

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2020

Hon. Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Hon. Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretaries Pompeo and Esper:

We are extremely concerned about the recent surge in violence along the Armenian-Azerbaijani international border near the village of Tavush. The recent outbreak of violence appears to be part of a deliberate campaign of incitement given the consistent barrage of combative rhetoric and provocative actions taken by from Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his ally, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. While we appreciate the State Department's message dated July 13 that urged calm on both sides of the ongoing conflict, we believe there is more the Trump administration can do to hold Azerbaijan accountable for violating the ceasefire in the short term and to help broker a fair and lasting peace moving forward.

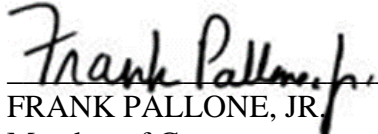
On May 20, we wrote to you about the military exercises that were being held by Azerbaijan from May 18 to 22. We warned that these exercises – paired with the rhetoric of Presidents Aliyev and Erdoğan – would dangerously accelerate tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia and could potentially destabilize security in the South Caucasus. Unfortunately, our concerns appear to be coming true.

To change the course of this conflict, we ask you to take assertive action by strongly encouraging Azerbaijan to accept international monitoring and implement the principles of the 2015 Royce-Engel proposals. These principles include the deployment of gunfire locators, the addition of observers, and the recalling of deployment of snipers, heavy arms, and new weaponry along the Artsakh line-of-contact and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. We also maintain our concerns over the \$100 million in security assistance the United States sent to Azerbaijan over the last two years through the Section 333 Building Partner Capacity program and continue to fear that money will be used by Azerbaijan against Armenia.

The United States should not be aiding and abetting a reckless, autocratic state like Azerbaijan for any reason, especially not when it threatens a democratic partner like Armenia. Once again, we urge you to immediately condemn the reckless actions of the Azerbaijani military and work with our allies and international partners to encourage the Aliyev regime to accept the principles of the Royce-Engel proposals.


We look forward to your prompt reply to this request.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress


GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress


JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress


ADAM B. SCHIFF
Member of Congress