

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2020

Hon. Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Hon. Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper:

We are deeply concerned by Turkey's ongoing acts of aggression taken in the sovereign territories of Greece and Cyprus that have led to heightened tensions between several North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members. We urge you to immediately condemn these actions, reaffirm the rights of these countries to develop their hydrocarbon resources, and reassert American leadership in the Eastern Mediterranean by halting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's confrontational tactics.

Greece, Cyprus, and other important U.S. trade partners in the region have a longstanding and enduring relationship in the Eastern Mediterranean. This has led to strong regional cooperation that has led to the discovery and development of important energy resources in the Mediterranean Sea over the last decade. Most countries directly affected by these new discoveries have used diplomacy to settle disagreements. Unfortunately, this has not been the case with the Republic of Turkey.

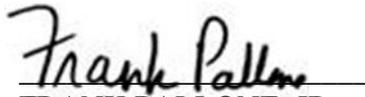
Since 2017, Turkey has consistently attempted to expand claims on hydrocarbon resources that are clearly within Greek and Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). It has done so by greatly intensifying its military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, leading to the destabilization of the region and heightened tensions between NATO members that has resulted in several near misses between Turkish and Greek, Cypriot, and French navies. As recently as this week, Turkey sent the Oruc Reis seismic exploration ship and several warships into Greece's EEZ. The Greek Navy, with support from the French military, responded immediately to this breach of its sovereign territory with an appropriate show of force.

Turkey's alarming unilateral actions in the Eastern Mediterranean – along with the myriad acts of aggression the Erdogan regime is taking throughout the Middle East and Eurasia – will continue unabated until the United States takes clear, decisive steps to oppose them. The United States cannot stand by as important trade partners, allies, and friends like Greece and Cyprus endure consistent harassment from the Erdogan regime.

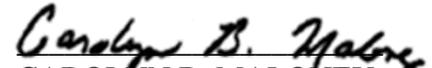
We urge you to condemn the aggressive actions taken by Turkey in the region, work with our regional partners to de-escalate the current situation and show that the United States will not allow this reckless behavior to continue.

We look forward to hearing your immediate response to this issue.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress


GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

/s/
BRIAN FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress

/s/
JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

/s/
CHRIS PAPPAS
Member of Congress

/s/
DINA TITUS
Member of Congress

/s/
JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress

/s/
GRACE MENG
Member of Congress

/s/
BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress

/s/
JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

/s/
ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

/s/
TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

/s/
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

/s/
JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress

/s/
DAVID N. CICILLINE
Member of Congress