

U.S. POLICY ON TURKEY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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U.S. POLICY ON TURKEY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2021

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:20 a.m. in room SD-G50, Hon. Bob Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Coons, Murphy, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Romney, Young, Barrasso, Cruz, and Hagerty.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Let us start with the very recent developments from the region. Yesterday, President Erdoğan visited illegally-occupied Cyprus and announced a plan to develop the seaside town of Varosha.

Over the years, I have met with Greek Cypriots who had to evacuate Varosha in 1974, fleeing the invading Turkish army for safety. Many of them ended up emigrating to the United States.

Forty-seven years following the invasion, their stories remain harrowing, a daily reminder of those terrible days in 1974. For years, many in the international community, including President Biden himself, have supported a peace process which would establish a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation on the island. Erdoğan's visit cast these efforts aside, as well as long-standing U.N. resolutions on Varosha.

His goal is to advance a separate state on the island of Cyprus. Simply put, this violation of international law is unacceptable, and I expect to hear from the undersecretary today a plan on how the Biden administration will respond.

I led a letter with several members on this committee to the President last week. Erdoğan's actions are not simply about Cyprus, but mark a crucial test for the U.N. system and the U.S. response.

We need to see a strong statement from the U.N. Security Council today condemning this move.

Unfortunately, this pattern of Turkish aggression across the region has become the norm. Last summer, Erdoğan provided military support to Azerbaijani strikes against ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. He also facilitated the passage of militants from Syria to fight on the side of Azerbaijan.

Yet, these actions elicited no penalty from the Trump administration, no concrete reaction from the international community, no sanction.

This is unacceptable, and I expect more from this administration than I did the last and I look forward to understanding how the department views Turkey's role in last year's war and what measures can be taken in response.

I appreciate the excellent work done by the Biden administration in reestablishing our rock-solid bond with NATO. It is the most powerful alliance in the history of the world and an absolutely essential pillar of U.S. national security.

So when Turkey, as a NATO member, introduces a Russian S-400 air defense system into its territory, it poses a significant threat to NATO. It poses a significant threat to U.S. pilots. It poses a significant threat to our partners.

Under no circumstances will I support the lifting of CAATSA sanctions if the S-400 remains in Turkey, nor would I support Turkey rejoining the F-35 program.

I am proud of the role played by Congress to advance these sanctions and ensure their implementation. The message should be clear. Any effort to weaken NATO from within or outside will be met by a robust response by the United States.

In Syria, the United States and Turkey remain at cross purposes through multiple military interventions, some of which were directly green lighted by the previous administration.

Turkey has created several zones of control in northern Syria that encompass 4,000 square miles, roughly, the size of Lebanon, and contain 4 million people, equivalent to the population of Croatia.

While these areas provide safe haven for millions of Syrians displaced from government-controlled areas, they have done so at a horrific cost to the local Kurdish population, who have endured forced displacement and kidnappings, unlawful detention and torture, illegal property seizures and numerous other human rights violations at the hands of Turkish-backed opposition forces.

Beyond the considerable human rights concerns, these actions directly undermine the United States' counterterrorism partnership with the Syrian Democratic Forces in our shared fight against the Islamic State. This is also unacceptable.

President Erdoğan has publicly asked President Biden for greater cooperation with Turkey and Syria. It is paramount that the administration provide the committee with greater clarity concerning how it is addressing Turkey's role in the numerous human rights violations committed in northern Syria, and the conditions it will apply to any enhanced cooperation with Ankara in this regard.

In Libya, despite the successful creation of a unity government after years of conflict, Turkey continues to maintain thousands of Syrian mercenaries, the presence of which, along with Russian-backed foreign fighters, threatens both the country's upcoming elections as well as its fragile peace.

Turkey has capitalized with the vulnerability of Libya's previous Government to extract a maritime border agreement that is in direct conflict with U.S. interests in the eastern Mediterranean, and

violates Greece and Cyprus' internationally recognized maritime boundaries and rights.

These are not the actions of a constructive partner, let alone a NATO ally. Erdoğan sees his country as on par with the great powers of the world. It is not.

President Erdoğan has, tragically, shredded its democratic institutions, imprisoned journalists. He has targeted his political opposition for arrest and sought to silence university professors.

To say that more lawyers and journalists are arrested and in jail in Turkey than in any other place in the world is saying something, considering some of those other places in the world.

These are the actions of a weak government, not a world power, and we should treat it as such. This treatment extends to United States embassy and consulate staff in the country. To this day, several individuals remain in prison on trumped up charges. It is disgraceful.

The under secretary, I am sure, will agree that the U.S. embassy staff should never be treated this way anywhere, especially by a so-called ally. So I look forward to hearing an update on their status in our efforts to secure their freedom.

We all hope for a day when Turkey embodies a high standard of democratic values and respect for human rights expected from a NATO member. The region and the world needs a stable and democratic Turkey. Under Erdoğan, such a future is but a dim hope.

I look forward to the undersecretary's views on these and other issues and we appreciate your appearance before the committee.

With that, let me recognize the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch, for his opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of the clear takeaways from this hearing is going to be that there is bipartisan agreement on the many issues that we have with Turkey.

Turkey is a center of a complex and important geopolitical crossroads. It is where Europe, Asia, and the Middle East meet and it borders the increasingly important Mediterranean and Black Seas.

First and foremost in this hearing we must discuss the direct bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey, which, of course, the chairman has already done, I am going to add to, and at a deeper level, the role our relationship plays in the eastern Mediterranean and across the region. Turkey is deeply interconnected and, of course, we must deal with them.

Before delving into the problems, I have to say how painful this is. Turkey has been a long-time ally of the United States and of our European partners. Obviously, they are a NATO ally, even though they are not acting like a NATO ally at this time.

Nonetheless, they are in the NATO alliance, and it is very painful to see the country deteriorate as it has deteriorated and left the commitments that we, all of the NATO partners, have had to the values and things that we value in NATO.

The most pressing aspect of our relationship is Turkey's acquisition and continued use of the Russian S-400 missile system. This

issue remains at an impasse and has now grown to define the most significant part of our relationship, and it is deeply troubling.

It is unacceptable that Turkey believes it can reap the benefits of NATO membership while refusing to commit to the basic principle of a cohesive interoperable alliance.

They seem to have forgotten that NATO was formed specifically to push back against Russian aggression. Dealing with them on military purchases like this is just simply unacceptable.

This is an issue I raise with Turkish leaders at every opportunity. Indeed, I had a very clear discussion with President Erdoğan in person, face to face, where I laid out the precise nature of the problems created and caused by the presence of Russian-made S-400s on the soil of a NATO ally.

He understood, but persisted. This issue will not go away, and it greatly affects our overall relationship on several fronts when it comes to NATO matters, including the F-35s.

Speaking of the F-35s, after our conversation he understood clearly that even though they have paid for five of them, the five have been completed and are sitting here in the United States. Those F-35s will not be delivered to Turkey so long as there are S-400 missiles on Turkish soil.

The same with the construction of parts for the F-35. There were 900 parts for the F-35 being produced in Turkey. That is down to a very minimal amount right now, and will eventually be completely phased out.

Ending on a positive note, first of all, Erdoğan has appointed a new ambassador to the United States. This ambassador is very engaging and says, and I believe, that he wants to do his best to attempt to repair what is, obviously, a deteriorating relationship.

I hope he is successful in that regard.

Turkey's recent agreement to withdraw its mercenaries from Libya also shows it has the capacity for responsible stabilization through diplomacy. It remains to be seen whether they follow through on this commitment and it is important that we ensure that they do.

Likewise, Turkey deserves international recognition for hosting millions of Syrian refugees for the past several years.

We must take a clear-eyed look at our relationship with Turkey. We can appreciate and encourage the good while clearly condemning the bad. I expect our discussions today will help us define these matters and develop a better understanding of how to address them in this emerging era.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will now turn to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland. We welcome you back to the committee. We look forward to hearing the administration's views on our policy vis-à-vis Turkey, moving forward.

I would ask that you summarize your remarks in about 5 minutes or so to allow time for a dialogue with you. Without objection, your full statement will be included in the record, and you are now recognized.

Madam Secretary.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE VICTORIA NULAND, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of this committee for the invitation to come before you to discuss U.S.-Turkey relations today.

As the committee knows well, and as you have both stated, the United States has a multifaceted and complex relationship with Turkey, a NATO ally for over 68 years.

There are areas where we are firmly aligned in policy and outlook and working well together. There are areas where we do not see eye to eye and are working to close those gaps and there are areas where we have profound disagreements with the Turkish Government, including with regard to Cyprus yesterday.

In these last two categories, President Biden and all of us who work for him are frank with our Turkish counterparts when we disagree, as are Turkish officials with us.

To start with the areas of strong cooperation, Turkey makes crucial contributions to NATO missions around the world, and our partnership with Turkey, which has the second largest standing military in NATO, enables us to project power in the region and defend NATO's eastern and southern flanks.

We also have an important economic relationship with Turkey, one that generates upwards of \$20 billion in annual bilateral trade, including an increasing energy and LNG relationship.

Washington and Ankara share priorities in countering terrorism, deterring Russian and Iranian malign influence in the Middle East, and Turkey is a staunch supporter of Ukraine and Georgia's territorial integrity and vocally supports their accession to NATO.

In Libya, Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led U.N.-facilitated political process including the prospect of elections on December 24 of this year, and we are now discussing how to reduce the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries before the election.

In Syria, as both of you have mentioned, Turkey's presence in the northwest protects some 4 million Syrians from indiscriminate targeting by the Assad regime.

New attacks there would be both a humanitarian catastrophe and likely launch a new wave of refugees into Turkey and Europe.

We are also grateful for Turkey's ongoing efforts to support 4 million refugees inside Turkey, making Turkey the largest refugee-hosting country in the world. Most recently, Turkey has expressed interest in maintaining a robust force at Kabul's airport, as the U.S. and NATO military missions in Afghanistan come to an end.

This contribution, as you all know, is vital to ensuring that we and our allies and partners can maintain a strong diplomatic presence in Kabul after our troops withdraw.

Even as we work closely on these issues, President Biden has been clear with President Erdoğan when we disagree, as have all of us.

We continue to object to Turkey's purchase and deployment of the Russian S-400 air defense system and have made clear that any new major arms purchases from Russia will trigger additional

CAATSA sanctions. As you both said, the sale and co-production of the F-35 will remain suspended.

We also press Turkey to avoid entanglements and regional conflicts that threaten long-term stability. The role played by third parties, including Turkey, in last year's fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh exacerbated regional tensions, and we have pressed Turkey to press Baku to release all detainees immediately, to support a ceasefire, and to help the sides work towards a sustainable long-term political solution.

We also urge Turkey's leaders to address disagreements in the region through diplomacy rather than through provocative action or rhetoric. We condemn yesterday's announcement by Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and Turkish President Erdoğan, which would allow Turkish Cypriots to take control of parts of Varosha.

