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Joins Congressional Delegation Calling On
President Bush to Continue Support of Cyprus
Says Greek Cypriots Must Wait For A Just & Reasonable Reunification Plan,
Praises Cyprus For Being True Friend of U.S.

Washington, DC - Reaffirming his commitment to a just and fair Cyprus reunification plan, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) this month addressed the 15th Annual Cyprus Conference in Washington, DC and last week signed onto a bipartisan congressional delegation letter to President Bush urging him to continue supporting Cyprus despite the recent rejection of the United Nation's (UN) plan. Rothman said the onus is on the Turkish Cypriots and the UN to develop a just plan that will ensure Cyprus' long-term security and prosperity.

"Although it was discouraging that the UN-brokered negotiations on reunification were ultimately not successful, it is important that the world recognizes that the Greek Cypriots rightfully voted against the referendum. It was not a vote against reunification, but instead, an expression of disapproval for this severely inadequate and unjust plan," said Rothman, who met in March with Cyprus' new Ambassador to the United States, Euripides L. Evriviades, to discuss the latest efforts for reunification. "As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, I will continue to support the Greek Cypriots in their perseverance to reunify Cyprus as a bizonal, bicomunal federation that honors democratic principles and human rights. I will also continue to call upon President Bush to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Cyprus as it continues to seek a reunification plan that will ensure safety, security, and justice for all of its people."

Greek Cypriots recently rejected the proposed UN reunification plan because it did not provide, among other things, for the eventual removal of Turkish troops from the island; the elimination of the right of foreign forces to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus; a property recovery system that recognizes the rights of those Greek Cypriots who were forced from their homes in 1974; the rights of all Cypriots to acquire property and live wherever they choose without restrictive quotas; and a functional government without deadlocks or voting restrictions based on ethnicity.

At the conference, Rothman also spoke about the solid ties between the U.S. and Cyprus saying that, "The United States' relationship with Cyprus is strong and continues to grow stronger. Cyprus and the United States have a great deal in common. We share a deep and abiding commitment to democracy, human rights, free markets, and the ideal and practice of equal justice under the law."

The 15th Annual Cyprus Conference was organized by the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), the International Coordinating Committee Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA) and the National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes (CEH). The letter to Bush is expected to be sent within the next two weeks. So far, more than 35 House Members have signed the letter.

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