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**COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 21, 2016

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

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We are writing to express our grave concerns regarding the recent authoritarian and anti-Western activities undertaken by the Turkish government in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016.

The United States government has rightly condemned the violent putsch, and joined the international community in calling for the Turkish government to fully respect the rule of law in its efforts to bring those involved in the coup to trial. However, it is with great distress we note that following the coup the actions of the government of Turkey, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have been dangerously unrestrained and threaten to unravel Turkish democracy.

As you know, the government in Ankara has suspended the European Convention on Human Rights, declared a State of Emergency, and launched an unprecedented crackdown on so-called "dissidents" from all walks of life, first and foremost the alleged supporters of the opposition "Hizmet" movement led by Fethullah Gülen, who was immediately declared responsible for the plot.

Since July 15, over 72,000 people have been detained and 32,000 have been arrested primarily based upon tenuous social ties to the Hizmet movement. Furthermore, over 100,000 public servants - including prosecutors, judges, mayors, teachers, and military personnel - have been purged from their positions with no right to appeal. Additionally, the Turkish authorities forcibly closed 150 critical media outlets and have imprisoned 133 journalists, making Turkey the world's leader in jailed journalists. On top of this, the government has confiscated more than \$15 billion in assets belonging to independent media outlets and businesses without any form of due process.

The United States cannot stand idly by while a crucial NATO ally slips into authoritarianism and destabilization. It is imperative that Turkey remains a strong, democratic ally who is able to stand with the United States against the threats posed by a Middle East facing unprecedented instability which terrorist organizations, such as ISIL

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and Al-Qaeda, have exploited to grow their influence. The Turkish government must be urged to immediately end the State of Emergency which it has exploited as a carte-blanche to undermine the Turkish Constitution and rule of international law. Likewise, the credible allegations of torture being brought to light by internationally renowned human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as the repeated violations of individuals' right to a fair trial, must be investigated by the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

In addition, the United States must not ignore the Turkish government's decision to curtail the right of its citizens to travel freely by arbitrarily revoking the passports of alleged dissidents and subjecting Turkish nationals with dual-citizenship to undue extra scrutiny while traveling to and from the country. Most importantly, Turkish government officials must be sternly rebuked for suggesting any sort of United States role in the attempted coup. The continued stoking of anti-American sentiments over government controlled media by Turkish officials is causing profound detriment to the half-century old alliance between the United States and Turkey.

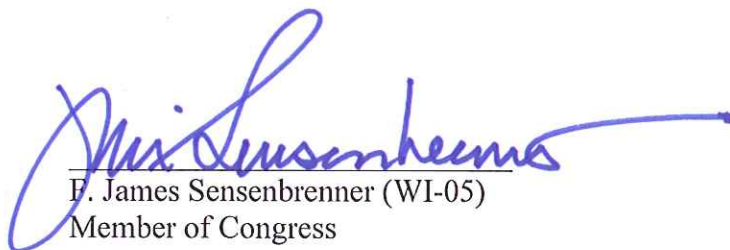
Turkey has long been an important ally whose location at the crossroads of the world has imparted tremendous geo-strategic benefits to the United States. However, if the Turkish government's descent into authoritarianism continues, then the United States will quickly find itself without a reliable partner for advancing political, security, and economic progress in the region. Should the curtailing of democratic principles and freedoms continue unabated in Turkey, we will witness yet another failure of democracy in a Muslim majority nation which would be a dramatic loss, not only for the United States, but for mankind.

In light of all the facts that have been presented, we strongly urge you to show the utmost care and effort in encouraging the government of Turkey to change course and to abide by its constitutional and international commitments to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. As a strategic ally to the United States in the Middle East, and a vital member of NATO, we cannot afford to let Turkish democracy crumble. Therefore, we request that you call upon the Turkish government to cease its undemocratic activities and to fully reinstate the democratic processes which are enshrined in its constitution.

Sincerely,



Bill Johnson (OH-06)
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner (WI-05)
Member of Congress