

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEES:

AGING

ARMED SERVICES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

JUDICIARY

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

706 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

(202) 224-2823
FAX: (202) 224-9673

90 STATE HOUSE SQUARE, TENTH FLOOR
HARTFORD, CT 06103

(860) 258-6940
FAX: (860) 258-6958

915 LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD, SUITE 304
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

(203) 330-0598
FAX: (203) 330-0608

<http://blumenthal.senate.gov>

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Pence,

I write regarding several reports concerning Michael Flynn's work on the Trump transition team and in the Trump White House raising serious concerns about his actions on behalf of foreign governments. As you well know, former FBI Director James Comey was fired by President Trump after the president asked him to "let go" of an ongoing investigation into Mr. Flynn's conduct. As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am deeply concerned about Mr. Flynn's potential illicit conflicts of interest—central to our investigation of possible obstruction of justice by the Administration. Moreover, as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, I am particularly alarmed about the potential separation of powers issues that are raised by the president and his subordinates attempting to obstruct enforcement of the laws passed by Congress.

A recent report in the *Wall Street Journal* indicated that Michael Flynn was offered \$15 million to deliver Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish exile living in the United States, to Turkey, where he would almost certainly face politically motivated charges at the hands of the Erdoğan government.¹ Mr. Flynn reportedly met with Turkish government officials in New York during the presidential transition in December 2016. This meeting took place while Mr. Flynn was serving as a vice-chair of the Trump transition team and after he had accepted then President-elect Trump's offer to be his National Security Advisor.

According to the FBI, during this meeting Mr. Flynn and the Turkish officials discussed potentially illegal ways to transfer Mr. Gülen from the United States to Turkey outside of the formal extradition process, including the possibility of abducting Mr. Gülen. This conversation was reportedly a follow up to an earlier meeting between Mr. Flynn and Turkish officials in September 2016, when the topic of forced rendition of Mr. Gülen was also discussed. Former CIA Director Jim Woolsey, who attended the September meeting at the invitation of one of Mr. Flynn's

¹ James V. Grimaldi, Shane Harris & Aruna Viswanatha, *Mueller Probes Flynn's Role in Alleged Plan to Deliver Cleric to Turkey*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Nov. 10, 2017, 5:33 AM), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mueller-probes-flynn-role-in-alleged-plan-to-deliver-cleric-to-turkey-1510309982>.

associates, described Mr. Gülen's forced rendition as "possibly illegal"² and "a covert step in the dead of night to whisk this guy away."³

Equally troubling is another recent report in the *Washington Post* alleging that Mr. Flynn used his position in the White House to push business proposals with ties to Russia and China that were backed by his former clients.⁴ Mr. Flynn reportedly advocated for the development of a so-called Marshall Plan for the Middle East, based on a proposal that was being pushed by IP3, a company he had advised during the campaign, right up until just weeks before he became National Security Advisor. IP3's plan to build nuclear power plants in the Middle East was similar to that of another one of Mr. Flynn's former clients, ACU Strategic Partners, which sought cooperation with Russian interests. Mr. Flynn's actions once again strongly suggest possible conflicts of interest while he was working on the transition team and in the White House.

Also of concern is Mr. Flynn's possible role in pressuring then-U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara to drop the prosecution of Reza Zarrab, the Turkish-based businessman who has been charged with violating sanctions against Iran. Various credible reports indicate that the Erdoğan government has a strong interest in seeing the charges against Zarrab dropped, and the Zarrab case was reportedly raised in the same December meeting where Mr. Gülen was discussed.⁵ Given that Mr. Flynn has worked as a lobbyist and an agent of the Erdoğan government, this issue presents yet another instance of conflicts of interest during the transition and in the White House.

I am deeply troubled by these reports and the possibility that Mr. Flynn was acting as a lobbyist on behalf of foreign nations within the Trump transition and Administration. I write to you because, as chairman of the Trump transition team, you were responsible for overseeing Mr. Flynn. It is imperative that we learn the full extent of Mr. Flynn's hidden lobbying for special interests or foreign interests while on the transition team and in the White House, as well as any undisclosed work he did for the Russian or Turkish governments, so that we may know his legal liability.

Accordingly, I request that you provide all information and any relevant documents pertaining to the following questions:

² Andrew Kent, *The Michael Flynn Scandal Just Got A Lot Worse*, FORTUNE (Mar. 27, 2017), <http://fortune.com/2017/03/27/michael-flynn-turkey-russia/>.

³ James V. Grimaldi, Dion Nissenbaum & Margaret Coker, *Ex-CIA Director: Mike Flynn and Turkish Officials Discussed Removal of Erdogan Foe From U.S.*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Mar. 24, 2017, 2:35 PM), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ex-cia-director-mike-flynn-and-turkish-officials-discussed-removal-of-erdogan-foe-from-u-s-1490380426>.

⁴ Greg Jaffe, Carol D. Leonnig, Michael Kranish & Tom Hamburger, *Inside the White House, Michael Flynn pushed proposal from company he said he had advised*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Nov. 28, 2017, 7:35 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/inside-the-white-house-michael-flynn-pushed-proposal-from-company-he-had-advised/2017/11/28/445da6f0-d454-11e7-b62d-d9345ced896d_story.html?utm_term=.2b8e53516347.

⁵ Katie Zavadski, *Feds Flip Turkish Crook; Did He Rat on Michael Flynn?*, THE DAILY BEAST (Nov. 28, 2017, 9:29 AM), <https://www.thedailybeast.com/turkish-businessman-reza-zarrab-pleads-guilty-with-possible-implications-for-michael-flynn>; see also Carol E. Lee and Julia Ainsley, *Mueller Probing Possible Deal Between Turks, Flynn During Presidential Transition*, NBC NEWS (Nov. 10, 2017, 7:44 AM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mueller-probing-possible-deal-between-turks-flynn-during-presidential-transition-n819616>.

- Did Mr. Flynn at any time disclose that he had been offered \$15 million to deliver Mr. Gülen to Turkey?
- What role did Mr. Flynn play in discussions within the transition team related to possible extradition of Mr. Gülen to Turkey, either by legal means or by extraordinary rendition?
- What role did Mr. Flynn play in advancing the IP3 “Marshall Plan” proposal described in the *Washington Post* article within the Trump transition team?
- Did Mr. Flynn at any time disclose that he had previously been a consultant for IP3, a private company that had developed the proposal for a “Marshall Plan” for the Middle East, and stood to benefit from such a policy?
- What role did Mr. Flynn play in discussions within the transition team or the Administration related to the prosecution by Preet Bharara of Reza Zarrab?
- Who on the Trump transition team was aware of Mr. Flynn’s relationship with the following entities:
 - The government of Russia
 - The government of Turkey
 - The government of China
 - IP3
 - ACU Strategic Partners

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Constitution
Senate Committee on the Judiciary