This move is inconsistent with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 550 and 7089, which explicitly call for Varosha to be administered by the United Nations.

The United States views this action as provocative, unacceptable, and detrimental to the prospects for the resumption of settlement talks.

We are urging a reversal of this decision, including in a phone call that I made to Ankara this morning, and we are working with like-minded partners in the U.N. Security Council.

A Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation is the only path to lasting peace and stability.

President Biden has also made clear that supporting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law is central to his administration, and protecting those freedoms is critical for Turkey to be a stable and democratic and reliable ally and partner.

We have been clear at all levels with the Turkish Government and in the department's annual Human Rights Report about our specific concerns, and we will continue to engage the Turkish Government on individual human rights cases, media freedom, freedom of expression, assembly, and association, judicial independence, and fair trial guarantees.

In this regard, as you said, Mr. Chairman, a top concern remains the release of local employees of U.S. Mission Turkey who have been unjustly detained.

Overall, we are working to try to resolve these concerns and advance our agenda through robust and regular engagement at all levels with Turkish counterparts, and with candor and clarity in those discussions.

I would like to make one final point, if I may, before taking your questions.

I know that this committee is exploring how to expedite consideration of more than 20 State Department senior political appointees and ambassadors in the weeks before the August recess, and you have recently noticed some additional hearings.

We are very grateful for this effort, and I just want to underscore that the strength of American diplomacy and the department's role in the policy process will be greatly enhanced by moving these nominees expeditiously to full Senate confirmation before the recess.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Nuland follows:]

Prepared Statement of Victoria Nuland

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to discuss the U.S.-Turkish relationship. We welcome the Committee's engagement on Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, and we want to work together to advance U.S. interests and values in this region and beyond.

As this Committee knows well, the United States has a multi-faceted and complex relationship with Turkey, a NATO Ally for over 68 years. There are areas where we are firmly aligned in policy and outlook and working well together; there are areas where we don't see eye-to-eye and we are working to close the gaps; and there are areas where we have profound disagreements with the Turkish Government, including with regard to Cyprus yesterday. In these last two categories, President Biden and all of us who work for him are frank with our Turkish counterparts when we disagree, as are Turkish officials with us.

To start with areas of strong cooperation, Turkey makes crucial contributions to NATO missions around the world. Our partnership with Turkey—which has the second largest standing military in NATO—enables us to project power in the region and defend NATO's eastern and southern flanks.

The United States also has an important economic relationship with Turkey, one that generates upwards of \$20 billion in annual bilateral trade. Roughly 1,700 U.S. companies operate in Turkey and 60 firms maintain regional headquarters in the country. U.S. liquified natural gas exports to Turkey increased 305 percent between 2019 and 2020, a trend that if continued, will diversify Turkey's sources of natural gas supply and reduce reliance on pipeline gas from Russia and Iran. Since January, Turkey and Greece have also resumed exploratory talks on energy and other issues. Resource development in the Eastern Mediterranean should promote cooperation and provide a foundation for durable energy security and economic prosperity throughout the region.

Washington and Ankara share priorities in countering terrorism and deterring Russian and Iranian malign influence in the Middle East. Turkey is a staunch supporter of Ukraine's and Georgia's territorial integrity and vocally supports their accession to NATO.

In Libya, Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24 this year. And we are discussing how to reduce the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries there before the elections.

In Syria, Turkey's presence in the northwest protects some 4 million Syrians from indiscriminate targeting by the Assad regime; new attacks there would be both a humanitarian catastrophe and likely launch a new wave of refugees into Turkey and Europe. We are also grateful for Turkey's ongoing efforts to support the 4 million refugees, including 3.6 million Syrians, making Turkey the largest refugee-hosting country in the world.

Most recently, Turkey has expressed interest in maintaining a robust force at Kabul's airport as the U.S. and NATO military missions in Afghanistan come to an end. This contribution is vital to ensuring we and our Allies and partners can maintain a strong diplomatic presence in Kabul after our troops withdraw. Following discussions between Presidents Biden and Erdogan at the NATO summit last month, technical teams on both sides are working together to finalize this critical arrangement.

Even as we work closely with Ankara on these issues, President Biden has been clear with President Erdogan when we disagree, as have all members of our team with their counterparts. We continue to object to Turkey's purchase and deployment of the Russian S-400 air defense system and have made clear that any new major arms purchases from Russia risk triggering additional CAATSA sanctions. Sale and co-production of the F-35 will remain suspended.

We also press Turkey to avoid entanglements in regional conflicts that threaten long-term stability. The role played by third parties, including Turkey, in last year's fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exacerbated regional tensions. We have pressed Turkey to urge Baku to release all detainees immediately, to support the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and to help the sides work towards a sustainable, long-term political solution to the conflict.

We also urge Turkey's leader to address disagreements in the region through diplomacy, rather than through provocative actions or rhetoric. We condemn yesterday's announcement by Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and Turkish President

Erdogan to allow Turkish Cypriots to take control of parts of Varosha. This move is inconsistent with U.N. Security Council resolutions 550 and 789, which explicitly call for Varosha to be administered by the United Nations. The United States views this action as provocative, unacceptable, and detrimental to the prospects for the resumption of settlement talks. We are urging a reversal of this decision and are working with like-minded partners in the U.N. Security Council. A Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation is the only path to lasting peace and stability.

President Biden has also made clear that supporting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law is a central priority for his administration. Protecting these freedoms is critical for Turkey to be a stable, democratic, and reliable Ally and partner. We have been clear with all levels of the Turkish Government, and in the Department's annual Human Rights Report, about our specific concerns. The President expressed his disappointment over Turkey's recent withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women, and the administration has continued to urge the Turkish Government to support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We will continue to engage the Turkish Government on individual human rights cases; media freedom; freedom of expression, assembly, and association; and judicial independence and fair trial guarantees. In this regard a top concern remains the release of local employees of U.S. Mission Turkey who have been unjustly detained.

We believe the best way to resolve these concerns and advance our agenda is through robust and regular engagement at all levels, and by candor and clarity with our Turkish counterparts. The administration welcomes the opportunity to stay in close coordination with this Committee and others in Congress on all these issues. We would also welcome regular direct engagement by Members with Turkish leaders and Congressional visits to Ankara, as conditions allow.

I would like to make one final point about the national security imperative of having our Senate-confirmed team of Department senior leaders and Ambassadors in place as soon as possible. I was pleased to see the President's announcement of your former colleague, Senator Flake, as the nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, and look forward to the Committee's consideration of him. I know the Committee is exploring how to expedite consideration of more than 20 other nominees in the weeks ahead of the August recess. We are grateful for this effort, and I just want to underscore that the strength of American diplomacy and the Department's role in the policy process will be greatly enhanced by moving these nominees expeditiously to full Senate confirmation before the recess.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you.

We will start a round of 5 minutes of questions, and I will just say on your last point, I totally embrace that. We are marching forward rather aggressively. We had a panel of three under-secretaries yesterday and have more. Senator Risch and I have just agreed on some for next week.

I think the administration's challenge is on the Senate floor, not before this committee, and I know that Senator Cruz has taken the view that he is going to hold up nominees over the Nord Stream pipeline issue, and I respect both his prerogatives as well as the question of Nord Stream.

I just think it is detrimental to the United States not to have its people on the ground in order to make the case and promote U.S. interests, and we hope we can come to a resolution in that regard.

So let me start. Do I have your commitment that CAATSA sanctions will remain in place on Turkey if it continues to possess the Russian S-400 air defenses?

Ms. NULAND. You do, Mr. Chairman, and not only my commitment, but the President.

The CHAIRMAN. Does the administration maintain a commitment to full implementation of Section 231 of CAATSA not only in Turkey but for that fact around the world?

Ms. NULAND. We do.

The CHAIRMAN. Can I get your commitment to brief me if there is any effort within the interagency to weaken or in any way diminish the use of CAATSA 231 in Turkey or anywhere else?

Ms. NULAND. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Now, as mentioned, Turkey now insists on a two-state solution in Cyprus. While our Government has rejected the notion at the highest level, I have seen some lower level officials at the State Department have been quoted talking about Turkish Cypriot “sovereignty.”

Can you affirm that the United States rejects the notion of two states?

Ms. NULAND. Absolutely. As I said in my statement, we think only a Cypriot-led process bi-zonal bi-communal will bring peace and stability in Cyprus.

The CHAIRMAN. Are we working to ensure that there will be a U.N. resolution on Varosha?

Ms. NULAND. We are, and we had consultations yesterday in the U.N., and those will continue until we have a product.

The CHAIRMAN. Is Turkey establishing a drone base in occupied Cyprus?

Ms. NULAND. Sir, I am personally not aware of that, but I will take a look at it.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like you to. My information is that they are. Then the question of if they are then what are the implications of such a move for the Republic of Cyprus, which is part of the European Union, but others in the region, like Israel and Egypt, for example.

Ms. NULAND. It would, obviously, be destabilizing? So let me take that for review.

The CHAIRMAN. We are agreed.

Over the past year, Turkey has violated Greek airspace and acted aggressively in the Cypriot-exclusive economic zone. This has been happening in two EU member states. Last year, Brussels considered sanctions in response to this behavior, but, ultimately, decided against strong measures.

Are you familiar with what role the United States played in the European sanctions debate?

Ms. NULAND. I am not familiar with how we would have played inside the EU conversation. I am familiar with the fact that we encouraged both Greece and Turkey to have bilateral talks.

We also encouraged the Secretary General of NATO to become involved in trying to mediate this dispute, as has been the case over many decades, and that the situation has calmed somewhat.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you aware of U.S. efforts to dissuade the EU from imposing sanctions?

Ms. NULAND. I am not familiar with that. That does not sound right to me.

The CHAIRMAN. So let me just say, and I just heard your response to the question before. I appreciate—we call on, in many cases, both countries to act appropriately.

The problem with that is when both countries are doing something wrong, I get it. When only one country is doing something

wrong, it is a little disingenuous. As far as I know, Greece is not making incursions into Turkish airspace.

The Turks are doing that to Greece. They do it in the territorial waters of Greece. They seek to drill in the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus.

So we cannot be calling on both sides to, ultimately, try to negotiate in good faith when one is the aggressor, and I think we make a huge mistake when we do not acknowledge who is the aggressor in a certain set of actions.

Let me ask you, are you familiar with Turkey facilitating the transfer of fighters from Syria to Azerbaijan during the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh?

Ms. NULAND. I think it would be appropriate on that last point to discuss it in a separate session, if that is acceptable to you, Mr. Chairman, in another setting.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Well, as part of that, I will be looking forward to hearing from the department on whether you investigated any of the Turkish drones used by Azerbaijan in the war last summer that included U.S.-produced component parts, which I find totally unacceptable.

Do you support full—do you meaning the department, of course—support full implementation of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act, the law that I helped write with Senator Rubio and members of this committee, for the establishment of a regional energy center to help deepen energy cooperation in the region and to deal both on security and renewable technologies?

Ms. NULAND. We do, and we have been engaged with the individual parties to try to encourage more coordination in that regard. It is one of the success stories of recent period.

The CHAIRMAN. Finally, because I want to go to other colleagues, the Council of Europe judicial arm of the European Court of Human Rights ordered Turkey to immediately release civil society leader Osman Kavala and Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtas from prison. What is the administration doing to advocate for both of the individuals' release?

Ms. NULAND. We have advocated directly for their release as well as other political prisoners and as well as appropriate treatment of media and other unjustly prosecuted individuals in Turkey, and we will continue to do so and we do that at every level.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

How does State assess Turkey's continued commitment to the S-400? I think a lot of us have been incredibly clear with them of the consequences, and my sense is they did not really think we would follow through on things like CAATSA.

My sense also is that they have come to the realization that we are serious about this and that it is not going to go away. Do you share that assessment, and what other thoughts might you have in that regard?

Ms. NULAND. As I said, Mr. Ranking Member, when I came up for my confirmation hearing, it is incomprehensible to me, personally, and to most of us why a NATO ally would want to acquire a Russian system and put at risk all of the things that have been

put at risk, including co-production of the F-35, which was not only a security benefit but it was also of economic benefit to Turkey.

So I think that you may have your finger on it, that they walked into this or were romanced into this by the seller without expecting that the costs would be as high as they have been, and it is uncomfortable for them that they are as high as they have been.

We continue to offer them various ways and off ramps out of this, including in our most recent highest level encounter, and we will continue to have that conversation. As we said, there are many things we cannot do together that we would like to do together while this goes forward.

Senator RISCH. Well, as you and I have discussed a number of times, it is mind boggling that they have gone down the road they have gone down, and particularly when they have been offered the clear off ramps that they have been offered, which, obviously, we cannot talk about publicly completely.

This is really disconcerting, and the good news is, is I think that one of the things, I think, might have pushed it over the edge is the fact that I do not think that they thought we would take away those 900 parts that they were co-producing for the F-35.

We have done so and I think that is a very significant economic matter for them, and it is totally in their hands that that happened.

Turning for a minute to the agreement that we all know about the mess that is going on in Libya, and Turkey and Russia have both played a part in making it messier.

They now have announced that they have reached this tentative agreement to withdraw the foreign troops and mercenaries from Libya. What is State's assessment, your assessment, as to whether or not that will actually come to fruition? These agreements are easy to make, hard to execute. What are your thoughts?

Ms. NULAND. You are not wrong about that, Senator Risch. Both Turkey at the highest level and Russia at the highest level have said that they are willing to support the withdrawal of mercenary forces, but they want to do it in tandem with each other.

We are working with the current U.N. envoy, Mr. Kubish, on how that might work, a synchronized withdrawal, and we are hopeful for progress on that well before the election at the end of the year.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I am going to yield back since we have got a vote going on and others want to ask questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, for holding this important hearing.

I want to thank you, Under Secretary Nuland, not only for your service now and your presence and testimony here, but for your long service to our nation. I very much appreciate it.

Under Secretary, you cited the very complex relationship that exists with Turkey. I think both the chairman and the ranking member have also done a great job of highlighting some of the issues that are associated with our critical strategic relationship with this nation.

We have an alliance that has existed for many, many years between Turkey and United States, and Turkey plays a critical role in NATO, one that we need to continue to preserve and support.

There are serious problems, as have been noted, in many dimensions in terms of Turkey's current behavior. If you think about the arrest of U.S. Government local employees in Turkey, the S-400 program that both the ranking member and the chairman have been so articulate about.

Turkey's purchase of Russian assets like that are very disturbing, as you know, to all of us, their crackdown on journalists and the friction that exists when their forces collide with our activity in Syria to fight against ISIS. It is a complex relationship, as you say.

I share the ranking member's optimism that our new ambassador from Turkey will take a new approach. I had the privilege of serving in Japan with him when I served as U.S. ambassador to Japan.

So I share the optimism that Ranking Member Risch noted with our new Turkish ambassador to the United States. I hope you will have a good working relationship with him as well.

I would be very curious, and this is a process question really, curious as to your approach in terms of having a structured strategic dialogue with Turkey, trying to preserve the good and important strategic aspects of what needs to happen there while pressing hard against Ankara on those issues where we will certainly differ and need to be strong against. I would appreciate just your perspective a bit, Under Secretary, on how you will approach that.

Ms. NULAND. Thanks, Senator Hagerty.

Well, I think we approach this very much as President Biden approaches all of our strategic relationships, which is to engage, engage, engage at every level, and to work together on as many things as we can but to be absolutely frank when we disagree, and I think you saw that when he and President Erdoğan met on the margins of the NATO summit about a month ago.

Prior to that, we had had Deputy Secretary Sherman in Ankara, one of her first overseas trips, to engage at all levels. I am now speaking probably every 2 weeks with my Turkish counterpart.

We have the excellent David Satterfield as our ambassador on the ground and the Honorable Senator Flake in the chute to succeed him, Senate willing, in the future.

Our process here is to talk about every single issue with as much frequency and as much candor as we can and try to close the gaps, and when we cannot close the gaps to be clear that we will call it as we see it, as we did yesterday on Varosha. I think you saw that pretty tough statement.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate that approach and that perspective, and to the extent that this committee can be helpful to you in any aspect of that, know that, certainly, I stand ready to be supportive.

I would like to pick up on something that Chairman Menendez also mentioned, too, and that is the role—again, a process question—but the role that you feel we could play in helping address disputes like that that exists between Turkey and Greece.

If you think about their entire posture in the eastern Mediterranean, what role do you think the United States can play in a constructive manner to help address that with our allies?

Ms. NULAND. Well, the good news, Senator, is that Greece and Turkey have been back in talks, particularly on the maritime situation, since January, and they are meeting with pretty regular frequency. So we have encouraged those and we support them from our platforms in both Athens and Ankara.

We also have encouraged the secretary general of NATO, as I said earlier, to be active with both Greece and Turkey to provide them a safe space to work through their issues and, particularly, as the chairman said, when there are incursions into airspace that are unacceptable.

One thing I cut out of my statement for length, but it is in the longer statement, we do encourage, as you all get back into the travel business, to consider stops in Ankara and Athens, ideally in a bipartisan way to talk frankly about both what is going well and the issues where we have to do better.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you for your leadership, Under Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY [Presiding.] Thank you very much.

In Senator Menendez's absence, I will recognize myself as next in line for questioning.

Good to see you, Madam Secretary. Thank you for joining us today. I wanted to dig a little bit deeper into the dangerous slide away from democracy in Turkey.

In June, Turkey's Constitutional Court ordered that the country's main pro-Kurdish party, the HDP, go on trial over alleged links to Kurdish fighters.

Now, the Kurds are Turkey's largest ethnic minority and the HDP has grown sort of so successful and so popular that it briefly helped end Erdoğan's ruling AKP parliamentary majority for the first time in over a decade.

The State Department has said that these attempts to, essentially, eradicate the HDP from Turkey's political infrastructure would "further undermine" democracy.

Can you talk a little bit more about whether the State Department has directly engaged with the Turkish Government on this issue and what steps can we take, both the executive and legislative branch, to try to make sure that the upcoming elections in 2023 are fair and that there is a robust multi-party system that is not undermined to the point of futility between now and those elections?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

We share your concerns about the treatment of the HDP. I know that there are members of this committee who have relationships with some of those members.

Obviously, it is important and it goes to the conversation we had with Senator Hagerty about the value that we see in members of this committee and other leaders in the Congress making regular trips to Ankara and showing support for political leaders across the spectrum, particularly those who are under particular pressure.

This issue is very much part of our larger concern about the human rights situation in Turkey, which we are very frank about

from the highest level onward, that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, upholding fair trial guarantees, judicial independence, freedom of association, freedom of political practice, are central to any thriving democracy.

Our view is very much the same as yours, that Turkey weakens itself when it does not uphold these fundamental freedoms, and particularly in the area of political pluralism.

Senator MURPHY. Let me maybe ask this civic question. What would be the impact of banning the largest Kurdish political party?

What would be the impact on the upcoming elections, and is there any justification on our mind for such a sweeping measure as necessary to continue what is a legitimate interest that the Turkish Government has on cracking down on Kurdish-affiliated terrorism that still does pose a legitimate threat to the security of the country?

Ms. NULAND. When legitimate terrorism cases can be made in a free and transparent manner with access to independent judicial process and all of that, obviously, it is in our interest and Turkey's interest to take action.

That is a far different matter than using a terrorism excuse to eradicate political pluralism or ban an individual party. As you know, there is a significant Kurdish population in Turkey which supports the HDP and which risks being disenfranchised were such a party to be banned.

As you know, the majority party has also made quite an effort to, how should we say, recruit HDP members into their fold. To the extent that party changes occur, that needs to be effectuated with free will and without any coercion also.

Senator MURPHY. Finally, and I am not asking for an extensive answer on this question, given limited time, but I am interested to know whether the department is pursuing Interpol reforms after the 2016 coup attempt.

The Turkish Government issued approximately 30,000 red notices on the Interpol system and, of course, some of the actions that Turkey has taken are consistent with the ways in which other nations have begun to compromise the Interpol system.

You also have, obviously, increasing news of extradition attempts and attempts to target dissidents abroad. Are we concerned at all about the overuse of the red notice system and is this something that we are looking into with respect to a future reform agenda?

Ms. NULAND. I am going to take the question on what we are doing on Interpol reform, per se. I will say that you are not wrong that when the Interpol system is flooded with cases that do not meet the standard, it sucks up time, energy, and money that should appropriately be applied to cases that do meet the standard. So it is an issue of concern.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Chairman Murphy. Thank you, Under Secretary Nuland. It is good to see you and appreciate your expertise and perspectives with regards to our strategy in Turkey.

I just wanted to follow up on a line of questioning that Senator Risch began with regards to the production of some 900 parts for the F-35.

Has that production ended or is it in the process of ending, and do we have any sense of what the economic impact will be in Turkey of that production ending?

Ms. NULAND. Thanks, Senator Romney.

Yes, we are in the phase-out part, as you know, after we ended the F-35 engagement. There were supply chain reasons to phase out the spare parts, including the need to ramp up production elsewhere so that we did not hurt the line globally.

My understanding is that it—I am going to ask you to go to DoD on the precise phase down, but I think we are within the year, if not sooner, of being finished there.

Overall, Turkey took a significant hit, not just in terms of security, but, as I said, in terms of its economy from the suspension of the program, both jobs and the potential to export and be part of the export chain in the future, so and particularly at a time when the Turkish economy is hurting in other areas. It was an interesting decision by the Government. Let us put it that way.

Senator ROMNEY. There was some speculation earlier about whether this was something that Erdoğan had actually considered and may have misjudged what America's response might be.

Is there also the possibility that this was calculated by Mr. Erdoğan in a desire to draw closer to Russia?

Can you characterize the relationship that you are seeing building between Erdoğan and Putin? Is it close? Is it collaborative? Is he hoping to play the EU and the U.S. off against Russia or is he actually moving pretty strong in that direction?

Ms. NULAND. Well, let me start by saying that our interest here is clear, which is in cementing Turkey as much as we can and the Turkish people with us in the transatlantic and NATO family and discouraging deepening cooperation or dependence in particular on Russia, whether it is in the field of security, whether it is in the field of energy or anything else for that matter.

Without overanalyzing in this open hearing, I would simply say that what I see, as a longtime watcher of Russia, is that in the past administration, there was quite a deepening of the Turkish-Russian relationship. It began in Syria and then expanded to other areas.

I think there may, and I will not speak for the Turks, but I do sense some buyer's remorse—let us put it that way—in Ankara with regard to that relationship. It has not necessarily paid out in Ankara's interest and has caused some of the problems that we have talked about already this morning and sort of culminated in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that we saw last summer, which was not only tragic for people there but also further frayed the engagement and Turkey and Russia being on opposite sides in Libya, et cetera, et cetera.

So I think we have an opportunity here if we continue engaging with our Turkish allies to bring them back closer to us. There is a lot of work to do.

Senator ROMNEY. Let me ask you to speculate a bit on your perspective as to what Erdoğan may have been thinking and his purposes behind supporting the safety of the Kabul airport as we withdraw from the region or from the country and as we hope to bring interpreters and others from Afghanistan into the U.S.

He has allowed his military or directed his military to play a role in securing that airport. Any sense as to why he is doing that?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Romney, I would just repeat what I said in the opening, which is this decision by Turkey is extremely welcome and absolutely vital to all of us who want to continue to maintain robust diplomatic presence in Afghanistan to support the people of Afghanistan as we withdraw our military forces. So we very much appreciate Turkey taking on that role.

As you know, Turkey has historically played a strong role during the NATO mission at the airport, so they are constructive partners there. They know what the mission is and they are experienced at it.

They also have a unique and special relationship both with the Afghan people but with other actors in the region, which makes them a partner who is more likely to be welcome there over the longer term, if that makes sense.

With regard to President Erdoğan's decision making, I never like to get in the head of another leader. My sense from joining the President's meeting with President Erdoğan was that he appreciated how vital it was to have a strong NATO military do that mission if we want to stay engaged diplomatically with Afghanistan, and was willing to take it on.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [Presiding.] Thank you.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Nuland, thank you very much for your service. I listened very carefully to you defining the differing buckets of interests between the United States and Turkey—those that we can agree, those we are making progress, and those where we disagree—and you have a very strong reputation of being very direct and clear in your bilateral conversations.

So I am certain that you are very clear with the Turks in regards to the areas that we disagree.

Having said that, President Biden rightly said that our foreign policy is going to be embedded in our values. So my question to you is, how do you deal with Turkey today and still hold true to American values that the President is talking about when under the Erdoğan regime we see reporters randomly imprisoned, citizens taken off the streets and imprisoned, the human rights record is horrible, and then a dimension on top of that, as we have already talked about, the Cyprus issue and the S-400s, et cetera, which looks more like a country like Russia rather than Turkey?

So how do you reconcile how you deal with Turkey and live up to President Biden's commitment that our foreign policy engagements are always going to be embedded with our values?

Ms. NULAND. Well, Senator Cardin, as the member of this committee who knows our President probably best of all, we do it the Biden way. He speaks truth to his interlocutors about human rights concerns.

I have seen him do it with leaders all around the world, whether they are NATO allies or whether they are President Putin, when he has concerns.

As he said not too long ago, it is a matter of his DNA, but it is also a matter of our national DNA.

We have been very clear with Turkey that we think this weakens their democracy, and it is also important, as you know, to stand with those Turks who are facing incarceration, repression, unfair judicial targeting, press pressure, et cetera, as we do with those who face human rights abuses around the world.

So speaking out privately is important, but speaking out publicly is important as well, and he leads all of us in that direction and I do not think that is going to change as long as he is President.

Senator CARDIN. So you have talked about the potential of buyer remorse in regards to some of the decisions made by Turkey.

So my question to you, in order to be effective we have to work with our partners in a multilateral manner. Considering Turkey's actions, particularly with the S-400, which is against NATO protocols, and its other activities, what success are you having with our traditional partners in working with us to put maximum disappointment and pressure on Turkey for its decisions?

Ms. NULAND. Well, first of all, with regard to the human rights issues that we just talked about, I think we share these concerns with other partners in NATO and with the European Union, and they make their views clear.

The European Union, I think you know, is back in dialogue with Turkey on the prospect for a better economic relationship. These issues are front and center with Turkey.

Every time the NATO Secretary General and other NATO partners go to Ankara, the issue of the S-400 comes up as well as our disappointment, those of us who are F-35 nations, that Turkey is not part of this extremely important program both in security and economic terms.

So we continue to make those points and we have had, as I have discussed here, to impose costs on Ankara for these decisions that they have made. We try to do it as a community of nations and not standing alone.

Senator CARDIN. Impose a cost but it would be more effective if that cost was supported by at least our NATO allies, but our other allies as well. Have we been successful in getting them to take action—I hear their language, but to take action?

Ms. NULAND. I think, as I mentioned, the EU-Turkey dialogue has been ongoing for decades, and because of some of the internal issues in Turkey has not progressed in the direction that either the EU or President Erdoğan hoped.

They are back in discussion again, but I think the rigorous EU standards come to bear here and, particularly, with regard to the decision made on Varosha yesterday. The EU has made its voice clear on that as well, yesterday.

There was a statement by Mr. Borrell and we have said to Turkey that we worry that with moves like this, they put at risk the bigger game, which is the potential for a customs union or something else with the EU.

So I do think that the allies and partners play an important role here, but, obviously, the United States has this long and deep and rich relationship, including our economic relationship, which is, perhaps the biggest card.

Senator CARDIN. I think there is room for improvement with our allies.

Ms. NULAND. I hear you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, nice to see you again. I want to talk about Nord Stream 2. It is something we have discussed previously.

There is strong bipartisan opposition to the President's deliberate failure to abide by U.S. law and sanction all of the entities involved in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Now we see news reports that the United States and Germany came to a deal on the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, front page of today's Wall Street Journal.

The President appears to have made this deal with a government that will change leadership in just a few months in Germany. Secretary Blinken has repeatedly pledged to work with Congress, as he said, on the takeoff and not just the landing, and he has, clearly, failed to keep his word on this.

This new deal, I believe, is a grave mistake. The President is giving Russia a new geopolitical weapon. Russia uses energy as a geopolitical weapon to coerce, to manipulate. Paving the way for Russia and Germany to complete this pipeline, I think, puts just a stranglehold on Europe.

I was in Germany a week or so ago, talking to people, leaders in Europe, who are opposed to what is happening through NATO. Protecting this Russian trap is not in our national security interest. It doubles Europe's reliance on Russian energy.

It funnels more money to Russia at a time with increased malign activities from Russia. It eliminates barriers for additional Russian military actions in Ukrainian territory. There are also reports of the administration now attempting to silence the Ukrainians from even raising concerns about this new deal.

Congress is the only one really willing to impose meaningful costs on Russian malign projects and support our allies facing the Russian aggression.

It is clear that Congress and the American people cannot count on the administration to do the right thing with regard to this.

Why do you believe it is acceptable to deal this way with the Ukrainians and trying to silence them over this terrible deal with the Germans?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Barrasso, let me start by saying we agree with you the Nord Stream pipeline is a bad deal. As we have said, it increases dependence on Russia and increases dependence on hydrocarbons.

I worked, as you know, because you and I worked on it together in my last government gig, very hard, particularly with the EU to make those points, to slow it and all of those things.

With regard to the PEESA sanctions, we did, as you know, impose in May a significant number of new sanctions, 19 new entities. We also imposed sanctions on the company and its officers.

However, we waived them in the interest of seeing whether we could get Germany to work with us and work with the Ukrainians

and Poland to deal with the consequences and the vulnerabilities that this pipeline creates for Ukraine.

We have not—I want to repeat that here—we have taken zero action to silence Ukraine. Ukraine is a sovereign nation and will speak out itself with regard to this.

Later this afternoon, we will make public the agreement that we have with the German Government. I can give you a couple of the highlights here, which you will—in a minute.

What I would like to say is throughout this process, we have engaged in intensive consultations with the Ukrainians, including when Secretary Blinken was there, when the President talked to President Zelensky, my own conversations on almost a twice monthly basis with senior Ukrainian leaders on their requirements and on their vulnerabilities.

As we worked on this agreement with the Germans, my colleague, Counselor Derek Chollet, has been in Ukraine yesterday and the day before, including to solidify President Zelensky's visit to Washington later this afternoon.

I, as a longtime friend and supporter of Ukraine, believe that if we had not had this agreement with the pipeline 90 percent complete, Ukraine would be at considerably more risk.

Let me just give you a couple of the highlights which will become fully public later this afternoon, if I may. It is in tiny print, and I am getting old here.

Among other things, Germany has committed in this agreement with us that should Russia attempt to use energy as a weapon or commit further aggressive acts against Ukraine, Germany will take actions at the national level and press for effective measures at the European level, including sanctions, to limit Russian export capabilities to Europe in the energy sector. That is one aspect of this agreement.

The other aspect of this agreement is support for an extension of the transit agreement between Russia and Ukraine. As you know, it comes to an end in 2024. We will seek and press for and use full leverage to try to seek an additional 10 years for Ukraine.

More broadly, we need to work together to reduce Ukrainian dependence, both its economic dependence on transit, but its own dependence on Russian gas.

So I think you will see when this is released a considerable effort by both the U.S. and Germany to help diversify energy supply and energy source for Ukraine with concrete dollar figures, Euro figures, attached to it.

So, look, this is a bad situation and a bad pipeline, but we need to help protect Ukraine and I feel that we have made some significant steps in that direction with this agreement.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam.

Mr. Chairman, I have one question on Afghanistan. My time has gone. It has to do with Afghanistan remaining one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

With the Taliban's increasing aggressive military actions, Afghanistan has experienced increasing levels of violence. The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is going to impact mobility of our personnel and the effectiveness of U.S. civilian—the mission there.

The question is, could you give a brief update on the status of negotiations with Turkey to provide forces to protect the airport?

Are we planning to downsize the diplomatic mission—close programs, reduce embassy staff—having been there a number of times and understanding the security risk of trying to protect the people in the personnel compound there?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, as I said, we are very gratified that Turkey has agreed to provide a significant force to protect the airport, and without that, we would not—neither we nor our allies and partners would be able to maintain a robust presence.

Obviously, some of the size of the embassy had to do with our security relationship with Afghan forces. We will now do most of that from an over horizon platform so that allows us to make some appropriate reductions.

