

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

In advance of your meeting with Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias tomorrow in Vienna, we are writing with grave concern regarding Turkey's provocative actions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Earlier this week, Turkey sent naval vessels to accompany a drilling ship into Greece's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to survey waters for oil and gas exploration. Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu has said that Ankara would issue new seismic exploration and drilling licenses by the end of August.

As you have previously stated, the United States "will not allow anyone, Turkey, to make unlawful drilling" and "we have told Turkey that actions in international waters are unacceptable and we will take diplomatic initiatives so that all actions that are to be taken are lawful." In accordance with your prior statements, we ask you to call on Turkey to remove its ships from Greece's EEZ and to resolve this matter in accordance with international law.

Second, we ask that you immediately begin to work with the European Union on a coordinated response to Turkey's increasing provocations and illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The European Union has already imposed an entry ban and asset freeze on two Turkish energy executives and France recently deployed ships to the Eastern Mediterranean. The United States and the European Union should immediately develop a plan of comprehensive joint sanctions that would be imposed on key sectors of the Turkish economy if Turkey continues to pursue illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and refuses to resolve these matters through an impartial international tribunal.

Third, we reiterate our insistence that the administration follow the law and impose sanctions on Turkey under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (P.L. 115-44). Under President Erdogan, Turkey has shirked its international obligations and moved away from the NATO Alliance. The administration's failure to impose sanctions on Turkey for its purchase of the S-400, in accordance with the law, has emboldened President Erdogan's aggression across the Eastern Mediterranean and throughout the Middle East.

The failure of the United States to act decisively at this critical time will only invite further Turkish escalation. Therefore, we urge you take all appropriate measures to ensure Turkey removes its naval vessels from Greece's EEZ and adheres to its international obligations.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator