

## AHI Hosts 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner



2023 Honorees (L-R): Euripides Kastaris, Jeannie Ranglas, Dr. George D. Yancopoulos, and John D. Georges

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) hosted its 49th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner, March 4, 2023, Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C.

The evening's program honored a distinguished set of awardees based upon their important career achievements and contributions to the Greek American community or community at-large. They were:

- Euripides Kastaris, Iconographer, Artist, and Teacher
- Jeannie Ranglas, Prominent Church Patron and Philanthropist

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## Top Officials Brief AHI Leadership Delegation in Greece



AHI Leadership with the Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, General Konstantinos Floros (center).

force 114 Combat Wing and tour the base. They met with Colonel Stephanos Ampouleris, who serves as Commander of the 114 Combat Wing, for a briefing. Lt. Col. Grigorios Sinas, who serves as Commander of the 331 Squadron (Mirage 2000-5), and Lt. Col. Theodoros Christodoulou, who serves as Commander of the

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## Delphi Forum Visionary and Groundbreaking Maritime CEO Feted at 19th Annual Athens Awards Dinner



(L-R) Vasileios Kyriazis, Irene S. Daifas, Symeon G. Tsomokos, and Nick Larigakis.

The American Hellenic Institute held its the 19th Annual AHI-Athens Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards Dinner at The Grande Bretagne, May 5, 2023. More than 200 people attended.

AHI presented the Hellenic Heritage Public Service Award to two honorees: Symeon G. Tsomokos, founder and president of the Delphi Economic Forum, and Irene S. Daifas, CEO, Stavros Daifas Maritime Corporation S.A.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS



Mike Emanuel, chief Washington correspondent for Fox News, served as the evening's master of ceremonies.



John Vasiliou, Nick Larigakis, Gerry & Jeannie Ranglas, Senator Chris Van Hollen, Kostas Alexakis & Leon Andris



AHI President Nick Larigakis



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Buhler, Mr. & Mrs. Gerry Ranglas with Dr. George Yacopoulos' family.



AHI Foundation President Leon Andris

- George D. Yancopoulos, M.D., Ph.D., Scientific Founder, President and Chief Scientific Officer, Regeneron
- John D. Georges, Founder and CEO, Georges Enterprises

The program also included a special presentation to Yola Pakhchanian for her 40 years of service to the American Hellenic Institute.

AHI Board Member John Vasiliou introduced Mike Emanuel, chief Washington correspondent for Fox News, who served as the evening's emcee.

The Marines of Headquarters Battalion presented the colors, and the American and Greek national anthems were performed by Mezzo-Soprano Sophia M. Pelekasis of The Juilliard School. She also performed a musical interlude. Father Dimitrios Antokas of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, Md., offered the invocation and benediction. Apollonia provided musical entertainment.

AHI Foundation President Leon Andris conveyed greetings and introduced AHI President Nick R. Larigakis, who reviewed the Institute's initiatives and programs that are provided to the community.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

“As a reminder, the American Hellenic Institute does the heavy lifting of creating policy and lobbying for our issues,” Andris said. “The Foundation is then able to take a broader view of things, especially a view to the future,” noting programs such as the Foundation’s student trip that builds leaders for tomorrow.

“Lastly, a lot of wonderful words will be spoken tonight, but not enough, in my humble opinion, to sufficiently recognize the heart and soul of AHI and the Foundation, Nick Larigakis,” Andris said.

President Larigakis congratulated each of the honorees, noting their excellence in professionalism and unwavering devotion to serving others as reasons for their achieving exceptionalism. In doing so, they exemplify the highest ideals of Hellenism. He also touched upon AHI’s accomplishments in 2022 and what he looks forward to in 2023 as AHI reaches the cusp of its 50th anniversary.

On the policy front, Larigakis stressed that we cannot have double standards that jeopardize upholding of the rule of law.

“With Ukraine, we are reminded that respect for the territorial integrity of nations is a central pillar for what has become to be known as the ‘Rule Based International Order,’” Larigakis said. “However, no such Order is credible, or can even be an aspiration, if we apply it selectively. The Biden administration, considering Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, must be clear-eyed about dangerous rogue nations that threaten peace, and this includes Turkey. Freedom can only be fulfilled within the context of the rule of law, and without the rule of law, freedom does not exist, and frankly, neither does the ‘Rule Based International Order.’”

### Honorees Credit Those Who Sacrificed, Provided Inspiration

Iconographer, Artist, and Teacher Euripides Kastaris received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his unparalleled achievements and excellence in the arts, his inspiring Byzantine Iconography and support of Orthodoxy.

“It is with gratefulness that I accept the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award,” Kastaris said. “We are in a room full of leaders in the Hellenic American Community, people who make this organization and their own business and church communities vibrant and successful. So many of you are just as worthy as myself of being honored for your achievements and hard work.”

Kastaris also spoke about his immigrant parents, a Greek Orthodox priest and presvytera, who came to America to serve the Greek Orthodox faith community, and their dream to have their three children attend great universities and earn quality educations.

“That dream was realized for all three of us because of my parents’ sacrifices,” he said.

Prominent Church Patron and Philanthropist Jeannie Ranglas received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Public Service Award for her passionate and selfless commitment to charitable endeavors, multiple philanthropic achievements, and her support of Orthodoxy.”

Ranglas, reflected on the individuals who influenced her life and spoke about the important role that faith plays in our lives.

“There are so many people whose influence on my life has guided my development, and by extension, my involvement in the church and civic communities on me and my spiritual formation, that I still carry with me today,” she said. “Our faith and culture are intertwined, but without our faith, we would have nothing. But it is how we demonstrate that faith that can and will make a difference in our world. If I could leave you all with one final thought, it would simply be to serve others with love, with generosity, and with joy and most of all Faith. These principles have guided me, and I hope they will inspire you to be a person whose actions speak louder than words.”

George D. Yancopoulos, M.D., Ph.D., Scientific Founder, President and Chief Scientific Officer, Regeneron received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his legendary achievements in the field of pharmaceutical science and his inspirational leadership and service to the Greek American community.

Dr. Yancopoulos stated: “I am honored to be recognized by the American Hellenic Institute, and I congratulate my fellow honorees. As the son of Greek immigrants, stories of my ancestors shaped my life and led me to my chosen profession of creating new medicines for patients in need. My upbringing instilled in me the belief that science and technology can better the human condition, and I’m inspired to see the myriad ways that people of Hellenic heritage improve the world every day. I hope that we all continue to inspire and equip the next generation of innovators and philanthropists who we are depending on to tackle the most complex challenges of tomorrow.”

Founder and CEO of Georges Enterprises, John D. Georges, received the AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his outstanding business achievements, dedicated philanthropy and promotion of Orthodoxy.

“AHI is the best foreign policy organization in America, which makes this award so meaningful for my family and me. As an American of Greek descent, it is truly a privilege to be an honoree at this year’s award dinner,” Georges said.



Nick Larigakis presenting a gift of appreciation to Yola Pakhchanian for 40 years of service to AHI.

In acceptance of her AHI 40-year service recognition, Yola Pakhchanian expressed gratitude to AHI's leadership of President Larigakis, AHIF President Andris, and board of directors, adding, "I owe an immense debt of gratitude to the late Gene Rossides, founder of AHI, who not only gave me my dream job 40 years ago, but also provided me with a platform to give back to the people of Cyprus that over a century ago, offered refuge to my grandparents and father when they were forced to flee Turkey. It has been a great privilege to have been part of this organization and to have had the opportunity to work with so many incredible people over the years. I am proud of the work we have done and the countless accomplishments we achieved."

She also gave a nod to the community's next generation—the alumni of the AHIF's Foreign Policy Program who were in attendance.

### Briefing with Top Greek, Cypriot Diplomats Comprise Weekend's Events

As part of the weekend's festivities AHI hosted a breakfast briefing with Ambassador of Greece to the U.S. Alexandra Papadopoulou and Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States Marios Lysiotis, on March 4. The relevant topics affecting both countries were discussed by the two top diplomats. AHI President Nick Larigakis moderated the discussion. A stimulating Q&A session followed.

A Greek Night and Art Exhibit by Honoree Rip Kastaris was held at National Press Club, on March 3.



*Euripides Kastaris and family (L-R): Laurie Bickett Marti, Rip Kastaris, Merope Mary Kastaris, Panagiotis Peter Kastaris and Georgia Kastaris*

Delphi Forum Visionary and Groundbreaking.....Continued from page 1

AHI honored Symeon Tsomokos for his dedicated leadership and unwavering support in promoting and strengthening United States-Greece relations.

In acceptance, Tsomokos recalled how he came to know AHI during his time with the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce decades ago.

"My history with the AHI goes back quite a few decades, when I was with the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, and we were seeking a partner in the United States to organize the first major investment conference in New York," he recalled. At the time I travelled to Washington, where I had the honor of meeting a remarkable man, Eugene Rossides, who is no longer with us."

Tsomokos humbly thanked and credited those with whom he worked at the Chamber as well as his close co-workers who have taken the Delphi Economic Forum to new heights since its inception in 2016.

"In our line of work – perhaps more than in others – nothing can be achieved unless you have committed co-workers, who embrace and share the same vision and who work closely alongside you to bring it to fruition," he said.

- Read more of Tsomokos' [remarks](#)



*Olga Bornozi, Master of Ceremonies.*



*Deputy Foreign Minister Kostas Fragogiannis representing Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, offering greetings.*



## SPECIAL EVENTS



*U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Maria Olson representing U.S. Ambassador George Tsunis offering greetings.*



*AHIF President Leon Andris in conversation with General Konstantinos Floros, Chief of Hellenic National Defense General Staff.*

AHI also honored Irene Daifas for her distinguished professional achievements in the shipping industry and for her unsurpassed support of the arts and philanthropy. Daifas spoke of her love for Piraeus, where she has also served at a Municipal Council Member, and the importance of unity for Greece to prosper and be secure in the future.

