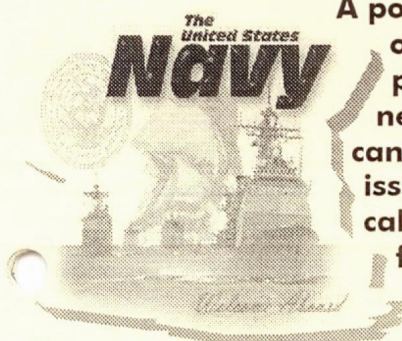


# United States Navy Ship Visits to Cyprus

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A port visit by a U.S. Navy ship in Cyprus is the most tangible testimony of the strong friendly relations between the United States and Cyprus. To fully appreciate the importance of a U.S. Navy ship visit we need to understand how the U.S. Navy operates as it differs significantly from other navies. The U.S. Navy is more sensitive to security issues, hospitality offered by the host nation and standards of logistical support. As such a visit by a U.S. Navy ship requires a big effort from the government, local authorities, contractors and local people in order to be successful.

The U.S. Navy makes courtesy visits only to countries where it feels welcome. In Cyprus the media regularly give the impression that the purpose of the ship visits is military operations and requirements. This might be true for navy ships of other countries calling to Cyprus but at present it does not apply to U.S. Navy ships. So far the only purpose of U.S. Navy ships visiting Cyprus is simply to express the gratitude of the U.S. government to the people of Cyprus for their friendship and support. It is of course normal that while in port they will make the most of it in terms of maintenance and crew liberty.

It is important that we realize that the U.S. Navy does not need our ports for its operations. There are nearby Naval Stations / Bases in Turkey and Greece where these functions can be fulfilled. For example Greece has offered unconditional use of Naval Station Souda in Crete for use by the U.S. Navy. In fact this Naval Base has now been upgraded to such an extent that today is considered the safest Naval Base in the Mediterranean. The Base is protected by Patriot antiballistic missiles from attacks on U.S. Navy ships by Iraqi or even Libyan missiles and there are shore as well as sea patrols by U.S. Marines 24 hours a day. Using Naval Bases in Greece, Turkey, Israel, Italy, France and Spain the U.S. Navy can keep the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet at sea for months without having to send its combat ships in port. Auxiliary ships load supplies and fuel at the Naval Bases and then replenish the combat ships at sea even while under way.

In the case of Cyprus a visit by a U.S. Navy ship also adds security and substance to Cyprus's entity, besides the bonding of the two countries' relations. In addition to the political benefits it is estimated that a routine visit by a small U.S. Navy ship with 500 crewmembers enriches the Cyprus economy by about US\$300,000 in port disbursements but mostly in crew entertainment. This figure grows exponentially as the number of crewmembers increases. The U.S. Navy / government always pays for all the services provided to it and is always very grateful for the support and assistance extended to it. There is a strict code of practice that does not allow the acceptance of any gifts or services for free.

Upon a ship's departure the captain will prepare a detailed report outlining every thing that took place during the visit. The report is circulated to the Commander of the European Forces, the Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, to Intelligence Agencies of the U.S. government and to all ships in the Fleet.

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## Meeting with H.E. Mr. Nicos Rolandis



On December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2002 the President of CyABA Mr. Kyriacos Kokkinos and representatives of the Board of Directors met with the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Mr. Nicos Rolandis, for the purpose of further enhancing cooperation with the Ministry, better serving the Associations and the Ministry's mutual interests for an improved Cyprus economy and increase trade opportunities between Cyprus and the United States.

During the meeting it was discussed and agreed that CyABA will, among its other activities, organize two major events in the first half of 2003 and kindly welcomed and thanked the Minister for his willingness to help and contribute in their success. The two events will be in the following topics:

1. The economic implications of a solution to the Cyprus problem
2. Corporate Governance in Cyprus businesses landscape

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If anything negative is noted like insufficient security, local hostility, bar fights, lack of police protection etc. it is taken into account for the future policy of the U.S. Navy and government towards Cyprus.

It is for all these reasons that our neighboring countries are so keen on attracting U.S. Navy ship visits that sometimes even compete with each other as to who will have the most. We are aware of many cases where U.S. Navy ships changed their port of call from one country to another only a few hours before arrival because of government intervention. Of course this is more evident when ships that play a more significant role in the U.S. Navy are involved.

So far in Cyprus we had visits by Amphibious Assault ships, Cruisers, Destroyers, Frigates, Auxiliary Ships and Submarines. However, only relatively small size ships of each type have visited us. Although, we in Cyprus would benefit politically more than any of our neighboring countries i.e. Israel, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, by U.S. Navy ship visits, unfortunately we are not doing much to encourage more ship visits in our country. On the contrary we are under the illusion that we are doing the U.S. Navy a big favor by allowing them to use our ports. therefore sit and wait for the U.S. Navy to ask for our permission to visit us whereas it should be the other way around i.e. we should extend an open invitation so that they feel free and welcome to visit us at any time they wish to do so, like true friends would do.

It must be obvious from the above that if we, the people of Cyprus, and the government wish to strengthen our relationship with the United States then we need to do a lot more. The government should start by encouraging the U.S. Navy / government to send more, bigger and more significant ships to Cyprus not only for courtesy visits but for operational support as well. The mayor of the port town should welcome the ships and provide hospitality and assistance. Government officials and MPs must also make their presence by participating and organizing social events during ship visits.

The comparative advantage of Cyprus lies mainly in its geographic position. In military terms this is translated to "Strategic Position". We have to make use of our position for political and financial reasons. Sooner or later we will start looking for new ways to expand the economy of Cyprus, which is beginning to show signs of stagnation and we will realize that the provision of military services to interested countries can be a very good source of foreign exchange.

We need to make up our minds and act promptly as our neighbors are already ahead of us. Middle solutions and strategies do not get us anywhere.

