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June 25, 2020

Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), I write to reiterate our grave concern about Turkey's demonstrated willingness to cause instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and the broader region to the detriment of U.S. interests. Our concern lies in understanding Turkey's habits during times of crisis or major distraction. The international community is responding and managing a global pandemic, and the United States, in addition, is experiencing social unrest.

In our March 23, 2020 letter to you, we contended Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would seek to instigate instability and disruption in the Eastern Mediterranean toward Greece and Cyprus as well as other partners in the region as a means to "export" Turkey's domestic problems abroad. To date, we have seen no evidence to the contrary.

Through rhetoric and acts, Turkey's behavior is alarming.

To demonstrate, we have provided an addendum that provides examples of Turkey's provocations since January 2020. All but two of the examples provided have occurred since our March letter with a significant uptick during June. Furthermore, since the beginning of the year, Turkey continues to violate Greece's airspace and territorial waters, piling on to 2019's reported 4,813 Hellenic airspace violations, including 384 mock dogfights; and 2,150 maritime incidents.

- Turkey violates Arms Export Control Act (AECA) each time it orders U.S.-supplied F-16s into Greek airspace because the condition under which Turkey received the F-16s is that they be used only for "legitimate self-defense." No one, not even Turkey, alleges that Greece has provoked the F-16 sorties. Turkey also violates international law when its F-16s enter Greek airspace.

Each of the acts presented in the addendum, from the Turkey-Libya MoU, to threats to the sovereignties and exclusive economic zones of Greece and Cyprus, to Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 missile defense system, must be seen within the context of the Blue Homeland doctrine which President Erdogan has espoused. The doctrine holds that Turkey will assert its own version, lawful or not, of its sovereign rights in the sea and land of the area using any means at its disposal, including military means. The doctrine derives from the religio-nationalism ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. The doctrine's objective is to establish Turkey as the primary hegemon in the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and the Balkans with President Erdogan as the Muslim leader of this hegemony. The doctrine and its objective are directly antithetical to the interest of the U.S. and NATO.

There is no longer any point in placing Turkey within the Morgenthau-Kissinger context in which nations pursue their rational economic and political self-interests. In this context, the major powers can influence the behavior of nations such as Turkey using the method of offering benefits for good behavior and penalties for bad behavior. This method is no longer effective. Turkey does not operate within this context. All available sanctions, whether CAATSA, AECA, or economic, must be imposed on Turkey not to influence its behavior, but to neutralize and contain its actions under the Blue Homeland doctrine. Given U.S.-Turkey relations from 1954 when it joined NATO, it is counter-intuitive to conceive of Turkey as an adversary. However, this is the result of policies which President Erdogan has chosen under the Blue Homeland doctrine.

And President Erdogan's top diplomats are delivering the incendiary rhetoric to complement and lead to the implementation of the doctrine:

- Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said, "Let them try," adding, "No one will dare stop our drill ships... if they want an escalation, we will respond," in response to a question about how Turkey would respond to Greece's efforts to prevent Turkey's exploratory drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean under the Memorandum of Understanding Ankara signed with the Libyan government.<sup>1</sup>
- "We say what we do, and we do what we say," Ambassador of Turkey to Greece Burak Özügergin said when asked if permits would be issued to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation conducting research under the Turkey-Libya MoU.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ekathimerini.com/253941/article/ekathimerini/news/turkish-fm-accuses-athens-of-shirking-dialogue>

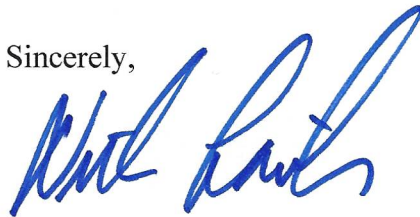
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ekathimerini.com/253920/article/ekathimerini/news/in-interview-envoy-says-ankaras-plans-to-proceed>



In January, we applauded your statement made on two occasions to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis that the United States will “keep supporting [Greece’s] prosperity, your security, and your democracy.” We strongly contend Turkey’s acts of aggression threaten Greece’s security and prosperity, and we believe now is the time for the United States to back that statement.

Therefore, the United States must have a more active presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and be more forthright and proactive with Turkey to safeguard U.S. interests and to avoid a potential crisis. A constructive step would be for the Administration to support H.R.4694, bipartisan legislation that would require a comprehensive assessment of the U.S.-Turkey relationship. The United States must make it clear to Turkey that it cease and desist with its provocative behavior against NATO ally Greece and strategic partner, Republic of Cyprus, or face consequences that would include opposition to any future foreign assistance. The United States also must be prepared to implement such measures as are necessary to properly diffuse these elevated tensions instigated by one party only—Turkey. Otherwise, we caution that the United States will have to react to another crisis similar to what occurred in 1974 when we also witnessed a major distraction impacting the United States of which Turkey took advantage.

Sincerely,



Nick Larigakis  
President

CC: Vice President Mike Pence  
Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense  
Philip T. Reeker, Acting Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State  
Matthew A. Palmer, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European & Eurasian Affairs, & Special Representative for the Western Balkans  
Maria Olson, Director of the Office of Southern European Affairs, Department of State  
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Isabelle Chan, Cyprus Desk Officer, Department of State  
The Congress