She added, “The honor of accepting this award is even more important for me, as it originates from the most dynamic part of Hellenism abroad, the part that, wherever it is, never stops treasuring in its mind and hearts our homeland...The history of Greece is a history of great triumphs but disasters as well, which we certainly could have not managed to go through, if all of us, had not always stood united in difficult times. Greeks living in Greece and those living abroad, create an admirable and dynamic “blend,” capable for the greatest successes! The strengthening of this “blend” and in the multi-leveled way that the American Hellenic Institute does reinforces the concepts of humanism, justice, cooperation, harmony and development for both our countries!”

- Read more of Daifas’ [remarks](#)

In his address to the audience, President Nick Larigakis saluted the honorees and spoke about AHI’s advocacy for the rule of law in the best interests of the United States and initiatives that keep the policy issues at the forefront in Washington. He also invited everyone to Washington, D.C., in 2024 for the 50th anniversary of the Institute’s founding.

Olga Bournozi of Capital Link served exceptionally as Master of Ceremonies.

Deputy Foreign Minister Kostas Fragogiannis represented Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and conveyed a strong message of support for AHI.

“I am here with you tonight representing our Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and the whole Greek Government. This is a great honor for me, as I know firsthand what a great job the American Hellenic Institute does,” he said. “The American Hellenic Institute is involved in many other good deeds as well. It was founded in 1974 and is also a well-respected lobby, a think tank and an educational foundation that informs and influences leaders, policymakers and citizens alike.”

- Read more of Deputy Foreign Minister Fragogiannis’ [remarks](#)

AHI-Athens Chapter President retired Vice Admiral Vasileios Kyriazis also addressed the audience, thanking the event’s sponsors and speaking about AHI-Athens Chapter programs.

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Maria Olson represented U.S. Ambassador George Tsunis, with whom an AHI delegation met the previous day. Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff General Konstantinos Floros; and the branch chiefs of the HNDGS: Lt. Gen Themistoklis Bourolias, Hellenic Air Force General Staff; Vice Admiral Ioannis Drymousis, Hellenic Navy General Staff; and Lt. Gen. Angelos Choudeloudis, Hellenic Army General Staff, and Vice Admiral Georgios E. Alexandrakis, Commandant of the Hellenic Coast Guard, also attended. Greek government officials in attendance included: Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food Simos Kedikoglou, Anna Maria-Michelle Asimakopoulou, who serves as member of the European Union Parliament, and Dimitris Keridis, who serves as a member of the Hellenic Parliament.



*Nick Larigakis with longtime AHI supporter and dinner sponsor (L) Isidoros Garifalakis, and Maria Garifalakis.*

### AHI and AHIF Presidents Thank Supporters in Community Message

American Hellenic Institute President Nick Larigakis and AHI Foundation President Leon Andris issued a joint message to the community on January 13, 2023, thanking supporters and recapping a productive 2022 year for both organizations. They also provided a look ahead to tasks that needed to be addressed in 2023 as well as AHI and AHIF programs offered to the community.

- Read the [message](#)

### AHI Conveys Its Sympathies for Deadly Train Wreck in Tempi

AHI issued a March 2, 2023, statement expressing the Institute's sincere condolences to the people of Greece for the tragic loss of life suffered from the horrific train collision that occurred in Tempi.

### AHI Debuts Short Video in Prelude to 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



AHI debuted a video clip, “[A Prelude: AHI–50 Years](#)” at the 49th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and Public Service Awards Dinner held March 4, 2023, Washington, D.C.

It features highlights from AHI's decades of advocating for the rule of law and the advocates with whom the Institute worked to effect change in Washington. We would like to thank 12-time Emmy Award winner Larry Michael who is Executive Producer of the video.

“Although we are extremely proud to reach the eve of our golden anniversary and what that means for all those, past and present, who gave selflessly to the Institute, we also realize the anniversary of our founding is a bittersweet one,” AHI President Nick Larigakis said. “And we will not stop until the rule of law is applied to Greece, Cyprus, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

### Statement on Avionics Software Upgrades for Turkey's F-16s

The Biden administration notified Congress on April 17, 2023, of the planned sale to Turkey of avionics software upgrades for its current fleet of F-16 fighter aircraft, a deal valued at up to \$259 million. The Administration moved ahead with the sale of the modernization package for Turkey's aircraft, after leaders of U.S. congressional committees gave informal approval.

*Politico* reported that Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez approved the \$259 million avionics software upgrade modernization contract for Turkey. Senator Menendez stated to *Politico* the avionics software upgrade, “was just to create interoperability in communications among NATO allies. I felt that was a worthy goal...It shows Turkey that if they change their attitude, the door's not closed to them, but I'm still against the F-16.”

In an April 21 statement on the development, AHI noted the \$259 million avionics software upgrade is separate from Turkey's request for an additional 40 F-16s and about 80 accompanying upgrade kits, valued at \$20 billion.

Senator Menendez also reiterated to *Politico* his continued opposition to the sale of new F-16s and accompanying upgrade kits to Turkey, stating: “They need to end their belligerence against their fellow NATO members [to include] the Hellenic Republic. They need to stop overflights. They have to permit the Ecumenical Patriarch to exercise his rights as the religious leader of millions of people around the world. Those are some of the things.”

In the April 21 statement, President Nick Larigakis said, “It is very important that individuals who care about the rule of law in the Eastern Mediterranean do not blend or confuse the avionics upgrade to existing F-16s with the attempt to sell new F-16s and 80 upgrade kits to Turkey, the latter of which has been strongly opposed by congressional leaders such as Senator Menendez as well as organizations such as AHI.”

He added, “AHI does have reservations about the avionics software upgrade for Turkey's F-16s,” citing the possibility of Turkish President Erdogan exploiting the upgrade for political purposes as he was campaigning for reelection at the time. “Furthermore, we need to avoid any sort of ‘slippery slope’ where this upgrade, even if considered ‘minor’ by some, could lead to larger military equipment transactions with Turkey.

“All said, AHI does not take any issue with the congressional leaders who approved of the upgrade, despite our reservations. Congressional leaders, such as Chairman Menendez, reiterated their opposition to the sale of new F-16 jets and accompanying upgrade kits to Turkey, which AHI applauds. I thank once again Chairman Menendez for his tireless efforts to promote the rule of law in the Eastern Mediterranean.”



### AHI Reiterates Opposition of Proposed F-16 Sale to Turkey; Supports F-35s to Greece

The Biden administration's proposed sale of F-16s and modernization kits to Turkey prompted AHI to monitor the issue closely in 2023. AHI issued several statements that reiterated the Institute's opposition to the proposed sale; a longstanding position toward any proposed arms sale to Turkey. Moreover, AHI repeatedly urged members of Congress to continue their opposition as well.

"We reiterate our strong opposition to the sale of any U.S. arms to Turkey based on our longstanding position that Turkey uses U.S.-supplied aircraft to infringe on Greek airspace, which violates U.S. law," President Nick Larigakis said in a January 16 statement. "In addition, Turkey had been removed from the F-35 program for its purchase of Russian S-400 missile defense systems, for which it continues to remain sanctioned under The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act."

Shortly after these media reports came out in January, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ), reaffirmed his opposition to the sale during an interview with Greek TV channel, *Mega TV*, in February.

"For Turkey to be the reliable NATO ally, to follow the international norms, to not be belligerent to its neighbors... It is in that context that I have opposed the sale of the F-16s, because at the end of the day, the reality is that we have not seen a Turkey under Erdogan that lives up to those expectations," Menendez said. "Maybe the Biden Administration will use my hold on the sale as a way to get Turkey to act in a different way. If that takes place that can be a positive thing. But as of now, I intend to continue to do what I have said I would do, which is that I would not use my ability to approve the sale at this time."

Chairman Menendez also called out the State Department's stance on Turkey's belligerence, "you can't call on both sides to tame their words or to find a way to peacefully resolve their differences when it is one side, and one side only, that is being belligerent."

AHI applauded Chairman Menendez's position in a statement issued February 3, 2023.

"We are grateful for Chairman Menendez's steadfast support for the rule of law in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the willingness to stand up to this Administration's appeasement of Turkey," President Nick Larigakis said. "AHI has called out the State Department's statements that resort to false equivalencies between Greece and Cyprus vis-a-vis Turkey for years. We appreciate a policymaker of Senator Menendez's stature reflecting and expressing the same point of view. As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Menendez is a critical voice against the sale of F-16s to Turkey and we applaud his rightful position and advocacy."

### Schumer: Turkey a "Major Threat to Global Security"

In June, AHI strongly affirmed a statement made by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) to a constituent regarding Turkey's aggressive policies and the United States' potential sale of arms to Turkey.

In his June 8 response to the constituent, Majority Leader Schumer wrote: "*Turkey is a major threat to global security and we must do everything we can to counter its aggression in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean regions. The notion that the United States must trust Turkey to respect global rules and the international order is not only dangerous, it endangers our security and that of our allies. I strongly believe that the US and the international community should take diplomatic action to ensure that Turkey is held accountable for any wrongdoing it may commit.*"

On June 12, President Nick Larigakis applauded Leader Schumer's statement.

"I applaud Majority Leader Schumer for his strong and unapologetic statement. Turkey, especially in recent years, has gone from an 'unreliable ally' to a threat to the international rules-based order. I support his call for immediate action to be taken by the United States and the international community to hold Turkey accountable."

He added, "Majority Leader Schumer's comments demonstrate why the United States must reassess its policy towards Turkey and its role in the region. Turkey has repeatedly undermined U.S. security interests through its activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, Southeast Europe, and the Middle East. From incursions into Syria, to purchasing Russian weapon systems, the Majority Leader correctly highlights that Turkey 'endangers' the security of the United States and its allies." Leader Schumer's statement also called for Congress to "assess the implications of this proposed arms sale and whether it is in the best interests of the United States and our allies."

"The Leader's statement demonstrates why AHI's mission to upholding the rule of law is so crucial to the safety and security of the United States and the rest of the world," Larigakis concluded.

