

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

120 HUYSHOPE AVENUE
SUITE 401
HARTFORD, CT 06106
(860) 549-8463

<http://murphy.senate.gov>

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

I write to you today to inquire about ties between the Libyan National Army leader Khalifa Haftar and the PMC Wagner (also known as the Wagner Group), and whether those ties could trigger mandatory CAATSA sanctions pursuant to Section 231, which mandates secondary sanctions on those who conduct significant transactions with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. I note the State Department added PMC Wagner to the 231(e) list “regarding the defense sector of the Government of the Russian Federation” subject to CAATSA sanctions on September 20, 2018.

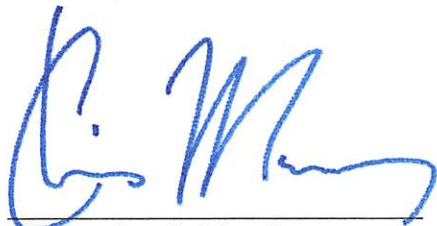
In testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, AFRICOM Commander Stephen Townsend confirmed that as the United States continues to support the United Nations action plan to resolve the crisis in Libya, Russia and Turkey are weighing in heavily on opposing sides. His testimony asserts that Russia’s “private military companies (PMCs), such as the Wagner Group with strong links to the Kremlin, are leading the fight for the self-styled ‘Libyan National Army’ against the UN-backed and U.S.-recognized Government of National Accord.” According to recent reports, more than one thousand Russian soldiers employed by PMC Wagner are now present in Libya, providing Haftar with logistical support and artillery as well as operating military drones. The head of PMC Wagner, Yevgeny Prigozhin, was pictured alongside top Russian defense officials in a meeting with Haftar in Libya last year. More than 100 mercenaries from PMC Wagner arrived at a forward base in Libya in the first week of September to support Haftar’s assault on the capital Tripoli, and as many as 35 of these mercenaries have reportedly been killed in action. As Commander Townsend testified, their deployment has prompted Turkey to deploy troops and hardware to Libya in an attempt to counter the Russian PMCs, which “risks a significant escalation, as both Russia and Turkey are attempting to tip the scales in their favor.”

Russia’s direct military involvement is a game-changing dynamic in the Libyan conflict, with the potential to significantly undermine American interests. Rather than contribute to international diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, Russia’s significant financial and military support for one faction in the Libyan civil war is guaranteed to further destabilize the country, trigger further armed support from Turkey to the other side of the conflict, harm large numbers of civilians and fuel the migrant crisis. In the longer term, Putin is clearly angling for access to oil and military

bases on the Mediterranean in a resource-rich country at the gateway to Africa and on NATO's southern flank. Recognizing these risks, I request a comprehensive summary of our diplomatic efforts to counter Russian influence in Libya and a detailed analysis, in classified or unclassified form, on the relationship between Khalifa Haftar and PMC Wagner.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and our continued dialogue on holding Russia accountable for its malign influence efforts and military aggression in Libya.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Murphy', written over a horizontal line.

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator