

LATE TESTIMONY

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GOVERNOR

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Statement of
Richard C. Lim
Interim Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 2, 2010

10:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 312

in consideration of
HCR 37 / HR 30

RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, ACADEMIC, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Chair Awana, Vice Chair Hashem and Committee members:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HCR 37 and HR 30, which seeks to recognize the cultural, educational, academic, political, and economic relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Republic of Turkey.

An active relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Republic of Turkey could result in increased educational and cultural exchange, and has the potential to create trade opportunities for Hawaii-based companies and organizations and reinforce the State of Hawaii's role as a major force for global commerce and diplomatic relations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

LATE TESTIMONY

Revised

Testimony of George Casen

March 2, 2011

Hawaii State Legislature

House Committee - International Affairs

Karen L. Awana, Chair

Mark J. Hashem, Vice-Chair

This pertains to the wording of resolution HR 30 and HCR 37.

Improving relations between the State of Hawaii and nations such as the Republic of Turkey is a worthwhile goal. The wording of HR 30 and HCR 37, however, does not accurately depict the current state of affairs in Turkey relating to freedom, democracy and human rights, nor tolerance regarding secular and religious issues.

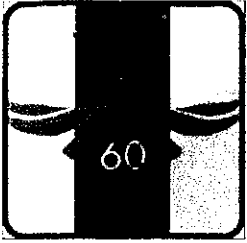
I suggest that the first two statements in these two resolutions be stricken or amended.

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code restricts freedom of speech. Turkey's most internationally read novelist, Orhan Pamuk, and many others have been arrested under this code.

The Kurdish minority in Turkey has been seriously discriminated against. Open discussion of the fate of the once numerous Anatolian Greeks and Armenians is severely restricted.

Turkey has a long history of discriminating against minorities. Turkey imposed a high restrictive tax in the 1940s specifically against its minorities, Jews and Christians. The Alevi Moslem sect has also been discriminated against. There have been recent murders of Catholic priests, Turkish Christians and journalists in Turkey. These cases languish in the Turkish courts without being resolved.

My family history focuses my concern upon this issue. My great-grandfather was a member of the Ottoman Parliament and his son, my grandfather, was a city councilman. It is recorded that they had excellent relations with the Sublime Porte. They were executed in 1915 for no other reason than their religious and ethnic identity.



Human Rights

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Turkey's article 301

By Nikolaj Nielsen

Wednesday, March 11 5:21 am EST

In an effort to silence the press and drown out media criticism, Turkey's government imposes its controversial Article 301 measure. Any journalist or editor who "insults" or "criticizes" the state could face a year in prison. Prison sentences were initially three years but Turkey agreed to reduce sentences after pressure from the European Commission.

Turkey, who wants to join the EU, is known for its hostile treatment of the press. Their prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has denounced media and called on the Turkish people to boycott newspapers. The International Press Institute (IPI) is lobbying EU Commission leaders to pressure Turkey's reforms and hopes any EU expansion project will consider press freedoms as a prerequisite.

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LATE TESTIMONY

TESTIFIER: Ali Altunkaya
TITLE, ORGANIZATION: Honolulu Representative, Pacifica Institute
COMMITTEE: House International Affairs Committee
HEARING DATE: Wednesday, March 02, 2011
HEARING TIME: 10:30 a.m.
MEASURE NUMBER: HCR 37 / HR 30
REQUESTED COPIES: 4

I support the House for recognizing the cultural, educational, academic, political, and economic relations between the people of Hawaii and the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey and Hawaii share a unique feature, being a bridge between the East and West on the other sides of the world, which makes them a cradle for many civilizations. Rich and diverse culture of both Hawaii and Turkey make it possible to have mutual understanding and beneficial relations between the people of Hawaii and Turkey. I hope that the close friendship and cultural exchange between the people of Hawaii and Turkey will be the seeds of the emergence of relations in other areas, such as educational, academic, economic and political relations.

Every journey starts with one small step, so I strongly support the House for recognizing the cultural, educational, academic, political, and economic relations between the people of Hawaii and the Republic of Turkey.