Also during the summer, amid a renewed effort triggered by House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) stating to *Politico* that he is "generally open to selling F-16 fighter jets to Turkey, even if President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wins reelection..." AHI reasserted its position, this time directed at the House Foreign Affairs Committee. According to *Politico*, "McCaul hastened to add that all four of the lawmakers currently agree on barring sales today. But the Texan said he believes they will approve the transfer once Turkey ratifies Sweden's membership in NATO, and after recent approvals for Greece to buy U.S.-made F-35 warplanes and to get upgrades to its F-16s." However, *Politico* reported Ranking Member Gregory Meeks (D-NY), "has broader conditions than McCaul, and they include Ankara halting its belligerence toward Greece, which could come

after the election ends.”

Based on this report, President Nick Larigakis issued a June 9 statement.

“Turkey should not get F-16s even if Turkey allows Sweden to accede to NATO, which Turkey has an obligation to do as a NATO member. Allowing for a ‘quid pro quo’ where the U.S. gives Turkey F-16s in exchange for Turkey lifting its veto over Sweden will create a situation where the United States will become a victim to Turkey’s policy of diplomatic extortion.

“However, our problems with Turkey go far beyond simply their blocking Sweden from joining NATO. They also include Turkey’s aggression in the Aegean, violation of Greek airspace, continued occupation of Cyprus, purchase of Russian military equipment, and support for Islamic fundamentalists and terrorist organizations, among many other issues,” Larigakis said.

Larigakis also applauded Ranking Member Meeks and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Menendez for holding strong to their opposition. He especially cited Meeks’ factoring Turkey’s aggression in the Aegean as a factor in formulating his opposition to the sale.

**Proposed F-35s Sale to Greece**

In addition, it has been reported that the Administration also plans to give a notification to Congress on a sale of F-35 jets to Greece. The leadership of the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Committees have all indicated their support for it.

In each of AHI’s statements on proposed arms sales, the Institute stated its position in support of the proposed sale of F-35 jet fighters to Greece.

“Unlike Turkey, Greece has been a pillar of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean,” Larigakis said. “The defense relationship between Greece and the United States is burgeoning and at an all-time high. We strongly encourage the sale of F-35 fighter jets to Greece and encourage the Congress to lend its full support.”

**AHI President Meets with New Hellenic Caucus Co-Chair Pappas**



Rep. Chris Pappas with Nick Larigakis

AHI President Nick Larigakis met with Congressman Chris Pappas (D-NH) and his senior legislative assistant, Jake Friedman, March 8, 2023. Congressman Pappas is the new Democratic Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues.

“We had a great discussion on developments in the region,” President Larigakis said. “We thank Congressman Pappas and his exceptional staffer, Jake Friedman, for their close cooperation with AHI on important policy issues. Congressman Pappas has become a leader and advocate for strong U.S.-Greece, U.S.-Cyprus relations in the Congress. We look forward to assisting him in his new role as the Hellenic Caucus co-chair.”



*“I would also like to commend AHI for its key role in strengthening relationships between the U.S. and some of our closest allies. For decades, the Institute has been a leading voice in Washington on Greek-American and Cypriot-American relations and I am confident that you will continue this valuable work as our nations’ partnership enters its third century.”*

— **Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)**  
July 19, 2023



## Eighteen Legislators Join AHI to Celebrate Greece's Independence



AHI virtually hosted its annual “Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day” to celebrate the 202nd Anniversary of Greek Independence and the common democratic ideals held by Greece and the United States, March 28, 2023. AHI held the event in cooperation with the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues’ co-chairs, U.S. Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Chris Pappas (D-NH).

The commemoration featured the bipartisan and bicameral participation of members of Congress. In addition to U.S. Reps. Bilirakis and Pappas, members of Congress who provided remarks included several who serve on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, including Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ). Foreign Relations Committee Members U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH). U.S. Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), who serves on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, also delivered remarks.

Additional legislators who delivered remarks included: U.S. Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ), Dina Titus (D-NV), Brad Sherman (D-CA), and David Cicilline (D-RI), all who serve on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. U.S. Representatives John Sarbanes (D-MD), Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Grace Meng (D NY), Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), Donald Payne Jr. (D-NJ), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), and Victoria Spartz (R-IN), also addressed the virtual audience.

Special guest speakers included Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulou, who stated, “This year we celebrate 202 years of revolution, against the despotic rule of Empires...throughout its history, Greeks never lost their sense of identity.”

In addition, AHI presented a pre-recorded video from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America.

“The AHI Congressional Salute to Greek Independence Day is a vital link between the *omogenia* and those in positions of the highest importance in the American government,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said. “The beginning of the Greek revolution has special importance to America, for the heroes of 1821 took courage from the successful American revolution of 1776.”

AHI President Nick Larigakis served as the event’s moderator. He thanked U.S. Reps. Bilirakis and Pappas for their sponsorship of the event.

The speakers emphasized their admiration for the Greek American community, Hellenic culture, U.S.- Greece bilateral relations, and for the valiant struggle for Greek Independence, achieved over 200 years ago. They also expressed their desire for a proper settlement of the Cyprus issue, peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the need to hold regional actors such as Turkey accountable

- For full event recording, and statements from the dignitaries, please visit [www.ahiworld.org](http://www.ahiworld.org).

## AHI Advocates for Robust U.S.-Greece Funding, Opposes Foreign Assistance to Turkey

AHI President Nick Larigakis submitted written testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs on the Biden Administration’s FY2024 foreign aid proposal on April 14 and May 30, 2023, respectively.

President Larigakis’ written testimony stated that it is in the best interests of the United States, and in keeping with the proposed budget’s vision, that AHI opposed: (1) any proposed foreign aid and assistance to Turkey from the United States until Turkey ends its provocations and aggression toward Cyprus and in the Aegean Sea; (2) any proposed reduction in the aid levels for the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

Based upon Greece’s demonstrated geostrategic importance to the United States, AHI recommended a \$1.8 million appropriation for NATO ally Greece’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. In addition, AHI recommended robust Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance for Greece, including \$25 million for each fiscal year through to FY 2026 for European Recapitalization Incentive Program (ERIP) and an extra \$6 million in FMF funding for FY 24.

AHI’s testimony also advocated for \$500,000 for the Republic of Cyprus’ IMET program.

- Visit [www.ahiworld.org](http://www.ahiworld.org) to read the testimony.

## Members of Congress Commemorate 49th Anniversary of Cyprus Invasion at AHI Forum

AHI hosted a forum on Capitol Hill for members of Congress to convey their reflections on Turkey's illegal invasion and subsequent occupation of the Republic of Cyprus a day before the 49th anniversary of the tragic event, July 19, 2023.

The forum featured as speakers: U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH), co-chair, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues; U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), co-chair, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues; U.S. Representatives Dina Titus (D-NV), Grace Meng (D-NY), Thomas Kean, Jr. (R-NJ), Charles Fleischmann (R-TN), and Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY).

Written statements were provided by U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Gary Peters (D-MI); and U.S. Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA); and John Sarbanes (D-MD).

Ambassador of Cyprus to the United States Evangelos Savva, Embassy of Greece Chargé d'affaires Theodoros Bizakis, and General Secretary of the Hellenic American National Council, Dr. Panagiotis Baltatzis, also offered remarks.

AHI President Nick Larigakis moderated the speaking program. He thanked the members of Congress for their words of support and expressed his gratitude to the 49 donors who made the event possible.

Larigakis offered special thanks to Co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues Pappas and Bilirakis for their cooperation and support of the event. He also spoke about the ongoing struggle of the people of Cyprus, who for 49 years, have endured an illegal occupation by Turkey and massive violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

■ To read statements from each of the speakers, please visit [www.aheworld.org](http://www.aheworld.org)



*Embassy of Greece Chargé d'affaires Theodoros Bizakis speaks to the room of attendees, including community leaders, congressional staff, and members of the Greek and Cypriot diplomatic core.*



*[Left to Right] Embassy of Greece Chargé d'affaires Theodoros Bizakis, U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), AHI President & CEO Nick Larigakis, U.S. Rep. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R-NJ), Ambassador of Cyprus to the U.S. Evangelos Savva.*



*Congresswoman Titus (D-NV) speaks to the room of attendees.*



*[Left to Right] Embassy of Greece Chargé d'affaires Theodoros Bizakis, U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH), co-chair, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, AHI President & CEO Nick Larigakis, U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), co-chair, Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, Ambassador of Cyprus to the U.S. Evangelos Savva.*



*Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY) addressing the audience.*



*Rep. Charles Fleischmann (R-TN).*



## AHI Joins Leadership 100



*His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros with Nick Larigakis at the Leadership 100 conference in Phoenix, AZ.*

AHI became an official member of The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Fund at the organization's 32nd Annual Conference held in Scottsdale, Arizona, February 2 to 5, 2023.

"On behalf of AHI, I am proud our Board of Directors agreed to join Leadership 100, a leading Greek American organization committed to advancing Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America," President Nick Larigakis said.

The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Fund is a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the Orthodox Faith and the life-giving legacy of Hellenism in America, through support of the National Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

## AHI President Meets with Prominent Californians

Prior to arriving at the Leadership 100 Conference, President Nick Larigakis traveled to California and spoke with prominent members of the Greek American communities of Sacramento and San Francisco.

Larigakis discussed AHI's role to strengthen relations between the United States and NATO ally, Greece, and strategic partner, Republic of Cyprus, through AHI's substantive policy programs and initiatives that advocate for the rule of law. He also presented updates on developments in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean.

In Sacramento, Businessman and Philanthropist Angelo Tsakopoulos hosted Larigakis for an intimate dinner with 10 community members on January 30.

In San Francisco, The ELIOS Society President and Chairman John Gumas sponsored a dinner for Larigakis attended by 25 community members on January 31.

"Thank you to Angelo Tsakopoulos and John Dumas for their time and generosity and for affording me the opportunity to engage with prominent members of the community about AHI and our programs," Larigakis said. "U.S. relations with Greece and Cyprus, continue to advance and strengthen, amid threats by Turkey. It is critical for our

communities to be informed and engaged on the issues, and I encourage their activism and outreach to their members of Congress as well as state and local officials."

