Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2005

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We were disappointed to learn that last month you extended a formal meeting invitation to Mehmet Ali Talat, the so-called president of the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," a government that the United States does not recognize. Although Secretaries of State Baker and Powell have met with leaders of the "TRNC" in the past, neither extended a formal invitation because of concerns for the consequences of such an invitation to an entity the United States does not recognize.

Your invitation and meeting with Mr. Talat is counterproductive to the United States policy of supporting the reunification of Cyprus, the island nation that was forcibly divided by an invasion of Turkish troops over 30 years ago. Your action was inconsistent with one United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution which calls on nations to extend no support to the "TRNC." More dangerously, it emboldens the Turkish Cypriot"government" not to negotiate in good faith for a reunification of Cyprus; it instead encourages a separate status for the occupied area. We believe that ***formal*** dealings with Mr. Talat render our non-recognition policy meaningless.

Since the defeat of the UN's Annan Plan, the Republic of Cyprus has worked to improve the economic situation in the occupied area. The Republic of Cyprus has invested almost $1 billion in aid and assistances to the Turkish Cypriots, including more than $43 million in social insurance, more than $9 million in medical care, and more than $343 million in free electricity. The Republic of Cyprus is also working to bring the two communities together with actions like removing landmines in the cease-fire zone and issuing birth certificates and passports for Turkish Cypriots.

Your unprecedented invitation and meeting with Mr. Talat provided ammunition needed by the "TRNC" leadership and the Turkish government to incite and promote separatist tendencies, rather than promote your intended goal of reunification. In fact, on the day of your meeting, an editorial in the Turkish Daily News said of the meeting: "[T]he United States is acknowledging the fact that there is not one, but two, Cypriot peoples living on the island . . . the United States is declaring that the Turkish Cypriot people on the island have some sort of sovereignty and the right to elect their leader." Likewise, Prime Minister Erdogan said recently: "One state in the north, one state in the south and a confederation . . . this is what [Cyprus President] Papadopoulos should accept, otherwise we cannot reach an

agreement."

While we appreciate your dedication and attention to helping to make a reunified Cyprus a reality, we feel that your actions are inconsistent with United States policy and counterproductive to the policy of reunification. Therefore, we ask that you please explain your long term plan for Cyprus and where you intend to take United States foreign policy with respect to Cyprus.

Sincerely,

Mike Bilirakis

Carolyn B. Maloney

Robert Menendez

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Thaddeus McCotter

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Robert E. Andrews

Vito Fossella

Clay Shaw

Eliot L. Engel

Nita Lowey

Eliot L. Engel

Bobby L. Rush

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Barney Frank

Henry E. Brown, Jr.

[illegible]

John E. Sweeney

Donald M. Payne

Ken Calvert

Sherrod Brown

Marcy Kaptur

Jim Ott

Rush Holt

Grace F. Napolitano

Michael M. Hamm

Jed Strickland

John F. Tierney

Susan A. Davis

Diane E. Watson

Pete Stark

Jim Bradley

Carolyn McCarthy

John Lewis

Chris Van Hollen

Hilda L. Solis

Raúl M. Grijalva

Ed Markey

Jim Moran

Peter J. Visclosky

Michael A. McNulty

Mike McIntyre

John Conyers Jr.

Steven A. Rothman

Charles B. Rangel

Lois Capps

Dennis J. Kucinich

Jim Langevin

Joseph Crowley

Patrick J. Kennedy

Mike Doyle

Shelley Berkley

Bob Filner