made to relieve painful pressures on the Ecumenical Patriarchate exerted by misguided forces in Turkey who do not understand the great asset the Ecumenical Patriarchate is in the efforts of the Turkish people to achieve a place in the family of European nations.

We call on the leaders of Turkey, our NATO ally, to prove that their country deserves recognition as an enlightened and compassionate nation - by ending the harassment of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, by recognizing his ecumenical status (as do all other countries), by recognizing with legal personality the Orthodox Church, as well as the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian communions and Jewish community, by returning confiscated church property belonging to the Patriarchate, by respecting the right of Apostolic succession in the Orthodox Church and ending all interference in the selection of future Patriarchs, and by allowing the reopening of the Halki seminary, which has trained Orthodox clergy and religious leaders in Turkey and around the world for generations.

We call on the President of the United States to show his commitment to religious freedom by doing everything in his power to convince the leaders of Turkey that it is in their country's best interests to end the discriminatory restrictions on the spiritual leader of 300 million Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. We call on you, Mr. President, to join Pope Benedict and many other religious and political leaders throughout the world who have raised their voices in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which stands at the crossroads between the Christian West and the Moslem East and can be a crucial bridge between these two great faiths.

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING 73 U.S. SENATORS WHO DEMONSTRATED, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS, THEIR SUPPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE & FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN TURKEY:

Daniel Akaka (HI)	Lincoln Chafee (RI)	Richard Durbin (IL)	Ted Kennedy (MA)	Bill Nelson (FL)	Olympia Snowe (ME)*
George Allen (VA)*	Hillary Clinton (NY)	Mike Enzi (WY)	Herbert Kohl (WI)	Barack Obama (IL)	Arlen Specter (PA)
Max Baucus (MT)	Norm Coleman (MN)	Russ Feingold (WI)	Mary Landrieu (LA)	Mark Pryor (AR)	Debbie Stabenow (MI)
Evan Bayh (IN)	Susan Collins (ME)	Dianne Feinstein (CA)	Frank Lautenberg (NJ)	Jack Reed (RI)	John Sununu (NH)
Robert Bennett (UT)	Kent Conrad (ND)	Lindsey Graham (SC)	Patrick Leahy (VT)	Harry Reid (NV)	Craig Thomas (WY)
Joe Biden (DE)*	John Cornyn (TX)	Chuck Grassley (IA)	Carl Levin (MI)	Pat Roberts (KS)	David Vitter (LA)
Jeff Bingaman (NM)	Mike Crapo (ID)	Judd Gregg (NH)	Joe Lieberman (CT)	Jay Rockefeller (WV)	George Voinovich (OH)
Barbara Boxer (CA)	Mark Dayton (MN)	Chuck Hagel (NE)	Blanche Lincoln (AR)	Ken Salazar (CO)	John Warner (VA)
Sam Brownback (KS)	Mike DeWine (OH)	Tom Harkin (IA)	Mel Martinez (FL)	Rick Santorum (PA)	Ron Wyden (OR)
Norm Coleman (MN)	Chris Dodd (CT)	James Inhofe (OK)	Bob Menendez (NJ)	Paul Sarbanes (MD)*	
Richard Burr (NC)	Elizabeth Dole (NC)	Daniel Inouye (HI)	Barbara Mikulski (MD)	Charles Schumer (NY)	* Letter originators
Maria Cantwell (WA)	Pete Domenici (NM)	Tim Johnson (SD)	Patty Murray (WA)	Jeff Sessions (AL)	
Thomas Carper (DE)	Byron Dorgan (ND)	John Kerry (MA)	Ben Nelson (NE)	Gordon Smith (OR)	

SINCE 1936, 7,000 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PROPERTIES HAVE BEEN CONFISCATED BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING CHURCHES, ORPHANAGES, CEMETERIES AND SCHOOLS, 1,500 IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

THE 300 MILLION ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ASK WHY THE FOLLOWING 27 UNITED STATES SENATORS HAVE NOT SIGNED ON FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND URGE THEM TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION:

