

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 6

Concerning the protection and continued livelihood of the Eastern Orthodox
Ecumenical Patriarchate.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 1997

Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mr. PORTER, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. KLINK, Mr. GEKAS, and Mr. ENGEL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Concerning the protection and continued livelihood of the
Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Whereas in recent years there have been successive terrorist attempts to desecrate and destroy the premises of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Fanar area of Istanbul (Constantinople), Turkey;

Whereas attempts against the Ecumenical Patriarchate have intensified, including:

- (1) On September 30, 1996, a hand grenade was thrown into the headquarters of the Eastern Orthodox

Patriarchate and exploded causing damage to the physical structure of the grounds, most notably the Agios Georgios Church.

(2) On May 28, 1994, three powerful bombs were discovered in the living quarters of the Patriarch, and were subsequently defused only minutes before they were set to detonate.

(3) In July and August 1993, the Christian Orthodox cemetery in Yenikoy, near Istanbul, was attacked by vandals and desecrated.

(4) There has been a concerted effort throughout Turkey to convert the Church of Hagia (Saint) Sophia, one of the most sacred monuments of Greek Orthodox Christianity and currently used as a museum, into a mosque.

(5) The Turkish press and some politicians have launched a well-orchestrated campaign against the Ecumenical Patriarchate, accusing it of trying to become an independent state or wishing to revive the Byzantine Empire. These accusations resulted in provoking dangerous reactions among the Moslem population in Turkey against the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

(6) Negative statements have been directed toward the Patriarchate by the Mayor of the Fatih District of Istanbul.

Whereas His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and those associated with the Ecumenical Patriarchate are Turkish citizens and thus must be protected under Turkish law against blatant and unprovoked attacks toward ethnic minorities;

Whereas the Turkish Government arbitrarily closed the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology in 1971;

Whereas the closing of the Halki School of Theology is a serious concern for the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

Whereas Turkish law requires that the Patriarch, as well as all the clergy, faculty, and students be citizens of Turkey, and the Halki School of Theology is the only educational institution for Orthodox Christian leadership;

Whereas the unimpeded continued provocations against the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the closing of the Halki School of Theology are in violation of International Treaties to which Turkey has been a signatory, including the Treaty of Lausanne, the 1968 Protocol, the Helsinki Final Act-1975, and the Charter of Paris;

Whereas these consequences have severely compromised and threatened the safety and security of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the future existence of this Orthodox Institution in Turkey;

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the spiritual center for more than 250,000,000 Orthodox Christians worldwide, including approximately 5,000,000 in the United States; and

Whereas it is in the best interest of the United States to prevent further incidents regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate and in the overall goals of the United States to

establish peaceful relations with and among the many important nations of the world that have substantial Orthodox Christian populations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

3 (1) the United States should use its influence
4 with the Turkish Government and as a permanent
5 member of the United Nations Security Council to
6 suggest that the Turkish Government—

7 (A) ensure proper protection for the Patri-
8 archate and all Orthodox faithful residing in
9 Turkey;

10 (B) assure that positive steps are taken to
11 reopen the Halki Patriarchal School of Theol-
12 ogy;

13 (C) provide for the proper protection and
14 safety of the Ecumenical Patriarch and Patri-
15 archate personnel;

16 (D) establish conditions that would prevent
17 the recurrence of past terrorist activities and
18 vandalism and other personal threats against
19 the Patriarch;

20 (E) establish conditions to ensure that the
21 Patriarchate is free to carry out its religious
22 mission; and

1 (F) do everything possible to find and pun-
2 ish the perpetrators of any provocative and ter-
3 rorist acts against the Patriarchate.

4 (2) The Administration should report to the
5 Congress on the status and progress of the concerns
6 in paragraph (1) on an annual basis.

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