

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to you expressing our strong opposition to your announcement that the Administration will lift existing sanctions imposed on Turkey under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Besides the legal limitations on your authority on this issue, we are perplexed by what you believe justifies this potential action. Since these sanctions were imposed in 2020, President Erdoğan and the Turkish government have taken no steps to address the justification for the imposition of sanctions in the first place: the purchase of the Russian S-400 system. In addition, Erdogan has continued to provoke our democratic allies, undermine regional stability, and support U.S. adversaries and their proxies – including Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). In the absence of any reasonable explanation justifying this, allowing Turkey back into the F-35 program without substantial concessions raises serious questions about your Administration's personal dealings with the Turkish government.

Despite your claim that President Erdoğan “has been a good ally,”¹ nothing can be further from the truth. Not only have Erdoğan and his regime threatened the territorial integrity of several U.S. allies, it has already illegally deployed F-16s to occupied Cyprus which we believe is a violation of U.S. law.² Turkey has also consistently and unabashedly maintained close ties with our adversaries for years. In 2020, during your first term, CAATSA sanctions were imposed on Turkey after Erdoğan deliberately procured the S-400, Russia's most advanced surface to air missile system. Back then, and to this day, Congress has made it perfectly clear: Erdoğan's acquisition of the Russian-made weapons system is a clear security threat to the United States – putting our proprietary technology at risk.

Erdoğan has made no attempt to hide his cozy relationship with our adversaries, including Iran and Russia. Despite sanctions on those countries, Turkey maintains significant economic and

¹ Firstpost, *Trump: "Turkey Has Been a Great Ally for Us"* | Firstpost News, YouTube (July 8, 2026), <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9srlxL4VkcK>

² Lena Argiri, *Turkey's F-16 Move in Occupied Northern Cyprus Violates U.S. Arms Export Rules*, eKathimerini (Mar. 16, 2026), <https://www.ekathimerini.com/in-depth/analysis/1298096/turkeys-f-16-move-in-occupied-northern-cyprus-violate-us-arms-export-rules/>

energy ties to both.³ Your Administration knows this all too well, as it recently and inexplicably dropped a case against the Erdoğan-backed entity, Halkbank, for helping Iran evade U.S. economic sanctions.⁴ It is also no secret that Erdoğan and his regime continue to support Iranian terror proxies like Hamas. To this day, Erdoğan’s regime openly harbors and hosts Hamas operatives who have plotted attacks on U.S. allies from the comfort of Turkish territory.⁵

With all these concerns regarding Turkey’s past and present conduct in mind, the question of *cui bono* arises. There exists no indication of Erdogan’s willingness to reform his rogue, authoritarian behavior – in fact, quite the opposite.⁶ This lack of clear benefit to American interests leads us to the inevitable conclusion that you and those around you may be personally benefiting from this absurd arrangement.

The conduct of those around you only furthers these concerning questions. In September 2025, your son Donald Trump Jr, who has no formal role within your Administration, reportedly traveled to Istanbul and met with President Erdoğan. According to reports, the two had “secret conversations” on regional topics and issues.⁷ This lack of transparency and even acknowledgement of this meeting only reinforces the notion that there are private arrangements occurring outside the scope of official government channels. Additionally, your chosen Ambassador to Turkey, Tom Barrack, has a history of acting in his own self interests. This includes previously being indicted for acting as an unregistered agent for a foreign government.⁸

Based on these concerns, we demand that you, Ambassador Barrack, your son, Donald Trump Jr, and anyone else involved, preserve and provide all records and correspondence that relate to your personal and official relationships with President Erdoğan and his government, as well as demand answers on the following questions from your Administration by July 24 2026:

1. What was the purpose and nature of Donald Trump Jr.’s reported meeting with President Erdoğan in 2025?
 - a. Have there been any further meetings between Erdoğan or other Turkish officials and Donald Trump Jr. or any other members of the Trump family and its business in the last several years?

³ Matthew Dalton: “*Europe Tried to Slam the Door on Russian Energy. It Didn’t Account for Turkey,*” The Wall Street Journal, (Dec. 27, 2025)

<https://www.wsj.com/world/europe-tried-to-slam-the-door-on-russian-energy-it-didnt-account-for-turkey-dcf90720>

⁴ Luc Cohen & Jasper Ward, *U.S. Department of Justice Formally Moves to Drop Halkbank Case*, Reuters (June 11, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-department-justice-formally-moves-drop-halkbank-case-2026-06-11/>.

⁵ Emanuel Fabian & ToI Staff, *Shin Bet Says It Foiled Dozens of Hamas Attacks Led by Turkey-Based Operatives*, Times of Israel (June 21, 2026), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-says-it-foiled-dozens-of-hamas-attacks-led-by-turkey-based-operatives/>

⁶ Ruth Michaelson: “*Turkey Intensifies Crackdown on Public Life in Runup to NATO Summit in Ankara,*” The Guardian, (Jul. 6, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jul/06/turkey-crackdown-public-life-run-up-nato-summit-ankara>

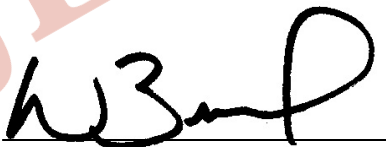
⁷ Ragıp Soylu, Donald Trump Jr. Secretly Met Turkey's Erdogan, Middle East Eye (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/donald-trump-junior-secretly-met-turkeys-erdogan>

⁸ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Former Advisor to Presidential Candidate Among Three Defendants Charged with Acting as Agents of a Foreign Government*, DOJ Archives (July 20, 2021), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/former-advisor-presidential-candidate-among-three-defendants-charged-acting-agents-foreign>.

- b. What are the current business interests of the Trump and Barrack families in Turkey, including any connections to Turkish state-owned enterprises or state-owned businesses outside of Turkey?
2. Will Turkey be allowed back into the F-35 program without giving up their S-400, in direct violation of U.S. law?
 - a. You said you “have no concerns about anything having to do with Turkey.”⁹ If you are planning to illegally transfer F-35 jets to Turkey, how will you guarantee that that technology will not be compromised if they maintain their S-400s?
3. Have you had any conversations with Members of Congress regarding Turkey’s possession of the S-400 and its potential renewed membership in the F-35 program and the implications for U.S. national security?
4. How does this Administration justify Erdoğan’s continued support for Hamas?
5. Did you or anyone in the White House have any contact with the Department of Justice as it relates to its decision to drop the sanctions evasion case against the Erdoğan-back entity, Halkbank?
 - a. If so, what was the nature and substance of those contacts?

We look forward to your answers as we begin the process of reviewing this proposed arrangement. In the coming months and years, Congress will continue to exercise our constitutional oversight authorities and thoroughly scrutinize this matter to ensure the interests of the American people and their security is protected.

Sincerely,



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

⁹ Julia Manchester, “Trump Shrugs off Concerns About Selling F-35s to Turkey,” The Hill, (Jul. 7, 2026), <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/5956507-trump-shrugs-off-concerns-about-selling-f-35s-to-turkey/>



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