It is the President's intention, it is our intention, to continue to if not redouble our diplomatic efforts, our assistance efforts, and particularly in the areas that Afghanistan needs most, including the protection of women and human rights and judicial independence, et cetera.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The senator got extra time because it is his birthday today. So—

Ms. NULAND. All right. Happy birthday.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for your leadership.

Chairman Menendez raised a litany of issues where President Erdoğan's Turkey has violated its obligations as a NATO partner, violated international law, undermined our interests in the region.

We talked about the S-400. I was pleased to hear you underscore the fact that the CAATSA sanctions will remain in place so long as that continues and that they will not be able to participate in the F-35 program.

Turkey is regularly violating the territorial waters in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus and Greece, and there is a real risk that some incident there could spiral out of control if they continue those provocative actions.

You referenced Turkey's malign actions with respect to Armenia. It is true that Turkey is shouldering the burden of millions of refugees from Syria.

It is also important that we remember that for years Turkey downplayed the ISIS threat, allowed ISIS fighters to transit through Turkey, and they continue to attack the Syrian Kurds, which have been the tip of the spear in our fight against ISIS.

I want to turn now to yesterday's actions in Cyprus and President Erdoğan's statements regarding Varosha and the efforts to reach a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, which, of course, he undermined entirely.

On Varosha, he is, as the administration has indicated, violating U.N. Security Council's resolutions in international law.

Here is what Erdoğan said in response to people calling him out on these issues: "We will listen to them, but we do not care what

they say,” and that has been Erdoğan’s attitude on a whole host of issues.

The question is what are we going to actually do in response? So my question to you is, what are we going to do in concert with our NATO and EU partners?

Chairman Menendez, Senator Rubio, and I wrote to the President last week, anticipating this action taken by Erdoğan, and it is not going to be enough to simply make statements, as President Erdoğan has indicated, “We do not care what they say.”

So my question is what are we going to actually do in partnership with our partners?

Ms. NULAND. Well, thank you, Senator, and happy birthday.

You saw, I think, as you referenced the strong statement from Secretary Blinken yesterday, that we, and as I also repeated in my opening statement before you came in, that we consider the move yesterday in Varosha to be inconsistent with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789—provocative, unacceptable, incompatible with past commitments.

I spoke to my Turkish counterpart this morning. I think there will be ongoing conversation with the Turkish Government. Before this happened, Ambassador Satterfield also spoke with key members in the palace, and Secretary Blinken talked to Foreign Minister Christodoulides of Cyprus this morning.

The issue here is not only does this have a chilling effect on what we hoped might be a reigniting of the U.N. process to try to get to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, which the last time I was in government I worked intensively on personally along with then Vice President Biden.

It also has a negative effect on the ongoing conversation that Turkey is having with the EU on what it has long wanted and what we had finally gotten them back into significant talks about some kind of a economic community.

Frankly, that is the bigger game. That is of far more value for Turkey.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. If I may, Madam Secretary, just because of the time, I agree with you. I am just reading to you President Erdoğan’s words.

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. He does not care what you say, what we say, what the EU says. So I think our experience indicates that Turkey will respond only when there is a price to be paid for their actions. Sometimes that does not move them either. Certainly, words alone will not.

If I could just also turn to the HDP issue, because as you know, this is Turkey’s third largest political party.

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. They locked up a number of their leaders under trumped-up charges. I mean, the European courts have looked at this. Totally trumped-up charges. Turkey has locked up lots of journalists.

I met with Hişyar Özsoy, who is one of the parliamentarians from HDP, who was visiting United States last week, and I guess, as has been indicated, we are really pleased to see the Biden ad-

ministration return to a values-based foreign policy, talking about rule of law, democracy.

This, obviously, violates every single one of those principles, to threaten to outlaw a political party and, beyond that, outlaw the individual members from participating in future elections under any kind of banner.

So I will just close, really, where I began, which is we really look forward to a conversation with you and the President about what we are going to do because I think we have the answer from Erdoğan as to what his response is going to be.

He does not care what we say, and it is going to be up to us to take actions to defend the rule of law, to defend democracy, and to make sure that Turkey does not set an example to others with respect to being a unfaithful NATO ally.

So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Nuland, good to see you.

Ms. NULAND. Good to see you.

Senator CRUZ. You will not be surprised by the topic of my questioning.

At your confirmation hearing, you told this committee that you believed if the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany were completed that it would have disastrous effects on U.S. national security, that it would have disastrous effects on European security by making them subject to economic and energy blackmail from Russia, and that it would enrich and empower Putin to carry out that blackmail.

Do you continue to believe that?

Ms. NULAND. I do, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. My understanding is that the State Department recommended that sanctions be imposed on the company that is building the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and on the CEO, and that the State Department did so consistent with the sanctions that Congress passed into law that I authored, not one set of sanctions but two sets of sanctions that passed both houses of Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support, nearly unanimous support.

My understanding is the State Department recommended that those sanctions be imposed to try to stop the pipeline and that the Biden White House overrode that recommendation.

Is that accurate?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think you will not be surprised that I am not going to discuss internal administration deliberations. I do not think you were here when I read out some of the actions that we have worked on with the German Government. I can repeat that here.

Obviously, our intention here—and we did sanction the company and sanction its leadership—we chose to waive those sanctions to buy some time to see if we could work with Germany so that it could take responsibility for the pressure that this pipeline puts not only on Ukraine and on Poland and on Eastern Europe but on

the advantages that it gives to Russia both in security and economic terms.

We will later this afternoon release the results of those negotiations, a U.S.-German joint statement, which includes a number of elements, and since I have already read it out to your colleagues I will not waste the committee's time. I can share it with you after this.

One point in particular, which I think is very important for Ukraine and for our collective response, is that Germany has committed to take action, that should Russia attempt to use energy as a weapon or commit further aggressive acts against Ukraine, Germany will take action at the national level and press for effective measures at the European Union level, including sanctions to limit Russian export capabilities to Europe in the energy sector, including gas and other economically relevant sectors.

So we can talk about how we are doing here. Our effort right now is to continue to protect Ukraine and others.

Senator CRUZ. So as promises go, that promise from Angela Merkel is, on its face, incredibly weak and the deal that is going to be announced today, conveniently at 9:00 p.m. German time so, presumably, to mitigate the pushback from the Greens in Germany, is, in my view, a complete and total capitulation by President Biden to Putin. He has given Putin everything he wants. He has surrendered on the pipeline, the pipeline that we had stopped, that we had successfully stopped until Biden surrendered.

I believe this is a generational geopolitical mistake that decades from now future Russian dictators will be reaping billions of dollars of benefits annually from Joe Biden's mistake and will be using that pipeline to exert economic blackmail on Europe decades from now.

Let me ask just a straightforward question. Do our Ukrainian allies agree that this is a good deal?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, with respect and in the spirit of candor with which we have always dealt with each other, I believe that we were, in 2016, on our way to stopping the pipeline, as you and I discussed.

When the Biden administration came into office 4 years later, that pipeline was 90 percent plus complete. So—

Senator CRUZ. Ms. Nuland, I understand that talking point that the Biden State Department has been using. It was 95 percent complete in December of 2019 when we passed the sanctions and we stopped it, and a 95 percent complete pipeline is zero percent complete.

We saw for a year it remained a hunk of metal at the bottom of the ocean until Joe Biden got elected and began signaling he would be soft on Russia.

So let me ask my question again because my time is expiring. Do our Ukrainian allies agree this is a good deal and is it correct, as it has been widely reported, that the Biden White House has been pressuring Ukraine, demanding that they not criticize the deal and threatening economic support, military support, and threatening President Zelensky directly to cancel the White House meeting with the President unless they bite their tongues and not say what

is obvious, which is that this is a disastrous deal that benefits Putin and hurts Ukraine badly?

Ms. NULAND. That is categorically incorrect, Senator. None of us has been pressuring Ukraine and, in fact, an invitation to President Zelensky is going to be issued publicly later today and we have been in deep consultations with the Ukrainians on every aspect of this arrangement.

I will leave it to the Ukrainians to speak for themselves on how they react to this. Do they, like all of us, wish this pipeline could be stopped and want it stopped? Of course.

Does this deal give them more than they had yesterday? I believe that it does, and I have been in intense consultation with them myself as has Derek Chollet, who is on the ground, the President, Secretary Blinken.

They will speak for themselves about this arrangement. I will not speak for them. They are a sovereign state.

Senator CRUZ. If I could ask one final question to clarify. Is it your testimony, Ambassador, under oath to this committee, that nobody in the Biden administration has been pressuring the Ukrainians not to criticize this deal? I find that astonishing testimony. Is that what you are telling this committee?

Ms. NULAND. I know of nobody in the administration who has told them how to feel or how to speak about this. What we have tried to do is have consultation with them throughout on what their major concerns are.

They have security concerns but they also have energy concerns, and we have worked hard to try to address the concerns that they have raised with us, including in consultations we had before this consultation with the Germans even began.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

I just have one or two final questions. We have a vote going on.

Two years are left until Turkey's next presidential and parliamentary elections. The Turkish Government's attempt to ban the country's second largest opposition party, the HDP, would represent a significant threat to the integrity of those elections.

What steps are we taking to support fair and democratic elections in Turkey in 2023?

Ms. NULAND. Thanks, Chairman. We spoke about this a little bit when Senator Murphy was occupying your large chair there.

We have been very clear with the Turkish Government about our concerns about the banning of political parties. I think the support that members of this committee and that Congress as a whole have provided to individual members of the HDP is very welcome.

Obviously, this party represents a large body of citizens of Turkey and so banning the representatives of those voices raises questions about the integrity of elections.

So we will continue to make those points, going forward.

The CHAIRMAN. I will, since I am not bound by the diplomatic speak, it would be an incredible action by Erdoğan to ban the second largest party and in doing so those elections could not have validity, at the end of the day.

That is like if President Biden banned the Republican Party for participating. Come on. Who in this country would believe that that is a fair election?

In January, the State Department affirmed the administration's intent to continue counterterrorism cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces, which include Syrian Kurd—the YPG, despite Erdoğan's continuing opposition to the group.

In our bilateral discussions with Turkey on Syria, what proposals has the administration put forward to address this fundamental difference of opinion around the role of the YPG?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think primarily at this stage we have just agreed to disagree. Syrian Democratic Forces have more than proved their value in the security situation in Syria and with regard to the fight against ISIS.

The CHAIRMAN. We agree to disagree, which means we are continuing to pursue our view and our engagement with the Syrian Kurds, including the YPG?

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Then, lastly, the maritime border agreement between Turkey and the Government of National Accord, the direct predecessor of Libya's current unity government, was based on the flawed understanding of international maritime law that ignores the valid claims of Turkey's Mediterranean neighbors, including Greece and the Republic of Cyprus.

What is the administration's messaging on this agreement?

Ms. NULAND. With regard to the specific maritime border with Libya, I am going to take that question because I have not personally looked at the Libya situation.

