



GUSBILIRAKIS

Representing the 12th District Florida

Dear Ms. Lazarou,

Thank you for contacting me to share your thoughts regarding the ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I appreciate hearing from you.

As a Greek-American, I have always felt a special kinship to the Armenian people. As you know, I am co-Vice-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, which works to strengthen US-Armenia relations and to raise the level of economic and strategic cooperation between the United States, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabakh.

For over thirty years, Armenia and Azerbaijan have engaged in a lengthy and violent territorial dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Although the region's ethnic majority population is Armenian, and in spite of its vote for independence, Nagorno-Karabakh still remains within the borders of Azerbaijan. Despite the ceasefire which ended the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1994, clashes between the two nations have continued to occur. On September 27, Azerbaijan launched a premeditated offensive in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. As the fighting has continued, it has become apparent that Turkey has been backing up Azerbaijani forces. This is no surprise given Turkey's history of antipathy towards the Armenian people. Turkey's involvement is not only appalling, but it violates international sovereignty. It is shameful and needs to end immediately.

Turkey's military adventurism has already left Syria and Libya in shambles, and its intervention in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is completely unacceptable. Azerbaijan needs to cease its operations immediately. That is why I joined a bipartisan resolution, H.Res. 1165, to condemn Azerbaijan's military operations in the region and denounce Turkish interference in the conflict. I am also thankful for the Trump Administration's statements calling for an immediate ceasefire. With our partners in Europe, I believe we can not only put serious pressure on Turkey to withdraw from the region but also find a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

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While these matters generally fall within the jurisdiction of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which I am not a member, you can rest assured knowing that I will continue to monitor this situation closely. I will also share your thoughts with my colleagues. I am certain they will benefit from your views.

Sincerely,

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress