



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary of State
for European and Eurasian Affairs*

Washington, D.C. 20520

Nick Larigakis
President
American Hellenic Institute
1220 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Nick:

Thank you for your June 25 letter regarding Turkey's posture in the Eastern Mediterranean. I am responding on behalf of Secretary Pompeo.

This Administration continues to view Greece as a pillar of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, and we look forward to more growth in the already outstanding bilateral relations between the United States and Greece. The Department continues high-level engagement with the Republic of Cyprus as a critical partner for promoting stability in the region, and we have broken new ground in the bilateral security relationship since the 2018 signing of the Statement of Intent to deepen bilateral security ties. For example, Secretary Pompeo announced July 8 that the Department of State intends to provide International Military Education and Training funding to the Republic of Cyprus beginning in FY 2021. Despite the challenges in our bilateral relations, Turkey remains an important NATO Ally, and we will continue working with Turkey on areas of mutual interest and addressing issues of mutual concern.

As you know, the United States views the Eastern Mediterranean as an important strategic space and our policy is to compete for positive influence against our great power competitors in the region. The Administration is deeply concerned with heightened tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, in particular between NATO Allies Greece and Turkey. These tensions complicate NATO's efforts to present a united front in the face of Russia's destabilizing activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and pose a risk of unintended escalation. Our objective is to support Allied unity in NATO, de-escalate tensions, and ensure that lines of communication remain open. We have conveyed to Turkey repeatedly that its overflights of Greek territory, its drilling activities in the waters off Cyprus, its signing of a maritime delimitation MOU with Libya, and its stated intent to explore for hydrocarbons on the basis of that MOU are provocative, unhelpful, and raise tensions in the region.

The Administration continues to object strenuously to Turkey's S-400 purchase. Our suspension and pending removal of Turkey from the F-35 program in response to the S-400 acquisition signals the seriousness of the Administration's approach to this issue and our willingness to impose consequences. We are deeply concerned with reports that Turkey is continuing its efforts to bring the S-400 into operation, and we have stressed that the S-400 issue remains a major

obstacle in the bilateral relationship and at NATO. We are confident that President Erdogan and his senior officials understand our position.

Our sanctions on Turkish individuals and entities following Turkey's October 2019 incursion into northeast Syria laid the groundwork for a negotiated ceasefire that remains in place. Secretary Pompeo takes his responsibilities under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) seriously and fully intends to comply with the law. The Department cannot pre-judge sanctions decisions or preview a timeline for a determination specific to this transaction. The Administration always considers the importance of maintaining CAATSA's credibility as a deterrent for Russian arms sales around the world during sanctions deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philip T. Reeker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip T. Reeker, Ambassador
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs