

CALLING UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY TO FACILITATE
THE REOPENING OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE'S
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF HALKI WITHOUT CONDITION OR
FURTHER DELAY

MARKUP

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, EURASIA, AND
EMERGING THREATS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. Res. 188

NOVEMBER 19, 2013

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CALLING UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY TO FACILITATE THE REOPENING OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE'S THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF HALKI WITHOUT CONDITION OR FURTHER DELAY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:19 p.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Dana Rohrabacher (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. This markup and this meeting of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats will come to order. And right off the bat, I ask for unanimous consent that Mr. Gus Bilirakis be recognized to briefly explain his resolution, which we will be marking up. That is H. Res. 188. And without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Bilirakis, you have been an active, aggressive member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and a Member of Congress respected for your opinions. And we know that you have no bias when it comes to anything to do with Greece.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Well, this is an issue for the whole world, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. There are 300 million Orthodox Christians, and I really appreciate you agendaing this bill. I really do.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Based on principle, as all of your decisions are.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Absolutely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And you may proceed with discussing with us what H. Resolution 188 is all about.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thanks very much. Sir, I really appreciate it.

Very shortly, Members, this subcommittee will have an opportunity to pass H.R. 188, which calls upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay.

I urge you to support this measure, just as you did unanimously last year when it passed out of the full committee. This resolution is significant to all Eastern Orthodox Christians, folks who live in our districts, because of its importance of making sure the very essence of the church survives.

The Theological School in Halki, founded in 1844 and located outside of Istanbul, Turkey, served as the principal seminary for the Ecumenical Patriarchate until its closure by the Turkish au-

thorities in 1971. In addition to countless priests and bishops, the seminary has trained 19 Patriarchs, including our current Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The aging population and dwindling numbers of the Orthodox clergy in Istanbul, combined with the Turkish law which requires that the Ecumenical Patriarch to be a Turkish citizen almost assures the ends of the succession process for our spiritual leader. So you can see why Halki and its Ecumenical Patriarchate is so essential to Eastern Orthodox Christians.

It is the spiritual home of the world oldest and second largest Christian church. Essentially it is the Orthodox Christians—to Orthodox Christians what the Vatican is to Catholics, Mr. Chairman. More than 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world and millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States are turning to find hope in this subcommittee's approval of H. Res. 188, knowing that the 2,000-year-old Sacred See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will be also—it will be able to teach future religious leaders for generations. This closure has been an issue of concern for the American people, Members of Congress, and multiple Presidential administrations.

Mr. Chairman, while Orthodox Christians and friends of religious freedom have appreciated over the past decade encouraging signs from the Government of Turkey related to the impending opening of the seminary, the deal has not been done yet. The deal has not been closed. This resolution simply encourages Turkey to take that last affirmative step.

I can go on, Mr. Chairman, but I know you get my drift. Will you permit me go on for 30 more seconds?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You go right ahead.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I know where you are, and I know you have co-sponsored the bill, and I really appreciate it very much.

And, Members, it would mean the world to the Orthodox community in the United States, but throughout the world, if we were to pass this in the subcommittee and ultimately on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. And we have with us also, of course, the ranking member, Mr. Keating. Do you have an opening statement?

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Over the years Greece and Turkey have made great strides in improving their economic and political ties through increased exchanges, dialogue and business opportunities. These steps not only benefit the relations between the two countries, but also in the development and stability of the wider region of Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. This region is also uniquely situated and draws in visitors from all over the world, who not only want to experience the picturesque landscapes, but visit the diversity of culture and the historical sites.

For this reason the increased benefits of measures to promote diversity are well recognized. I believe Prime Minister Erdogan understood this well when he and some of his ministers vowed to reopen the Halki Seminary in Turkey.

The Halki Seminary is the main theological school of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and was shut down in 1971. The Justice and Development Party raised the hopes of Orthodox Christians all around the world when they announced they would reopen the seminary, and a proposed democratization package seemed to be an appropriate channel for this change. Many were, however, surprised to see that the reopening of Halki was not included under the provisions of this package when it was announced. Since then, Prime Minister Erdogan's rhetoric on Halki has taken a turn, and conditions and reciprocity demands are now attached to reopening of the school.

