



Production Begins on Cyprus Documentary; Island Nation a Forgotten Key to Mideast Peace

March 28, 2007 – Production has begun on a new documentary about a mostly forgotten linchpin of Middle East peace – the divided island of Cyprus.

Cyprus – a Mediterranean island nation divided 32 years ago by a Turkish invasion – holds a key to the solution of the War on Terrorism and the unrest in the Middle East. Largely forgotten except as perhaps a vacation spot or an evacuation site in the Israeli-Lebanese war of 2006, Cyprus continues to inflame the relationship of Greece and Turkey. It thereby limits Turkey’s chances for membership in the European Union. That membership could establish Turkey as a key player in this part of the world, but without resolution – and specifically without U.S. involvement – this festering problem will continue to be a thorn in the side of peace in a region where the U.S. desperately needs help and stability.

Cyprus: Still Divided is being produced for national distribution in Fall 2007 by Veras Communications, Inc. (VCI) and presented on public TV by WTVS Detroit Public Television (DPTV). The documentary will seek real solutions and show the continued unrest and human suffering of those that were uprooted from their ancestral homes on both sides of the island.

As production continues, interview excerpts and blogging will be available at www.cyprusdivided.com. In addition to the documentary, a separate discussion representing a variety of expert viewpoints will be taped and made available for public television stations.

“Since the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 by Turkey, Cyprus and its capital city, Nicosia, have been divided by barbed wire and armed occupation forces,” notes executive producer George Veras. “Today, the south is a vibrant democracy and a valued member of the European Union, while the north is an impoverished and unrecognized non-state controlled by 40,000 Turkish troops. After three decades of behind-the-scenes talks with no resolution, this issue has disappeared from the American consciousness, but it is well known as a major problem in the world diplomatic community. It is time to put the spotlight back on Cyprus as a way to break the log jam.”

“We will examine elements of history such as why the United States and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger did not push for removal of Turkish troops when the crisis erupted in 1974 and bring the story to the present, looking at why 40,000 Turkish troops remain. This is not about Turkey vs. Cyprus, but rather why after more than three decades the issue remains unresolved and now, how it is undermining U.S. efforts in the Middle East.”

About the Producer**George Veras, Veras Communications, Inc.**

After 20 years working for ABC and CBS, President George Veras founded Veras Communications (VCI) in 1994. VCI has written, produced and directed full-length documentaries appearing on PBS, The History Channel, A&E, ESPN Classic, and NFL Films, among others.

Veras was the Supervising Producer for NBC's High Definition telecasts for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens Greece, producing over 100 hours of original programming, for which Veras won his 12th National Sports Emmy.

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About Detroit Public Television

WTVS Detroit Public Television is the community-owned PBS member station serving Southeast Michigan with a vision to educate, entertain and inspire, in partnership with the community it serves. Its award-winning national productions and presentations to public television have included "Canada: True North," "Mahler's Beethoven," "The Sphinx Competition: Breaking the Sound Barrier," and "Afghanistan: Captives of the Warlords." Detroit Public Television is also known for successful PBS fundraising programs such as the Daniel O'Donnell music specials, "Jerry Baker's Gardening Marathon," "Riverdance" and many others.

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