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April 10, 2018

The Honorable Bob Corker  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Menendez,

In advance of the upcoming confirmation hearings on the nomination of CIA Director Mike Pompeo to serve as United States Secretary of State, the Anti-Defamation League ("ADL") urges you and your colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee to closely examine Mr. Pompeo's views on the role of the Secretary of State and the State Department in promoting the foreign policy of the United States and representing the highest American human rights values abroad.

We hope that you can probe the nominee on several specific topics that relate to his past views and to his future responsibilities as our prospective US Secretary of State. While we have some areas of agreement with Mr. Pompeo, we have deep concerns about his nomination based on his stated views and past behaviors. We trust that the Committee will question him rigorously on these topics in order to assure the American people that he can deliver on the responsibilities of this important position in his service to his country.

- 1) The need to oppose all forms of intolerance, including anti-Muslim sentiment
- 2) The Need for United States Leadership Against Global Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Hate
- 3) Upholding America's Commitment to a Safe and Secure Israel at Peace with its Neighbors
- 4) US Leadership Against Iranian Aggression
- 5) The Need for Strong American Leadership in Support of Marginalized Communities Abroad
- 6) Rising Sectarian and Religious Violence in the Middle East
- 7) U.S. Leadership to Counter International Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Ethnic Cleansing

**1) The need to oppose all forms of intolerance including anti-Muslim sentiment**

As detailed below, ADL believes that, other than the President, the Secretary of State is the most significant position affecting the foreign policy of the United States. The person holding this most sensitive role must exemplify our most cherished values including the highest standards of respect and tolerance. And therefore it is troubling that the President has selected Mr. Pompeo, an individual who has been closely tied to individuals and organizations that have exhibited unequivocal bias against Muslims and members of the LGBTQ community. We have great concern regarding Mr. Pompeo's long history

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of making anti-LGBTQ and anti-Muslim statements – and his close associations with organizations that have frequently expressed hostility to Muslims and trafficked in anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. We believe that these tendencies as well as Mr. Pompeo’s own statements propagating such conspiracy theories, risks jeopardizing the credibility of the United States on these issues and could imperil his ability to represent all Americans in the highest foreign policy position in the federal government.

Throughout his career in politics, Mr. Pompeo has demonstrated a consistent pattern of casting doubt in the minds of constituents about the trustworthiness of their Muslim neighbors. Though he has sometimes hedged his comments by limiting them to Muslims who belong to “radical Islam,” he does not define or limit that term. Instead, he has referred to, and reiterated the false claim time and again, that the purported dangers posed by American Muslims in “small towns all throughout America”<sup>1</sup> and “in many mosques across America.”<sup>2</sup> He has stated that “it’s not just in...faraway places; this evil is all around us.”<sup>3</sup>

The Anti-Defamation League is deeply troubled by Mr. Pompeo’s statements – because we have seen this before. The allegations he levels against American Muslims – that they may be part of a plot against America, that they are not to be trusted, that they are loyal to a poorly defined global conspiracy that is fundamentally incompatible with American ideals – are allegations which have been leveled against Jews in the long history of anti-Semitism.

A selection of Mr. Pompeo’s comments is illustrative of our concerns.

In the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing when responsible leaders were attempting to calm interfaith tensions, Mr. Pompeo did the opposite. In a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives, he set forth an insulting and lengthy script that he demanded American Muslim leaders repeat in order to absolve themselves of being “potentially complicit” in both past and future terrorist attacks perpetrated by Muslims. He demanded that this script, which included his own formulations on how to interpret the Quran and Islamic traditions, be made “publicly, frequently, and in the mosques...and the madrasas where many learn their Islamic religion.” Despite the numerous and repeated condemnations of extremism that Muslims and Muslim leaders had voiced, then-Rep. Pompeo said that “silence in the face of extremism coming from the best funded Islamic advocacy organizations, and many mosques across America, is absolutely deafening. It casts doubt upon the commitment to peace by adherents of the Muslim faith.”<sup>4</sup>

In a radio interview with notorious anti-Muslim advocate Frank Gaffney in 2014, Mr. Pompeo promoted the conspiracy theory that a fifth column of Muslims exists in the United States with the express purpose of undermining the country:

There are organizations and networks here in the United States tied to radical Islam in deep and fundamental ways, and they’re not just in places like Libya, and Syria, and Iraq, but in places like Coldwater, Kansas and small towns all throughout America. This network is real. The efforts to expand the caliphate are not limited to the physical geography of the Middle East or in the other places where there are large Muslim majorities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Secure Freedom Radio interview, December 3, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> June 11, 2013 remarks on the House floor. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?313224-1/morning-hour>

<sup>3</sup> “God and Country Rally,” Summit Church, June 28, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sO0opXYM52w>

<sup>4</sup> June 11, 2013 remarks on the House floor. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?313224-1/morning-hour>

<sup>5</sup> Secure Freedom Radio interview, December 3, 2014.

