

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 354

Condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. HOYER, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. GOODLATTE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Whereas, on May 16, 2017, President Donald J. Trump hosted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, a longstanding NATO ally, for an official meeting at the

White House to discuss counterterrorism cooperation and bilateral issues;

Whereas, on the evening of May 16, 2017, over two dozen protesters gathered outside of the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC, to demonstrate opposition to Turkish government policies;

Whereas after hours of peaceful protest, violence erupted when pro-Erdogan supporters and individuals from the Turkish Embassy grounds pushed past District of Columbia police officers to brutally attack the demonstrators;

Whereas those Turkish officials blatantly suppressed the First Amendment rights of United States citizens, and multiple armed Turkish security officials beat, kicked, and choked unarmed demonstrators;

Whereas multiple video recordings of the violence and reports by the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia and the Department of State confirm that the demonstrators did not instigate the violence;

Whereas at least 11 individuals were seriously injured in the ensuing brawl, with two individuals requiring immediate hospitalization;

Whereas two armed Turkish security officers attached to a security detail were detained at the scene for physically assaulting Federal agents;

Whereas those two Turkish security officers were later released and subsequently allowed to leave the United States because they held Derived Head of State immunity;

Whereas the Department of State did not request that Turkey waive the immunity for these two security officers in

order to fully investigate the assault prior to their being released from custody;

Whereas a joint criminal investigation into the incident is ongoing with the combined efforts of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department, the United States Secret Service, and the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service;

Whereas at no point was President Erdogan in danger;

Whereas immunity for diplomatic personnel and certain other foreign officials is a core principle, as is the right to protest peacefully and freely in the United States;

Whereas this is the third instance of violence perpetrated by members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail in United States territory;

Whereas in 2011, a brawl erupted in the halls of the United Nations General Assembly between members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail and United Nations security officers, resulting in one United Nations security officer being hospitalized due to serious injuries;

Whereas in 2016, members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail engaged in unwarranted violence against journalists reporting on an event at the Brookings Institution;

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on May 21, 2017, that the violence outside the Turkish Embassy was "outrageous" and "simply unacceptable"; and

Whereas the right to assembly, peaceful protest, and freedom of speech are essential and protected rights in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 representatives that—

3 (1) the rights to peacefully assemble and freely
4 express one’s views are essential to the fabric of
5 American democracy;

6 (2) the Turkish security forces acted in an un-
7 professional and brutal manner, reflecting poorly on
8 President Erdogan and the Government of Turkey;

9 (3) any Turkish security officials who directed,
10 oversaw, or participated in efforts by Turkish secu-
11 rity forces to illegally suppress peaceful protests on
12 May 16, 2017, should be charged and prosecuted
13 under United States law;

14 (4) the United States Secret Service and the
15 Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of
16 State should review this incident and confirm with
17 the Turkish National Police the standards expected
18 by visiting security details to prevent future violent
19 incidents;

20 (5) the Department of State should immediately
21 request the waiver of immunity of any Turkish secu-
22 rity detail official engaged in assault in the United
23 States prior to release of that individual from cus-
24 tody;

1 (6) the Department of State should conduct a
2 review of its own security procedures to determine
3 how to mitigate the likelihood of such an event in
4 the future;

5 (7) the United States respect for free speech re-
6 quires officials of the United States to speak out
7 against such incidents; and

8 (8) the United States should take steps to
9 strengthen freedoms for the press and civil society in
10 countries such as Turkey, and combat efforts by for-
11 eign leaders to suppress free and peaceful protest in
12 their own countries.

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