

**WOODROW WILSON CENTER  
DIRECTOR'S FORUM**  
Speech by Her Excellency Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Cyprus

**“Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean: Strategic Location, Strategic opportunities”**

**Tuesday, December 20, 2011  
1:00 to 2:00 p.m.  
Woodrow Wilson Center,  
6th Floor, Joseph H. and Claire Flom Auditorium**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today at this prestigious Center where I have been graciously hosted before during my tenure as Ambassador of my country over a decade ago. I have wonderful memories from that period and I cherish many friendships and strong bonds with institutions and individuals many of whom are here today.

When Cypriots talk about politics, one of Cyprus is the center of the earth. Though outlook is a trace of pride which carries civilization.

To be absolutely honest, I truly share this Asia and Africa, one can clearly witness influences from East and West have met the centuries; that it sits on a crossroad. A Cyprus as a crossroad and of considerable

Throughout history, and still today, for east to Asia or westward, all cross through as this crossroad is a geographic location, considering that human settlement in Cyp

imagine, and then spend a lifetime appreciating, the historical footprint that Cyprus carries – the accumulation of cultures, religions, languages, traditions and ideas that have come to pass through our land. Cyprus, the eastern-most island in the Mediterranean Sea, positioned at the crossroads of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, has been a junction of the world's great civilizations. From its 11,000-year history, Cyprus has woven its own distinctive history and culture.

From a political, strategic point of view, it is also easy to appreciate that almost all Major Powers that have ruled the region at any time in history, have passed near, over or on Cyprus and conquered or controlled the island in one way or another.

Cypriots have experienced this on their flesh, on their soil and on their souls. We have been raided, owned and sold; we have been ruled and occupied. Our copper mines, our forests, our grain and our salt, exploited and traded by our conquerors; our antiquities ravaged and pilfered, our heritage plundered. And yet we have persevered with the resilience that perhaps can be best characterized as stubbornness, committed to our land, or simply bound and deeply rooted to it.

However, the story of Cyprus is ultimately not a sad one but one which should give hope to humanity: because our achievements have been substantial. Since independence in 1960 we have managed to emerge from colonial rule and succeed as few other former colonies have. Even after being ravaged by the Turkish invasion in 1974, torn by the subsequent occupation, economically destroyed as a result of





Of course, one would argue that the benefits are great and that

Then came the blatant threats of violence and saber rattling which involved Turkish warships and aircraft, air and naval exercises in the sea south of Cyprus, and illegal seismic surveying and seabed mapping, carried out by ships on behalf of Turkey inside our Exclusive Economic Zone in blatant violation of Cypriot sovereign rights. The next step was the signing by Turkey of an agreement with its proxy in the occupied part of Cyprus, an agreement which seeks to create the semblance of legality in what cannot possibly be legal. I do not need to remind you that the Security Council in its 1983 and 1984 resolutions rejected the unilateral declaration of a so-called independent state in the occupied part of Cyprus and instructed the international community not to recognize, not to cooperate and not to support in any way the secessionist entity. Turkey, being the only country member of the UN that has recognized this illegal entity, continues to violate international law to this day in this respect.

But Turkey does not stop there. Its newfound confidence, based on real or imagined successes, its economic growth, and, I am sorry to say, the unbridled support it receives in some countries, has given rise to a neighborhood bully. A Turkey whose Foreign Minister promoted a policy of “zero problems” with its neighbors, is now asserting a policy of “only problems.” The tensions with Israel were just the beginning of a concerted effort by Ankara to delegitimize others in order to legitimize its actions. For example, Mr. Erdogan sees no contradiction in pontificating from the UN General

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process. The negotiation process is not progressing, in fact it has remained frozen, because Turkey is failing to meet the European standards and its commitments to the European Union. It is failing because, like in international law, Turkey wants to dictate its own terms to the European Union. The statements by its leadership have left no question that they believe that Europe needs Turkey at any cost; that Europe without Turkey is a “miserable” Europe, as President Abdullah Gül recently said in London.

We are hopeful, that the Turkey which aspires to be recognized as a regional if not a global leader, will rise to the occasion. We are hopeful that the Turkish leadership will put aside polemics, diatribes, threats, and adopt a more mild and statesmanlike tone and attitude. We believe that there is room for Turkey to cooperate with its neighbors, out of genuine desire toward common ground and mutual benefit. To do that, Turkey must meet its obligations vis a vis the European Union. It must meet its obligations in terms of international law.

Finally, let me conclude by saying a few words about the longstanding Cyprus problem which has produced so much suffering to the people of Cyprus as a whole. A Cyprus settlement for the reunification of Cyprus, its people, its economy and society, that have remained forcibly divided since the Turkish invasion

The main stumbling block has all along been the position maintained by the Turkish Cypriot side, fully supported by the Turkish Government, that the goal should not be a federation, in the form of one unbreakable federal state, with a single sovereignty, single international personality and single citizenship, as has been agreed and endorsed by the international community, but a confederal arrangement between two separate states with separate sovereignties. This position is still maintained by the Turkish side and it is manifested in the nature and content of the proposals submitted on a number of the core issues, with the full encouragement, support and indeed guidance of the entire leadership of the Turkish Republic, at both the political and the military level.

Despite the difficulties and obstacles on the way, we continue to persist in our efforts to reunify our country in the form of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. We shall continue to spare no effort towards the direction of Cyprus' reunification, because we strongly hold that such a development would be a win-win situation for all parties concerned, primarily Cyprus and the Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for Greece and Turkey, for the European Union and for the international community at large. We are determined to make this vision, however difficult and elusive it seems right now, a reality. We owe its fulfillment to our children and to the future generations of Cypriots, but primarily we owe it to our country, which must survive as a single international personality, a peaceful, democratic and prosperous pl.ouse(T-3(6(e)4( s)-1(ha) [(ow)2(e)4(r)3(1( p [(ow)2(e)( )-10(a)4(l)-23(i)-20( a)4(nd w)2( )-1nso

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I fully subscribe to such words of wisdom. And if this has been proven true, in Europe, if it has been proven true in Northern Island, it can also be proven true for Cyprus. I am convinced that the majority of the people of Cyprus of every c