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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

October 30, 2014

Vice President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Biden:

I write to express my grave concern over the Republic of Turkey's illegal incursion into Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This continuing and dramatic escalation of events by Turkey requires an immediate response. I ask that you raise this blatant violation with President Erdogan during your upcoming visit to the Republic of Turkey and request that he immediately withdraw from the island's exclusive economic zone.

The Cypriot people need your strong voice on this issue to urge President Erdogan to withdraw from Cyprus' EEZ so that reunification talks can resume. Your active engagement on the Cyprus issue has engendered new hope for the talks, which Turkey's illegal provocations in Cyprus have endangered.

Earlier this month, Turkey sent a research vessel accompanied by several support and warships into Cyprus' EEZ for the purpose of conducting a seismic survey where ENI/KOGAS is already exploring for natural gas at the request of the Cypriot government. In response to Turkey's provocation, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades promptly suspended Greek Cypriot participation in the peace negotiations with the Turkish Cypriots. As you know, Turkey has occupied the northern part of Cyprus for 40 years in violation of international law, during which time it has actively obstructed the rights of the Cypriot people to benefit from their country's natural resources, and it has prolonged their suffering by supporting the intransigence of the Turkish Cypriot position during all prior peace negotiations.

The European Union and the United Nations have publicly condemned Turkey's actions. The United States must join the international community in calling on Turkey to immediately withdraw from Cyprus' internationally recognized EEZ, and agree to work toward a Turkish Cypriot position that seeks to establish the "bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality" that was agreed to in February's Joint Statement. Given your commitment to supporting both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots in their efforts to achieve this objective, I believe you are in a unique position to deliver this message to President Erdogan so that both sides can reengage in honest and productive negotiations.

Sincerely,

Chairman Robert Menendez