

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2014

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Prime Minister
The Republic of Turkey
Embassy of Turkey
2525 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

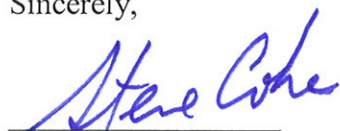
Dear Prime Minister Erdoğan,

As co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkish Relations and Turkish Americans, we are viewed by our colleagues as advocates for strong ties with your country. Indeed, each of us understands and values the important and historical relationship between the United States and Turkey and we have worked over the years to educate our colleagues about the importance of the relationship between our countries. Our common goal is to improve those relationships in a way that is beneficial and sustainable for both of our countries politically and economically.

It has come to our attention that remarks you have made recently have been widely viewed as anti-Semitic and are most definitely anti-Israel. Your remarks, already reviled as “offensive and wrong” by the U.S. State Department, make it increasingly difficult to communicate in a positive way about Turkey when interacting with our colleagues. Your statement: “You can see that what Israel does to Palestine, to Gaza right now, has surpassed what Hitler did to them” is historically inaccurate and provocative. Many countries around the world are focused on working towards peace in the Middle East, and at one time Turkey was considered among them. Your recent comments, however, do nothing to end violence but rather could serve to instigate further hatred.

We remain strong supporters of robust U.S.-Turkey relations and hope that you will consider the impact that such inflammatory rhetoric has on our relationship.

Sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress



Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



Gerald Connolly
Member of Congress