

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To promote the United States-Greece defense partnership, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To promote the United States-Greece defense partnership, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “U.S.-Greece Defense
5 and Interparliamentary Partnership Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The United States and Greece are strong
9 allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
10 (NATO) and have deepened their defense relation-

1 ship in recent years in response to growing security
2 challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

3 (2) Greece participates in several NATO mis-
4 sions, including Operation Sea Guardian in the Med-
5 iterranean and NATO's mission in Kosovo.

6 (3) The Eastern Mediterranean Security and
7 Energy Partnership Act (title II of division J of
8 Public Law 116–94), authorized new security assist-
9 ance for Greece and Cyprus, lifted the United States
10 prohibition on arms transfers to Cyprus, and author-
11 ized the establishment of a United States-Eastern
12 Mediterranean Energy Center to facilitate energy co-
13 operation among the United States, Greece, Israel,
14 and Cyprus.

15 (4) The United States has demonstrated its
16 support for the trilateral partnership of Greece,
17 Israel, and Cyprus through joint engagement with
18 Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United States in the
19 “3+1” format.

20 (5) The United States and Greece have held
21 Strategic Dialogue meetings in Athens, Washington
22 D.C., and virtually, and have committed to hold an
23 upcoming Strategic Dialogue session in 2021 in
24 Washington, D.C.

1 (6) In October 2019, the United States and
2 Greece agreed to update the U.S.-Greece Mutual De-
3 fense Cooperation Agreement, and the amended
4 agreement officially entered into force on February
5 13, 2020.

6 (7) The amended Mutual Defense Cooperation
7 Agreement provides for increased joint United
8 States-Greece and NATO activities at Greek military
9 bases and facilities in Larissa, Stefanovikeio,
10 Alexandroupolis, and other parts of central and
11 northern Greece, and allows for infrastructure im-
12 provements at the United States Naval Support Ac-
13 tivity Souda Bay base on Crete.

14 (8) In October 2020, Greek Foreign Minister
15 Nikos Dendias announced that Greece hopes to fur-
16 ther expand the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agree-
17 ment with the United States.

18 (9) The United States Naval Support Activity
19 Souda Bay serves as a critical naval logistics hub for
20 the United States Navy's 6th Fleet.

21 (10) In June 2020, United States Ambassador
22 to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt characterized the impor-
23 tance of Naval Support Activity Souda Bay as "our
24 most important platform for the projection of Amer-
25 ican power into a strategically dynamic Eastern

1 Mediterranean region. From Syria to Libya to the
2 chokepoint of the Black Sea, this is a critically im-
3 portant asset for the United States, as our air force,
4 naval, and other resources are applied to support
5 our Alliance obligations and to help bring peace and
6 stability.”.

7 (11) During a September 2020 visit to Souda
8 Bay, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo an-
9 nounced that the USS Hershel “Woody” Williams,
10 the second of a new class of United States sea-bas-
11 ing ships, will be based out of Souda Bay, the first
12 permanent United States naval deployment at the
13 base.

14 (12) The United States cooperates with the
15 Hellenic Armed Forces at facilities in Larissa,
16 Stefanovikeio, and Alexandroupolis, where the
17 United States Armed Forces conduct training, re-
18 fueling, temporary maintenance, storage, and emer-
19 gency response.

20 (13) The United States has conducted a long-
21 standing International Military Education and
22 Training program with Greece, and the Government
23 of Greece has committed to provide \$3 for every dol-
24 lar invested by the United States in the program.

1 (14) Greece's defense spending in 2020
2 amounted to an estimated 2.68 percent of its gross
3 domestic product (GDP), exceeding NATO's 2 per-
4 cent of GDP benchmark agreed to at the 2014
5 NATO Summit in Wales.

6 (15) In September 2020, Greek Prime Minister
7 Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced plans to modernize
8 all three branches of the Hellenic Armed Forces,
9 which will strengthen Greece's military position in
10 the Eastern Mediterranean.

11 (16) The modernization includes upgrades to
12 the arms of all three branches, including new anti-
13 tank weapons for the Hellenic Army, new heavy-duty
14 torpedoes for the Hellenic Navy, and new guided
15 missiles for the Hellenic Air Force.

16 (17) The Hellenic Navy also plans to upgrade
17 its four MEKO 200HN frigates and purchase four
18 new multirole frigates of an undisclosed type, to be
19 accompanied by 4 MH-60R anti-submarine heli-
20 copters.

21 (18) The Hellenic Air Force plans to upgrade
22 84 of its fleet of F-16 jets to the F-16 Viper vari-
23 ant by 2027 and has expressed interest in partici-
24 pating in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.

1 (19) The United States ejected Turkey from
2 the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program in July
3 2019 as a result of its purchase of the Russian S-
4 400 air defense system. Eight F-35 Joint Strike
5 Fighters were produced for Turkey but never deliv-
6 ered as a result of its ejection from the program.