As you know, we have a lot of work to do together on Libya to get to an election and to get to, ideally, a legitimate government that can then take up its own interests in terms of maritime boundaries, et cetera.

So that is something we work on with Greece, something we work on with Turkey, and will continue to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. I would just say it is rather obvious that this agreement with an entity that really is questionable to be able to engage the Government of Libya was drawn in such a way that it is in violation of every international norm of Law of the Sea—the essence of what is recognized as territorial Exclusive Economic Zones. It is provocative, once again.

So my problem with the past administration, and I hope is not going to be a problem with this administration, is that we continue to have the aspirations of what we wanted from Turkey—the bridge between East and West, the strong NATO ally, a more secular government committed on a path to democracy and a respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Under Erdoğan, that is just not the reality. So I sometimes get concerned that we are unwilling to call out that which is pretty obvious. That which is in the gray zone, okay.

What is pretty obvious is pretty obvious. When we fail to recognize it as such, I think we do our nation a disservice and we muddle our message across the globe beyond Turkey, that we are willing to look the other way because there are some other interests involved.

So I can assure you that the committee will be pursuing this with vigor as we continue.

We appreciate your testimony before the committee. This record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow.

With the thanks to the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, committee.

[Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF THE HON. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Human rights violations and other atrocities committed against Kurdish populations in northern Syria by Turkish-sponsored opposition groups are well-documented. The United States must not remain silent in face of extrajudicial killings, mass displacement, property seizures, and related crimes. To what extent is the administration actively raising these concerns with Ankara, and what is State specifically asking be done to rectify the situation?

Answer. We remain concerned by reports that Syrian opposition groups reportedly violated the law of armed conflict and abused human rights in northeast Syria. We have repeatedly raised these concerns with the Turkish Government, the Syrian Interim Government, and the Syrian Opposition Coalition. On July 28, the United States imposed sanctions on the armed Syrian group Ahrar al-Sharqiya and two of its leaders for committing numerous serious human rights abuses across northern Syria. We are equally concerned by and engage on credible accusations against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and SDF-aligned elements that Turkey believes have links to the Kurdistan Workers Party, a U.S. designated terrorist organization.

Question. Following June's Berlin Conference [Second Berlin Conference on Libya], in which the foreign fighters issue featured prominently, what updates can the administration provide concerning progress on this topic, including a potential agreement between Turkey and Russia?

Answer. At the June 23 Second Berlin Conference on Libya, issues surrounding military de-escalation were highlighted, and while still unresolved, the United States is in discussions with Allies, the interim Libyan Government, and others on how progress can be made towards the withdrawal of foreign forces, especially mercenary and proxy groups.

Question. How would the U.S. ensure that any such agreement is fully and efficiently implemented? What is the State Department's messaging to Turkey on this topic, and how is this integrated into the administration's broader bilateral approach to Turkey?

Answer. In Libya, Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24 this year. The administration strongly supports the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021), which requests the U.N. Support Mission in Libya's continued support for the Libyan-led ceasefire monitoring and security sector reform mechanisms, and the withdrawal of all mercenaries, proxy groups, and foreign forces. The United States and its Allies have been working with the U.N. Special Envoy for Libya to encourage more concrete discussions with Turkey and Russia on a withdrawal process, and pushed the issue with both countries bilaterally. A ceasefire monitoring mission will have an important role in verifying the departure of mercenaries and foreign forces.

RESPONSES OF THE HON. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Does Turkey's non-compliant and difficult behavior change how we and our allies think about future NATO expansion? How do our NATO allies feel about Turkey's S-400s?

Answer. Turkey joined NATO in 1952. It has NATO's second-largest military and is a key contributor to Allied missions, including in Afghanistan. Turkey helps constrain Russian influence in the region—both through Ankara's support of Ukraine's and Georgia's sovereignty as well as through Turkey's role in Syria, the Caucasus,

and Libya. Turkey's 2019 acquisition and testing of S-400 surface-to-air missile systems from Russia undermines Allied interoperability and threatens Alliance systems. We and many of our NATO Allies continue to urge Turkey not to retain the S-400 and remind Ankara that any new major Russian arms purchase would risk triggering additional CAATSA sanctions.

Question. What proposals and alternatives has the Biden administration put forth to the Turkish Government to induce them to give up the S-400s?

Answer. Turkey knows exactly what it needs to do to secure relief from existing CAATSA sanctions. Ankara's acquisition and testing of S-400 surface-to-air missile systems from Russia undermines Allied interoperability and threatens Alliance systems. We continue to urge Turkey at every level not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing any additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any major new Russian arms purchases would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020.

Question. In what ways, if any, have issues between the U.S. and Turkey spilled over into NATO relationships and discussions? Have Turkey's actions in Libya had an impact on its standing in NATO? If so, please detail how.

Answer. The United States has a multi-faceted, complex relationship with Turkey, a NATO Ally for 68 years with the Alliance's second-largest military and a significant contributor to NATO operations and missions. In the bilateral relationship, there are areas where we are firmly aligned and there are areas where we are working to close the gaps. Similarly, we seek cooperation with Turkey in NATO on common priorities and engage in dialogue to address disagreements. In Libya, Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24. We and other Allies are also discussing with Turkey and Russia how to reduce the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries there before the elections.

Question. To what extent have the tensions in the U.S.-Turkey relationship affected, either negatively or positively, the military relationship and cooperation between our two nations?

Answer. As you know, Turkey's participation in the F-35 program was suspended, and it has faced CAATSA sanctions. That said, and despite the challenges in our relationship, U.S. strategic interests overlap with Turkey's in many ways, including countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and deterring destabilizing influence in the region. Turkey makes crucial contributions to NATO missions around the world, actively supports Ukrainian and Georgian sovereignty, and works to prevent the Russian-backed Assad regime from precipitating additional humanitarian crises on Europe's doorstep. The United States has a strong interest in keeping Turkey broadly anchored to the Euro-Atlantic community.

Question. Have the purges of the Turkish military since the attempted coup in 2016 in any way affected the U.S.-Turkey political-military relationship? If so, in what way?

Answer. The United States supports Turkish efforts to bring perpetrators of the attempted coup to justice. However, we also urge Turkey to uphold the highest standards of respect for judicial due process, human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions, and the rule of law. Turkey is a NATO Ally and makes crucial contributions to NATO missions around the world. U.S. strategic interests overlap with Turkey's in many ways, including countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and deterring destabilizing influence in the region.

Question. In such a polarized political environment, and with such high levels of anti-Americanism, how has the Embassy in Ankara and our consulates throughout Turkey been able to continue productive engagement with ordinary Turks as well as with civil society? Please provide specific examples.

Answer. Despite challenges, the U.S. Mission to Turkey is connecting with key Turkish audiences via: traditional and social media outreach; educational and cultural exchanges such as the 70-year-old Fulbright Commission; a variety of English language programs; cultural preservation efforts such as for the medieval synagogue of Izmir; public diplomacy grants to civil society partners; regular engagements with civil society leaders at the highest levels of Mission leadership; and four Education USA advising offices and two American Corners.

Question. Turkey's Bayraktar Drones were proven to be quite effective in last year's Nagorno-Karabakh war. Turkey has now begun to sell them to others in the

region, including Ukraine, and NATO allies like Poland have also expressed interest in purchasing them.

What do you see as the impact of the success of the Bayraktar drones on Turkey's larger project to build out an indigenous arms industry?

Answer. Turkey's TB-2 Bayraktar Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) is a highly effective platform. The Bayraktar is particularly effective against Russian and Soviet-origin surface-to-air missile systems, making it a sought-after capability for partners facing potential or actual Russian aggression. As Turkey is a relatively cost-effective supplier of advanced drone technology, it is not surprising that countries are increasingly seeking Turkish UAS solutions. Turkey is one of the top producers and exporters of drones in the world today.

Question. Does the U.S. consider the Bayraktar drones to meet NATO interoperable?

Answer. Turkey's TB-2 Bayraktar drones are not currently enabled for NATO-standard data links. The Bayraktar platform is particularly effective against Russian and Soviet-origin surface-to-air missile systems. Bayraktar drones enabled for NATO interoperability would support defense and Allied deterrence in Eastern Europe.

Question. In the Black Sea, Russia has increased its provocations and is increasingly turning it into a Russian lake. Yet despite its rather nationalistic Blue Homeland naval doctrine, Turkey has not seemed very worried about these developments.

Please assess Turkey's attitudes towards growing Russian strength in the Black Sea?

Answer. Turkey regularly contributes forces and aircraft to NATO air patrol missions, Standing Maritime Groups, and NATO exercises in the Black Sea. Turkey pursues cooperation with Russia in some areas, reflecting Russian political and economic leverage over Turkey through natural gas, tourism, and agricultural revenue. At the same time, Turkey's approach toward countering Russian influence in Libya, Syria, the South Caucasus, and elsewhere largely aligns with our interests. Turkey's arms sales to Ukraine and staunch support for Ukrainian and Georgian sovereignty highlight Turkey's positive role in countering Russia's influence in the Black Sea region.

Question. Do you believe Turkey is working well with fellow NATO allies and Black Sea littoral states Bulgaria and Romania to deter Russia's aggression in the Black Sea? Please provide details in your answer.

Answer. We encourage all Allies—those bordering the Black Sea and all Allies at NATO headquarters—to support deeper NATO engagement in the Black Sea. Turkey regularly contributes forces and aircraft to NATO air patrol missions, Standing Maritime Groups, and NATO exercises in the Black Sea. Turkey pursues cooperation with Russia in some areas, reflecting Russian political and economic leverage over Turkey. At the same time, Turkey's approach toward countering Russian influence in Libya, Syria, the Caucasus, and elsewhere largely aligns with our interests. Turkey's support for Ukrainian and Georgian sovereignty highlight Turkey's positive role countering Russia's influence in the Black Sea region.

Question. What more would the U.S. like to see Turkey do to push back on Russia in the Black Sea?

Answer. Turkey is strengthening relations with countries bordering the Black Sea and taking other actions to counter Russia's influence in the region. Turkey regularly contributes forces and aircraft to NATO air patrol missions, Standing Maritime Groups, and NATO exercises in the Black Sea. While Turkey sometimes limits the ambition of NATO initiatives in the region, it continues to manage access to the Black Sea per the Montreux Convention in a manner that is in line with its treaty obligations and supports many U.S. and Allied military operations. Turkey conducts significant activity on a national basis to support Black Sea deterrence and defense.

Question. Turkish President Erdoğan has increasingly been vocal about his dislike of the 1936 Montreux Convention, the treaty that governs the international use of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits that control access into and out of the Black Sea.

Does the U.S. have any concern that President Erdoğan may try to change the rules surrounding transit through the straits? If so, please enumerate those concerns.