Lamar Alexander (TN)	Robert Byrd (WV)	Jim DeMint (SC)	John Isakson (GA)	John McCain (AZ)	Jim Talent (MO)
Wayne Allard (CO)	Saxby Chambliss (GE)	John Ensign (NV)	Jim Jeffords (VT)	Mitch McConnell (KY)	John Thune (SD)
Christopher Bond (MO)	Tom Coburn (OK)	Bill Frist (TN)	Jon Kyl (AZ)	Lisa Murkowski (AK)	
Jim Bunning (KY)	Thad Cochran (MS)	Orrin Hatch (UT)	Trent Lott (MS)	Richard Shelby (AL)	
Conrad Burns (MT)	Larry Craig (ID)	Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX)	Richard Lugar (IN)	Ted Stevens (AK)	

TURKEY MUST UNDERSTAND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND ADMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION GO HAND IN HAND. ONE CANNOT OCCUR WITHOUT THE OTHER.

Archon Anthony J. Limberakis, MD
National Commander



ORDER OF
SAINT ANDREW
the apostle
ARCHONS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Archon John A. Catsimatidis
Chairman, Religious Freedom Committee

The Order of St. Andrew / Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America is comprised of the leading Orthodox Christians in the United States whose mission is to support and defend the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the first See of the Orthodox Christian Church comprised of 300 million faithful worldwide.
www.archons.org

APOSTLES OF PEACE



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We appreciate the support the Pope demonstrated for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the second largest Christian communion in the world, and the efforts that the Pontiff made to relieve painful pressures on the Ecumenical Patriarchate. These pressures are exerted by misguided forces in Turkey who do not understand the great asset the Ecumenical Patriarchate is in the efforts of the Turkish people to achieve a place in the family of European nations.

We call on the leaders of Turkey, our NATO ally, to prove that their country deserves recognition as an enlightened and compassionate nation and act as a bridge of tolerance between the Moslem and Christian communities. We call on Turkey to act now - by ending the

harassment of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, by recognizing his ecumenical status (as do all other countries), by recognizing with legal personality the Orthodox Church, as well as the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian communions and Jewish community, by returning confiscated church property belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, by respecting the right of Apostolic succession in the Orthodox Christian Church and ending all interference in the selection of future Ecumenical Patriarchs, and by allowing the reopening of the Halki seminary, which has trained Orthodox clergy and religious leaders in Turkey and around the world for generations.

We call on the leaders of the European Union to show their commitment to religious freedom by doing everything in their power to convince the leaders of Turkey that it is in their country's best interests to end the discriminatory restrictions on the spiritual leader of 300 million Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. We call on all our European friends of all faiths, to join Pope Benedict and many other religious and political leaders throughout the world who have raised their voices in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which stands at the crossroads between the Christian West and the Moslem East and can be a crucial bridge between these two great faiths.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ADMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION GO HAND IN HAND. TURKEY MUST BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THAT ONE CANNOT OCCUR WITHOUT THE OTHER.

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Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle

Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

December 19, 2006

Via E-Mail and Regular Mail

The Honorable Ross Wilson
Ambassador to Turkey
American Embassy Ankara
110 Atatürk Blvd.
Kavaklıdere, 06100 Ankara – Turkey

Mr. Ambassador:

I am writing this letter in my capacity as National Commander of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and for the more than 6 million Orthodox Christians who reside in the United States of America.

At what point does the abridgment of the rights of United States citizens by the government of Turkey warrant a strenuous rebuke and vigorous protest by the United States Government? We think that point has long come and that the State Department must not turn silent to a government who consistently acts in a fashion opposed to the most basic religious values and the most fundamental rights of citizens of the United States of America.

* * *

The visit in Istanbul by the Roman Catholic Pope, Benedict XVI, to Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate, Bartholomew, was a historic event of great religious importance for the world over. It was viewed everywhere as a step towards reconciliation between the two ancient and apostolic Christian churches. Almost 200 United States citizens traveled to Turkey to witness the momentous event. Today, I have the unfortunate responsibility of reporting the harassment that we Americans endured as we came to witness this historic meeting.

