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James O. Goldsborough (Jan 11th) couldn't be more wrong. To personally attack Trustee Kyriakos Tsakopoulos for attempting to right a wrong – Trustee Herbert Carter himself stated that were the program not already in existence he would recommend against it – is not only poor journalism, it is unethical. Further, Mr. Goldsborough's ethnic profiling and innuendo against the Greek American community as a whole crosses the line into racism. According to Goldsborough, who has run afoul of other ethnic and religious groups in the past, he "resigned" from the Union Tribune after the publisher refused to run an article in which Goldsborough sought to expose Bush's "pandering.... (to the Jews)," one cannot oppose SDSU's exchange program in occupied Cyprus, have a Greek last name and not be a member of the all-powerful Greek lobby headed by Mr. Angelo Tsakopoulos. (Were I in Mr. Tsakopoulos' shoes, I'd slap Mr. Goldsborough with a libel suit.) In point of fact, the American Hellenic community brought this matter to Mr. Tsakopoulos' attention and requested his assistance in terminating this injustice.

The fact is that voicesofsandiego.com provides Mr. Goldsborough with a platform for his particular brand of ethnic and religiously inspired hatred. It would do well to follow the example of other publications that have seen fit to make him persona non grata for his racist rants. That said I wish to address the facts, which Mr. Goldsborough utterly neglected.

Mr. Goldsborough erroneously attributes the Greek/Turkish dispute to the time of "the Iliad," and describes the near 60-year membership of Greece and Turkey in NATO as "recent." The 2,700 year old Iliad, predates Turks in the area by more than 1,500 years--there were no Turks

in Anatolia before the 11th century and the first Turkish colony on Cyprus postdates the Venetians' loss of the island to the Ottomans in 1571. Besides lessons in decency and ethics, Mr. Goldsborough would clearly benefit from history lessons.

Historically, there was never a "Turkish part" of Cyprus; that which Mr. Goldsborough alludes to is the part of the Cyprus Republic under illegal occupation since the Turkish military invasions of 1974. Two hundred thousand Greek Cypriots, nearly one third of the island's population, were ethnically cleansed during the invasions and ensuing 32-year occupation by forces seeking to remove all traces of the area's Christian past. That fewer than 500 of the 12,500 Greek Cypriots still in their ancestral homes following the 1974 invasions remain in the occupied area today is the result of systematic harassment, abuse and brutality.

The Turkish military and its puppet regime in occupied Cyprus which supports EMU are guilty of countless human rights violations including murder, rape of women from their teens to their 70's, and oppression and denial of religious and personal freedoms to the few remaining enclaved Christians, as well as support of terrorism, both domestic and international. The First Merchant Bank of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" is still on the State Dept. watch-list for money laundering and support of terrorism. State Dept. sources cite Turkish and Italian reports (Sept. 2001) indicating Osama Bin Laden's use of "TRNC" banks to launder money then used to purchase munitions and support his network of spies and training camps, as well as the transfer by Al Qaeda of more than \$700 million to Muslim insurgents in the Balkans through the "TRNC's" largely unregulated casinos and banks in a six-year period. Additionally, the government of Cyprus is investigating reports cited in "Defense and Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy" (Sept. 2006) of biochemical experimentation by the Turkish military on Greek and Greek Cypriot prisoners of war missing since the invasion.

To elevate the claim of "academic freedom" over the human rights of 200,000 refugees driven from their homes and property by an invading and occupying army is truly Orwellian. Moreover, as stated above, the occupation regime has been proven to serve as a conduit for Al Qaeda. What's next, Mr. Goldsborough, academic freedom for those committing genocide in Darfur?

Citing "support of Matt Bryza of the State Dept." indicates the exchange program's political nature. The university's role to "ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots" through educational exchanges, is in direct violation of UN Resolutions 541 and 550 condemning the secessionist state and calling on members "not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforesaid secessionist entity."

The program in occupied Cyprus takes place at a university which operates on property illegally confiscated from its pre-invasion Greek Cypriot owners, in violation of international treaties and the laws of Cyprus. Participants become unwitting accomplices of the occupiers.

Mr. Goldsborough errs again in stating that the EMU campus was “the best qualified after SDSU faculty members went to the island last year to investigate sites on both parts of the island.” In fact, the exchange agreement with EMU was signed in February 2005. Perhaps the faculty were attracted by the campus’ location in the former Miami Beach of Cyprus?—the personal connection to EMU’s rector not withstanding.