7 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

8 It is the sense of Congress that—

9 (1) Greece is a pillar of stability in the Eastern
10 Mediterranean region and the United States should
11 remain committed to supporting its security and
12 prosperity;

13 (2) the 3+1 format of cooperation among Cy-
14 prus, Greece, Israel, and the United States has been
15 a successful forum to cooperate on energy issues and
16 should be expanded to include other areas of com-
17 mon concern to the members;

18 (3) the United States should increase and deep-
19 en efforts to partner with and support the mod-
20 ernization of the Greek military;

21 (4) it is in the interests of the United States
22 that Greece continue to transition its military equip-
23 ment away from Russian-produced platforms and
24 weapons systems through the European Recapital-
25 ization Investment Program;

1 (5) the United States Government should con-
2 tinue to deepen strong partnerships with the Greek
3 military, especially in co-development and co-produc-
4 tion opportunities with the Greek Navy;

5 (6) the naval partnership with Greece at Souda
6 Bay and Alexandroupolis is mutually beneficial to
7 the national security of the United States and
8 Greece;

9 (7) the United States should support the sale of
10 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to Greece to include
11 those F-35 aircraft produced for but never delivered
12 to Turkey as a result of Turkey's exclusion from the
13 program due to its purchase of the Russian S-400
14 air defense system;

15 (8) the United States Government should con-
16 tinue to invest in International Military Education
17 and Training (IMET) programs in Greece;

18 (9) the United States Government should sup-
19 port joint maritime security cooperation exercises
20 with Cyprus, Greece, and Israel;

21 (10) in accordance with its legal authorities and
22 project selection criteria, the United States Develop-
23 ment Finance Corporation should support private in-
24 vestment in strategic infrastructure projects in
25 Greece, to include shipyards and ports that con-

1 tribute to the security of the region and Greece's
2 prosperity;

3 (11) the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agree-
4 ment with Greece should be extended and include
5 deepened partnerships at Greek military facilities
6 throughout the country, and, as appropriate and
7 necessary, the United States should partner with
8 Greece in order to increase rotational deployments
9 and presences of forward-based troops at Greek
10 bases;

11 (12) the United States Government should re-
12 store congressionally appropriated military construc-
13 tion funds for construction projects at Naval Sup-
14 port Activity Souda Bay focused on a warehouse
15 storage facility and an airport passenger terminal;
16 and

17 (13) the United States Government should es-
18 tablish the United States-Eastern Mediterranean
19 Energy Center as authorized in the Eastern Medi-
20 terranean Energy and Security Partnership Act of
21 2019.

1 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR EURO-**
2 **PEAN RECAPITALIZATION INCENTIVE PRO-**
3 **GRAM.**

4 There is authorized to be appropriated for the De-
5 partment of State \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years
6 2022 through 2026 for European Recapitalization Incen-
7 tive Program (ERIP) assistance to Greece to assist the
8 country in meeting its defense needs and transitioning
9 away from Russian-produced military equipment.

10 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON LOAN PROGRAM.**

11 It is the sense of Congress that—

12 (1) as appropriate, the United States Govern-
13 ment should provide direct loans to Greece for the
14 procurement of defense articles, defense services,
15 and design and construction services pursuant to the
16 authority of section 23 of the Arms Export Control
17 Act (22 U.S.C. 2763) to support the further devel-
18 opment of Greece's military forces; and

19 (2) such loans should be considered an additive
20 security partnership tool, and not a substitute for
21 European Recapitalization Incentive Program assist-
22 ance.

23 **SEC. 6. EXPEDITED EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLES TRANSFER**
24 **PROGRAM.**

25 (a) IN GENERAL.—During fiscal years 2022 through
26 2026, the delivery of excess defense articles to Greece shall

1 be given the same priority as that given other countries
2 and regions under section 516(c)(2) of the Foreign Assist-
3 ance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2321j(c)(2)).

4 (b) REPORT.—During each fiscal year listed in sub-
5 section (a), the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence
6 of the Secretary of State, shall report not later than Octo-
7 ber 31 to the appropriate congressional committees and
8 the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the
9 House of Representatives on Greece’s defense needs and
10 how the United States will seek to address such needs
11 through transfers of excess defense equipment to Greece
12 for that fiscal year.

13 **SEC. 7. DELIVERY OF F-35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER AIR-**
14 **CRAFT TO GREECE.**

15 The President is authorized to expedite delivery of
16 any future F-35 aircraft once Greece is prepared to move
17 forward with such a purchase on such terms and condi-
18 tions as the President may require. Such transfer shall
19 be submitted to Congress pursuant to the certification re-
20 quirements under section 36 of the Arms Export Control
21 Act (22 U.S.C. 2776).

22 **SEC. 8. IMET COOPERATION WITH GREECE.**

23 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
24 authorized to be appropriated to the Department of State
25 \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026

1 for International Military Education and Training
2 (IMET) assistance for Greece. The assistance shall be
3 made available for the following purposes:

4 (1) Training of future leaders.

5 (2) Fostering a better understanding of the
6 United States.

7 (3) Establishing a rapport between the United
8 States Armed Forces and Greece's military to build
9 partnerships for the future.

10 (4) Enhancement of interoperability and capa-
11 bilities for joint operations.

12 (5) Focusing on professional military education,
13 civilian control of the military, and protection of
14 human rights.

15 **SEC. 9. CYPRUS, GREECE, ISRAEL, AND THE UNITED**
16 **STATES 3+1 INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP.**

17 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a group,
18 to be known as the “Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the
19 United States 3+1 Interparliamentary Group”, to serve
20 as a legislative component to the 3+1 process launched
21 in Jerusalem in March 2019.

22 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and
23 the United States 3+1 Interparliamentary Group shall in-
24 clude a group of not more than 6 United States Senators,
25 to be known as the “United States group”, who shall be

1 appointed jointly by the majority leader and the minority
2 leader of the Senate.

3 (c) MEETINGS.—Not less frequently than once each
4 year, the United States group shall meet with members
5 of the 3+1 group to discuss issues on the agenda of the
6 3+1 deliberations of the Governments of Greece, Israel,
7 Cyprus, and the United States to include maritime secu-
8 rity, defense cooperation, energy initiatives, and coun-
9 tering malign influence efforts by the People’s Republic
10 of China and the Russian Federation.

11 **SEC. 10. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**

12 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
13 mittees” means—

14 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
15 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

16 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
17 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
18 resentatives.