

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2011

The Honorable Don Young
Chairman
Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska
Native Affairs
1337 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0201

The Honorable Dan Boren
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska
Native Affairs
186 Ford HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0201

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Boren:

We understand that the Subcommittee on Indian & Alaskan Native Affairs has noticed a hearing on H.R. 2362, the Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act of 2011. We have serious concerns about this proposed legislation, which would give selective benefit to Turkish entities in the use of tribal lands. Regardless of the particular beneficiary, this kind of arrangement would be unusual and potentially problematic. The fact that it is being specifically catered to Turkish interests makes it indefensible given Turkey's recent, as well as historic, conduct. For that reason, we believe it is imperative that the hearing allow for testimony with respect to the following:

Turkish Entities Currently Operating in the United States - Federal agencies including the FBI and the Departments of Labor and Education are investigating a network of Turkish charter schools and Turkish owned businesses that provide services to these US taxpayer funded charter schools for the payment of illegal kickbacks and for engaging in unlawful immigration practices. See www.hawaiifreepress.com/main/ArticlesMain/tabid/56/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/4003/VIDEO-FBI-investigating-Gulen-Charter-Schools-parents-pulling-kids-out.aspx; www.nytimes.com/2011/06/07/education/07charter.html?pagewanted=all;www.educationnews.org/commentaries/insights_on_education/152233.html.

Turkish Threats Against American Business Enterprises - Turkey has unlawfully threatened the use of force to stop Texas-based Noble Energy from drilling for oil and gas off the shores of Cyprus and Israel. Turkey has also threatened to blacklist any companies including Noble Energy from any business dealings in Turkey who work with Cyprus and Israel for the extraction of natural resources. It is in the national interest of the United States that the European Union and Israel develop independent energy resources, and the State Department has made this clear to Turkish authorities.

It should be noted that Turkey has become increasingly hostile to our ally Israel, recently threatening to mobilize its air and naval assets to escort ships to Gaza and to stop Israel from developing energy sources in its Exclusive Economic Zone in the Eastern Mediterranean. In recent weeks and months, Turkish officials, including Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu, have engaged in escalating anti-Israel rhetoric.

Turkish Support for Iran - On June 9, 2010, NATO member Turkey voted against the United Nations resolution imposing sanctions against Iran to thwart its nuclear weapons program. Turkey continues to offer cover to Iran while recklessly charging that Israel as a nuclear power is the greatest threat to Middle East security.

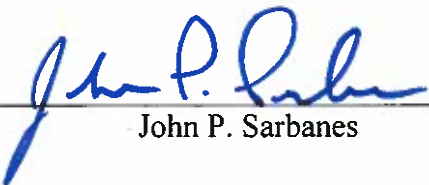
Turkish Mistreatment of Religious and Ethnic Minorities - The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has placed Turkey on its watch list for its widespread discrimination of minority religious communities (www.uscirf.gov/turkey.html#Annual%20Report). Even with respect to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual center of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians, Turkish policy violates nearly every tenet of human rights and religious freedom. Turkey also continues to deny its large Kurdish minority - by some estimates numbering 20 million - the full exercise of democratic freedoms and human rights.

Turkish Blockade of Armenia - Since 1993, Turkey has maintained a destabilizing blockade of Armenia. Turkey's blockade obstructs Armenia's ability to engage in the global economy and integrate into European economic structures thereby undermining regional security and prosperity in the Caucuses which is a long-term policy objective of the United States. The United States engaged in substantial diplomacy to obtain execution of the Armenia-Turkey protocols only to have Turkey renege on its promises. Turkey's blockade further advances its goals of pressuring Armenia to surrender its efforts to gain recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Turkish Occupation of Cyprus - For more than 37 years, Turkey has illegally occupied the northern third of the island Republic of Cyprus, a member of the European Union. Despite calls from the United Nations and the international community for Turkey to reverse its illegal invasion and occupation it has in utter contravention of international law relocated nearly 200,000 mainland Turks to occupied Cyprus with the sole aim of permanently altering the historic, cultural and demographic realities of the small island nation. Turkey refuses to honor its obligations to the European Union to open its air and sea ports to Republic of Cyprus flagged vessels. Turkey's economic blockade of Cypriot vessels undermines the Cypriot economy, which is heavily dependent on shipping and tourism.

We ask that any hearing on the proposed legislation call for testimony to address the many issues detailed in this letter. We further call for a closer review of the foreign policy implications of the proposed legislation before further action is taken.

Sincerely,



John P. Sarbanes



Frank Pallone