



COORDINATED EFFORT OF HELLENES

June 8, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Blinken:

As representatives of Greek American organizations who have worked with the United States government to strengthen bilateral relations with Greece and Cyprus and to strengthen US policy in the Eastern Mediterranean, we are writing to express our concern regarding the latest reports regarding F-16 sales to Turkey.

We know that you are well-aware of the list of transgressions Turkey has performed with American weapons, including: its 49-year occupation of Cyprus; its undermining of the anti-ISIS coalition by using F-16s to bomb our Syrian Kurdish partners and in some cases doing so without regard to U.S. troop presence in the area; and providing its F-16s for use in Azerbaijan's outrageous war in Artsakh. But given the present policy considerations, we would like to focus on Turkey's use of American F-16s to challenge Greek sovereignty, to conduct a record number of overflights and airspace violations in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, and to threaten war against Greece.

Several reports, including last week's piece in *Politico* and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's interview with Fareed Zakaria have created the impression that the Biden Administration is willing to trade F-16 sales solely for Turkey's approval of Sweden's NATO accession. With everything at stake in the region and beyond, the United States *can* and *must* demand more.

As civically active Americans concerned with our country's foreign policy, we urge you not to submit to Turkey's strategy of blackmail. Mr. Sullivan declared that Turkey is "charting an independent foreign policy." Since Turkey cannot be counted on to advance Western security

interests or values, any “transaction” with Ankara must ensure that these interests and values are indeed protected.

The American Enterprise Institute’s Michael Rubin recently argued that the greatest threat Turkey poses to NATO is not continuing to hold up Sweden’s accession, but its consistent threats of conflict within NATO. We support Sweden’s accession to NATO and believe that the countries holding it up – whether it be Turkey or Hungary – should face consequences for any continued intransigence. But Greece, which has already approved Sweden’s membership and has played a key role in maintaining Western solidarity and supplying Ukraine with the means to defend itself, should not have its security compromised by attempts to gain Turkey’s support for NATO expansion. NATO is an alliance based on principles and shared fundamental interests and not an organization operated through transactional behavior.

We welcome the calming of tensions between Greece and Turkey and the pause in Turkey’s provocative overflights and airspace violations since the tragic earthquakes in Turkey. Yet we cannot ignore that all of this was negated as President Erdogan and his new Defense Minister once again touted the “Blue Homeland” doctrine – which makes expansive claims against Greek and Cypriot sovereignty and introduces revisionist aspirations in the region – just this week. We also cannot forget that since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Turkey has deployed its F-16 fleet against Greece than it has in support of Ukraine. Finally, since NATO alliance unity interests are constantly cited as a justification for an F-16 deal, we cannot ignore Turkey’s purchase and continued possession of Russian S-400 systems in violation of U.S. law, and that Ankara has effectively served as a sanctions evading mechanism for Vladimir Putin.

Any transfer of F-16s to Turkey must deal with Ankara’s continued belligerence against Greece and must also consider Turkey’s destabilizing use of American weapons in the region, in particular its use of such weapons to continue its occupation of Cyprus. Turkey is threatening the very principles, values and interests that are at stake in Ukraine. As the leader of the Western alliance, the United States must ensure that its weapons cannot be used to undermine the security of its allies. We urge you to make the inviolability of Greece’s territorial integrity and sovereignty a primary consideration in any F-16 sales to Turkey.

We look forward to discussing this issue further with you.

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