



June 7, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

On behalf of the worldwide membership of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA), the leading association for the nation's millions of Americans of Hellenic heritage and Philhellenes, I write to request the U.S. Department of State stop the proposed sale of approximately 1,600 semi-automatic pistols to a Turkish-controlled intermediary, which in turn, would sell them to the Turkish agency that provides security for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹

The brutal attack upon peaceful American protesters on American soil perpetrated by the very security detail this proposed weapons sale would arm received broad, bipartisan condemnation from members of both chambers of Congress. The House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats held an extensive briefing to examine the incident. Yesterday, the House of Representatives resoundingly passed a resolution sponsored by Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce and Ranking Member Eliot Engel, condemning the attack and calling for the perpetrators be brought to justice. Finally, you rightfully called the violence "unacceptable" and took proper action to call the Turkish ambassador to the State Department for rebuke.²

The attack was an assault on the First Amendment Constitutional rights of American citizens and not the first one carried-out by the Turkish president's security detail in the United States. There have been three. Undoubtedly, if the State Department approves this proposed arms sale to the perpetrators of this brutal assault on American citizens, it condones the security detail's thuggish actions and contradicts the strong and certain message of condemnation conveyed rightfully by the U.S. House of Representatives and you.

Sincerely,

Andrew C. Zachariades
President

Founded in 1922 in Atlanta, Georgia, on the principles that undergirded its fight for civil rights and against discrimination, bigotry, and hatred felt at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan, AHEPA is the largest and oldest grassroots association of American citizens of Greek heritage and Philhellenes with more than 400 active chapters across the United States, Canada, and Europe.

AHEPA's mission is to promote the ancient Greek ideals of Education, Philanthropy, Civic Responsibility, and Family and Individual Excellence through community service and volunteerism.

¹ "Gun Deal in Jeopardy for Turkish Guards Who Beat Protesters," Nicholas Fandos, *New York Times*, June 1, 2017, accessed <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/us/politics/turkey-guns-us-protest.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&smid=tw-nytimes&smtyp=cur&r=0>

² "Rex Tillerson scolds Turkey's ambassador over attack on protesters," John Siciliano, *Washington Examiner*, May 21, 2017, accessed <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/rex-tillerson-scolds-turkeys-ambassador-over-attack-on-protesters/article/2623744>