Additionally, as 95% of the students studying at EMU are either Turkish nationals or foreigners transferred to Cyprus illegally from Turkey, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention to which the US is a signatory, clearly EMU is in no way suitable for the program on International Security and Conflict Resolution. Academic freedom does not place SDSU above the law. This program was clearly politically motivated and resulted from the personal relationships between key individuals at both universities.

Former SDSU faculty, Dr. Guven, EMU’s rector, founded Istanbul’s Bahcesehir University while in SDSU’s employ. SDSU President Stephen Weber, served on the Advisory Board of the Bahcesehir University in Istanbul of which Dr. Guven was founding rector. Additionally, Dr. Sinclair, SDSU’s Honors Program Director, who accompanied the students to Cyprus last summer, is married to Dr. Gerald Monk who with Dr. John Winslade (CSU San Bernardino) has pursued bi-communal research in Cyprus for quite a few years. Dr. Monk even admits a preference for alternating summers between his (and Winslade’s) native New Zealand and Cyprus. Is your head spinning yet? Isn’t it lovely that the trio can summer in beautiful Cyprus on the taxpayer’s dime?

Further, if these conflict resolution programs were to yield any benefits, would they not have done so already? Dr. Marco Turk (CSU Dominguez Hills) began work in conflict resolution with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in 1997. In 2002, he published a blueprint for resolution of the Cyprus conflict, the “Oslo Paper,” which collects dust in government offices as well as at the Fulbright office in Nicosia, the United Nations in New York and the PRIO center in Oslo. By his own admission, the participants’ recommendations were ignored by the architects of the Annan Plan. Speaking of which, had Mr. Goldborough bothered to read even a “cliff notes” version of the 9,000 page plan, he would have seen that the plan granted the Turkish side’s every wish while failing to satisfy even the most basic demands of the Greek Cypriots who had no choice

but to overwhelmingly reject it in a democratic referendum.

The participants' contribution to the local economy and the appearance of legitimacy lent by the exchange agreements to the pseudo-state undermine prospects for a solution by contributing to Turkish Cypriot intransigence. While the Turkish Cypriots' needs are being fulfilled, there is no reason to compromise. In fact, the university's exchange program is having the opposite effect of their stated intention. The correct and moral thing to do is relocate the program to a university under the jurisdiction of the Sovereign Republic of Cyprus, the island's only internationally recognized government.

This issue, pursued by people of conscience, not just "wealthy and influential and politically connected Greek Americans" or "Democrats" (Congressman Gary Miller opposes the program), has been totally misrepresented by Mr. Goldsborough's view through the cracked lens of ethnic hatred and innuendo. It is not Mr. Tsakopoulos but Mr. Goldsborough who needs a thorough examination of his ethnic bias and motives.

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On behalf of Hellenic Electronic Center

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC) www.greece.org is a US non-profit organization with 35,000 members worldwide.

<http://www.voiceofsandiego.com/articles/2007/01/11/opinion/01golddsu.txt>

San Diego State's Turkey Trouble

By James O. Goldsborough

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2007 | University boards of education aren't allowed to meddle in academic issues, and for good reason. Unlike elected officials to public school boards, many appointees to the UC and Cal State boards of education are fat cats -- wealthy political campaign contributors who donate to politicians who reward them with board appointments.

Imagine if such appointees could tell professors what to teach.

One board member of the Cal State Board of Trustees doesn't see things that way.

Kyriakos Tsakopoulos, son of one of the wealthiest men in California, is bringing the full force of family money and connections to the Democratic Party, the Greek-American lobby and the Greek government to bear on San Diego State University. The family doesn't like SDSU's exchange program in the Turkish part of Cyprus.

The Cal State Board, which oversees the largest university system in the nation, votes on the matter in two weeks, and Tsakopoulos, an appointee of Gray Davis, is calling in some chits. Son of Angelo Tsakopoulos, the largest individual contributor to the Democratic Party in California, Kyriakos has many friends in high places.

Phil Angelides, to whom Angelo Tsakopoulos was the largest individual contributor last year, didn't win the governor's race, but many of the family friends did win: Nancy Pelosi and John Garamendi, for example. Cruz Bustamante lost his race, but was still on the Cal State Board in November and supported the decision to investigate SDSU's Cyprus program. Sen. Barbara Boxer has weighed in with a letter to Cal State Chancellor Charles B. Reed questioning the

program.

SDSU's exchange program in Cyprus is an academic matter. The California Education Code states: "The California State University shall be entirely independent of all political and sectarian influence and kept free therefrom in the appointment of its Trustees and in the administration of its affairs."

The Greek-American community, the Greek government, the Republic of Cyprus and all of the Tsakopoulos' friends in high places may not like the idea that SDSU has begun a summer program in Turkish Cyprus, but neither their sectarian preferences nor all the money the family gives to Democratic officials can do a thing about it.

Not, that is, unless the Cal State board, at its coming meeting on Jan. 23, takes the unprecedented step of violating the California Education Code and bows to this blatant political blackmail. So who's Tsakopoulos going to give his money to if the board turns him down -- Republicans?

With some 180 overseas exchanges involving some 1,400 students, SDSU's international programs are as comprehensive as those of any American university. The Cyprus affiliation is part of the university's program for International Security and Conflict Resolution and last year sent 26 students for the first summer program at the Eastern Mediterranean University, which happens to be in Turkish Cyprus.

That campus was chosen as the best qualified after SDSU faculty members went to the island last year to investigate sites on both parts of the island. The summer program was a success.

The Greek-Turkish conflict is as old as the Iliad, as old as the battle between Hector and Achilles. More recently, however, the flames have cooled, and Greece and Turkey find themselves partners in NATO. Perhaps, one day, they will be partners in the European Union. Cyprus remains divided, however, largely because the Greek part of the island rejected the 2004 Annan plan for reunification, though the Turkish part accepted it.

The United States recognizes the Republic of Cyprus (the Greek part), and has friendly relations with the Turkish part. There are no restrictions on Americans traveling to either part of the island. The State Department has enthusiastically endorsed SDSU's exchange program. A State Department letter to SDSU states:

"We support the easing of the economic and social isolation of Turkish Cypriots as a way to reduce disparities between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and thereby facilitate reunification of the island. The U.S. government also pursues reunification by encouraging educational and cultural exchanges with members of the Turkish Cypriot community."

At a meeting of the Cal State Board in Long Beach in November, Kyriakos Tsakopoulos first raised the Cyprus issue. Angelo, the patriarch, a big fish in the Greek-American community, is founder of AKT Development, the largest real estate developer in Sacramento. (He is also the man whose company's environmental violations carried all the way to the Supreme Court in 2002, where Justice Anthony Kennedy, of Sacramento and a family friend, recused himself, and Tsakopoulos lost the case.) Bustamante, a lame duck member of the board following his defeat in the Nov. 7 election, backed Tsakopoulos at the meeting, and the board set up a subcommittee to look into it.

At a raucous subcommittee meeting last month with both Greek and Turkish-Americans present, Greek representatives and their lawyers -- including Stuart Eizenstat, a former official of both the Carter and Clinton administrations -- called the SDSU exchange program "illegal and immoral." In a letter to Chancellor Reed, Eizenstat, now a private Washington attorney, compared the situation on Cyprus to apartheid in South Africa, an outrageous charge in view of the State Department's support for Turkish Cypriots and in light of the Greek Cypriot vote rejecting the Annan reunification plan.

Both SDSU students and faculty defended the program at the meeting, and the subcommittee declined to suspend the program. A final decision, however, was put off until the full board meeting, on Jan. 23, giving Tsakopoulos six more weeks' time for his friends to lean on Cal State board members.

Democratic politicians should drop this flimflam before their fingers are further burned. Kyriakos Tsakopoulos is in clear violation of the education code in bringing a personal, political and sectarian issue to the board and using family connections to pressure board members. Imagine a trustee wanted evolution removed from biology class or brought personal bias to bear on the way Middle East history is taught.

The Tsakopoulos aversion to things Turks should be barred from the classroom.

James O. Goldsborough has written on foreign affairs for four decades, both from the United States and abroad, where he worked as a foreign correspondent for The New York Herald Tribune, International Herald Tribune and Newsweek magazine for 14 years, reporting from more than 40 countries. Visit his website [here](#). Submit a letter to the editor [here](#).