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Politics

"Let me be clear: We will disclose the client's name and accusations only when SHE is ready and we have adequate security measures in place. And not a moment before that. It is her choice and hers alone as to when to surface bc it is her life. We expect it within the next 36 hrs."

— Lawyer Michael Avenatti in a tweet, on his mysterious client who he said Tuesday will publicly describe her accusations against Supreme Court nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh



Lifting the U.S. arms embargo on Cyprus

By Philip Christopher, Andy Manatos and Mike Manatos

The impending prospect of lifting the US arms embargo on Cyprus is potentially more important for America than it is for Cyprus. This dysfunctional Embargo represents the destructiveness of both flawed American government policy and the chipping away at our country's faith in our democratic processes.

The very existence of an arms embargo on Cyprus is an example of our government ignoring the law of our land and punishing our relationship with a country that conducts itself as a most dependable ally, Cyprus. Hard though it may be to believe, this legislative Embargo is actually aimed at Turkey, not Cyprus. Its legislative history makes clear that it was intended to end Turkey's illegal military occupation of Cyprus by prohibiting Turkey from employing American arms on Cyprus. The Administration, however, ignored that legislative intent and instead applied the law so that Turkey could continue to carry American arms onto Cyprus, but all other US arms to that country were embargoed.

As the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Human Rights Subcommittee said recently, "The United States should lift its outdated arms embargo on Cyprus. There's no good reason for the United States to deny a tried and true ally like Cyprus essential weaponry for its defense."

Another member of the US House of Representatives received a standing ovation from colleagues for his impassioned defense of Congressional duty. He said, "We make laws. The President was given the duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. The House of Representatives does not exist to pass suggestions. We do not exist to pass ideas. We make law." The fact that such a basic point received such an overwhelming reaction indicates how far our Executive Branch can stray from our Founders' brilliant vision.

The Cyprus arms embargo is an example of the kind of undemocratic conduct that is slowly sinking

the American democratic ship of state. Today, 70% of young Americans and a majority of Americans under 60 DO NOT consider it "essential" to live in a democracy – that's up from 30% in the 1930s. And, 35% of well-to-do young Americans believe army rule would be a good form of government – up from 6% in 1995. In the past three years, scholars have filled book shelves and newspaper headlines with proof of this loss.

Unfortunately, Cyprus has experienced decades of such undemocratic American practices. One of many occurred in 1978 when the White House began its effort to lift another arms embargo, the one against Turkey. That embargo was applied because Turkey used American arms illegally to invade and occupy the northern third of Cyprus. The White House promised the Congress that, if they lifted the Turkish arms embargo and Turkey did not withdraw its occupation of Cyprus, the embargo would be re-imposed. During the 40 years since, no troops have left and roughly half-a-million Turks have been moved to the occupied area of Cyprus. Yet, every few months, the Administration has assured the Congress, in a total of over 100 letters, of a fantasy that Turkey is moving toward a withdrawal from Cyprus.

In the past, the American government has played these dangerous games with Cyprus, the bulwark of the Western World in the Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, Turkish President Erdogan's dream of an Ottoman caliphate targets Cyprus' Muslims. They are called Turkish-Cypriots even though their gene pool resembles Greek-Cypriots more than Turks and many were Christians who converted to Islam to avoid paying taxes under Ottoman rule. Also, in contrast to Erdogan's Turks, Turkish-Cypriots are steeped in the thousands-of-years-old Western culture of Cyprus that has led to democratic, secular, moderate Muslim beliefs. Recently, Erdogan's Turks on Cyprus attacked a newspaper while yelling "Allahu Akbar." The paper had supported the US in opposing Erdogan's assault on

US-backed Syrian Kurds. Thousands of Cypriot-born Turkish-Cypriots immediately demonstrated against this attack.

In recent years, Erdogan's aggression against Cyprus has included an attempt to steal Cyprus' newly discovered hydrocarbons. This is all part of the Turkish President's final push for Islamist Fundamentalism's first modern conquest of Western World territory and resources – the northern third of Cyprus. These are hydrocarbons that the Eastern Mediterranean Alliance -- Cyprus, Greece and Israel – are working on together to provide safe delivery to Western Europe.

Fortunately, State Department officials handling this region of the world today and the effort to lift the arms embargo against Cyprus and cut off the delivery of F-35 stealth fighter jets to Turkey are among the best we have seen in half a century, possibly in the league of Dick Holbrooke. Gone, at least for the moment, are those who smugly ignored our legislative branch's laws regarding Cyprus.

A policy of sanctions against Turkey for imprisoning an innocent American seems to have replaced our government's previous policy of refusing for years to press Turkey about what its military did with five innocent Americans they captured. They were later found to have been executed with over 1,000 innocent Greek-Cypriots and dumped in mass graves.

Hopefully, today's handling of Cyprus will be a textbook primer of top notch diplomacy as well as adherence to democratic procedures our Founders intended.

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