

Statement of Julie Fisher
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 30, 2022

Senator Shaheen, thank you for your kind words and for the support that you have shown to my State colleagues and me over many years. I am deeply grateful for your leadership on the range of issues on which I have worked – from NATO to Belarus and now Cyprus.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden’s nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus.

As Ambassador-designate for Belarus and then subsequently as Special Envoy, it was a privilege for me to work closely with the Members and staff of this committee. If given the opportunity to serve as Ambassador to Cyprus, I count on our continued consultation and coordination to advance key priorities in the context of our fundamental commitment to a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

These objectives have defined my career. And in my leadership roles, I’ve sought to build teams with a clear view of our guiding mission: to protect and advance the interests of the American people.

I know firsthand there is no greater responsibility than the safety and security of American citizens. If confirmed, this would be my highest priority. So, in this context, I am committed to continuing our efforts to locate and return home three Americans still missing since the tragic events of 1974.

This Committee knows well that Cyprus sits on a critical seam between the Middle East and Europe. The Republic of Cyprus is a highly valued partner, and our bilateral relationship has deepened significantly in recent years on a range of priorities, from strengthening security in the Eastern Mediterranean to expanding economic and commercial ties.

The results of this cooperation have been most evident in the Republic of Cyprus’ partnership in responding to Russia’s brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Our National Security Strategy highlights Russia’s immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability and calls for transatlantic unity in countering Russia’s threat. The Republic of Cyprus has had a direct impact in holding the Kremlin to account for its war of choice against Ukraine. As a result of this values-based decision, Cyprus has weathered significant economic disruption and despite this, continues to take actions that demonstrate its commitment to stand with Ukraine, including welcoming more than 14,000 Ukrainian refugees this year.

I am pleased to see our bilateral cooperation growing in new and tangible ways. In April, we jointly opened the U.S.-funded, state-of-the-art Cyprus Center for Land, Open-seas, and Port Security to strengthen maritime and border security training across the region. We also signed a Science and Technology Agreement, paving the way for increased scientific collaboration

between our nations. And our shared commitment to combat trafficking in persons is yielding meaningful progress.

Cyprus is an increasingly inviting market for American tech companies, and American firms are leading the development of offshore hydrocarbon resources around the island. These investments will help Cyprus become a critical contributor to Europe's energy security, countering both Russia's weaponization of energy and PRC influence in the region. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that American enterprise and American products are what come to mind when Cypriots look for trusted business partners.

Specifically, with leadership from this committee, Cyprus, Greece, and Israel plus the United States are forging new ground in the "3+1" format to promote regional cooperation on a broad range of pressing issues.

Let me say this regarding the division of Cyprus: the United States remains clear: the status quo is unacceptable. If given the opportunity to serve, I will use the full weight of my office to support Cypriot-led, UN-facilitated efforts to reunify Cyprus as a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality for all Cypriots. I will meet with Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to advance our unwavering commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms and seek their feedback as they work to realize the benefits of reaching the comprehensive settlement which has eluded them for decades. There is no escaping the unjust costs of division that have fallen on all Cypriots.

In a 2014 visit to Cyprus, then-Vice President Biden outlined a vision for a future generation of Cypriots who might grow up without the burden of conflict. This vision can animate new efforts towards a reunified Cyprus, creating meaningful prosperity for all Cypriots and unlocking greater stability in this critical region.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that I am joined today by my husband, Matthew Fisher. I would not be before you without his support over my 27-year career. He has been my chief advisor on bidding, my chief morale officer on tough days, and chief of dinner procurement on late nights. I have been so very lucky to have him in my corner.

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.