Answer. Turkey continues to manage access to the Black Sea as per the Montreux Convention in a manner that is in line with its treaty obligations and adequately supports U.S. and Allied military operations. In April, President Erdoğan reaffirmed

Turkey's commitment to the Montreux Convention. Any attempt to change the rules surrounding transit through the straits would be provocative and unwelcome.

Question. Please list all arms and technology transfers from the U.S. to Turkey over last 2 years that fall below congressional threshold notification requirements found in the Arms Export Control Act.

Answer. The Department is committed to complying with the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). As you are aware, on December 14, 2020, the Secretary of State, pursuant to Section 231 of CAATSA and in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, imposed sanctions on the Turkish Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB), a Turkish Government entity that purchases defense equipment and has responsibilities for defense industrial development for Turkey, as well as four SSB officials.

The Department has continued to approve cases that are in the U.S. national security and foreign policy interests and consistent with the Arms Export Control Act and the Conventional Arms Transfer policy. I pledge to work with you to ensure that transfers to Turkey continue to adhere to these standards, and I would welcome the opportunity to provide you with a more fulsome briefing about these matters.

Question. Since undersea gas deposits were discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean, coastal nations have been developing strategies to extract and export it. Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, (consisting of Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and a Palestinian representative) have emerged as competitors over the future economic development of the zone.

How is the U.S. engaging with parties to ensure that economic development is executed in a safe, stable, and fair way?

Answer. The United States supports regional cooperation to bring durable energy security to the region, create new markets, and provide economic prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Biden administration is committed to ensuring stability in the Eastern Mediterranean by encouraging peaceful and diplomatic resolutions to disagreements which respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. In addition to our regular and continuous bilateral engagements across the region, we participate in the "3+1" format, which includes Greece, Israel, the ROC, and the United States, and in the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, which Egypt hosts and in which the United States is an observer.

Question. What are the challenges and threats we face surrounding the issue? What are the security implications?

Answer. Recent offshore gas discoveries in Israel, Egypt, and the Republic of Cyprus (ROC), some in disputed waters, have redefined regional relationships and led to political tensions. At the same time, collaborative work in the region in planning for a shared energy future could contribute to improving economic and political cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Effective collaboration can also increase regional energy security through diversification of fuel types and routes for European and Middle Eastern partners, thus reducing regional reliance on Russian and Iranian energy supplies. We continue to promote collaboration toward these ends.

Question. President Biden and his administration have repeatedly made commitments to upholding universal rights at home and abroad. In Turkey, authorities are abusing people's human rights and attacking peaceful dissidents at an alarming scale.

Having promised a rights-centered foreign policy, how is the Biden administration prioritizing human rights in Turkey?

Answer. The Biden administration has elevated democracy, human rights, and rule of law in our bilateral agenda with Turkey. We publicly and privately urge Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and the right to a fair trial, which are important to any healthy democracy. The Department reinforces at the highest levels of the Turkish Government that addressing democratic backsliding could have a positive impact on our bilateral relationship. The Department works with international partners to defend fundamental freedoms and provides foreign assistance to promote human rights, rule of law, media freedom, and freedom of expression in Turkey.

Question. How is Turkey's declining human rights record impacting its relationship with the United States?

Answer. The Biden administration shares your concerns about the Turkish Government's repression of judicial independence, political pluralism, and the freedoms

of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Such repression erodes the foundations of democratic society and stifles growth. It is in our interest to keep Turkey anchored to the transatlantic community. We will continue to press the Turkish Government to do more to protect judicial independence, respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, bolster rule of law, uphold the rules-based international order, and stand united with Western allies in addressing global challenges from Iran, Russia, and the People's Republic of China.

Question. To what extent were human rights part of President Biden's meeting with President Erdogan in June?

Answer. The Biden administration has elevated democracy, human rights, and rule of law in our bilateral agenda with Turkey. The administration will continue to publicly and privately urge Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, and the right to a fair trial, which are important to any healthy democracy. I refer you to the White House for details on President Biden's June meeting with President Erdogan.

Question. Did President Biden express concern about specific rights issues?

Answer. I refer you to the White House for details on President Biden's June meeting with President Erdogan.

Question. Did President Biden raise any specific cases of unjustly detained individuals, such as U.S. locally-employed staff members Metin Topuz, Hamza Ulucay, and Mete Canturk, or civil society leader Osman Kavala?

Answer. President Biden has made it clear that his administration will be focused on promoting democracy and human rights and the rule of law—and Turkey is no exception. The Department regularly raises the cases of our wrongfully prosecuted and detained Locally Employed Staff with the highest levels of the Turkish Government. More broadly, the administration will continue to advocate for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to a fair trial, in Turkey and other countries. For details about President Biden's June meeting with President Erdogan, I refer you to the White House.

Question. In the event the Turkey-Syria border crossings close, what alternatives do we have to get aid to the Syrian people? How can we pressure the Assad regime (and Russia) to provide aid in our stead?

Answer. Following a successful diplomatic campaign to overcome Russian opposition, on July 9 the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2585, which reauthorized humanitarian access into Syria via the Bab al-Hawa crossing from Turkey for the next 12 months. Crossline assistance alone cannot meet existing needs, which is why extending the cross-border mandate at Bab al-Hawa for another year was so important. We also continue to encourage all parties to engage constructively to find ways to enable crossline deliveries. Meeting the Syrian people's needs over the long term requires a political solution. We remain engaged with the U.N., our allies, and our international partners to encourage all possible efforts to advance this track.

Question. Turkey and Russia reportedly reached an understanding to advance the incremental withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya, beginning with the initial withdrawal of 300 Syrian mercenaries from each side.

To what extent does State consider the withdrawal of Russian and Turkish backed foreign forces from Libya a priority?

Answer. The United States is increasing its diplomatic focus on supporting progress in Libya, including through the work of U.S. Special Envoy Richard Norland. The administration strongly supports the operationalization of UNSC resolution 2570 (2021) and full implementation of the October 23 ceasefire, including the withdrawal of all foreign military forces, proxy groups, and mercenaries. The administration continues to engage parties on all sides of the conflict to advance a political solution facilitated by the U.N. that reinforces the sovereignty of the Libyan people and protects the shared interests of the United States, our allies, and partners.

Question. What, if any, leverage does the U.S. have over Russia and Turkey to ensure continued progress on this front? To what extent is the U.S. prepared to use this leverage?

Answer. In Libya, Turkey joins the United States and others in supporting the Libyan-led, U.N.-facilitated political process, including elections on December 24 this year. And we are discussing with Russia, Turkey, and other NATO Allies and

U.N. officials how to reduce the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries there before the elections.

Question. The imminent U.S. and NATO military withdrawal appears to be fueling violence across Afghanistan. As the Taliban continues to rapidly gain ground, seizing control over key district centers and border crossing points, there are growing concerns over the country's future. In order to sustain the gains we've made over the past 20 years, we will need to continue diplomatic focus.

Earlier this summer, Turkey proposed to operate and provide security for Afghanistan's main international airport, provided the U.S. is willing to provide supplemental financial, political and logistical support in exchange.

What is the status of U.S.-Turkish engagement on the security of the airport?

Answer. Following discussions between President Biden and President Erdogan in Brussels, the U.S. and Turkish delegations held technical talks and made progress toward the possible continuation of Turkey's security support at Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai International Airport. Turkey maintaining its security presence at Kabul's airport after NATO's Resolute Support Mission ends would enable the United States and international partners to maintain a diplomatic presence in Afghanistan and sustain international assistance. Technical teams on both sides are working together to finalize this critical arrangement. We remain in close coordination with the Department of Defense, which is leading those technical negotiations.

Question. To what extent is Turkey's acquisition of the Russian S-400 shaping the discussion?

Answer. Turkey maintaining its security presence at Hamid Karzai International Airport after NATO's Resolute Support Mission ends would enable a long-term U.S. and international diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. Technical teams on both sides are working together to finalize this arrangement. We remain in close coordination with the Department of Defense, which is leading those technical negotiations. Separate from those technical negotiations, we also continue to urge Turkey at every level not to retain the S-400 system and remind Ankara that any new major Russian purchase risks additional CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020.

Question. Should talks with Turkey fall through, what steps is the administration willing to take to ensure Hamid Karzai International Airport remains open and continues to operate?

Answer. A major component of sustaining a robust diplomatic presence in Kabul is to maintain a functioning and secure airport in Kabul. We are working with our international partners to identify and dedicate security resources to secure the international zone and secure HKIA, the international airport in Kabul for our diplomats, our personnel, and our continued support to the Government of Afghanistan. We are finalizing discussions with Turkey about a security presence at HKIA now. In the event Turkey instead decides to depart, we are also considering a range of alternative scenarios to secure the airport, including working with other international partners.

Question. If the airport closes, how does the U.S. plan to ensure foreign embassies remain and humanitarian aid is distributed, particularly as the Taliban continues to expand its control over key border crossings?

Answer. The safety and security of our personnel is a top priority for the Department. A major component of sustaining a robust diplomatic presence and providing humanitarian assistance in Kabul is to maintain a functioning and secure airport in Kabul. We are working with our international partners to identify and dedicate resources to ensure security for the international zone and the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA), protect our diplomats and personnel, and maintain continued support to the people of Afghanistan. Both the Department and USAID have developed scenario-based contingency plans to adjust U.S. assistance programming as the operating environment warrants.

RESPONSES OF THE HON. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Democracy Backsliding: As a NATO ally, we expect Turkey to advance democracy and human rights and yet it is moving in the opposite direction. I am very concerned about Turkey's current trajectory. Turkey's abrupt withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, enshrining commitments to improve the status of women, is deeply concerning.

Beyond the White House statement that Turkey and others “should be working to strengthen and renew their commitments to ending violence against women, not rejecting international treaties designed to protect women and hold abusers accountable,” what other actions have been taken by the administration? Did President Biden raise any of these issues during his one-on-one meeting with Erdogan at the NATO summit?

Answer. The administration shares your concerns about democratic backsliding in Turkey. The United States has expressed publicly and privately to Turkey at the highest levels that countries should be working to strengthen and renew their commitments to preventing and responding to all forms of gender-based violence, not rejecting international treaties designed to protect women and hold abusers accountable. The administration will continue publicly and privately to urge Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including women’s rights.

Question. Have we engaged our Allies and partners to increase the pressure on Erdogan?

Answer. The Biden administration has elevated democracy, human rights, and rule of law in our bilateral agenda with Turkey. The administration will continue to publicly and privately urge Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, and the right to a fair trial, which are important to any healthy democracy. We also regularly engage and coordinate with our Allies and partners to urge Turkey to support human rights and fundamental freedoms and to honor its international commitments.

Question. Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP): Banning the political party HDP, which speaks for the Kurdish minority among many others, the country’s third largest, would be a major step backwards for Turkish democracy that would severely damage prospects for a peaceful and enduring resolution to Turkey’s Kurdish conflict.

What is the latest situation on the treatment of the Kurdish-led Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP)? How has the administration engaged Turkey on this issue?

