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Grace Meng

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October 7, 2019

The Honorable Mike R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

I write to you regarding the recent announcement by the White House that it would be withdrawing from northeastern Syria. Should the Administration follow through with these plans, this would pose a serious threat to the security of critical regional allies, including the Kurds, and put our victories against ISIS at risk.

In March of this year, when you testified before the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, I asked you: "How will the U.S. retreating [from Syria] affect Iran's presence [in the region]?" You responded, "Well, we're not retreating." Although news reports and other official statements had reported otherwise, you definitively claimed that the U.S. was not drawing down its presence in Syria and refused to outline a cohesive plan for the region in that hearing.

The lack of a coherent strategy in Syria not only puts the lives of our allies at risk, but fails to address key national security concerns. As evident by the White House statement last night, this Administration continues to create a false separation between its fight against ISIS and a broader Syria strategy that restricts President Assad, without acknowledging that these factors are inextricably linked.

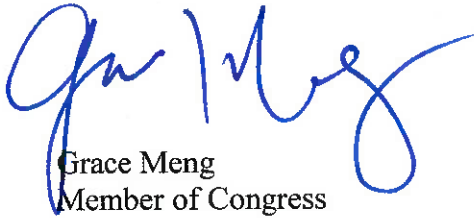
The consequences of your Administration's reckless and haphazard Syria policy are becoming increasingly apparent. The Kurds have fought shoulder to shoulder beside U.S. servicemembers in our fight against ISIS and have risked their lives for our mutual security. Now their lives are at risk as a result of this betrayal by the White House. Without a strategy, the people of Syria, too, continue to suffer at the hands of President Bashar al-Assad's war crimes, while he faces no consequences.

Make no mistake – Turkey is not our friend. Beyond President Erdogan's disregard of human rights within his own borders, Turkey has contravened its obligations as a NATO member in an effort to forge closer alliances with Russia. Handing over regional security to Turkey would not

just be irresponsible, it would betray our regional allies and put our broader national security priorities at risk.

I urge you to immediately reverse this decision to withdraw from northeast Syria, fight to protect the Kurds who fought alongside our servicemembers, and present a long-term Syria strategy to Congress. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary of Defense Mark Esper