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August 2, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on National Security, I strongly urge you to exercise your constitutional authority under Art. II, Sec. II, Cl. 2, to nominate qualified personnel to fill ambassadorial vacancies at critical U.S. diplomatic posts in the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other areas.

According to the *American Foreign Service Association*, there are nearly forty ambassadorial vacancies at key U.S. embassies worldwide for which you have not yet nominated individuals for United States Senate confirmation.

The absence of U.S. ambassadors at our diplomatic missions in Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia poses a serious challenge to the effectiveness of our counterterrorism operations and diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. This region is defined by a heightened state of conflict stemming from ongoing civil wars in Syria and Yemen, the escalating use of guerilla tactics by the remaining pockets of the Islamic State, and other destabilizing events. It is also marked by the deployment of more than 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria and an estimated 6,000 troops still deployed in Iraq. National security demands the presence of permanent U.S. diplomatic leadership in the region.

The U.S. also does not have an ambassador in Pakistan. This nation is a focus of your new *Strategy in South Asia* considering the continuing challenge of Al Qaeda and Islamic State affiliate activity in Pakistan and its Federally-Administered Tribal Areas. The State Department has also consistently cited Pakistan as providing safe havens for terrorist groups. Moreover, this week witnessed national parliamentary elections that could significantly affect Pakistan's erratic counterterrorism and diplomatic relationship with the U.S. through the emergence of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. Our security efforts in the region would greatly benefit from the appointment of a qualified U.S. ambassador to serve at U.S. Embassy, Islamabad.

In Africa, American Green Berets, U.S. Navy SEALs, and other commandos are on the ground under so-called Section 127(e) Special Operations Authority. These units are undertaking perilous

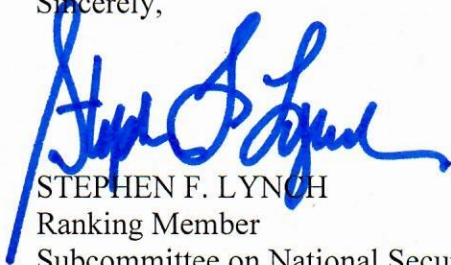
counterterrorism raids with partner forces in Libya and other nations. We also have a significant military presence in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, where deployed American forces serve in a peacekeeping capacity in a region that continues to be subject to terrorist attacks by the Islamic State's Sinai Province affiliate and other groups. Despite these critical operations, neither Libya nor Egypt has a U.S. ambassador. The U.S. diplomatic missions in South Africa, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Eritrea, Madagascar and Comoros are also lacking ambassadors.

In Mexico, president-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the leftist MORENA party has indicated that he will seek a good working relationship with the U.S. However, the nature of future bilateral cooperation on critical security, counter-narcotics, migration, and economic issues remains unclear. Both the U.S. and Mexico are continuing to resolve the confusion stemming from U.S. immigration enforcement policy on family separations at the U.S.-Mexico border. U.S.-Mexico negotiations regarding the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement are also ongoing. Amid these developments, we do not have a U.S. ambassador in Mexico.

The lack of ambassadorial leadership also extends to important intergovernmental institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ("OECD"). As an international body that analyzes and coordinates global economic policy on behalf of its 36 member nations, the OECD houses the Financial Action Task Force ("FATF") at its headquarters in Paris, France and works closely with FATF to combat the threat of terrorist financing and money laundering to the international banking system. OECD also coordinates national approaches to curbing the illicit use of offshore tax havens. The OECD's work in this area is particularly relevant to U.S. national security given that evidence included in the so-called "*Panama Papers*" indicated that entities seeking to set up shell companies through a Panamanian law firm had ties to North Korea, the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and other subjects of U.S. anti-terrorism sanctions. Regrettably, you have not nominated a U.S. ambassador to the OECD. Panama also lacks a U.S. ambassador.

In furtherance of U.S. national security and our efforts to safeguard deployed U.S. military and civilian personnel worldwide, it is imperative that you fulfill your constitutional duty and name qualified individuals to serve as U.S. ambassadors at these and other critical diplomatic posts with ambassadorial vacancies. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security

cc: The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State