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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 17, 2019

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

Secretary Pompeo:

I understand from press reports that U.S. Ambassador William Taylor is being recalled from his post prior to your planned visit to Kyiv next month. Recalling an ambassador and intentionally leaving a critical post vacant during a visit from the Secretary of State is highly irregular and perhaps unprecedented. I am concerned about the lack of Embassy leadership Ambassador Taylor's absence would create at a time when Ukraine continues to face military aggression from Russia and looks to the United States in promoting its democratic reform process. Moreover, I am extremely concerned that this suspect decision furthers the President's inappropriate and unacceptable linking of U.S. policy to Ukraine to his personal and political benefit, and potentially your own.

This action, coming on the heels of your refusal over months to issue any statement of support for career non-partisan diplomats in the face of unfounded attacks is deeply concerning. Ambassador Taylor has given decades of service to our nation in the name of national security, including multiple postings abroad and serving in the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, for which he received a bronze star. In addition, removing Ambassador Taylor early calls into question the assurances that your own deputies have given me that individuals who testify before the House will not be subject to reprisal for their actions.

Given Ambassador Taylor's stellar leadership shown throughout his tenure in Kyiv, his presence in meetings with Ukrainian officials would benefit U.S. policy goals in the country. Further, you and the American people would benefit from his institutional knowledge and counsel during your expected interactions with President Zelensky's administration. Your joint appearances with the Ambassador in Kyiv would also send a strong message of solidarity to our professional diplomatic service at a time when morale is historically low. By unceremoniously recalling Ambassador Taylor early, in a manner similar to Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch's removal, you would once again denigrate the role of our frontline diplomats serving around the world.

Particularly at a time when our relationship with Ukraine is under heightened scrutiny, I urge you to immediately reconsider this decision and maintain Bill Taylor in Kyiv during the course of your visit.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member