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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

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December 02, 2020

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Attorney General Barr and Director Wray:

I am writing to you concerning reports of Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) involvement with the Trump Administration's concerning relationship with Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. According to the *New York Times*, the FBI 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."¹ 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.²

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.³

Reportedly, the request to the FBI 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

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.*; *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>.

³ *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>.

efforts to end a criminal investigation of Halkbank.⁴ 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, and Mr. Bolton reports that Attorney General Barr shared his concerns about “the appearance” that President Trump’s actions created.⁵

These policy interventions, which would likely advance Turkish interests, coincide with President Trump’s pardon of his former National Security Advisor, Michael T. Flynn.⁶ Mr. Flynn pleaded guilty to lying about his work on behalf of the Turkish government in 2016, including on election day.⁷

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 President Trump 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. Did President Trump, his agents, or White House personnel, ever instruct or suggest that the FBI, or another element of DOJ, take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen? If so, when and what were you asked to do? Did any such request raise any concerns about undue influence by President Trump in the matter? Please provide all records relevant to this item.
2. If President Trump, his agents, or White House personnel, instructed or suggested that the FBI, or another element of DOJ, take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen, what basis, if any, was cited for the suggestion or request?
3. If President Trump, his agents, or White House personnel, instructed or suggested the FBI, or another element of DOJ, take any action with regard to Mr. Gülen, did DOJ examine whether it had the legal authority to do so? If so, what did DOJ conclude, and with whom was this analysis shared? Please provide all records relevant to this item.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ 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”).

⁶ *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/>.

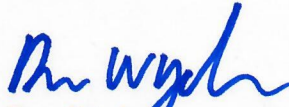
⁷ *United States of America v. Michael T. Flynn*, 1:17-cr-00232-RC (D.D.C 2019), Statement of the Offense at 5, <https://www.justice.gov/file/1015126/download>, (“In the FARA filings, FLYNN made materially false statements and omissions, including by falsely stating that (a) FIG did not know whether 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.”).

4. In general, does the FBI, or any element of DOJ, have the legal authority to “look for ways to perhaps force [a permanent U.S. resident] out of the United States”⁸ solely on the basis of a request from the President, or someone acting at the President’s direction?
5. Identify any meetings or conversations you or any other senior DOJ officials have held with any senior Turkish officials since your confirmation, identify the participants in those conversations and meetings, and the nature of those discussions including whether or not they discussed Gülen. Please provide all records relevant to this item.
6. As you are aware, the Committee is currently conducting an investigation of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane investigation. Please provide any relevant documents related to Michael Flynn, the Flynn Intel Group, Fethullah Gülen, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, or the Republic of Turkey that have not already been produced to the Committee.

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

⁸ *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>.