Perhaps the conduct which best illustrates the oppressive harassment by the Turkish authorities of the religious rights of United States citizens occurred on the celebration of the services by the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch on November 29th and 30th. Archons and other faithful Orthodox Christians from the United States were forced to **turn in their passports** to Turkish

authorities before passing through a blockade and proceeding to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to attend the services, while many other Orthodox Christians were completely denied access to worship. Once inside the Church, Turkish police permeated the congregation and physically blocked and bullied worshippers in their attempts to receive communion and receive liturgical gifts from the revered clergy. In fact, the clergy had to plead and argue with the Turkish police, to allow the faithful to move towards the Altar and the Chalice.

But the harassment did not begin or end in the confines of our Patriarchal Cathedral and sanctuary. The following list records some of the acts of mistreatment. These examples provide yet more evidence of the oppression that the Ecumenical Patriarchate suffers at the hands of the Turkish government. This list is not all inclusive, but is indicative of our experience:

- On November 28th and 29th, press registration and the issue of press passes was disrupted by Turkish Authorities who forcibly closed our registration table and threatened to confiscate the press passes we had prepared for distribution to registered journalists.
- On three separate occasions, Turkish authorities attempted to close down the press office of the Holy See/Ecumenical Patriarchate which was directed and staffed by Archons of the Order of St. Andrew.
- On November 29th, Turkish authorities threatened to expel our staff from the press office, and take over the operation thereof.
- On the morning of November 29th, our technical staff discovered that all of the work server preferences on computer and communication systems in the press room had been remotely changed, causing the simultaneous failure of our wireless internet connections, and ADSL internet lines. Our Turkish vendor stated unequivocally that these problems could only be due to technical sabotage, as the preferences had been checked the previous evening and that morning, at which time all communication systems were working properly.
- On November 29th, Turkish authorities confiscated banners with images of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Benedict XVI which the Archons had hung at the entrance of the press office of the Holy See/Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- On the 29th of November, busses transporting Archons and other faithful Orthodox Christians for the Doxology service were kept from approaching the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Archons and other pilgrims were forced to walk approximately one mile to participate in the Doxology worship service at the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

- At the conclusion of the Doxology service on the 29th, these same passengers learned that Turkish authorities had ordered their busses to move even further away from the Ecumenical Patriarch. Archons and other faithful Orthodox Christians, many of whom are advanced in age, were forced to walk more than two miles through the dark streets of the Fenar district in order to board their busses and return to their hotel.
- Crucial Turkish vendors, including the caterer for the luncheon in honor of the Pope hosted by the Ecumenical Patriarch, were initially denied entrance into the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Ultimately, their access was restricted and delayed.
- On the 30th of November, busses bringing passengers for the Divine Liturgy were barred from approaching the Ecumenical Patriarchate again. Passengers were again forced to walk a great distance and turn in their passports before being admitted into the Ecumenical Patriarchate for worship services. Again, many Orthodox Christians were denied access all together.
- On November 29th and 30th, Members of the press bearing Turkish press credentials and press passes of Ecumenical Patriarchate were denied entrance into the Ecumenical Patriarchate even though they were named on a list of pre-approved press. This list was agreed upon by Turkish authorities and the staff of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's press office prior to the event. This seriously compromised media coverage of the exchange between Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Benedict XVI.
- On the 30th of November, an Archon attempting to secure admittance to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for approved press and faithful Orthodox Christians was forcibly removed from the premises and detained by Turkish authorities for approximately one hour.

In summary, Turkish authorities took concrete steps to disrupt the smooth operation and of the Papal visit. They attacked the press office of the Holy See/Ecumenical Patriarchate, harassed volunteer staff and paid vendors, and disrupted media coverage. Most alarming of all, they restricted Orthodox Christians' access to their church, making entrance to services and free movement in worship difficult and, for many, impossible.

