

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 7, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write in response to ongoing reports over the past several months that Turkey is seeking relief from CAATSA sanctions and readmission into the F-35 program. These reports were most recently and explicitly reinforced by Turkish President Erdogan's statement at the NATO summit that "talks at a technical level have started" with the United States. We strongly urge the Administration to review the facts and reject Turkey's attempt to rewrite the history of its violation of U.S. law and national security policy.

In 2017, President Trump signed the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which imposed sanctions on Russia, Iran, and North Korea, and authorized sanctions on entities conducting significant transactions with Russia's defense or intelligence sectors. Despite extensive U.S. engagement, Turkey moved forward that same year with its purchase of Russia's S-400 surface-to-air missile defense system.

The S-400 poses a direct threat to U.S. aircraft, including the F-16 and F-35. If operated alongside these platforms, it risks exposing sensitive military technology to Russian intelligence. In 2019, after repeated warnings and Turkey's refusal to reverse course, the Trump Administration removed Turkey from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.

The F-35 is the cornerstone of U.S. aerial superiority and a pillar of allied defense cooperation. The program is also a major driver of our defense industrial base, and represents decades of American innovation, investment, and technological leadership.

Nearly a decade later, Turkey still possesses S-400 systems and has shown no willingness to comply with U.S. law. This behavior cannot be rewarded. Lifting sanctions or allowing Turkey back into the F-35 program without first removing its S-400s would jeopardize the integrity of F-35 systems; expose U.S. military secrets to Russian intelligence; undermine our defense industrial base and allied confidence in purchasing future U.S. platforms; and disrupt development of the next-generation fighter jet recently announced by the Administration.

This is not a partisan issue. Congress has consistently supported CAATSA sanctions and Turkey's removal from the F-35 program across multiple administrations and with bipartisan support. We urge the Administration to uphold U.S. law, maintain CAATSA sanctions, and protect American defense and intelligence assets. We must continue to hold allies and adversaries alike accountable when their actions threaten U.S. interests.

We stand firmly in support of our servicemembers, our defense industrial base, and preserving United States leadership in global aerospace and defense capabilities, and we urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress




Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



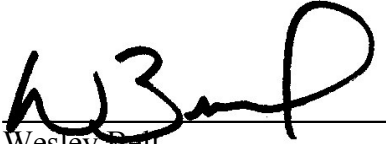
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



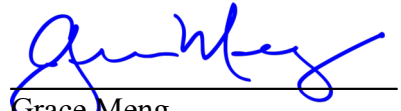
Mike Haridopolos
Member of Congress



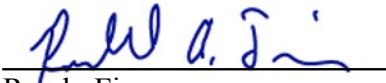
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



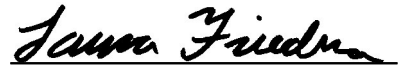
Wesley Bell
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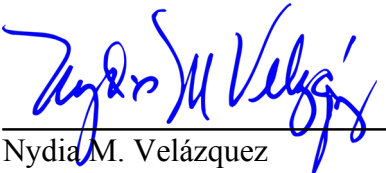
Grace Meng
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Randy Fine
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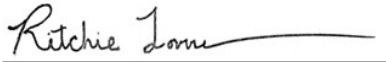
Laura Friedman
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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Ritchie Torres
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Robert J. Menendez
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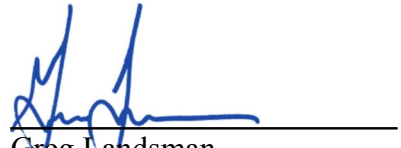
Maria Elvira Salazar
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Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



George Latimer
Member of Congress



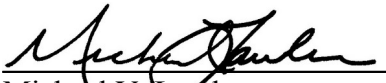
Greg Landsman
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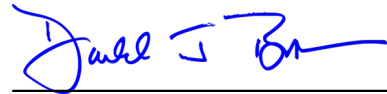
Maggie Goodlander
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Ted W. Lieu
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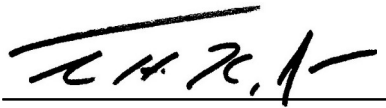
Don Bacon
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Mario Diaz-Balart
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
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Charles J. "Chuck"
Fleischmann
Member of Congress



Jimmy Patronis
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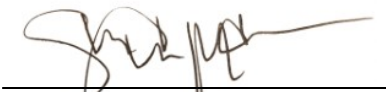
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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Gabe Amo
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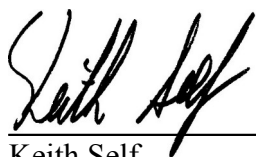
Jeff Hurd
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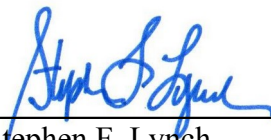
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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Mike Quigley
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Keith Self
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Lois Frankel
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Darrell Issa
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