## AHI President Presents to Florida Community



*Archons with U.S. Rep. Anna Luna.*



*Nick Larigakis during the presentation.*

AHI President Nick Larigakis addressed the Greek American communities of the Clearwater, Florida area, as the main speaker of a presentation organized by the Order of Saint Andrew-Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Tampa Bay, the PanHellenic Federation of Florida, and the Clearwater Holy Trinity community, held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Clearwater, Fla., February 23, 2023.

President Larigakis presented on the topic, "Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey at a Crossroads: The Importance of U.S. Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean."

In addition to discussing AHI's role to strengthen relations between the United States and NATO ally, Greece, and strategic partner, Republic of Cyprus, Larigakis addressed the state of religious freedom in Turkey and the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, including its lack of recognition by the Turkish government and the closure of the Halki Theological School.

Archon Regional Commander Dr. Theodore Vlahos moderated the presentation and the substantive Q&A with Larigakis that followed. The attendees included newly elected U.S. Rep. Anna Luna (R-FL), and her staff, as well as area clergy, Archons, members of the Pan Hellenic Federation, and many others.

"Thank you to the organizers for inviting me to present to the dynamic communities of Clearwater and Tampa,"

Larigakis said. “Specially, thank you to Father James Paris, Dr. Theodore Vlahos, Nick Anton, and Peter Theofanous, for affording me the opportunity to engage with prominent members of the community about AHI and our community’s policy matters. It is critical for our communities to be informed and engaged on the issues, and I encourage their activism and outreach to their members of Congress as well as state and local officials. In this regard, I am pleased newly elected Congresswoman Luna attended.”

Moreover, President of the PanHellenic Federation of Florida Nick Anton presented President Larigakis with a \$2,000 donation to AHI.

“We sincerely appreciate the Federation’s generous donation that will benefit our programs,” Larigakis said.

## AHI President Presents to Alpha Omega Council of Boston



Nick Larigakis (center) being presented with a commemorative speaker’s plaque by President Paul Tsitsopoulos (left) and Vice President Costas Speliakos (right).

AHI President Nick Larigakis addressed the Alpha Omega Council as the guest speaker of the Council’s monthly dinner meeting held at the University of Massachusetts Club, Boston, Mass., May 18, 2023. More than 50 people attended.

President Larigakis presented on the topic, “Current Developments with Greece and Cyprus, and the Impact in the Eastern Mediterranean,” similar in scope to the presentations made to the communities of California and Florida held earlier in the year.

“Thank you to the Alpha Omega Council for the invitation to make a presentation to the Boston community,” Larigakis said. “Specially, my sincere appreciation goes to President Paul Tsitsopoulos, Vice President Costas Speliakos, and past president and close friend, Costa Sideridis.”

Also in attendance and offering comments were Symeon Tegos, consul general of Greece in Boston, and State Senator Lou Raptakis of Rhode Island.

The Council presented Larigakis with a Greek Heritage-themed Boston Red Sox jersey and a commemorative speaker’s crystal plaque.

The Alpha Omega Council is a Boston-based organization dedicated to the promotion of Hellenism.

## AHI to Blinken: Appeasing Erdogan Is Not the Answer

AHI President Nick Larigakis wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the eve of his meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in Washington, D.C., to encourage a candid discussion on the state of U.S.-Turkey relations based upon Turkey’s demonstrated actions that undermine the interests of the United States and NATO.

The January 16, 2023, letter also requests Secretary Blinken to confront Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu about incendiary statements made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Turkish government officials against the United States and its allies and calls for the U.S. government to demand Turkey cease and desist with these statements and reverse its support for the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey. The letter cites numerous examples of Erdogan’s dangerous rhetoric, including his calling for an invasion of Greek islands.

“Turkey is actively working against United States interests and values,” Larigakis wrote. “Appeasing a rogue dictator such as President Erdogan will not result in better behavior.”

■ Visit [aheworld.org](http://aheworld.org) to read the [letter](#).

## Ahead of Blinken Visit, AHI Touts Greek, Cypriot Leadership in Advancing U.S. Interests

AHI President Nick Larigakis wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken ahead of his February 20-21 visit to Greece to tout Greek and Cypriot contributions to advancing U.S. interests in the region. The letter also conveyed the importance of holding Turkey to account for its rule of law violations that cause instability and increased tensions.

The February 15, 2023, letter also included the Institute’s updated positions in five policy areas that impact the Eastern Mediterranean:

- U.S. Relations with Greece
- Turkey’s Violations in the Eastern Mediterranean and Broader Region
- Eastern Mediterranean Partnership (“3+1”)
- The Cyprus Problem & U.S.-Cyprus Relations
- The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Religious Freedom in Turkey

“Greece is a reliable, steady, and trusted NATO ally--a frontline state in the fight against terrorism...The Republic of Cyprus is a proven strategic partner of the U.S. Conversely, Turkey has failed to meet its NATO responsibilities,” Larigakis wrote.

■ Visit [aheworld.org](http://aheworld.org) to read the [letter](#).



## Groups Call on U.S. to Demand Release of Greek Minority Mayoral Candidate in Albania

Greek and Cypriot American organizations, including the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), sent a joint letter to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Gabriel Escobar, expressing concern over the treatment of Albania's Greek minority during the recent municipal elections in Albania and called on the United States "to urge the Albanian government to hold free and fair elections."

In the [May 12 letter](#), the organizations also called on the United States to demand the immediate release of Mr. Fredi Beleri, a Greek national minority candidate who at the time was running for mayor of the Municipality of Himara, and members of his campaign team. Beleri and his team were arrested on dubious charges by undercover law enforcement officers.

Initial election results announced May 15 showed that Mr. Beleri won his race.

In addition to AHI President Nick Larigakis, leaders of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA), International Coordinating Committee - Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA), Coordinated Effort of Hellenes, Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), the Chian Federation, Pan Macedonian Association USA, and the Hellenic American National Council (HANC), signed the letter.

## AHI Participates at PSEKA's Annual Leadership Conference



*Nick Larigakis addressing the conference.*

AHI representatives participated at the 38th Annual Cyprus & Hellenic Leadership Conference hosted by the International Coordinating Committee - Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA), May 9 to 11, 2023, in Washington, DC. AHI supported the conference as a sponsor.

President Nick Larigakis addressed the conference, reiterating the need for tangible consequences for Turkey's aggression against Cyprus.



*The participants of the 38th Annual PSEKA Cyprus Conference in Washington, DC*



*(l-r) AHI Foundation Board member John Alahouzos, AHI Foundation President Leon Andris, AHI President Nick Larigakis and AHI Board Member Kostas Alexakis.*

"I commend all event participants, including policymakers and community leaders, for their tireless efforts to achieve a Cyprus whole, free, and at peace," Larigakis said. "This annual conference is a rare opportunity to bring us all together to prioritize and focus on the Cyprus problem and U.S.-Cyprus relations."

Conference attendees heard from leading members of Congress, including: Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez, and Ranking Member Jim Risch; House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul and Ranking Member Gregory Meeks; as well as Senator Dick Durbin, and leaders of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, Co-Chairs Gus Bilirakis and Chris Pappas, Vice Chairs Dina Titus and Nicole Malliotakis, and longstanding member, John Sarbanes.

Cyprus' Government Spokesman, Konstantinos Letymbiotis, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus Marios Lysiotis, and Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulou, also addressed the audience.

In addition to President Larigakis, the AHI leadership delegation included AHI Foundation President Leon Andris, and AHI Board Members John Alahouzos and Kostas Alexakis.

## Groups Urge U.S. Not to Submit to Turkey's Blackmail on F-16s

Greek and Cypriot American organizations, including the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), sent a joint letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, expressing concern regarding recent reports of the Biden Administration's willingness to sell F-16s to Turkey.

In the June 8 letter, the organizations urged Secretary Blinken "not to submit to Turkey's strategy of blackmail" by willing to trade F-16 sales solely for Turkey's approval of Sweden's NATO accession.

In addition to AHI President Nick Larigakis, leaders of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA), International Coordinating Committee - Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA), Coordinated Effort of Hellenes, Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), the Cyprus-U.S. American Chamber of Commerce, the Chian Federation, Pan Macedonian Association USA, the Hellenic American National Council (HANC), and the Federation of Cypriot American Organizations, signed the letter.

## Order of St. Andrew Co-Hosts Panel with AHI on the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Legal Status Under the Treaty of Lausanne



(L – R) Nick Larigakis, H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros, Dr. Alexander Kitroeff, Dr. Andrew Novo, Dr. Alexander Kyrou and Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle – Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in cooperation with the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), presented a webinar on the legal status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under the Treaty of Lausanne, June 9, 2023. More than 230 people registered for the event.

Four leading scholars comprised the panel: Dr. Alexander Kitroeff of Haverford College; Dr. Alexandros Kyrou of Salem State University; Dr. Andrew Novo of National Defense University; and Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou of Boston College. Archon Nick Larigakis, AHI president, served as the moderator.

The Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, by the governments of Greece, Turkey, and members of the Entente Powers including France, Italy, Japan, and the UK, established the borders of modern Turkey and specified protections for the ethno-religious minority populations in

Greece and Turkey. As a signatory, the government of Turkey is still obligated to adhere to the Treaty today.

In their presentations, the scholars explained how each country that signed the Treaty agreed to provide, among other protections, the following:

1. Protection of life and liberty without regard to place of birth, nationality, language, race, or religion;
2. Free exercise of religion;
3. The right to establish and control charitable, religious, and social institutions and schools; and
4. Full protection for religious establishments and charitable institutions.

"It was an honor for AHI to host this important webinar in cooperation with the Order of Saint Andrew, and for me, as an Archon as well as AHI president, to serve as its moderator," Larigakis said. "Our sincere thanks to Archbishop Elpidophoros for his blessings and to the expert panelists, who shared their scholarly and informative insights about the Treaty's framework and principles and how the actions of Turkish governments under the Treaty have affected the sustainability of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Greek Orthodox Christians in Turkey."

