

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

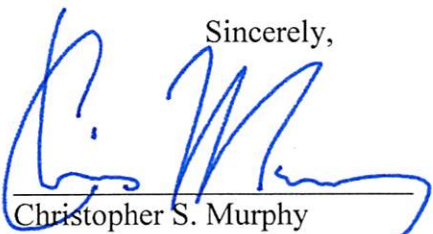
We write today to express our concern regarding the apparent involvement of members of the Turkish security detail accompanying President Recep Erdogan and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in a violent altercation outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, D.C. on May 16. Nine people were hospitalized—one in serious condition—due to the violence. If true, this is the second time in little more than a year that members of Turkish diplomatic security have intervened violently against protestors and members of the media in the United States. This is not acceptable.

Videos and witness accounts of the altercation indicate men dressed in dark suits and wearing earpieces assaulted political protestors gathered outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence. Press reports, including one by Turkey's official news agency, indicate that these men were members of President Erdogan's security detail who had accompanied him to the Ambassador's residence. If accurate, those individuals acted well outside of what is acceptable behavior by a professional security detail, especially that of a 65-year NATO ally.

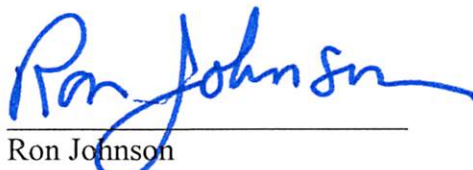
If these were Turkish diplomatic security guards, their actions demonstrate a pattern of indefensible behavior. In March 2016, members of President Erdogan's detail behaved in a similarly heavy-handed fashion outside the Brookings Institution as Erdogan gave a speech. The Brookings Institution reported that, "Erdogan's security detail behaved unacceptably – they roughed up protesters outside the building and tried to drag away 'undesired' journalists."

We urge you to work expeditiously with the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department to identify the perpetrators of this assault and to determine whether members of President Erdogan and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's security detail were involved. If their participation is confirmed, those responsible should be held accountable under applicable U.S. law. We look forward to working with you to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



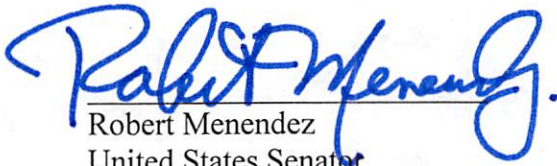
Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



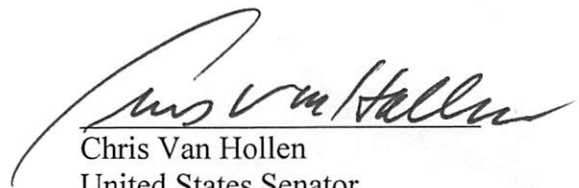
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



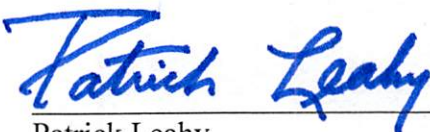
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



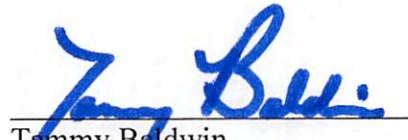
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



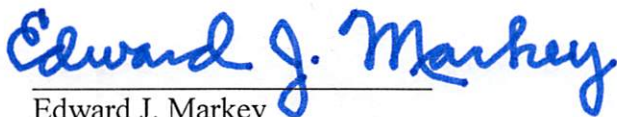
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



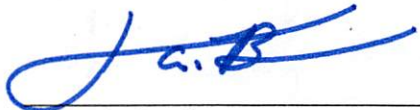
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator

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