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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](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

October 15, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our deep concern about the conduct of the Government of the Republic of Turkey over the course of the last several years and the Administration's consistent failure to hold President Erdogan sufficiently accountable for such conduct. Though Turkey is an important NATO ally, that status cannot and should not excuse it from criticism by other member states – especially the United States leadership of NATO's pursuit of collective security *and* its support for democracy around the world. If Turkey is to remain a valuable contributing member of the Alliance, it is imperative that the Administration end its acquiescence in President Erdogan's assaults on democracy and aggression throughout the region. The Administration must take the necessary steps to hold President Erdogan accountable – including by enforcing laws requiring sanctions.

President Erdogan's anti-democratic behavior demonstrates a disregard for the U.S.- Turkish bilateral relationship and jeopardizes NATO security, while his attacks on human rights and the rule of law erode Turkey's democratic foundations. He has politicized Turkey's judicial system and harshly punishes the citizens of Turkey for exercising their rights to free speech and a free press, and has even targeted U.S. consulate and embassy employees like Metin Topuz, who was sentenced to nearly nine years in prison with no credible evidence to support the charges against him. As we are sure you will recall, Erdogan's aggression reached the streets of D.C. where he unleashed his bodyguards to violently attack peaceful protestors in our nation's capital.

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Yet, the Administration's responses to these and other provocations since 2016 have been shamefully muted and give implicit support to autocratic behavior.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, President Erdogan continues to court conflict with other U.S. allies and partners in the region, especially Greece, Cyprus, and Israel – including by most recently announcing his intention to violate United Nations Resolutions and longstanding policy toward for Cyprus by opening a beach in Varosha, Cyprus, an action which sets back the possibility of reunification negotiations and undermines intercommunal relations. He and the Turkish government have also given quarter and lent support to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, and reports suggest that he is granting as many as a dozen Hamas operatives with Turkish citizenship and passports. Turkey further threatens stability in the region by targeting ethnic minorities across the Middle East, particularly Kurdish communities in Syria and ethnic Yazidi and Kurdish communities in Northern Iraq – attacks which have claimed the lives of Iraqi government officials. President Erdogan's government's actions have also contravened the United Nations arms embargo on Libya and are contributing to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In another display of President Erdogan's failure to be a constructive ally of the West, he purchased the S-400 air defense system from the Russian Federation, which severely threatens U.S. and NATO security interests. This rightfully led to the termination of Turkey's participation in the F-35 consortium. For months, Congress supported the Administration's efforts to urge President Erdogan to change course and accept the offer to purchase the U.S. PATRIOT missile defense system in lieu of the S-400. However, since Erdogan has refused to do so, Congress has widely rebuked Turkey through public statements and the near unanimous bipartisan passage of H.R. 4695, which classifies Turkey's S-400 purchase as a significant transaction under CAATSA and passage of a similar provision in the House version of the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act. After months of delay and bipartisan outreach from Members of Congress, it is long past time that the Administration enforce the law.

We genuinely hope that the United States and Turkey can once again enjoy a close relationship built on mutual security interests, commitment to NATO, and shared democratic values. However, overlooking President Erdogan's aggression and anti-democratic behavior only serves to delay that result. We urge this Administration to increase pressure on Ankara , including through use of legally-required sanctions, to roll back Turkey's aggressive behavior in the Eastern Mediterranean, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Nagorno-Karabakh; pressure it to give up its S-400 air defense system; and stand up for the democratic rights and freedoms of the Turkish people and U.S. government employees being threatened every day by Erdogan's regime. Sadly, after nearly four years of accommodation from President Trump and more than two years from

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the Department under your leadership, we fear that the next administration will have to work even harder to steer Turkey back toward a more NATO-aligned democratic path.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman



WILLIAM R. KEATING  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia,  
and the Environment