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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write regarding the clear and growing transnational threat posed by white nationalist terrorism, as exemplified most recently by the horrific terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand and last fall by the shocking and ghastly attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh. The perpetrator of the horrific massacre in New Zealand is part of a wider, international movement built on a hateful and extremist ideology. In the same way that Islamist terrorists have looked to figures in al-Qaeda and the Islamic State for inspiration, the terrorist responsible for the attacks in Christchurch drew on the extremist ideas and actions of white nationalists like the Norwegian terrorist responsible for killing almost eighty people in 2011. White nationalist attacks have occurred in other countries as well, including Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In fact, the United Kingdom designated the neo-Nazi National Action group as a terrorist organization in 2016.

The New Zealand attacker also declared in his own manifesto to have read the writings of the terrorist who was responsible for the attack at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. White nationalist terrorism clearly draws on international ideologies and networks of like-minded individuals and thus is not simply a domestic danger for the United States. In short, this is a serious and growing international problem that demands international solutions. Just as with Islamist terrorism, we must target white nationalist terrorism, and the networks and ideologies which underpin it, globally in order to safeguard the United States, our allies, and our interests.

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March 28, 2019
Page Two

I request a briefing within two weeks of your receipt of this letter from senior officials in the Bureaus of Counterterrorism and Intelligence and Research that provides the State Department's assessment of the global threat from white nationalist terrorism, including its potential to inspire or otherwise abet attacks around the world, including the United States. As part of this briefing, I also would like an update of current State Department efforts to counter white nationalist terrorism globally and how these efforts will be enhanced. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about the sharing of information with allies regarding the white nationalism terrorism threat, and best practices for countering it. In addition, I would like an assessment of how the Department will adapt or expand existing programs or create new ones to address the global threat from white nationalist terrorism and its ideology without hampering current efforts to combat the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, or other threats to the United States.

In addition to this briefing, I formally request that the State Department use the authority granted under Executive Order 13224 to designate the perpetrator of the New Zealand attack as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, as well as to develop a list of other potential white nationalist terrorist individuals or organizations who might meet the threshold for designation.

White nationalist terrorism threatens the United States domestically and internationally, and I think we all understand that our country cannot sit by while another attack like the ones in Pittsburgh, Charleston, New Zealand, and Norway leaves more victims in its wake. Now is the time to combat this scourge with a multifaceted approach – one which includes a global component in which the State Department must be a key player.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your urgent response.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL

Chairman

House Foreign Affairs Committee