Answer. Opposition pro-Kurdish civil society organizations and political parties continue to experience problems exercising freedoms of assembly and association. Hundreds of Kurdish organizations and Kurdish-language media outlets were closed during the State of Emergency in 2016 and 2017 and remain shut. The United States is closely following efforts to dissolve the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) and impose political bans on many HDP members. We engage continuously with the Turkish Government on our concerns, urging respect for the democratic process as well as fundamental freedoms in line with protections in the Turkish constitution and Turkey’s international obligations.

Question. S-400 and Russian Cooperation: Turkey’s purchase of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system and its exploration of possibly acquiring Russian fighter aircraft are very troubling. I was disappointed that despite President Biden’s efforts during his meeting with Erdogan on the margins of the NATO Summit the issue remains at a standstill.

How is the administration working to engage Turkey on this issue?

Answer. Turkey’s acquisition and testing of S-400 surface-to-air missile systems from Russia undermine Allied interoperability and threaten Alliance systems. We continue to urge Turkey at every level not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing any additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any major new Russian arms purchases would risk triggering additional CAATSA sanctions to those imposed in December 2020. Turkey knows exactly what it needs to do to secure relief from existing CAATSA sanctions.

Question. What steps does the administration plan to take in response to Turkey’s intransigence?

Answer. We continue to urge Turkey at every level not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing any additional Russian materiel. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any major new Russian arms purchases would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020. These sanctions, as well as Turkey’s removal from F-35 aircraft acquisition and co-production, sent a clear message.

RESPONSES OF THE HON. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. According to the Federation of American Scientists, the United States hosts roughly 50 gravity nuclear bombs at Incirlik Air Base in south Turkey. Turkey's government cut power to Incirlik during the 2016 attempted coup. Given the recent rise of human rights violations, frays in our alliance, and a heightened risk for political turmoil, is the administration rethinking its decisions about the placement of weapons and other assets in Turkey accordingly?

Answer. It is the longstanding policy of the United States to neither confirm nor deny the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in any particular country.

Separately on Turkey, it is a long-standing Ally, has NATO's second-largest military, and is a key contributor to Allied missions, including in Afghanistan. We seek cooperation with Turkey on common priorities and engage in dialogue to address disagreements.

Question. President Erdogan recently spoke with President Xi Jinping about the need for Uyghurs to live in peace and equality in China. The hypocrisy of President Erdogan's statement is lost on no one, but Turkey's pressure on China is welcome to continue shedding light on the mass scale of human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Has the State Department engaged with our Turkish counterparts to align our efforts in regards to the genocide being carried out against Uyghurs by the Government of China?

Answer. The United States regularly engages with Turkey to advocate for the protection of those fleeing Xinjiang and for the rights of members of ethnic and religious minority groups inside China. Turkey hosts between 30,000–60,000 Uyghurs, the largest Uyghur population outside Xinjiang. Turkey has welcomed Uyghurs for more than two decades under a variety of visa and immigration statuses. In a recent phone call, President Erdogan reportedly told PRC President Xi that Uyghurs should live in peace as equal citizens of China.

Question. The recently agreed upon extradition treaty between Ankara and Beijing also presents a threat to Chinese Uyghurs in Turkey. How are we engaging with Turkey to make clear that vulnerable Uyghurs must not be sent back to be persecuted by the Chinese Government?

Answer. Embassy officials, including Ambassador Satterfield, regularly meet with the Turkish Government to discuss Turkey's continued support for Uyghurs in the face of Chinese pressure. Turkey hosts between 30,000–60,000 Uyghurs, the largest Uyghur population outside Xinjiang. Turkey has welcomed Uyghurs for more than two decades under a variety of visa and immigration statuses. Senior Turkish officials, including Foreign Minister Cavusoglu in December 2020, continue to publicly assert that Turkey will not accede to PRC requests to forcibly repatriate Uyghur Muslims from Turkey. In a recent phone call, President Erdogan reportedly told PRC President Xi that Uyghurs should live in peace as equal citizens of China.

Question. An area of potential cooperation with Turkey lies on issues related to forward progress and stability in the Balkan Peninsula—Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia, and Kosovo. How are we engaging Turkey to ensure they play a positive role in improving stability in the Balkan region instead of stoking nationalist rhetoric?

Answer. The United States cooperates with Turkey where our interests overlap, including on promoting political stability and economic development. We encourage Turkey to play a constructive role in helping the countries of the Balkans achieve their stated goals of European integration and regional stability. Turkey has a history of opposing Russian malign influence in the region. There are large infrastructure needs throughout the Balkans. Investment is key to unlocking higher growth rates in the region. Turkey can play a positive role.

Question. If there is not significant improvement in the human rights record of the Erdogan Government, which is documented in the 2020 State Department Human Rights Report for Turkey, would the administration support targeted Magnitsky sanctions or visa restrictions under the so-called "Khashoggi Ban" against individuals responsible for such human rights violations and Turkey's democratic backslide?

Answer. President Biden's administration has elevated democracy, human rights, and rule of law in our bilateral agenda with Turkey. The administration will look at all available tools to press Turkey to respect human rights, protect judicial independence and rule of law, support fundamental freedoms, and uphold the rules-based international order. We will apply the Khashoggi Ban as appropriate to pro-

mote accountability for serious, extraterritorial counter-dissident activities that target journalists, activists, and perceived dissidents, and their family members.

Question. Specifically, what is the United States strategy to end Government of Turkey’s abuse of Interpol “red notices” to detain critics abroad, its abductions to include Orhan Inandi, Turkish-Kyrgyz citizen, and its practice of transnational oppression whereby Turkish citizens are targeted in third countries without regard to their due process?

Answer. The Biden administration takes seriously the threat posed by transnational repression. We will continue to encourage Turkey to respect fundamental human rights and its international commitments, as well as encourage third-country partners to resist pressure and follow due process in cases where Turkey pursues politically-motivated deportation. The United States is committed to strengthening international efforts to deter the misuse of INTERPOL Notices by Member States. This includes supporting reforms at INTERPOL and diplomatic outreach.

RESPONSES OF THE HON. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

In your testimony on July 21, 2021, you provided details about a deal between the Biden administration and Germany to allow completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

I asked you about reports that “the Biden White House has been pressuring Ukraine, demanding that they not criticize the deal, and threatening economic support, military support, and threatening President Zelensky directly to cancel the White House meeting with the President, unless they bite their tongues” and support the deal (in June, President Biden had assured President Zelensky in June that he would be invited for a White House meeting in July). You described those reports as “categorically incorrect” and stated “[n]one of us has been pressuring Ukraine.”

I asked you again if it was “your testimony . . . under oath in this committee that nobody in the Biden administration has been pressuring the Ukrainians not to criticize the deal?” You revised what had been your categorical denial: you instead said, “I know of nobody in the administration who has told them how to feel or how to speak about this.”

Within hours of your testimony, Politico published a report confirming and describing a campaign by the Biden administration to pressure the Ukrainians. The report, which was headlined, “Ukraine hits back at pressure from Biden administration over gas pipeline,” included confirmation of the pressure campaign from senior Ukrainian Government officials and provided details about a trip to Kyiv by U.S. State Department counselor Derek Chollet in which he imposed that pressure. The report specifically confirmed that “the pressure campaign by the Biden administration . . . had included a refusal to confirm a date for a visit to the White House” by President Zelensky, which had originally been planned for July.

At roughly the same time, the White House announced it had extended an invitation to President Zelensky, and that the visit would occur on August 30. The new date ensures that President Zelensky won’t be able to engage members of Congress, who on a bipartisan basis continue to oppose the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Question. Is the July 21, 2021, Politico report describing the pressure campaign by the Biden administration inaccurate? If it is inaccurate, what parts are inaccurate?

Answer. As I stated in my testimony, we have taken zero action to silence Ukraine, and I know of no one in the administration who has told the Ukrainians how to feel or how to speak about this.

Question. Did Counselor Chollet participate in any engagements with Ukrainian officials between June 7, 2021 and July 20, 2021, including meetings or calls, in which he urged them to support the developing or finalized U.S.-German deal?

Answer. Counselor Chollet consulted frequently with Ukrainian officials throughout the negotiating process, to seek their input and views on the developing package with Germany and to urge direct Ukrainian-German consultations as well.

Question. Additionally, in any of those engagements, did Ukrainian officials ask for Mr. Chollet to confirm a date for President Zelensky to visit the White House, and he declined to provide a date?

Answer. In early June, the President invited President Zelenskyy to visit the White House later this summer. The White House, which is responsible for the President’s schedule, confirmed the date of the visit prior to the release of the joint

statement, and Mr. Chollet directly advised the Ukrainian Government of the date before it was announced publicly.

Question. And if so, were you aware of the details of those engagements?

Answer. In early June, the President invited President Zelenskyy to visit the White House later this summer. I was aware that the Ukrainians were eager to secure a date for the visit, and was glad to see that the White House, which is responsible for the President's schedule, was able to confirm the date of the visit prior to the release of the joint statement.

Question. Did you personally participate in any engagements with Ukrainian officials between June 7, 2021, and July 20, 2021, including meetings or calls, in which you discussed the developing or finalized U.S.-German deal?

Answer. Yes, we consulted regularly with Ukrainian officials throughout the negotiation process. I discussed Ukrainian security and energy security concerns with Presidential Advisor Yermak on several occasions during this period, and with Foreign Minister Kuleba. I encouraged both to share Kyiv's perspective on NS2 and actions Germany could take to address Ukraine's energy vulnerabilities with us and directly with the German Government.

Question. Additionally, in any of those engagements, did Ukrainian officials ask for you to confirm a date for President Zelenskyy to visit the White House, and you declined to provide a date?

Answer. In early June, the President invited President Zelenskyy to visit the White House later this summer. The White House, which is responsible for the President's schedule, confirmed the date of the visit prior to the release of the joint statement. On several occasions in the intervening period, Ukrainian officials pressed for a date, and I passed those requests on to the White House.

Question. In your testimony, you described consultations with the Ukrainians to provide assurances in response to their Nord Stream 2-related security concerns that occurred "before this consultation with the Germans even began."

When did "this consultation with the Germans" begin?

Answer. We have engaged with Germany at multiple levels since the beginning of this administration, and intensively throughout the course of our diplomatic efforts over the past 2 months on the U.S.-Germany joint statement.

Question. When did those prior consultations with the Ukrainians occur?

Answer. We have engaged with Ukraine at multiple levels since the beginning of this administration, including during the Secretary's May trip to Kyiv, and intensively throughout the course of our diplomatic efforts over the past 2 months on the U.S.-Germany joint statement.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Ukrainians are satisfied with the assurances that the Biden administration has provided in these or other consultations.

Answer. We took note of the Ukraine-Poland joint statement and anticipate continued consultations with Ukraine as we move forward with implementation, and as we look forward to welcoming President Zelenskyy to the White House on August 30 to discuss the full range of bilateral issues.