* * *

As you know, the Order of St. Andrew enthusiastically shares in Turkey's hope to enter the European Union, and actively advocates for the necessary changes within Turkey to realize that hope. The Order of St. Andrew has always been aware of Turkish policies that abridge the full and free operation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious minorities, and yet the Order is confident that Turkey can become a nation in which people of all faiths may exercise their religion freely.

The Honorable Ross Wilson
Page 4

We have expressed this confidence to policy makers in the United States and Europe, while advocating for the freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its historic home of Istanbul. However, I am saddened to say that from our experiences during the Papal visit, the members of the Order of St. Andrew have acquired a new understanding of Turkey's marginalizing and unfair treatment of Christians.

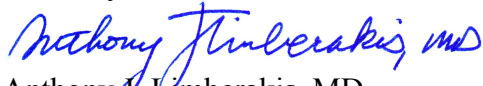
The outright harassment of members of the Order of St. Andrew, faithful Orthodox Christians, and the press has made the obstacles to Turkey's entrance to the European Union undeniably visible.

The Order of St. Andrew views these acts of harassment as religious oppression of United States citizens. We, however, refuse to lose hope that Turkey will fulfill its potential as a dignified and noble member of the European Union, and we continue to advocate for changes in policy and practice that will allow for the free exercise of religion for people of all faiths. In pursuit of this end, I request that you forward this letter of complaint to all relevant Turkish authorities, and insist these urgent issues of religious freedom be addressed as Turkey, a U.S. ally, works to find her place among the European nations.

As I close this communication, allow me to express the appreciation of the visiting pilgrims who had the great honor to be present at the dinner in honor of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on December 1st. As Americans who believe in the First Amendment, we were quite pleased when you offered stirring words in support of religious freedom in Turkey and the Ecumenical Patriarch and his role as a "religious figure, statesman, advocate of understanding, respect and love among peoples, and friend..."

Wishing you and your family an Advent Season filled with abundant blessings and a New Year replete with peace and good health, I remain,

Sincerely,



Anthony J. Limberakis, MD

Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
National Commander

Cc: The President of the United States
The Secretary of State
Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5 May 2006

SUBJECT: Problems Faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Restrictions on the Election of the Ecumenical Patriarch

In 1923 and 1970, the Governor of Istanbul issued illegal decrees imposing restrictions on the election of the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the Metropolitans who elect him. These decrees state that the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Hierarchs (Metropolitans and Archbishops) who vote for him must be Turkish citizens. The Canons of the Orthodox Church state that the Ecumenical Patriarch is to be elected from the entire pool of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Currently there are only 15 Hierarchs in Turkey with Turkish citizenship and 40 Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate outside of Turkey. Additionally, there are only 2 deacons and 2 priests working at the Ecumenical Patriarchate as candidates to replace them in the future. Theoretically, according to Canon Law, if a vote were to take place, they all should be eligible to be elected Ecumenical Patriarch and to elect the Ecumenical Patriarch. The result of these restrictions is that in the not so distant future the Ecumenical Patriarchate may not be able to elect an Ecumenical Patriarch.

Non-Recognition of “Ecumenical” Status of Patriarch and Patriarchate

The Turkish State still does not recognize the “Ecumenical” title and status of the Patriarch and Patriarchate. This title was given to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople by the undivided Christian Church in the 6th century, and is purely an ecclesiastical title. The mission and jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has always been and always will be purely spiritual. Unfortunately, this title has been the source of much debate by the Turkish State, even though it is recognized and used by the rest of the world. The majority of the faithful under the immediate jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is outside of Turkey and encircles the globe. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is also the First Church of the Orthodox Church world-wide, responsible for coordinating the Pan-Orthodox affairs of the Orthodox Church. It is the spiritual center of 250 million Orthodox Christians world-wide. The Turkish Authorities state that the Treaty of Lausanne prohibits this ecumenical status but in reality the Lausanne Treaty does not do so.

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Re-Opening of the Theological School of Halki

This seminary was illegally closed in 1971 by a secret decision that prohibited private higher religious education. The operation of this Minority School is protected by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. This school operated as a 3 year high school followed by 4 years of theological and priestly training. However, these 4 years were recognized as 1 year of vocational training and therefore could not have been considered a school of higher education. Since its closure, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has had to send the young men from its community desiring to enter the priesthood or study theology abroad, usually to one of the theological schools in Greece, and in many instances they do not return to Turkey after their studies. Since the closure of the school, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has also had difficulties in staffing the Ecumenical Patriarchate to carry out its many administrative responsibilities, and to fill positions to carry out its world-wide mission. Despite many promises made by the Turkish Government over the past few years that the school would reopen, there has been absolutely no progress towards this end. Prime Minister Erdoğan has stated that he would like the school to re-open but first a mosque needs to be built in Athens, Greece, which is now happening. Minister of Foreign Affairs Gül has said several times that the Government is working on a solution. The Minister of Education has said that if there is political will that the school could re-open in 24 hours. The Ecumenical Patriarchate has never been officially contacted by the Turkish Authorities about the re-opening of the school. The re-opening of the school is absolutely necessary for the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Non-Legal Status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Ecumenical Patriarchate still has no legal identity, or personality, in Turkey. This is particularly difficult to understand since the institution is 1700 years old. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923, established and defined the legal position and rights of the Minorities in Turkey. This is an internationally binding agreement and its articles cannot be altered or interfered with by the Turkish State. The EU-Turkey 2003 Accession Partnership instructs Turkey to conform to European standards with respect to religious freedom and the protection of minorities. The Turkish State continues to violate the Lausanne Treaty by not recognizing legally the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and it has not made any progress towards the EU-Turkey 2003 Accession Partnership. Not having a legal identity is a major source of many other problems of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey.

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

No Work Permits for Foreigners

Foreigners who work at the Ecumenical Patriarchate are not able to obtain work permits to work in Turkey at the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There are currently 10 clergymen from Greece, 1 layman from the United States and 1 layman from Great Britain that work at the Ecumenical Patriarchate illegally. These individuals must leave the country every three months to renew their tourist visas. This makes bringing individuals from abroad to work at the Ecumenical Patriarchate very difficult and also greatly disrupts the operation and productivity of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Once, when a clergyman from France working at the Ecumenical Patriarchate applied for a work permit, two days later he was deported and banned from Turkey. At any moment the Turkish Authorities can order these foreigners to leave the country. This would immediately halt the functioning of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

No Property Rights

The Turkish Authorities do not allow the Ecumenical Patriarchate to have any property rights in Turkey and therefore it cannot own any property. None of the churches under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey are owned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Rather, they are owned by a Minority Foundations which are administered independently of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Even the newly issued title to the Patriarchal House, the Ecumenical Patriarchate's main building, is written to the foundation of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George, but not to the Ecumenical Patriarchate itself. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is also prohibited from purchasing any type of property.

Loss of Properties

Through various methods, the Turkish Authorities have confiscated thousands of properties (homes, apartment buildings, schools, land) from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its community over the years. One method was when it was illegal for churches to own property, properties were placed in the names of private individuals. These properties were then confiscated by the State, and have either been sold or are rented by the State, who now collects the rental income from these properties. The Authorities have also confiscated school buildings, and the General Directorate of Foundations has classified 18 church and monastery foundations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as "mazbut". This means that the properties belonging to these foundations have been confiscated and only the Church building has been left to be used by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. However, in some instances, even the church building is now in the name of the General Directorate of Foundations. The Turkish Authorities have also taken 36 cemeteries of the Ecumenical

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Patriarchate, which are protected by the Lausanne Treaty, and have registered them to the various municipalities of Istanbul.

Confiscation of the Boys Orphanage Building of Büyükkada

On 20 March 2006, the name of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was erased as the owner of the only building in Turkey that it possesses the title of, and replaced with the name of the Foundation of the building. However, this Foundation was seized by the Turkish Authorities in 1997. Therefore this building is now owned by the Turkish State. This is the largest wooden building in Europe and has tremendous historical value. The Ecumenical Patriarchate appealed to the European Courts of Human Rights on 9 April 2005 about the ownership of this building, but the Turkish State still proceeded with this above-mentioned action while this case is in process.

Confiscation of the Monasteries on the Princes Islands

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has recently learned that out of its 11 monasteries on the Princes Islands of Istanbul, 3 monasteries and the property of 1 monastery are registered in the name of the General Directorate of Foundations, 6 are listed as having no owner and 1 is not listed at all. Even though this transfer of ownership occurred in 1976 and 1977, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was never notified by the Turkish Authorities about this, and still has not been. So while the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been using and maintaining these churches for the past 30 years, it has just learned that it no longer owns these monastery churches. This is most disturbing because this is the first time the Ecumenical Patriarchate is aware of the fact that an actual church building has been taken from it and given to the General Directorate of Foundations.

Draft Law on Minority Foundations

The Turkish State has been preparing a new Law concerning Minority Foundations property rights in Turkey for over 2 years now. The Minority communities submitted their opinions to the State about this Law over 2 years ago, but there has never been a response or any notification about this new Law. Not only is the State taking an excessive amount of time to produce the new Law, but it is doing so in a very secretive way. The Minority communities are very nervous about how this new law will be written, as thousands of their properties have been confiscated from them by the Turkish State over the years. The current law gives the power to the General Directorate of Welfare Foundations to classify minority properties as “mazbut” and therefore confiscate them. The new law must eradicate this power and practice, and correct the numerous problems the Minority Communities face in

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the administration of their properties because if it doesn't, the life of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its Rum* community will be increasingly threatened.

The Administration of Churches

The ownership of many of the churches of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is also now in jeopardy because of a lack of faithful living in their districts. The Governor of Istanbul recently sent a letter to the Ecumenical Patriarchate instructing its churches to perform elections for the Administrative Boards of its churches' foundations. Because of a lack of faithful living in the districts of many of the churches, the required number of 12 individuals cannot be elected to many the administrative boards. Therefore, if elections are held, the State may classify many of these churches as "mazbut" and confiscate them and their properties.

The Islands of Imvros and Tenedos

On what were once islands inhabited only by the Rum population, there are now only 170 Rum individuals living on Imvros and 14 on Tenedos. On these islands, the majority of the private and church property of the Rum Minority has been taken and at present is being sold, rented or distributed by the Turkish Authorities to Turkish Emigrants from Anatolia. A law was passed on the island of Imvros on 24 July 2004 that no minorities are allowed to own private property on the island any more. This means that the properties the minorities own can be taken away from them. The Turkish Assembly also agreed that all properties on the islands of Imvros and Tenedos are now National Heritage sites and therefore belong to the State.

The Churches of Galata

There are 3 churches in the area of Galata that properly belong to the Ecumenical Patriarchate but were taken by the Turkish State and given to the so-called "Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate". One church was taken in 1924 and 3 were taken in 1965, but one of the latter was given back shortly after. This so-called church was started by the Turkish State in 1924 solely in order to create problems for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It has no priests and no faithful. It rents one of these churches to the Syrian Catholic community in Istanbul. Additionally, it collects the rental income from the properties owned by these 3 churches, which is a considerable income. These churches must be given back to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

* Rum- The Greek Orthodox Community of Constantinople who are the cultural heirs of the Byzantine Civilization and the Roman Empire

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Problems in Education

Currently there are many qualified primary school teachers from the local Rum Minority community that are denied teaching positions in the Rum Minority primary schools. The reason is that the Turkish State insists on employing a predetermined number of teachers from Greece every year to teach in the Rum schools here in Istanbul. As a result, sometimes qualified teachers from the local Rum community are not employed because of the desire to fill the “quota” of teachers from Greece. However, the teachers from Greece should only be used to fill positions when they cannot be filled by the local Rum teachers.

The Rum Community also has many empty school buildings that cannot be used for a purpose other than education. Therefore, the community is losing much rental income to help finance its other schools that are open.

The libraries of Rum Minority Schools are very inadequate because of the current 6 year process of getting books “approved” by the Turkish Authorities to be placed in the library. As a result, the students suffer from not having up-to-date books at their disposal for their education.

No Dialogue

One of the most difficult things the Ecumenical Patriarchate must endure is the fact that there is no dialogue with the Turkish Authorities about the issues of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in order to find solutions to the problems. In the past several years, there have been very few meetings between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Turkish Authorities. Additionally, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has written and sent over 30 letters to the Prime Minister, other Ministers and Authorities in Ankara about the problems of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its community, but there has never been even one reply to any of these letters.

On 30 October 2003, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew had a meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan in Ankara. At this meeting the Ecumenical Patriarch gave the Prime Minister a letter containing all of the problems of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Prime Minister said that he wants to do something to help the situation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its Rum community but he said that in order for this to happen that Greece must do something about the situation of the Muslim’s living in Eastern Thrace, Greece. However, there are 100,000 Turkish Muslim populations living in Western Thrace under much better conditions than the 2,500 Rum people living in Istanbul under much more difficult circumstances. The Prime Minister also said that in order for the Theological

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School to open, first a mosque must be built in Athens, which is now happening. In response the Ecumenical Patriarch explained that there is a big difference between the Muslims in Greece and the Rum Community in Turkey because the Rum community are Turkish citizens. Although the Prime Minister said that he would respond to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's letter within a week, there has never been a reply to the His All Holiness' letter.

In October 2003, the Ecumenical Patriarch also met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Gül and the Minister of Education Çelic. Both Ministers said that they wanted to find a solution for the re-opening of Halki but there has never been any follow-up by either of them.

In January 2004 another meeting took place at the Governor of Istanbul's home. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia were present and 3 Ambassadors from Ankara, the Chief of Police of Minorities in Istanbul, and two lawyers from the Ministries of Internal and External Affairs. The issues of the Theological School of Halki, the election of the Ecumenical Patriarch and Minority property rights were discussed.

On 17 April 2006, a meeting took place at the Ecumenical Patriarchate with representatives of the Minority Communities and representatives of the Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs and Education, and a representative of the General Directorate of Foundations. At this meeting all of the problems of the Minorities were raised but there were no suggestions given by any of the representatives from the Ministries or Directorate of Foundations about how these problems may be solved. In fact, the only collective response by the representatives was that once Turkey enters the European Union then most of these problems will be solved.

This meeting was of course most disappointing for the Minority communities and especially for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It appears that there is still no interest by Turkey in solving any of the problems of the Minorities in Turkey, even though it has been instructed by the EU-Turkey 2003 Accession Partnership to conform to European standards with respect to religious freedom and the protection of minorities. Without the resolution of many of these problems, Turkey will not be demonstrating the religious freedom necessary to enter the European Union.

SAMPLE

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESOLUTION FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Subject: A Religious Freedom Resolution by (name of entity passing resolution) regarding the crisis threatening the existence of the spiritual head of our fellow citizens who are Orthodox Christians -- the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

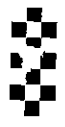
Background

1. His Eminence Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington; Holocaust survivor Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation; Dr. Robert Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ; His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Chairman of SCOBA; and Dr. Anthony Limberakis, the National Commander of the Order of St. Andrew, presented testimony in the U.S. House of Representatives before the Helsinki Commission on March 15, 2005 expressing their grave concern about Turkey's withholding of religious and human rights to the point of elimination of the spiritual head of Orthodox Christians in America, who are among the 250 million around the world -- Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.
2. The spiritual head of Orthodox Christians residing in our (State, City, Town and Village), Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul, Turkey, is the 269th direct successor of the Apostle Andrew. Our fellow citizens of Orthodox Christian faith are members of the second largest church in the largest religion in the world.
3. All Christians in our (State, City, Town and Village), in America and around the world stand to lose this nearly 2,000-year-old Sacred See where the text of the New Testament was codified, the canonical structure of the Christian Church was established, and the Nicene Creed was written and first pronounced.
4. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America, the spiritual leader of our fellow citizens of Orthodox Christian Faith, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, gathered international religious leaders and produced the first condemnation of the attacks as "anti-religious" that included Muslim leaders.
5. The individual importance to America of our fellow Orthodox Christian citizens' spiritual head, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, is reflected in the record number of Congressional cosponsors who bestowed on him America's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal – an award first given to George Washington and also to Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II.

Action

The (name of entity enacting resolution) approves the following Resolution:

1. Millions of Orthodox Christian Americans stand to lose their spiritual head and all Christians in America will lose a crucial link to their sacred history, holy texts and religious forefathers because the Turkish government refuses to uphold and safeguard religious freedom and human rights without compromise.
2. Turkish Prime Ministers insist that any new spiritual head of Orthodox Christian Americans (selected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate) must be approved or disapproved by him or her and that the government of Turkey refuses to reopen the Seminary it forcibly closed in 1971, thus, impeding the training of clergy.
3. The dissolution of the spiritual head of our Orthodox Christian citizens in the coming decades is essentially inevitable if Turkey continues its imposed policy demanding that only Turkish Orthodox Christians can become Ecumenical Patriarch, which violates and interferes in the Church's historic and holy right of apostolic succession for the past 2,000 years. Because of incessant forms of discrimination, the once large eligible community of Turkish citizens of the Orthodox Faith has declined to only 2,500, and they are mostly elderly.
4. In recent years, the Turkish government has, in violation of the inalienable rights of all peoples, confiscated seventy-five percent of the properties of the spiritual head of our fellow Americans who are Orthodox Christians.
5. The disappearance of this Sacred See would also mean the end of a crucial link between Christians and the Muslim world. At a time when individuals hostile to the United States are attempting to create conflict between Christians and Muslims, the 1,700 years continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey is a living testimony of religious co-existence since 1453.
6. Help Turkey understand the close ties of millions of American citizens to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the importance we attach to its welfare. Help Turkey realize our strong desire that the Ecumenical Patriarchate be accorded the religious freedom it deserves and persuade the Turkish government to abandon policies that will lead to the disappearance of this Sacred See, thus creating a religious tragedy of historic magnitude.



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 11
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
212th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2006 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator JOSEPH M. KYRILLOS, JR.

District 13 (Middlesex and Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Turkey to respect rights and religious freedoms of Ecumenical Patriarchate.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

A JOINT RESOLUTION urging Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey refuses to recognize the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the head of the Greek Orthodox Christian Church which is a minority religion in Turkey; and

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited the candidates available to the Holy Synod for selection as the Ecumenical Patriarch to Turkish nationals and reneged on its agreement to reopen the Theological School at Halki, thus impeding training for the clergy; and

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has confiscated most of the properties of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and has placed a 42 percent retroactive tax on the Balukli Hospital which is run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

WHEREAS, The European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005; and

WHEREAS, The European Union defined membership criteria for accession to the European Union at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to have achieved certain levels of reform, including stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for and protection of minorities and human rights; and

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the draft European Union Constitution, current and prospective member nations should have the goal of eliminating discrimination based on any ground, such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, national minority membership, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, Turkey's current treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey call on the Government of Turkey to eliminate all forms of discrimination, particularly those based on race or religion, and immediately grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities. New Jersey calls on the Government of Turkey to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

2. The Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey call on the Government of Turkey to pledge to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise and encourages Turkey to continue the advancement of processes and programs to modernize and democratize its own society, in light of its potential accession to the European Union.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This resolution urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Turkey continues to limit the rights of minority Greek Orthodox Christians through acts such as seizing property, including a major hospital, orphanage and theological school.

The resolution urges Turkey to recognize its ill treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and change its treatment so that, if and when it is accepted as a member of the European Union, its goals and actions will comply with the draft European Union Constitution and mirror those of other member nations. The draft Constitution of the European Union states that the Union's values are "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities." It states that the goal of the Union is to "strengthen the protection of fundamental rights in light of changes in society, social progress and scientific and technological developments...." Turkey did not satisfactorily reform its treatment of the Patriarchate before accession discussions began with the European Union on October 3, 2005, but is urged to do so during such negotiations.