I fear that this type of rhetoric threatens to undo much of the progress that has been made in Turkey. And further, it may have a negative impact of dividing Turks and stalling long-awaited progress on the issue of Halki as well as other issues concerning Turkish minority groups. I recognize that Turkey has come a long way, but hope this is not—that now they are willing to make this final push for Halki.

I don't think it is too late. I hope that the Prime Minister will reconsider his new-found position on Halki and encourage the long-advocated rights for all Turks within the Turkish Republic. As I said earlier, this is not just important for Turkey, it is important for the region as a whole.

And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

And, Mr. Holding, do you have a statement that you would like to make?

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Chairman, I will submit one for the record.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. And a couple of my colleagues as well.

Let me just begin by saying that we are very grateful to Congressman Bilirakis for his leadership on issues like this. His expertise and his attention that he has paid to this part of the world is a great asset to the Congress. And just this is a fine example of what we need to pay attention to, because sending a message today, which is what we are doing, sending a message to Turkey today to make sure that they send us a message back about the way they are going to be dealing with their part of the world is vitally important for us to understand.

And our message to them is that, yes, we are concerned that the Turkish Government not be molded after other governments that have a certain tie to the Islamic faith. And in other governments that have a radical commitment to Islam and promoting Islam, we have found that that type of government turns—is an anti-Western approach, is a threat to our well-being. At the same time we know that we need models in the Islamic world of moderation and of, yes, pro-Western sentiment, and that is what we have in Turkey today, a country that is—obviously a country where the vast majority of its population is Islamic, but we are asking them to send us a message today, send the rest of the world a message today, that they do respect—yes, they respect and they identify with Islam, but they respect human rights. They respect the religious convictions of others. And nowhere would Turkey be able to not only say that, but to demonstrate it to the world that they are indeed respectful and

are not going to go this other direction of repression of other faiths in the name of the majority faith of that country—there is no better message that they could send to us and reaffirming their ties with the West than the seminary in Halki and making sure that that was open and shown as an example of the positive intent of the Turkish Government and the Turkish people.

Turkey is an important historical ally, and having been a key NATO member for decades, it has, for example, played a huge role in the Cold War. And had it not been for the support of the Turkish Government and people, the Cold War would have turned out in a totally different way, and this would be a different world, a worse world without that.

But despite their initial lack—and, of course, we have had some problems—despite their initial lack of assistance at the beginning of the Iraq war, which many of us noted that, which may have saved some United States lives and some of our troops that were engaged in Iraq and that part of the world, and, of course, basing their overflight access and regulating that, that is something that we have had to pay close attention to as well recently. And their permitting us these overflights has been critical to the safety and security of American troops operating in that region, just as, I might say, unfortunately their opposition in the beginning in terms of not allowing us in the beginning of the Iraq war to base our operations, some of them, out of Turkey was detrimental to that effort.

So I come to this discussion realizing that Turkey is a free and independent country, a proud country, and they will make determinations which reflect their values and reflect their long-term goals, as they should, as they should. But now we are hoping they will send us a signal today that don't worry, we are really your friends and friends of the West. I say that I hope this will spur some action on their part, because I come to this discussion as a friend and admirer of Turkey. And I say that personally, and I know that probably reflects some of my colleagues as well.

Turkey's recent decision, however, to buy, for example, Chinese long-range antimissiles, this antimissile system, does trouble me. We do have American companies that were available who actually sell other weapons systems, antimissile weapons systems, and I reminded the Turkish Foreign Minister just yesterday that it might have been better for Turkey to buy the antimissile system from the United States because it was our technology that was probably stolen by the Chinese that are now been sold to them by the Chinese companies.

Well, the resolution before us today is not—we are going to have agreements and disagreements with every free country in the world, and this resolution today is not aimed at what some people would have us do, just taking a gratuitous slap in the face of Turkey. And I have seen that far too often in the last 25 years that I have been here that people want to just hurt Turkey, and that is their—you are going to show you are a good person by—you are allied with us if you hurt Turkey.

Well, the bottom line today, that is not what this is all about. This is actually a way that if the Turks send us this message, agreeing with what we are asking them to do, which is nothing

more than to fulfill an agreement they have already made, and to respect the rights of the Greek people and actually show a respect for those religious beliefs, just as we would have the Greek people respect the beliefs of the Turkish people, that this is a way that we could basically make some real points that were meaningful in a very easy and quick way.

So we are not asking—this isn't a cheap shot, this isn't criticism. This is a request in a very dignified way. And I want to thank Congressman Bilirakis for crafting this so well that this will be seen as a respectful request of Turkey and not just condemning them for something that we think is not right at this moment.

And so there is no better way for the Turks to send us—to send all of the Western world a message, a positive message, than to reopen this theological school at Halki.

Long before the introduction of Islam in Turkey, Turkey was the outpost of the Christianity. This is very—and what we are talking about is an historic site in that whole history of the region tied to ancient Constantinople. The school has a history that spans 17 centuries representing the Orthodox Church and linking the Christian and Muslim worlds. What a better example they could have to us of a commitment of a peaceful transition point. They could be the actual bridge, which is what Turkey has always been, and just by giving us this sign today about reopening this theological school.

The reopening of this school has been endorsed by previous Congresses, the European Court of Human Rights, and even the Turkish Prime Minister at one point has endorsed this 4 years ago. Turkey's long tradition of tolerance and peace between the religions should be maintained and preserved and basically demonstrated for us in the opening of this theological school that is so important to their neighbors.

And so I would ask my colleagues to join me today in supporting this resolution and hopefully, if you could inform my staff, become a cosponsor, if you are not already a cosponsor, on this bill.

So as we move forward, at that point is there anyone else with an opening statement?

If not, does anyone have any amendments to offer?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I have none.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Anyone have any amendments to offer?

The bill is before us. I call up for H. Resolution 188, calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Theological School at Halki without condition or further delay.

Without objection, this measure will be considered as read and open for amendment.

[H. Res. 188 follows:]

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 188

Calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 26, 2013

Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. TITUS, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mr. MICEAUD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay.

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate is an institution with a history spanning 17 centuries, serving as the center of the Orthodox Christian Church throughout the world;

Whereas Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the spiritual leader of nearly 300,000,000 Orthodox Christians around the world and millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States;

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the spiritual home of the world's oldest and second largest Christian church located in Istanbul, Turkey;

Whereas within the 2,000-year-old Sacred See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the New Testament was codified and the Nicene Creed was created;

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate sits at the crossroads of East and West, offering a unique perspective on the religions and cultures of the world;

Whereas the disappearance of the See would mean the end of a crucial link between the Christian and the Muslim world since the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey is a living testimony of religious co-existence since 1453;

Whereas the title of Ecumenical Patriarch was formally accorded to the Archbishop of Constantinople by a synod convened in Constantinople during the 6th century;

Whereas since November 1991, His All Holiness, Bartholomew I, has served as Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch;

Whereas Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1997, in recognition of his outstanding and enduring contributions toward religious understanding and peace;

Whereas during the 110th Congress, 75 Senators and the overwhelming majority of members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives wrote to President George W. Bush and the Prime Minister of Turkey to express congressional concern, which continues today, regarding the absence of religious freedom for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I in the areas of

church-controlled Patriarchal succession, the confiscation of the vast majority of Patriarchal properties, recognition of the international Ecumenicity of the Patriarchate, and the reopening of the Theological School of Halki;

Whereas the Theological School of Halki, founded in 1844 and located outside Istanbul, Turkey, served as the principal seminary for the Ecumenical Patriarchate until its forcible closure by the Turkish authorities in 1971;

Whereas the alumni of this preeminent educational institution include numerous prominent Orthodox scholars, theologians, priests, bishops, and patriarchs, including Bartholomew I;

Whereas the Republic of Turkey has been a participating state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since signing the Helsinki Final Act in 1975;

Whereas in 1989, OSCE participating states adopted the Vienna Concluding Document, committing to respect the right of religious communities to provide “training of religious personnel in appropriate institutions”;

Whereas the continued closure of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s Theological School of Halki has been an ongoing issue of concern for the United States people and the United States Congress and has been repeatedly raised by members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and by United States delegations to the OSCE’s annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting;

Whereas in his address to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on April 6, 2009, President Barack Obama said, “Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and

vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening Halki Seminary will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond.”;

