

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our deep concern with Azerbaijan's renewed aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and the rising possibility of a wider conflict with Armenia. We ask that the Administration use all available diplomatic tools to reduce tensions, end the fighting, and restrain Azerbaijan from further offensive actions.

As you know, this weekend Azerbaijan launched the most significant offensive against Artsakh in years, and the resulting conflict has caused substantial casualties and damage on both sides. This action is a continuation of increasingly bellicose rhetoric from President Aliyev and his regime towards Artsakh and Armenia, including the threat earlier this year by the Azerbaijani Minister of Defense to bomb an Armenian nuclear power plant. The sustained and coordinated nature of this action makes clear this attack is qualitatively distinct from previous exchanges of sniper fire or artillery across the line of contact, but appears to represent a planned military operation.

Of additional concern is that Azerbaijan is receiving material assistance and encouragement from Turkey in taking this action. Turkey's involvement raises the danger of a sustained regional conflict that would be a humanitarian disaster and undermine important U.S. national security priorities.

In our view, this new round of fighting represents further evidence that the U.S. policy of equivalence between Armenia and Azerbaijan has failed. For far too long, the United States and other members of the Minsk Group have drawn a false equivalence between Armenia and Azerbaijan, even as the latter threatens war and refuses to agree to monitoring along the line of contact.

The United States has provided tens of millions of dollars in military assistance to Azerbaijan in recent years, while seemingly remaining unable or unwilling to restrain the Aliyev government from offensive military actions or gross human rights violations. This policy is a failure, and we must choose a different course.

In light of recent developments, we call upon the Department of State to take the following steps:

- 1) Clearly and unequivocally condemn Azerbaijan's unprovoked aggression, and make clear that if they do not exercise restraint it will call into question the continuance of U.S. assistance;

2) Work with the OSCE Minsk Group to call upon the Aliyev government to cease all offensive uses of force against both Artsakh and Armenia, and to commit to a purely peaceful resolution of status and security issues related to Artsakh;

3) Work with the Minsk Group to press Azerbaijan to accept international monitoring along the line of contact, as called for in the Royce-Engel proposals; and;

4) Engage at a senior level with Turkey to make clear that the encouragement of Azerbaijan's recent actions is detrimental to the cause of peace and regional stability.

Thank you for your attention to these requests. We stand ready to meet with you and to work with your colleagues toward a peaceful, durable, and democratic resolution of Artsakh status and security issues.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s
Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

/s
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

/s
Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

/s
TJ Cox
Member of Congress

/s
Mike Garcia
Member of Congress

/s
David Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s
Andy Levin
Member of Congress

/s
Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

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Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress

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Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

/s
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

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Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

/s
Albio Sires
Member of Congress

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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

/s
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

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Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

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Judy Chu
Member of Congress

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Jim McGovern
Member of Congress

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Dina Titus
Member of Congress

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John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

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Brian Mast
Member of Congress

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Maxine Waters
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Jan Schakowsky
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Grace Meng
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Jason Crow
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Ted Deutch
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Tony Cardenas
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Lou Correa
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Lori Trahan
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Josh Harder
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John Moolenaar
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Alan Lowenthal
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Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

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Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

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Christopher H. Smith
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Jim Langevin
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Ted Lieu
Member of Congress

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Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

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Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

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Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

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Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

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Steve King
Member of Congress

/s
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

/s
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress