



GOVERNMENT OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR



PRESS AND INFORMATION
OFFICE (P.I.O.)

PRESS RELEASE

No. 5

Tuesday, 21/1/2020

Address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus Mr Nicos Anastasiades upon receiving an honorary doctorate from the IDC Herzliya

Dear founder and President of the IDC, Professor Reichman,
Your Beatitude,
Professors and faculty members,
Ambassadors,
Dear Mayors,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear friends,

I am deeply moved to be receiving the Honorary Doctorate from a prestigious academic institution such as IDC Herzliya; this renowned institution which has been instrumental in educating eminent individuals not only in Israel's diverse politico - economic fabric, but also far beyond.

I consider the honour awarded to me today, which I humbly accept, as an honour to the country and people that I represent and as the genuine recognition and appreciation of the long-standing struggles of Cypriot Hellenism for freedom and justice.

At the same time, the presence of each one of you here, is for my delegation, my wife and me personally, a clear endorsement of the prolific merit that the ever - growing partnership between Israel and Cyprus holds.

It is often said that small countries need dedicated allies and very good friends. And while referring to very good friends it would be an omission not to make a special mention to the vision and innovative spirit of individuals that believe in the tangible

value of strengthening the relations of Israel with Cyprus and the geopolitical bridging role our countries can assume in our Eastern Mediterranean region.

Visionary individuals like:

(i) Professor Reichmann, founder of Israel's leading private University, who dares, time and time again, to think and act outside of the box, and who proceeded to set up a brand new innovation and entrepreneurship graduate school in Paphos, the Paphos Innovation Institute;

(ii) Major General Amos Gilad, a key figure in masterminding the close security alliance that our two countries are engaged in,

As well as

(iii) Mayor Fadlon and Mayor Phaedonos who proceeded with twinning the beautiful coastal city of Pafos with the affluent city of Herzliya, known for its robust start - up culture.

But there are so many other true champions of the Cypriot - Israeli friendship in tonight's audience, doctors, academics, diplomats and ambassadors, as well as children born in Cyprus after the Holocaust, all of whom have been instrumental in bringing our countries and peoples closer together, and to whom I convey my personal appreciation.

Experiencing this relationship grow has been for me, personally, a conviction of the heart.

This is even more pertinent if one thinks how the quest of Cypriots and Jews for survival and self – determination was marked by the passage of more than 53,000 holocaust survivors from the British camps in Cyprus after the Second World War.

During those extremely difficult times, the people of Cyprus, including Prodromos Papavasileiou, without any hesitation, embraced Jewish refugees from Europe during the shameful drama of the Holocaust. Once the State of Israel was created, most of the refugees, including two thousand babies born on the island, moved to their homeland.

These events touch upon a key characteristic common to our two peoples: Resilience in the face of adversity, coupled with a unique bond of compassion rooted in the depth of history and our joint commitment for a stable and secure future for our countries, our peoples and our region.

In this regard, I am extremely pleased to attest that Cyprus and Israel have embarked in a new era of partnership.

A new era based on the common vision to substantially and strategically upgrade our relationship in all possible fields of co-operation, especially on energy, security, economy, tourism, research and innovation.

Through capitalizing on the solid foundation of our common values and our historic connections, we have nourished a diverse strategic partnership that has also blossomed into strong bonds between our peoples. It is a partnership that carries profound geopolitical meaning and I am certain that will only grow in the years ahead.

During the course of the last few years we have achieved incredible results. I can trace back to the birth of our trilateral platform with Greece, with the first Trilateral Summit that I had the honor to launch in Nicosia back in January 2016, a Summit with the American Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, in Jerusalem last March, the recent 7th Trilateral Summit in Athens, countless high level meetings, but also an abundance of people – to - people contacts that brings us closer and closer together.

Our dialogue manifests our joint vision to synthesize tangible projects of shared interest, be it in areas of energy, defense, intelligence, crisis management, health, research and technology, innovation, business, tourism, our vibrant diasporas, and of course, as is the case tonight, our acclaimed academia.

And taking this opportunity, I am delighted that one superb example of the fruitful cooperation between Cyprus and Israel is the relationship developed between the Local Authorities of two cities of Cyprus and Israel, Pafos and Herzliya.

The twinned municipalities, via their Mayors Moshe Fadlon and Phaedonas Phaedonos, encouraged and supported the launch of a branch of IDC in Pafos in the context of the Pafos Innovation Institute of which the infrastructure was developed by the Municipality of Pafos with State assistance.

The goal is to develop this high-level, non-profit higher educational institution owned and academically supervised by IDC as a regional hub for the development of innovation and entrepreneurship, but also as a melting pot for bridging people and cultures together.

Likewise, and in view of the World Holocaust Forum to take place in Yad Vashem the day after tomorrow, upon the initiative of my dear friend President Ruviv Rivlin, I ought to specifically mention another important chapter of our partnership: Our united efforts in the struggle against the growing scourge of antisemitism.

