

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We write to express our grave concerns about the horrifically vicious attacks that appeared to be carried out last week by members of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's security detail against individuals engaged in legal, peaceful, protest on U.S. soil in the heart of our nation's capital.

We condemn these thuggish attacks, which occurred under the watchful eye of President Erdoğan himself, as a direct offense against all Americans and the rights, values, and freedoms that underlie the very foundation of American democracy. The right to peaceably assemble and exercise free speech, even when that speech expresses views with which one may disagree, are American values that are proudly enshrined in the First Amendment of our Constitution. These brutal attacks that led to the hospitalization of peaceful protesters are tantamount to an assault on those core pillars of our republic.

President Erdoğan has consolidated extraordinary power in the executive branch, conducted intimidation campaigns against the Turkish press, suppressed the independence and authority of the judiciary, and arrested members of the opposition, among other anti-democratic measures. However, to sanction such an assault within the United States while a guest of our government is beyond egregious and contrary to all international and diplomatic norms.

In light of these actions, we call on you, as our country's top diplomat, to personally condemn the actions of President Erdoğan's security personnel in the strongest possible manner through both public and official diplomatic channels. We also request that you work in partnership with the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department to support a thorough review of the events that transpired that day and hold to account the security personnel who escalated the conflict to its violent conclusion.

We stand ready to support you in this endeavor, and thank you for your attention to this serious issue.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress