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Focuses on Bush Cuts in Aid to Cyprus, Accession to the
European Union, & Resolution to the Divided Cyprus

Washington, DC – As part of his continuing efforts to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Cyprus, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) recently met in his Washington, DC office with Cyprus Ambassador to the United States, Erato Marcoullis. Rothman, a member of the influential Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, which allocates U.S. foreign assistance, holds a key position this year in the fight against President Bush's proposed 50 percent reduction in aid to Cyprus.

"I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Marcoullis to discuss issues of importance to the U.S.-Cyprus relationship. Cyprus is at a critical juncture as it readies to accede to the European Union," said Rothman. "Membership in the European Union combined with the continuing refusal on the part of Turkish Cypriot Leader Rauf Denktash to negotiate realistically for a settlement to the conflict makes it clear that the United States must continue sufficient funding for Cyprus instead of decreasing assistance. I pledge to use my position on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee to fight for the full \$15 million that Cyprus needs to continue important initiatives such as bicomunal projects and scholarships."

In the Fiscal Year 2004 budget request submitted to Congress by President Bush, only \$7.5 million was included for Cyprus. This is reduced from \$15 million in Fiscal Year 2003 and previous years. Rothman and Ambassador Marcoullis also discussed the future of a federation on the island of Cyprus, and actions that can be taken by the U.S. Congress to facilitate this goal.

Rothman is a member of the bipartisan Congressional Hellenic Caucus, which focuses attention on issues of concern to Greek Americans, specifically regarding Greece and Cyprus.

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[Go back](#)