In this respect, I am proud to inform that Cyprus has recently adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition on antisemitism and applied for observer membership in IHRA, as evidence of our strong and active commitment in the battle against all forms of antisemitism.

At the same time, we are not only united in combating the evil of anti-Semitism, but we have developed an advanced defence and security cooperation through joint exercises in the fields search and rescue, Special Forces Training, illegal migration, crisis management, and, particularly, in addressing asymmetrical threats.

We have also been very clear and at all fronts that rhetoric that turns against Israel in any way is absolutely deplorable, whilst we clearly condemn attacks and any ballistic missile activity which constitute a threat to the security and territorial integrity of Israel, either by terrorist organizations or by states which support directly or indirectly these organizations.

As neighbors, we are well – aware of the fact that our neighborhood is going through dramatic changes, in which our partnership is deemed crucial. And this is not a cliché. It is a friendship standing tall and firm on our common democratic values, our

joint strategic interests and our shared vision for peace, security, prosperity and stability in our challenging region.

At a time of escalating tensions we proudly uphold what has evolved through the trilateral network that we have developed with Greece: An alliance that generates constructive strategic weight in our region, a region battered with turmoil, asymmetric threats of terrorism, religious extremism and ongoing conflicts.

Establishing reliable synergies that generate stability and security is of critical importance, particularly in view of revisionist ambitions by some of our neighbors and attempts to infringe sovereign rights of independent states, via outrageous, and utterly condemnable, actions which pose a serious threat to the fragile dynamics of our entire region.

You are surely aware that energy has been the triggering pillar of our trilateral positive agenda through the significant discoveries of hydrocarbons in the Levantine basin.

A most recent example of this is the Cyprus – Israel – Greece - Italy synergy via the Levantine energy corridor.

The EastMed pipeline, whose Intergovernmental Agreement was signed a few days ago, is a project of paramount geostrategic value to energy diversification and proves our tangible commitment to anchor peace, security and stability.

Likewise, last week's adoption of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum Charter in Cairo, agreed by Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Italy, together with the endorsement of the Forum by the EU, the US and France as observers, reinforces not only our joint efforts for regional cooperation but also the common pursuit for peace and stability in our neighborhood.

In this context, it is important to stress what we have reiterated many times before: These partnerships are neither exclusive nor excludable, and are open to any stakeholder that would like to participate, as long as it respects and abides the

universally acceptable rules of lawful international engagement, in full respect to the territorial integrity and the exercise of sovereign rights by independent States.

Regrettably, against this background of creating strong shared interests, Turkey continues to act as a “spoiler” by, amongst others, turning to military threats, illegal drilling activities within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus, threats to occupy the fenced-city of Famagusta, and signing an illegal Memorandum of Understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea with Libya.

Actions which have been condemned in the strongest manner by the international community and the EU, since they do not comply with the notion of good neighbourly relations, international law and particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and infringe upon the sovereign rights of third States.

It is tough to digest that Cyprus, after almost 46 years since the violent Turkish invasion, still remains under illegal military occupation by an EU candidate country, a country which aspires to assume an important regional geopolitical role.

A role, nonetheless, which is not consistent with the non-stop display of brinkmanship, bullying and gunboat tactics of coercion in Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone, the Aegean, in Syria, and now in Libya.

These hostile actions, apart from escalating tensions in our volatile neighborhood, have also extremely negative consequences on the prospect of resuming talks on the Cyprus Problem.

Yet, against such negative background, I remain strongly committed in engaging in a new round of negotiations, once conditions permit it, with the aim to reach a lasting, viable and comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus issue, in line with the relevant UN Resolutions international and EU Law.

A settlement that will safeguard the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, ensuring the peaceful co-existence of all Cypriots, Greek and Turkish, without any third country dependencies, military troops and guarantees.

We do hope that Turkey will finally adopt a more realistic and constructive approach; refraining from actions which do not create the necessary conditions of establishing an environment conducive to having productive negotiations on an equal footing.

And we do also hope that Turkish stakeholders will finally acknowledge the overwhelming benefit of becoming part of our regional cooperation agenda and of positively working towards a viable solution to the Cyprus problem which would reunify Cyprus and its people and enhance regional stability.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the people and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus for Israel's principled stance on the Cyprus issue, in condemning Turkey's illegal drilling plans and fully supporting the unhindered exercise by the Republic of its sovereign rights to explore and exploit its natural resources.

I believe I have showcased – to the extent possible and within the time available - a panoramic overview of the compelling reasons that prove why the Cyprus – Israel strategic partnership is here to stay. It is a resilient partnership for our future, as we termed it, and the role of academic synergies in nourishing it, such as the one between IDC and Paphos, is so very important.

While once again thanking you again for today's honour and for this remarkable ceremony, I would like to share a quote from none other but Aristotle, which I believe is reflected in the philosophy of the IDC in empowering the young generation for a better future:

«Those who educate children well are to be honoured more than they who produce them; for the formers only gave them life, the latter's taught them the skills of leading a righteous life ».

I am assured that this quote is the guiding principle of our partnership. I thank you profoundly.

RM/II