ANCIENT COIN COLLECTORS GUILD, et al.,

v.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Civil No. 07-2074 (RJL)

Exhibit E

UNCLASSIFIED

Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute

CA3

Cultural Property Advisory Committee
Department of State
Fax: 001(202) 453-8803

RELEASED IN FULL

January 3, 2007

Re: a proposal to extend the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus Concerning the Imposition of Import Restrictions on Pre-Classical and Classical Archaeological Objects and Byzantine Period Ecclesiastical and Ritual Ethnological Material.

Dear Sir/madam:

I am the director of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI), which has been located in Nicosia Cyprus since 1978. We are a private American based research institute, the only international historical/archaeological research center on the island. As the Director of CAARI, I have many contacts in the archaeological communities of both sections of Cyprus and can speak with personal knowledge of the issues involved.

I am writing to support the proposal to extend the emergency import restrictions on Cypriot cultural heritage material. The physical remains of Cyprus' cultural heritage remain under assault. The following examples are just a few of the more recent incidents, illustrative of the continuing problems on Cyprus.

In the areas under de facto control of the Government of Cyprus, looting remains a problem.

- I have been reliably informed by members of the archeological community, who have discovered direct evidence of looting in the past three years at the following archaeological sites:
  - from the site of Dhenia, a huge bronze and iron age cemetery site extending across the UN buffer zone west of Nicosia.
  - And from the cemetery site of Souskiou *Laona*, a chalcolithic site west of Limassol

- On December 25th 2006 the Greek Cypriot press reported looting from a newly identified underwater archaeological site. Since its discovery 3 months ago, numerous Hellenistic amphorae (3rd c. BC) have disappeared from the wreck site.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK TUMMINIA
DATE/CASE ID: 26 JUN 2008 200704168

UNCLASSIFIED

- A beautiful classical sarcophagus decorated with scenes in low relief from the works of Homer (both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) was discovered in April 2006 during road construction outside of Kouklia, ancient Palepaphos, the site of a famous temple of Aphrodite. When the archaeologists from the Department of Antiquities arrived at the tomb, only the sarcophagus was there. Any archaeologist will tell you that no ancient burial from this time consisted of just a beautiful sarcophagus. There was no evidence of ancient grave robbing in the chamber containing the sarcophagus either. Undoubtedly other burial goods, more easily transported, were taken in the hours between the actual discovery of the tomb and the arrival of the competent authorities.

Sites in the north of Cyprus, where the Government of Cyprus does not have de facto control, also had problems with looting.

- According to the statistics provided to me by individuals in the north, in 2004, (the first year the US emergency import restrictions were in place) the northern police confiscated more than 200 archaeological and ecclesiastical objects including coins and an icon) that had been illegally obtained from sites or monuments.

- I personally noticed carved stone blocks from a medieval church had disappeared from the storage area at the site of Enkomi between visits during t he summer of 2006.

- One individual in 2005 brought to my office in Nicosia Late Bronze age ceramic sherds from Enkomi that an acquaintance of his had taken from the site

- The United Nations Police commander informed me last Spring (2006) that patrols in the buffer zone have caught individuals from the north at night within the area of the site of Dhenia carrying shovels and flashlights, obviously intending to loot the cemetery site.

The Government of Cyprus has aggressively tried to eliminate the illegal trade in antiquities by improved customs inspections, increased passive protection at known sites (fencing etc.), educating the public , and requiring all private collections to be registered on the island.

Why should the United States help Cyprus? From my perspective as an American in Nicosia, it is in our own self interest as American scholars to help the government of Cyprus protect the cultural heritage of Cyprus. The Government of Cyprus has been very accommodating to American scholars over the years. I have conducted archaeological research in a number of countries that border the eastern Mediterranean. Based on my 20+ years of experience, I can categorically

state that Cyprus provides the most open environment in the entire region for American archaeological and historical research. Since Cypriot independence in 1960, some 150 field projects have occurred in Cyprus. Nearly 25% have been American led or sponsored. Only the local Cypriot archaeologists have been more active. This remains the story today. In 2006, out of 20 active archaeological projects, more than 1/3 were American directed. In contrast, in Greece, only 3 American teams are allowed to conduct active field research during the course of a single year.

The maintenance of the emergency restrictions is clearly in the interest of the American scholarly community. It is also in the political interest of the United States to support the efforts of the Cypriots of all communities to safe-guard their heritage from looting and illegal excavation. It is one of the ways that we as Americans can express our gratitude for the generations of generosity and hospitality shown by the people of Cyprus to American scholars

Thank you for allowing me to comment as a private American citizen on this issue.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Davis, Ph.D.
Director
Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute

11 Andreas Demitriou
1066 Nicosia Cyprus
Tel. (357) 22456414
Fax (357) 22671147
www.caari.org

email: director@caari.org.cy
admin@caari.org.cy
librarian@cari.org.cy