**SAVE THE DATE**



**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
Hellenic Heritage  
Achievement  
& National Public Service  
Awards Dinner**

**April 13, 2024**

THE CAPITAL HILTON WASHINGTON, DC



## Greek, Cypriot Ambassadors to U.S. Outline State of Relations



(L-R) Panelists Ambassador Marios Lysiotis, Ambassador Alexandra Papadopoulou, and AHI President Nick Larigakis



Breakfast Attendees

AHI hosted a breakfast briefing with Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the U.S. Alexandra Papadopoulou and Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the U.S. Marios Lysiotis, at the Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2023. One hundred people attended.

AHI President Nick Larigakis moderated the briefing and delivered opening remarks.

Greece and Cyprus continue to take measures to strengthen their relations with the United States while addressing their own challenges—some of which are mutual, including Turkey’s provocations—and include the year-long war in Ukraine,” Larigakis said.

### Ambassador Reflects on U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue

Ambassador Papadopoulou stated U.S.-Greece relations are like a “family relationship” during a “historical time of great challenge.” She highlighted the relationship’s multifaceted nature and the bipartisan support it receives in the United States and Greece as evidence. “It is only natural for the two countries who share the same values,” she said.

She reflected on the outcome of the latest round of U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue talks held in Athens in February that included the participation of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The Strategic Dialogue signaled “a deepening of U.S. relations which covers all aspects of government,” the ambassador said, adding that the discussions were “very good.”

During her presentation, Ambassador Papadopoulou commented on the geostrategic importance of Souda Bay and Alexandropolis, describing the latter as an energy and transportation hub. She also elaborated on energy cooperation and foreign policy matters for Greece that include Ukraine, the EU orientation of the Western Balkans, relations with Israel, including the 3+1 framework, and relations with Russia.

Ambassador Papadopoulou clearly denounced invasions of any kind and stated nations must have respect for the rule of law.

### Cyprus Problem Remains of “Utmost Importance”

Ambassador Lysiotis, alluding to his impending departure from his Washington post, stated his happiness that, “I will be leaving a bilateral relationship that is at an all-time high.” He cited the full lifting of the arms prohibition on Cyprus, the first-ever U.S. foreign investment in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program for Cyprus, and the completion and opening of the Cyprus Center for Land, Open-seas and Port Security (CYCLOPS), which is a state-of-the-art security training facility owned and operated by the Republic of Cyprus.

“I am certain that our relations with U.S., based on values, shared principles and interests in the Eastern Mediterranean will continue to grow in the next three years,” he said.

On the Cyprus problem, Ambassador Lysiotis stated it is of “utmost importance” to address and that Cyprus will “use every opportunity [in the EU] in order to have negotiations resume.” He cited Turkey’s ongoing intransigence on the issue, namely Turkey’s call for a two-state solution, as reason for the lack of movement. The ambassador also touched on energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean, and on Ukraine, noted that 60,000 Ukrainian refugees are in Cyprus.

A Q&A with the audience followed the ambassadors’ presentation.

The audience included: U.S. Department of State official David Galbraith and AHI Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Honorees John D. Georges and Euripides Kastaris. In addition, many AHI members, supporters and friends attended, including AHI Foundation President Leon Andris, AHI-Athens Chapter President Retired Vice Admiral HN Vaseilios Kyriazis, and eight AHI board members.

### AHI Forum Examines U.S. Policy Outlook toward Eastern Med



*Nick Larigakis, Doug Bandow and Michael Rubin.*

AHI hosted a Virtual Speakers Forum, “The Eastern Mediterranean in the Cross Hairs: The Opportunity and Challenges for U.S. Foreign Policy in 2023,” March 14, 2023.

The panelists were: Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at Cato Institute, and Dr. Michael Rubin, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. AHI President Nick Larigakis served as a moderator for the discussion and facilitated the Q&A.

In his presentation, Bandow strongly contended the Eastern Mediterranean will remain volatile region due to Turkey’s behavior, especially toward Greece and Cyprus and the Biden administration will need to address Turkey’s behavior in this regard.

“How Turkey deals with a NATO member in Greece, and a country that it occupies in Cyprus, are questions which the Biden administration needs to deal with, and the reality is that Greece is a far more solid ally than Turkey,” he said. “That would suggest greater support from other NATO members over Turkey’s air and sea violations of Greece and Cyprus. Turkey remains a destabilizing force in the Eastern Mediterranean and in NATO. The Eastern Mediterranean will remain a very volatile region for the foreseeable future.”

In his presentation, Dr. Rubin expressed concern about continued tensions this year and for time to come.

“2023 will be a pivotal year,” he said. “As we approach the 100th anniversary of modern Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will look for ways to solidify his reign as Turkey’s most influential leader. We need to stop reacting to Turkey’s provocations and be proactive. Given the incitement we have seen over the past 20 years from Turkey, I am worried this tension will continue for time to come.”

### AHI-Athens Chapter Holds Vasilopita-Cutting Ceremony



*(L-R) AHI-Athens Chapter President retired Vice Admiral Vassilios, Archimandrite Fr. Aristarchos (Vassileios) Grekas, and former AHI-Athens Chapter President George Economou.*

The AHI-Athens Chapter held its annual Vasilopita-cutting ceremony at the Athens Club, January 28, 2023, with many AHI supporters and friends in attendance.

AHI-Athens President retired Vice Admiral Vassilios Kyriazis addressed the audience and participated in the vasilopita-cutting ceremony. He highlighted AHI’s activities in 2022 and provided a preview of the upcoming programs for 2023.

AHI-Athens President Emeritus George Economou sponsored the ceremony and offered remarks.

Secretary General of Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad, Prof. John Chrysoulakis, also delivered remarks. He commended AHI, and thanked the Institute its effective programs.

In addition to Secretary General Prof. Chrysoulakis, dignitaries in attendance included: Major General Dimitrios Oikonomidis, who represented General Konstantinos Floros, chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDS); Commodore Charalampos Paglidis, who represented Vice Admiral Ioannis Drymousis, chief of Hellenic Navy; Major General Konstantinos Karamesinis, who represented Lt. General Themistoklis Bourolias, chief of the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS), Ambassador Eleftherios Angelopoulos, who serves as diplomatic advisor to Minister of National Defense Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos; Mrs. Liana Skourli, who represented the Maria Callas Greek Society; former chief of the Hellenic Navy General Staff, Vice Admiral Stylianos Petrakis; AHEPA Chapter HJ-1 President Stavros Stathopoulos, and George Dimopoulos.



## AHI Commemorates Greek Independence Day at Events Held Nationwide



Nick Larigakis, pictured with U.S. Ambassador to Greece George Tsunis, Greek Ambassador to the U.S. Alexandra Papadopoulou (center) and members of the Greek Embassy and Military Attaché's office of the Greek Embassy at the White House Greek Independence Day celebration. (Photo: © GOA/Dimitrios Panagos)



President Joe Biden with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros at the White House Greek Independence Day celebration. A/Dimitrios Panagos)



Nick Larigakis with Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer and guests from the Military Attaché's office of the Greek Embassy at the White House Greek Independence Day Celebration.

AHI representatives participated at several events held to commemorate the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence during March and April 2023.

AHI celebrated Greek Independence Day at the White House on March 29, 2023. President Nick Larigakis, and Board Members Demitrios Halakos and John Vasiliou, as well as AHI Foundation President Leon Andris and AHIF Board Member Costas Galanis, attended the ceremony officiated

by President Joe Biden, and His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America.

On the previous evening, March 28, President Larigakis attended a private dinner at the Blair House in honor of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros and hosted by Ambassador Rufus Gifford, chief of Protocol of the United States.

## President Larigakis Addresses Rhode Island State House



Nick Larigakis delivered the keynote remarks at the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day celebration held in the Rhode Island State House. Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee, Consul General of Greece in Boston Symeon Tegos, and His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston were in attendance.



Participants in the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day celebration held in the State Room on March.

At the invitation of Rhode Island State Senator Lou Raptakis, President Nick Larigakis participated in several Greek Independence Day events held in Rhode Island on March 22, 2023.

State Senator Raptakis welcomed President Larigakis at the Senate Assembly. Larigakis served as the Keynote Speaker for Rhode Island's "State House Salute to the 202nd Anniversary of Greek Independence Day." Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee, Consul General of Greece in Boston Symeon Tegos, and His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston attended.

During the day, President Larigakis also met with Governor McKee, delivered remarks at a flag-raising ceremony hosted by the mayor of Pawtucket, Donald R. Grebien, at City Hall, and offered greetings in the evening at a reception hosted by Assumption Greek Orthodox Church of Pawtucket.

## President Larigakis Serves as Honorary Grand Marshal in Philadelphia



Nick Larigakis with AHF Board of Directors members Demetri Halakos and John Vasiliou (center) who also served as co-chair of the Philadelphia Greek Independence Day Parade.

President Nick Larigakis served as one of several Honorary Grand Marshals at the annual Greek Independence Day Parade in Philadelphia, April 2, 2023.

“I sincerely thank the organizing committee for honoring me as one of the Grand Marshals of the city’s annual Greek Independence Day Parade,” Larigakis said. “It was a tremendous honor. Congratulations to AHF Board Member John Vasiliou, who served as the parade’s co-chair and who did an exceptional job in helping to organize the parade.”

AHF Board Member Demetrios Halakos also marched in the parade as an Honorary Guest.

President Larigakis also attended the Federation of Hellenic American Societies of Philadelphia and Greater Delaware Valley’s Eleftheria Banquet where he sat at the dais as one of the Honorary Grand Marshals.



Nick Larigakis with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) at the Baltimore pre-parade luncheon.

### Baltimore

President Larigakis marched as an Honorary Guest in Baltimore’s Greek Independence Day Parade on March 26,

2023. There, he also presented the Senator Sarbanes Award and laid a wreath at the parade’s representation of the Unknown Soldier Tomb.



Nick Larigakis with the Mayor of Tarpon Spring Costa Vatikiotis at the parade banquet at Tarpon Springs, FL.

### Tarpon Springs

President Larigakis also marched as an Honorary Guest in the Greek Independence Day Parade in Tarpon Springs, Fla., held March 19, 2023. On the evening prior, Larigakis attended the parade banquet at the Tarpon Springs Community Center where he offered greetings.

### Washington, DC Metro Area

Additionally, President Larigakis celebrated Greek Independence Day, March 25, by offering greetings at The Hellenic Center of the Washington Metro Area’s annual celebration, and he made a presentation at the St. Katherine Hellenic Education Center Greek School’s annual Greek Independence Day program.

## Larigakis Calls for U.S. to “Step Up” When It Comes to Greece-Turkey Relations at Delphi Forum



Nick Larigakis participated as a panelist for a discussion on the topic, “Building Peaceful Coexistence: The Road Forward of Greek Turkish Relations” held at the Delphi Economic Forum.





(L-R) James Lagos, Violetta Kapsalis-Buhler, Kostas Alexakis, Leon Andris, Nick Larigakis

AHI President Nick Larigakis participated as a panelist for a discussion on the topic, “Building Peaceful Coexistence: The Road Forward of Greek Turkish Relations” held at the Delphi Economic Forum, Athens, Greece, April 29, 2023.

President Larigakis framed the topic through the importance of the region to the projection of U.S. and NATO geostrategic interests. He added his perspective on how the rule of law is applied selectively when conflicts arise and how Washington deals with relations between Greece and Turkey and views both countries.

“Obviously there are problems in relations between Turkey and Greece. The way it gets solved is you have a respect for international law,” Larigakis said, citing several international agreements such as the UN Charter. “But you cannot have a rules-based international order and be selective within the context of how you apply the rules-based international order...Kuwait, Ukraine, and Cyprus are the same violations of international law.”

He added, “These are two countries who live side-by-side, and it behooves them to be able to have good relations.”

Larigakis called out Washington for playing games by appeasing Turkey and cited how Turkey will exploit a situation whenever appeasement occurs.

“Turkey will push the envelope when U.S. provides appeasement,” he said. “[Turkey must] abide by international law, and the U.S. needs to step up its game if peace and stability is to advance. But it cannot be through appeasement.”

Alexandros Diakopoulos, vice admiral (Ret); National Security adviser to the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (2019-2020); Mustafa Aydin, president, International Relations Council, Türkiye; Selim Yenel, president, Global Relation Forum, Türkiye; and Nilgun Arisan-Eralp, director, Center of EU Studies at The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, also served as panelists.

“I sincerely thank the organizers of the Delphi Economic Forum for the opportunity to participate on this important panel before an esteemed audience with a distinguished set of colleagues,” Larigakis said.

## AHI Brings Community Together as Phillies Host 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Greek Heritage Night



Georgia Chletcos with the Phillies Fanatic after throwing the ceremonial first pitch. (photo credit: Cosmos Philly)



The St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church of Broomall, Pa., dance troupe The Olympians, dancing along the third base line.



Sophia Pelekasis singing the National Anthem at the Phillies game. (photo credit: Cosmos Philly)



## GENERAL NEWS



Friends and supporters of AHI and the Philadelphia Phillies at the Suite. AHI Foundation President Leon Andris (left), Nick Larigakis (center) with his daughter Panayiota and grandson Socrates; AHI Board member Demetrios Halakos with his wife Georgia and Phillies' Director of Publicity, John Brazer (right). (photo credit: Cosmos Philly)



Fans celebrating their Greek heritage. (photo credit: Cosmos Philly)

AHI held its annual Greek Heritage Night, in cooperation with Major League Baseball's Philadelphia Phillies, at Citizens Bank Park, Philadelphia, Pa., June 6, 2023. Approximately 600 tickets were sold for the 8th annual event which featured the defending National League Champion Philadelphia Phillies versus the Detroit Tigers.

Highlights from Greek Heritage Night included the popular Phillies mascot, The Phillie Phanatic, sporting an Evzone costume and leading the St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church of Broomall, Pa., dance troupe, The Olympians, prior to the start of the 6th inning along the third base line. The Olympians also performed pre-game Greek folk dances at the main concourse as fans were coming into the stadium.

Longtime AHI supporter and President of the Federation of Hellenic American Societies of Philadelphia, Georgia Chletcos, threw out the ceremonial First Pitch. Sophia Plekasis, who attends The Juilliard School, performed the National Anthem.

A promotional video about Greece, made possible by the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO), was played on the ballpark's Jumbo-tron.

"On behalf of AHI, I sincerely thank the Philadelphia Phillies, especially the unbelievable unwavering efforts of the Phillies' Director of Publicity, John Brazer, and Director of Group Sales, Vanessa Mapson, without whose support the event could not have been a success," President Nick Larigakis said. "I am also deeply grateful to the Greek American communities of the Tri-State Philadelphia area who came out in droves to support Greek Heritage Night and proudly displayed their Hellenic pride. Finally, the event could not have been a success without the incredible backing of certain individuals and entities that helped to promote it and to sell tickets, including AHI Board Members Nicholas E. Chimicles, Demetrios Halakos, and John Vasiliou, and AHI supporters Georgia Chletcos and Constantine Larigakis. We continue to receive positive feedback about the event, and we will continue to work to see it grow every year."

### In Appreciation

AHI is grateful to the many individuals and entities that helped to make the Philadelphia Phillies Greek Heritage Night a success. AHI also thanks the following for their assistance and from the media: Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and the Greater Delaware Valley.

Additional gratitude is extended to Cosmos Philly for their media coverage of Greek Heritage Night. From The Philadelphia Phillies: John Brazer, director of Publicity; Vanessa Mapson, director, Group Sales; The Phillie Phanatic; and of course, The Philadelphia Phillies organization.



**OCTOBER 16, 2023**

**9:30 AM – REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST**

**10:00 AM SPECIAL GUEST: STEVE BUCKHANTZ,  
AWARD WINNING SPORTSCASTER**

**11:15 AM – SHOTGUN START**

**4:30 PM – AWARDS DINNER**

**COUNTRY CLUB OF FAIRFAX  
5110 Ox Road, Fairfax, VA 22030**



## AHI's 2022 Annual Report Released

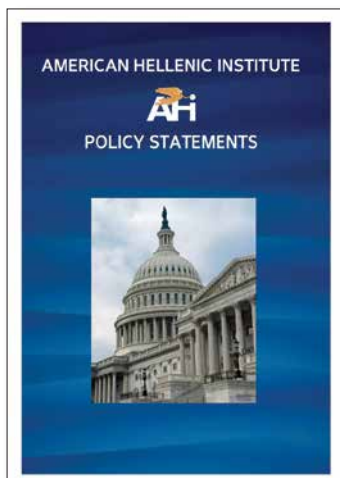


AHI announced the release of its 2022 Annual Report on March 6, 2023.

“Now in our 49th year as the only Greek American think tank and public policy center advocating for the rule of law, AHI members and supporters can take pleasure with the Institute’s commitment to meeting its mission to the fullest,” President Nick Larigakis said. “This substantive

annual report captures all our policy-driven programs and initiatives that advocate for the rule of law and advance the best interests of the United States. Also, the AHI Foundation’s educational programs and publications that benefit our community are presented. I would like to thank our dedicated board members, members, and staff, who ensured we did not miss a beat.”

## AHI's Popular Policy Statements Updated



AHI released an updated version of its longstanding Policy Statements on April 28, 2023.

“When it comes down to it, Greece and Cyprus are proven, reliable, and invaluable allies of the United States, while Turkey has become ever more unreliable and provocative,” President Nick Larigakis said. “Our statements recommend policies in five focus areas the United States should pursue in the Eastern Mediterranean in

the best interests of the United States. We hope they serve as a useful tool for policymakers in Washington as well as advocates in the Greek American community when meeting with policymakers.”

The five focus areas are:

- U.S.-Greece Relations
- Turkey’s Violations in the Eastern Mediterranean and Broader Region
- The Eastern Mediterranean Partnership (3+1)
- The Cyprus Problem and U.S.-Cyprus Relations
- The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Religious Freedom in Turkey

■ Visit [www.ahiworld.org](http://www.ahiworld.org) to download the Policy Statements.

## AHI President to Skai TV: Menendez Will Fight Administration’s F-16s Proposal



Skai TV, which is part of one of the largest media groups in Greece, interviewed AHI President Nick Larigakis for a segment that aired on January 17, 2023.

Larigakis provided his insight on the reaction of the U.S. Congress, especially Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Robert Menendez, to the Biden administration’s proposed sale of F-16s to Turkey. He also shared how AHI is advocating in opposition to the proposed sale.

Diplomatic Editor of Skai TV News Maria Tsiliniou interviewed Larigakis.

- [Watch it here.](#)

In addition, *Hellas Journal* reported on the interview.

- [Read it here.](#)

## Greek Media Outlets Cover AHI's Take on Blinken's Visit to Greece

ERT Proto Programma 91.6, a radio broadcast radio station from Athens, Greece, interviewed AHI President Nick Larigakis about U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s visit to Greece for a segment that aired on February 21, 2023.

Skai TV, which is part of one of the largest media groups in Greece, also reported on the February 15 letter President Larigakis sent to Secretary Blinken ahead of his overseas trip that touted Greek and Cypriot contributions to advancing U.S. interests in the region and conveyed the importance of holding Turkey accountable for its violations of the rule of law. The report aired on Skai’s evening news program on February 18.

## AHI Reaffirms Its Commitment to Strengthening U.S.-Cyprus Relations



The AHI Leadership with President Nicos Christodoulides.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Constantinos Kombos met with the AHI Leadership.



President of the House of Representatives Annita Demetriou with the AHI Leadership. (L-R) Kostas Alexakis, Leon Andris, Nick Larigakis, Annita Demetriou, Violetta Kapsalis Buhler, Vice Admiral Vasileios Kyriazis, (ret) H.N., James Lagos.