Whereas in a welcomed development, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met with the Ecumenical Patriarch on August 15, 2009, and, in an address to a wider gathering of minority religious leaders that day, concluded by stating, “We should not be of those who gather, talk, and disperse. A result should come out of this.”;

Whereas during his visit to the United States in November 2009, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I raised the issue of the continued closure of the Theological School of Halki with President Obama, congressional leaders, and others;

Whereas in a welcome development, for the first time since 1922, the Government of Turkey in August 2010 allowed the liturgical celebration by the Ecumenical Patriarch at the historic Sumela Monastery;

Whereas following a unanimous decision by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 2010, ruling that Turkey return the former Greek Orphanage on Buyukada Island to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on the eve of the feast day of St. Andrew observed on November 30, the Government of Turkey provided lawyers representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the formal property title for the confiscated building;

Whereas in March 2012, after bilateral meetings between the United States and Turkey in Seoul, Korea, President Barack Obama praised Prime Minister Erdogan’s efforts to protect religious minorities and announced, “I am

pleased to hear of his decision to reopen the Halki Seminary.”;

Whereas Turkey’s Council of Foundations returned 190 hectares of forestland to the Theological School of Halki in January 2013; and

Whereas Secretary of State John F. Kerry met with Turkish officials and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I during an April 2013 meeting and reiterated the United States position that the Halki Seminary should be reopened without further delay or conditions: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) welcomes past and future meetings between
3 Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I;

4 (2) welcomes the positive gestures by the Government of Turkey, including allowing the liturgical celebration by the Ecumenical Patriarch at the historic Sumela Monastery and the return of the former Greek Orphanage on Buyukada Island to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the return of the 190 hectares of forestland to the Greek Orthodox foundation listed as owner-of-record of the Theological School of Halki;

5 (3) urges the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s

1 Theological School of Halki without condition or fur-
2 ther delay; and

3 (4) urges the Government of Turkey to address
4 other longstanding concerns relating to the Ecu-
5 menical Patriarchate.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And as I have stated, there will be—we have already seen there are no amendments, so I now recognize the ranking member for his remarks. And would you like us to proceed with a motion?

Mr. KEATING. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Let us proceed with the motion.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. So all of those who agree with H. Resolution 188, say aye.

And let the record note that Mr. Lowenthal said aye.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Aye.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right.

And all those opposed? All those opposed?

I hear no opposition, so the resolution passes. And without objection, H. Resolution 188, as amended, is ordered to be favorably reported to the full committee, and the staff is directed to make any technical and conforming changes.

Unless someone else has any other business, we are now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:40 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats
Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Chairman**

November 15, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats in Room 2200 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Tuesday, November 19, 2013

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

MARKUP OF: H. Res. 188, Calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay.

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats MARKUP

Day Tuesday Date November 19, 2013 Room 2170

Starting Time 2:00pm Ending Time 2:35pm

Recesses (___ to ___) (___ to ___)

Presiding Member(s)

Mr. Rohrabacher

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Executive (closed) Session

Televised

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Stenographic Record

BILLS FOR MARKUP: (Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)

Markup of H.Res.188, Calling upon the government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the ecumenical patriarchate's theological school of Halki without condition or further delay

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Holding, Rep. Bilirakis, Rep. Lowenthal, Rep. Rohrabacher, Rep. Keating, Rep. Strickland

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: (Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): (Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Yeas</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
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6

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 2:35pm


Subcommittee Staff Director

11/19/13 Foreign Affairs Committee Markup Summary

The Chair called up H.Res. 188 for consideration.

H.Res. 188 (Bilirakis - FL), “Calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay.”

H.Res. 188 was agreed to by voice vote, ordered favorably reported to the Full Committee by unanimous consent.

The Subcommittee adjourned.



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM THE HONORABLE GEORGE HOLDING (NC-
13)**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS

MARKUP OF: H. RES. 188

November 19, 2013

“I thank the Chairman for calling this markup and thank Representative Bilirakis for sponsoring this Resolution.

The Halki Seminary has been shuttered for over forty years and although parcels of land have been returned to the Church, it is far past time that their doors are allowed to be reopened.

H. Res. 188 is a simple and straightforward Resolution and I encourage its passage.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman and I yield back.”