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December 2, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

I am writing to you concerning reports of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) role in the Trump Administration's concerning relationship with Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹ According to the *New York Times*, DHS received requests from the White House to investigate Fethullah Gülen, a permanent U.S. resident and critic of President Erdoğan, "and look for ways to perhaps force him out of the United States."² This report is particularly alarming given my ongoing investigation of whether President Trump's personal conflicts of interest drove him to personally interfere in U.S. policy in favor of Erdoğan.³

President Erdoğan blames Mr. Gülen for an attempted coup in 2016, without producing public evidence for the claim. President Erdoğan has also called Mr. Gülen a terrorist and has repeatedly sought his extradition.⁴

Reportedly, the White House's request to DHS to remove Mr. Gülen was related to others made by the White House aimed at blocking federal funding to charter schools associated with Mr. Gülen, and efforts to end a criminal investigation of Halkbank.⁵ This pattern of interventions is particularly troubling given that former National Security Adviser John R. Bolton publically detailed concerns that President Trump was granting personal favors to President Erdoğan.⁶

¹ *Turkish Bank Case Showed Erdogan's Influence With Trump*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/us/politics/trump-erdogan-halkbank.html>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*; *Wyden Launches Investigation Into Halkbank Scandal*, Press Release, Oct. 24, 2019; <https://www.finance.senate.gov/ranking-members-news/wyden-launches-investigation-into-halkbank-scandal>.

⁴ *Turkish Bank Case Showed Erdogan's Influence With Trump*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/us/politics/trump-erdogan-halkbank.html>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ JOHN BOLTON, *THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENED* 412 (2020) ("Barr said he was very worried about the appearances Trump was creating, especially his remarks on Halkbank to Erdogan in Buenos Aires at the G20 meeting, what he said to Xi Jinping on ZTE, and other exchanges").

These policy interventions, which would likely advance Turkish interests, coincide with President Trump's pardon of his former National Security Advisor, Michael T. Flynn.⁷ Mr. Flynn pleaded guilty to lying about his work on behalf of the Turkish government in 2016, including on election day.⁸

These circumstances reinforce my concern that the Trump Administration's policy on Turkey, and in this instance the treatment of a permanent U.S. resident, may be driven by the personal interests of U.S. and foreign leaders rather than the interests of the American people. I intend to investigate this disturbing possibility. To assist this investigation I ask that you provide the following information:

1. Has DHS, either on its own initiative or by request, ever considered or taken any action to force, encourage, persuade or otherwise influence Mr. Gülen to leave the United States?
2. Did President Trump, his agents, or White House personnel, ever instruct or suggest that DHS take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen? If so, when and what was DHS asked to do? Did any such request raise any concerns about undue influence by President Trump in the matter? Please provide all records related to any such efforts, including any communications with White House officials related to Mr. Gülen.
3. If President Trump, his agents, or White House personnel, instructed or suggested DHS take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen, what basis, if any, was cited for the instruction or suggestion?
4. If President Trump, or someone at his direction, instructed or suggested DHS take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen, did DHS examine whether it had the legal authority to do so? If so, what did DHS conclude, and with whom was this analysis shared? Please provide all records related to any such legal analysis.
5. In general, does DHS have the legal authority to "look for ways to perhaps force [a permanent U.S. resident] out of the United States"⁹ solely on the basis of a request from the President, or someone acting at the President's direction, that cites no legal authority?

⁷ *Statement from the Press Secretary Regarding Executive Grant of Clemency for General Michael T. Flynn*, Nov. 25, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-regarding-executive-grant-clemency-general-michael-t-flynn/>.

⁸ *United States of America v. Michael T. Flynn*, 1:17-cr-00232-RC (D.D.C. 2019), Statement of the Offense at 5, <https://www.justice.gov/file/1015126/download>, ("In the FARA filings, FLYNN made materially false statements and omissions, including by falsely stating that (a) FIG did not know whether or the extent to which the Republic of Turkey was involved in the Turkey project, (b) the Turkey project was focused on improving U.S. business organizations' confidence regarding doing business in Turkey, and (c) an op-ed by FLYNN published in The Hill on November 8, 2016, was written at his own initiative; and by omitting that officials from the Republic of Turkey provided supervision and direction over the Turkey project.").

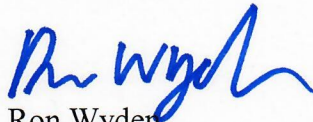
⁹ *Turkish Bank Case Showed Erdogan's Influence With Trump*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/us/politics/trump-erdogan-halkbank.html>.

6. Identify any meetings or conversations you or any other senior DHS officials have held with any senior Turkish officials since you joined DHS, identify the participants in those conversations and meetings, and the nature of those discussions including whether or not they included Gülen.
7. Please provide all Department of Homeland Security documents related to Mr. Gülen since 2016, including, but not limited to, documents responsive to these questions.

Please provide answers to these questions no later than December 16, 2020.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member