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**A "HIC RHODUS, HIC SALTA" CHALLENGE: MAKE THE REPUBLIC OF
CYPRUS A "MAJOR NON- NATO ALLY" OF THE UNITED STATES**

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There is NATO, known to all, with 32 members.

There is also the NATO "Partnership for Peace", known to most, with 18 members.

There are also the NATO "Partners", which many know about, with more than 40 members.

And there are also the "Major Non-NATO Allies" ("MNNA"), privileged allies of the U.S. that few know about. These MNNA are 20. But membership in this US privileged club may vary because the U.S. President retains the right to cancel the status of any MNNA.

In order for a state to join the first three of the above categories, the consent of all 32 NATO members is needed. In other words, Turkey retains the right of veto. But in the fourth category, as MNNA, the decision is purely American. The initiative for the designation of a state as MNNA lies institutionally with the US Secretary of Défense, i.e., the Pentagon. It is the global strategic needs of the Pentagon that such a designation is supposed to serve. Still because such a decision has serious international implications, the US Secretary of State must give his approval. Additionally, Congress must also consent to a relevant proposal by the American President for such designation. But so long as the Pentagon takes the decision, the rest of the steps follow routinely. However, the US President reserves the right to revoke a state's membership as a MNNA, after a relevant decision by the Pentagon.

The decision to create the MNNA was taken in 1987 by Congress with the adoption of relevant legislation (Sam Num Amendment) and strengthened by a relevant amendment in 1996 (Section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961). Sam Nun, has been one of the most accomplished Senators and for years served as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Forces.

Of the 20 member countries, four come from our region: they are Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Israel. The latest country to join is Kenya. Kenya became independent in 1963 and still remains a non-aligned country. In May 2024 its President, William Ruto, became the first African leader in 15 years to officially visit the White House. On the occasion of the official visit, Kenya was designated by President Biden as a MNNA. The Pentagon had initiated the process with the approval of the Secretary of State.

Reproduced below is President Biden's designation proposal to Congress for Kenya's designation as MNNA. The President's proposed is self-explanatory:

"To the Congress of the United States, Pursuant to section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2321k), I am giving notice of my intention to designate Kenya as a "Major Non-NATO Ally".

I make this designation in recognition of Kenya's longstanding contribution to the United States Africa Command area of responsibility and globally and in recognition of our own national interest in deepening our bilateral defense and security cooperation with the Government of Kenya. Kenya is one of the United States government's leading counterterrorism and security partners in sub-Saharan Africa, and the designation will demonstrate that the United States views Africa's contributions to global peace and security as equal to those of the Major Allies us outside NATO in other areas. I appreciate Congress's support of this proposal."

President Joseph Biden

White House May 23, 2024

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/message-the-congress-the-intent-designate-kenya-major-non-nato-ally>

What are the benefits for a state designated as a US MNNA?

I quote a relevant announcement from the website of the US Department of State:
<https://www.state.gov/major-non-nato-ally-status/>

"Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status is a designation under US law that provides foreign partners with certain benefits in the areas of defense trade and security cooperation. The Major Non-NATO Ally designation is a powerful a symbol of the close relationship the United States shares with these countries and demonstrates our deep respect for friendship with the countries it extends to. While MNNA status provides military and economic privileges, it does not entail any security commitment to the designated country.

Benefits arising from MNNA membership pursuant to 22 U.S.C.

* Eligible for loans of hardware, supplies, or equipment for cooperative research, development, testing, or evaluation purposes.

* Eligible as a location for US-owned War Reserve stocks to be placed on its territory outside of US military installations.

- * May enter into agreements with the United States for the cooperative provision of education on a bilateral or multilateral basis if the financial arrangements are reciprocal and provide for reimbursement of all direct US costs.
 - * Eligible, to the maximum extent possible, for priority delivery of surplus military material transferred pursuant to Section 516 of the Foreign Assistance Act (if located in NATO's South or Southeast Wing).
 - * Eligible to purchase depleted uranium ammunition.
 - * Privileges arising from the MNNA designation under 10 U.S.C.
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- * Possibility of concluding a Memorandum of Understanding or other formal agreement with the US Department of Defense. For the purpose of conducting cooperative research and development projects in defense equipment and ammunition.
 - * Allows companies in an MNNA, as with NATO countries, to bid on contracts for the maintenance, repair, or overhaul of US Department of Defense equipment outside the United States.
 - * Authorises funding for the procurement of explosive detection devices and other counterterrorism research and development projects under the auspices of the Department of State's Technical Support."

From the above statement, the following is worth underlining: "The Major Non-NATO Ally designation is a powerful symbol of the close relationship the United States shares with these countries and demonstrates our deep respect for the friendship of the countries in which expands".

In light of recent high-profile developments in defense relations between Nicosia and Washington, including the inaugural Cyprus-US Strategic Dialogue held in Nicosia, which culminated in a Joint Statement issued on 23 October 2024 (<https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-first-strategic-dialogue-between-the-republic-of-cyprus-and-the-united-states-of-america/>), and the signing of bilateral agreements such as the U.S. - ROC Road Map for Bilateral Defense Cooperation (it must be emphasized that these initiatives have predominantly, if not exclusively, been spearheaded by the Pentagon), Nicosia and Washington are presented with a significant strategic opportunity: to take the next logical step and secure the designation of Cyprus as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA).

More specifically, President Christodoulides, Foreign Minister Kombos, and separately, US Ambassador Ms. Fisher, along with officials from the US Departments of State, and Defense, are presented with a "hic Rhodus, hic salta" challenge. What success it would be if a forthcoming visit to the White House by President Christodoulides is crowned with an announcement by the US President designating the Republic of Cyprus as a "Major Non-NATO Ally" of the United States.