AHI Leadership paying their respects to the fallen by laying a wreath at the at the military cemetery and war memorial at the Makedonitissa Tomb.

A six-member AHI delegation completed a series of high-level meetings in Cyprus, April 25 to 27, 2023.

The U.S.-Cyprus relationship topped the agenda.

“We are committed to continuing to strengthen relations between the United States and Cyprus,” President Nick Larigakis said.

The meetings also provided an opportunity for the delegation to discuss the vital role Cyprus continues to play in the region, especially with the new Cypriot government under the administration of President Nicos Christodoulides.

“We thank the Cypriot government officials, military officers and religious leaders who took the time to meet with us,” Larigakis said. “We were extremely well-received, and welcome the appreciation expressed for AHI’s work and contributions to keep Cyprus, and the Cyprus issue, at the forefront.”

The AHI delegation met with: President Christodoulides, President of the House of Representatives Annita Demetriou, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Constantinos Kombos, Minister of Defense Michalis Giorgallas, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry Giorgos Papanastasiou, and Yaryna Ferencevych, Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Nicosia.

The delegation also met with His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Georgios at the Archdiocese of Cyprus and Chief of the Cypriot National Guard Lt. Gen. Dimokritos Zervakis, who hosted the delegation for a luncheon at the National Guard Club.

### Appreciation for AHI Conveyed

“For 49 years AHI have been supporting Cyprus and the promotion of a just solution to the Cyprus problem,” a foreign ministry tweet said after the meeting.

According to a press report, in a statement issued by House of Representatives President Demetriou, she expressed sincere appreciation for the very important contributions of the Institute, since it was founded in 1974, to the promotion of the Cyprus problem and underlined the importance of maintaining and further strengthening ties and cooperation with the diaspora of Cyprus and Greece.

At the beginning of their visit, the delegation paid their



## LEADERSHIP VISITS ABROAD

respects at the Makedonitissa Tomb, a military cemetery and war memorial, where President Larigakis laid a wreath in tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The group also paid their respects at the “Imprisoned Graves” where 13 EOKA fighters are interred in a small cemetery located in the Central Jail of Nicosia. Nine of these fighters were hung by the British during the 1955-1959 liberation struggle of Cyprus from the United Kingdom.

### AHI Delegation Participants

The six-member delegation included: AHI President Nick Larigakis, AHI Foundation President Leon Andris, and AHI Board Members Kostas Alexakis, James Lagos, and Violetta Kapsalis Buhler and AHI Athens Chapter President Vice Admiral Vasileios Kyriazis, (ret) H.N.



*Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Dendias with the AHI Leadership.*

Top Officials Brief AHI Leadership .....Continued from page 1

332 Squadron (Rafale), attended the briefing.

Also on May 2, AHI held a private dinner for Greece’s Minister of National Defense Nikos Panagiotopoulos and the chiefs of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS) and their wives at the Grande Bretagne. The chiefs of the HNDGS included: General Konstantinos Floros, chief, HNDGS; Lt. Gen. Themistoklis Bouroulias, chief, Hellenic Air Force General Staff; Vice Admiral Ioannis Drymoussis, HN, chief, Hellenic Navy General Staff; and Lt. Gen. Angelos Choudeloudis, chief, Hellenic Army General Staff.

“It was our esteemed pleasure to host a dinner in honor of this distinguished and decorated group who are dedicated around the clock to the national security of Greece, NATO, and to U.S. interests in the Eastern Mediterranean,” Larigakis said. “We are grateful for their service.”

On May 3, the delegation met with General Floros at the headquarters for the Hellenic National Defense General Staff. General Floros also hosted the AHI delegation for a luncheon.

“We thank General Floros for meeting with us and hosting us for lunch,” Larigakis said. “We appreciated the opportunity to be briefed on developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and the close-working relationship between longstanding NATO allies, Greece and the United States.”



*Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, General Konstantinos Floros briefing the AHI Leadership.*



*The AHI Leadership at the Tanagra Air Base to review the Hellenic Airforce 114 Combat Wing.*

## LEADERSHIP VISITS ABROAD

Earlier in the morning, the group met with Vice Admiral Georgios E. Alexandrakis, who serves as Commandant of the Hellenic Coast Guard, at the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) at the port of Piraeus. There, Vice Admiral Aristides Pantazoglou, who serves as Vice Commander of the Hellenic Coast Guard, delivered a detailed briefing on how Greece confronts illegal migration. He also explained the Coast Guard's challenges to patrol a country with one of the largest coastlines in the world.

"We also thank Vice Admiral Alexandrakis, and Vice Commander Pantazoglou for their time as this was our first visit to the Hellenic Coast Guard," Larigakis said. "Pantazoglou's briefing was very thorough, informative, and eye-opening."

The AHI delegation concluded the day by attending a reception in Athens to commemorate Israel's 75th Independence Day at the personal invite of Israeli Ambassador to Greece, Noam Katz.

The delegation's agenda turned to foreign policy on May 4 with a series of meetings at the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The delegation met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias, Ambassador Haris Lalacos, secretary general, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ambassador Despina Loubacou, director, A2 Department for Cyprus; Ambassador Ioanna Efthimiadou, director, A3 Department for Southeastern Europe; Ambassador Apostolos Baltas, A4 directorate for Turkey; and Director Ilias Kremmydas, A7 directorate for North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In a tweet, Foreign Affairs Minister Denias stated he welcomed the AHI delegation to discuss U.S.- Greece relations and efforts to strengthen it as well as developments in the region.

The delegation also met with U.S. Ambassador to Greece George Tsunis and Deputy Chief of Mission Maria Olson at the U.S. Embassy, on May 4.

The focus returned to national security on May 5 as the delegation hosted a breakfast meeting with Thanos Dokos,



*Lt. Col. Theodoros Christodoulou giving the AHI leadership a tour of the Tanagra Air Base.*

who serves as the national security advisor of Greece, at The Grande Bretagne.

"We greatly appreciate the U.S. and Greek government officials for their time to discuss how U.S.- Greece relations can be strengthened further and to address the latest challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean and broader region," Larigakis said.

### AHI Delegation Participants

The six-member AHI delegation included: President Nick Larigakis, AHI Foundation President Leon Andris, and AHI Board Members Kostas Alexakis, James Lagos, Violetta Kapsalis Buhler, and Demetrios Halakos.



*AHI Board Member James "Top Gun" Lagos, Esq ready for action.*



*Nick Larigakis on a tour of the flight line.*



## VISITORS TO HELLENIC HOUSE

### AHI welcomed several dignitaries to Hellenic House during the first half of 2023.

In February, two officials from Greece visited. Greece's Deputy Minister of Interior Responsible for Macedonia – Thrace, Stavros Kalafatis, visited on February 6, 2023, and Evangelos Kalpadakis, who serves as diplomatic advisor to the Leader of the Main Opposition/SYRIZA, Alexis Tsipras, visited on February 9, 2023. They were in Washington to attend the Delphi Economic Forum's 4th Southeast Europe & East Med Conference.



(L-R) Stavros Kalafatis with Nick Larigakis



(L-R) Evangelos Kalpadakis with Nick Larigakis

AHI welcomed Nikolaos Bakatselos, American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (AmCham Greece) president, on March 3, 2023. He shared the Chamber's latest initiatives that drive business growth in Greece with AHI President Nick Larigakis.

Bakatselos visited Washington for the 100th anniversary celebration of the American College that included a discussion on "Education as a Pillar of Growth and U.S. - Greece Cooperation," held at the Embassy of Greece on March 2.



(L-R) Nikolaos Bakatselos, Nick Larigakis

Rhode Island State Senator Lou Raptakis and George Verbis, CEO of ifly, a private VIP helicopter and jet operator based in Megara, Greece visited on March 29, 2023. They discussed policies impacting business investment and growth in Greece. Raptakis and Verbis were visiting Washington on the occasion of Greek Independence celebrations at the White House.



(L-R) Lou Raptakis, Nick Larigakis, George Verbis

March concluded with a visit from 10 University of Piraeus graduate students, and their professor of International Relations, Athanasios Grammenos, on March 31.

Following their visit, Professor Grammenos wrote on President Larigakis' personal Facebook page: "Nick, it was an honor and a pleasure to visit AHI. The Institute's role in forming a Greek American lobby and supporting Greek-US relations has been pivotal."



Nick Larigakis with University of Piraeus Students



[Left to Right] Chief of the National Guard Lieutenant General Democritus Zervakis, Defense Minister of the Republic of Cyprus Michalis Giorgallas, AHI President & CEO Nick Larigakis.

AHI President Nick Larigakis met with the Defense Minister of the Republic of Cyprus, Michalis Giorgallas, as well as the Chief of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Democritus Zervakis, on July 18, 2023. "During his time in the United States, Defense Minister Giorgallas signed an agreement for the integration of the National Guard of Cyprus into the State Partnership Programme (SPP), following up on a Statement of Intent to join the SPP signed between the Ministry of Defense and the National Guard of the State of New Jersey.



*George C. Blytas*

### Author, Former AHI Honoree Blytas Mourned

In a statement issued June 23, 2023, AHI mourned the passing of George C. Blytas, a longtime AHI member and recipient of AHI's Hellenic Heritage and Public Service Award, on June 14, 2023, at the age of 92.

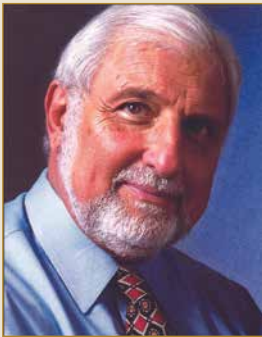
A prominent figure within the Greek community in Houston, Texas, George Blytas made significant contributions to preserving Greek heritage and promoting cultural understanding. His notable work, "The First Victory: Greece in the Second World War," published jointly by the American Hellenic Institute Foundation and Cosmos Publishing, remains a testament to his dedication and passion for shedding light on Greece's crucial role during that historic conflict.

"The First Victory: Greece in the Second World War" provides an extensive and sweeping account of Greece's pivotal role in World War II. Drawing from official military records, archives, and personal testimonies of those who experienced the war firsthand, Blytas vividly describes the surprising resistance and ferocious battles that unfolded. The book meticulously showcases how Greece's determination and resilience altered the course of events, delivering valuable time to the Allies and thwarting the Axis powers' plans in various regions.

AHI President Nick Larigakis said, "The American Hellenic Institute expresses its deepest condolences to the family and friends of George C. Blytas. His contributions to the preservation of Greek history and culture will continue to inspire future generations. May his memory be eternal."

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### Former AHIPAC Chair Dr. Takey H. Crist



*Dr. Takey H. Crist*

In a June 29, 2023, statement, AHI mourned the passing of Dr. Takey H. Crist, former Chairman of the American Hellenic Institute Public Affairs Committee (AHIPAC) and a devoted advocate for Cyprus and the preservation of its culture. Dr. Crist passed away on June 29, 2023, in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

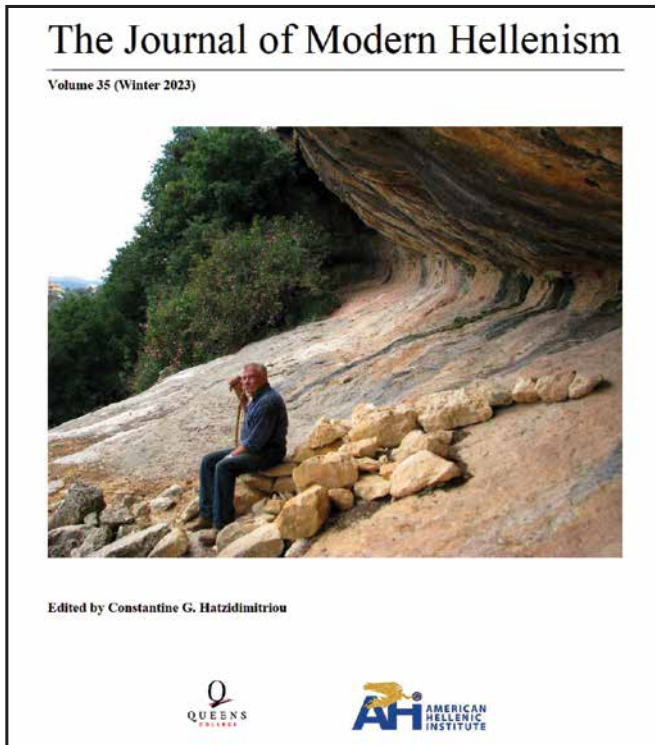
Dr. Crist was a highly respected obstetrician, gynecologist, and a relentless champion for women's health and reproductive rights. Serving as the AHIPAC Chairman from 1993 to 1995 and dedicating four decades to supporting the American Hellenic Institute, Dr. Crist tirelessly dedicated himself to the pursuit of justice for Cyprus. In the 1980s, he sponsored a group of U.S. women who participated in the three Women Walk Home marches into occupied Cyprus, raising awareness about the right of Greek Cypriot refugees to return to their homes and drawing international attention to the Turkish occupation of Cyprus.

In 1990, after witnessing the plunder of Cyprus' antiquities, Dr. Crist established the Cyprus Museum in Jacksonville, showcasing over 1,000 pieces. He also played a vital role in an initiative that tracked looted Cypriot antiquities on the illicit international art market and facilitated their return to Cyprus. Dr. Crist's commitment to preserving the island's cultural heritage led him to donate a significant collection of Cypriot artifacts and rare books to support the Greek studies program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) in 2008.

Reflecting on the passing of Dr. Crist, AHI President Nick Larigakis expressed his heartfelt condolences and highlighted his immeasurable contributions, stating, "We are profoundly saddened by the loss of Dr. Takey Crist, a titan whose dedication, compassion, and unwavering efforts have etched an indelible mark on the relentless fight for justice in Cyprus. His unwavering commitment to the reunification of Cyprus and the preservation of its rich cultural heritage serves as an everlasting inspiration. It was a tremendous honor for us to present Dr. Crist with the AHI Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award in 2011, a testament to his outstanding advocacy and unwavering defense of Cyprus. His legacy as a formidable champion of Cyprus will forever be cherished. On behalf of the entire AHI and AHIF board of directors, we extend our sincerest and deepest sympathies to his family. May His Memory Be Eternal!"



## AHIF, Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies Release Their First Collaboration Dedicated to Journal's Former Editor



The American Hellenic Institute Foundation (AHIF) and the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (Queens College CUNY) announced the release of the 35<sup>th</sup> volume (Winter 2023) of *The Journal of Modern Hellenism (JMh)* on January 13, 2023. It is the first volume co-published by the collaboration and support of a new partnership between AHIF and the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (Queens College CUNY).

The Winter 2023 issue is dedicated to the memory of Dan Georgakas, the Journal's editor who passed away in 2021. The introductory sections contain an assessment of Dan's importance, contributions to Hellenism, and to many other scholarly fields by Dr. Gerasimus Katsan, the director of the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College, CUNY; Dr. Van Coufoudakis, and the Journal's new managing editor, Dr. Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou.

## AHIF Study Abroad Alumni Share Their Knowledge, Experiences

It is a pleasure for AHI to present updates on alumni of the AHI Foundation Foreign Policy Study Abroad program or former interns.

In fall 2022, Nikolaos Piperis, a participant on the 2015 AHI Foundation Foreign Policy Study Abroad program, presented on "The Cypriot Constitution," for Professor

Michael J. Kelly's Comparative Constitutional Law course at Creighton Law School.

- An audio recording of Piperis' presentation is available at [aheworld.org](http://aheworld.org).

Also, in December 2022, the *Hellenic News of America* published an article authored by Eleni Pilotis titled, "To Promote Peace and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean, enact the Pappas Amendment."

- [Read Pilotis' piece here.](#)

Eleni participated in the 2022 AHI Foundation Foreign Policy Study Abroad program. She is a candidate for a master's degree for Security Policy Studies at The George Washington University.



Christopher Zrazik

During the spring of 2023, Christopher Zrazik, a participant on the 14th AHI Foundation Foreign Policy Study Abroad program, completed an internship in the Washington office of New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ). Senator Menendez serves as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

At the end of his internship, Zrazik authored a reflection of his time serving in the senator's office titled, "Reflections from Capitol Hill."

- Read Zrazik's "[Reflections from Capitol Hill](#)"

In his piece, Zrazik credits the AHI Foundation study abroad trip for confirming his desire to pursue a public service career.

"The Foreign Policy Trip last summer undoubtedly confirmed my desire to pursue a career in public service," he wrote. "It is a significant part of what prompted me to apply to intern with Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis last fall and Senator Menendez this spring. I remain grateful for the efforts of Mr. Larigakis and the American Hellenic Institute Foundation to make the trip possible."

"We beam with pride whenever our Study Abroad program alumni share the knowledge or experiences gained from their time with us with their professors, peers, and broader audiences through published works," said AHI President Nick Larigakis. "We look forward to providing many more students like Nikolaos, Eleni, and Christopher, with the same opportunity to experience and learn more about the history and geopolitics of the eastern Mediterranean region."

## AHIF Policy Journal Spotlights Democracy, The Genocide of the Anatolian Christians, and Human Rights



WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Hellenic Institute Foundation announced the release of the 14th volume of its policy journal, the American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues (AJCHI).

The issue is dedicated to the memories of the publisher, scholar and community leader, Aristide D. Caratzas, and the distinguished lawyer and former AHI Chairman, James L.

Marketos, Esq. both of whom devoted their lives to the advocacy of the rule of law, democratic values, truth, human rights, and the support of vital Hellenic national issues. The contents of this new AJCHI issue discuss the importance of preserving democracy in Greece and elsewhere, the genocide of Anatolian Christians, and the importance of truth and human rights, especially in relation to the destruction of Smyrna in 1922, subjects that they labored to make better known and were both very passionate about.

The latest edition of the American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues includes the following articles:

- Greek Island Sovereignty in the Aegean: The Turkish Government's Misuse and Misrepresentation of International Law and the Treaties of Lausanne, Montreux and Paris by Panayotis G. Agelarakis
- The Burning of Smyrna: H.C. Jaquith's report to Admiral Bristol by Ilias Chrissochoidis
- Assessing the Responsiveness Quality of Democracy in Greece-Surviving the Crisis by Constantine P. Danopoulos
- George Horton's Truth on Genocide and Smyrna and Why it Matters by Ismini and Christopher Lamb

### Book Reviews:

- Roderick Beaton. Greece: Biography of A Modern Nation reviewed by John Frangos
- Yianni Cartlege and Andrekos Varnava, (eds.), New Perspectives on the Greek War of Independence: Myths, Realities, Legacies and Reflections, reviewed by Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou
- Konstantinos Travlos (ed), Salvation and Catastrophe: the Greek-Turkish War, 1919- 1922 reviewed by Stavros Stavrides

The online journal is available the AJCHI website, <https://www.ahifworld.net/journal-issues>

## LEADERSHIP AND STAFF NEWS

### New Legislative Assistant Hired



Alexander Christofor

AHI announced the hire of Alexander Christofor as the Institute's legislative assistant on May 25, 2023

Alexander previously served as a congressional intern for U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Jim Himes. He has also worked on over a dozen different political campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels. Most recently, Alexander served as an Administrative Assistant for the Delphi Economic Forum's 4th Southeast Eu-

rope & East Mediterranean Conference and as a volunteer for the 2023 Cyprus & Hellenic Leadership Conference.

"It is an incredible honor to join the AHI team and work on these critically important issues," Alexander stated. "I greatly appreciate the opportunity to contribute to AHI's goals and advance its mission."

Alexander graduated from American University, majoring in interdisciplinary studies: communication, legal institutions, economics, and government along with a minor in public administration and policy.

Alexander succeeds AHI's Special Projects Coordinator Demo Theofanopoulos, who departed to pursue a law degree at St. John's University. Demo has worked passionately over the last two years to support AHI's events, activities, and goals.



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