Another extremely troubling statement by Mr. Pompeo occurred in November, 2015, when he advocated using law enforcement to “pull from the streets” any Muslim who he deems is part of a poorly defined radical Islamic “network,” even if that person’s only action is “communicating with” or “talking to” others in that network. When opposing radical Islam, he said, “my judgment is that we need to go well past what is violent extremism.” He suggested that, for Muslims who are part of these “networks,” merely “talking about your faith” is tantamount to “putting people in my neighborhood at risk.”<sup>6</sup> The notion that Mr. Pompeo supports using the apparatus of state to “pull from the streets” Muslims for engaging in protected First Amendment activity is highly troubling.

And Mr. Pompeo believes that problems follow Islam beyond the confines of the Middle East. At a 2015 speech at the Westminster Institute in MacLean Virginia, in answering a question about how much the United States can be a force for good in the Middle East, Pompeo responded that the problem in the Middle East “is a problem inside of [the Muslim] faith and that faith extends to places outside of the Middle East as well.” He continued:

And so I don’t think that you can define the challenge by geography but rather we have a military, political, and diplomatic challenge and a faith-driven challenge to figure out how to contain what is not a small minority inside the Islamic faith that believes in much of what it is we are facing in the Middle East today and the threats that we face here in America as well.<sup>7</sup>

Speaking at Summit Church in 2015, Mr. Pompeo repeated the theme:

It’s not just in these faraway places. This evil is all around us. And we, as Pastor Wright spoke in his prayer, have an obligation to speak out against it. Sometimes they’ll call us Islamophobes or they’ll say we’re bigoted. I’ve had each of those bestowed upon me. I’ve been call a tool of the Jews. But it will never destroy me and I hope none of you...<sup>8</sup>

In addition to his own statements, Mr. Pompeo has shown a deeply disturbing willingness to associate with extreme anti-Muslim voices, especially Frank Gaffney, who runs an influential Islamophobic organization called the Center for Security Policy. Mr. Gaffney frequently promotes anti-Muslim conspiracy theories and stereotypes American Muslims as a disloyal potential fifth

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<sup>6</sup> Wichita Pachyderm Club, November 20, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3B1KLyEz7k4>.

“I think we all had hoped that it would stay someplace else, and wouldn’t come to our shores. But the director of the FBI talked about 50 states. You should know, about once every three months I meet with the law enforcement national security folks who are working here in Kansas, and get the list of the terror investigations that are taking place in Kansas. And I’ll share with you what I can in an unclassified setting; it’s not a two minute briefing. It takes a while to go through the list of the work that they’re engaged in, and it’s around us. And every bit of that investigation involves folks who are extremists for sure, and every one of them has some connection to Islamic extremism around the world. In some cases, it’s just, it’s not violent, but my judgment is that we need to go well past what is a violent extremism. If you are communicating with talking to, facilitating, providing resources and money for educating, training, helping, assisting, and you are part of that network you are someone who America has every right and indeed an obligation to pull from the streets. We have deep constitutional commitments, to what we allow people to do. You all want to be able to say let’s talk about your faith. I talk about mine all the time I want everyone to be able to do that, but when you begin to engage with networks around the world that are part of jihadist organizations, you’re no longer talking about your faith but you’re putting people in my neighborhood at risk. And so there’s an awful lot of work to do.”

<sup>7</sup> The Westminster Institute, December 1, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxrUg0yqNho>

<sup>8</sup> “God and Country Rally,” Summit Church, June 28, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sO0opXYM52w>

column in the United States. Mr. Pompeo has appeared on Gaffney's radio show at least twenty times,<sup>9</sup> and spoke at the CSP's 2015 "Defeat Jihad Summit."<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Pompeo has also closely associated with Brigitte Gabriel, the head of ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim organization in the US. He accepted ACT's National Security Eagle Award in 2016, which is described as the organization's "highest honor."<sup>11</sup> At least once, Mr. Pompeo obtained space for ACT to conduct an event in the U.S. Capitol.<sup>12</sup> Mr. Pompeo himself spoke at these events in 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016. In late 2016, ACT sent a mailer to their followers boasting that "new CIA Director Mike Pompeo has been a steadfast ally of ours since the day he was elected to Congress." In that same letter, which was signed by its founder Brigitte Gabriel, Gabriel said that "It's time we start monitoring the radical Mosques, which preach poisonous, anti-American hatred to their attendees."<sup>13</sup>

In light of this background of anti-Muslim statements and close associations with anti-Muslim groups, we urge you to ask the nominee questions on this topic:

- **Do you disavow the harsh anti-Muslim rhetoric of groups with whom you have previously had connections, such as the Center for Security Policy and ACT for America? Will you commit to never holding an official meeting as Secretary of State with people who espouse hateful views of any major religion and its adherents, including Islam and Muslims, thus potentially excluding individuals such as Frank Gaffney, Pamela Geller, and Brigitte Gabriel?**
- **Do you believe that extremism is a fundamental element of traditional Muslim religious belief? Will you affirm that Islam, as practiced by the vast majority of American Muslims, is fundamentally compatible with democracy and commit to not calling this affirmation into question in the future?**
- **Do you believe that a network of Muslims in the United States is currently attempting to impose Shariah law over American citizens, or to create a caliphate in our country? Do you believe that American Muslims are waging a cultural "jihad" to infiltrate and/or undermine American political and social institutions?**
- **Do you repudiate your suggestion to "pull from the streets" American Muslims who aspire to discuss their faith publicly? Can you affirm that all Muslims have the right to express their religious beliefs without government interference?**
- **Will you disavow your repeated insinuation that non-Muslims should fear the intentions of their Muslim neighbors, and will you commit to not spreading that calumny again?**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/tag/mike-pompeo/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/pompeo-trump-tillerson/547217/>

More ADL background information on the extreme anti-Muslim views of Mr. Gaffney and the Center for Security Policy is available here: <https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/frank-gaffney-jr-and-the-center-for-security-policy>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/pompeo-trump-tillerson/547217/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.actforamerica.org/bgeoy>. More ADL background information about Brigitte Gabriel and ACT for America is available here: <https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/act-for-america>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/act-for-america-still-raising-money-off-pompeo-white-house-connections/>

- **There are many State Department employees who identify as Muslim Americans. How would you plan to assure them that they will not be discriminated against during your tenure?**
- **Your predecessor has expressed a worrisome intention to eliminate the office of the Special Representative for Muslim Communities.<sup>14</sup> As a demonstration that you are committed to working constructively with America’s Muslim allies and communities abroad, will you commit to restoring rather than eliminating this office and promise that the special representative can faithfully execute his or her work and will not be sidelined due to your political views?**
- **What assurances can you make that the State Department’s Office for Global Religious Affairs and Special Representative for Muslim Communities can faithfully execute their work and will not be restricted in their outreach due to your political views?**
- **Diplomacy is inherently a job of creating incentives for partnership, and America’s security forces depend on strong partnerships throughout the Middle East and Africa, including many Muslim-majority countries. What specific steps will you take to distance yourself from your past anti-Muslim statements and associations, and provide assurances to encourage those countries to partner with the U.S. government?**

**The Need for United States Leadership Against Global Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Hate**

Today, in many regions of the world, a Jew’s right to live in security and freedom to express their identity with dignity is threatened by an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment, and violent hate crimes against Jews and Jewish sites such as schools, synagogues, shops, and cemeteries. The past year has seen an increase in violent anti-Semitic incidents in a number of European countries. Just this past March, an elderly Holocaust survivor was brutally murdered in Paris, allegedly by her neighbor and an accomplice in what police described as an anti-Semitic attack.

The U.S. has played a singularly important role in the international community by mobilizing governments and international organizations to counter anti-Semitism, and all forms of discrimination, bigotry, and bias-motivated violence. The U.S. must continue its strong leadership in utilizing the vital platform that international organizations provide to advance this fight. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is just one example of a regional intergovernmental forum that has been a focal point where the U.S. has successfully helped secure commitments by 57 countries to promote legislative, law enforcement, and educational initiatives to fight anti-Semitism and hate crimes, and to collect data on anti-Semitic and other hate-motivated violence.

Within the State Department, combating anti-Semitism is now being advanced as part of a wide array of America’s human rights and democracy-promotion programs and public diplomacy efforts. Under the leadership of Secretary Colin Powell, the creation of the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism led to meaningful improvements in U.S. reporting on and response to anti-Semitism. That work continued during the eight years of the Obama Administration, with envoys appointed under both Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of State

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<sup>14</sup> Lynch, Colum and Robbie Grammer. “State Department Reorganization Eliminates Climate, Muslim and Syria Envoys.” Foreign Policy. 29 August 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/29/state-department-reorganization-eliminates-climate-muslim-and-syria-envoys/>

Kerry. We were dismayed, however, by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's failure to appoint a Special Envoy, despite repeated assurances that he would do so.

Programmatic efforts across the U.S. foreign affairs apparatus make a real difference in fundamental areas like training diplomats to accurately and effectively recognize the indicators of anti-Semitism. And there are significant opportunities to expand these efforts to meet the rise of anti-Semitism. Just one example would be to enhance our country's existing training of international law enforcement to capacitate police in other countries to better address anti-Semitism and hate crimes.

Jews are often referred to as the "canary in the coal mine" and fighting anti-Semitism has always advanced protections of targeted groups more broadly. In this context, America's interest in strong and stable democratic partners rests, in part, on other countries protecting the rights of Jews and other minorities and adopting fair and inclusive laws and policies.

For these reasons, we urge you to ask the nominee questions on this topic:

- **Will you commit now to promptly appointing, upon your assuming office, a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism to ensure that the United States continues to demonstrate leadership in addressing global anti-Semitism? How do you think the impact of the Special Envoy can be maximized?**
- **What qualifications are important in a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism? What will you do to ensure the impact of the Special Envoy is maximized?**
- **How else do you plan to demonstrate to vulnerable Jewish communities around the world that American leadership on behalf of their protection will continue to be robust?**
- **The annual country reports on human rights have been a unique and vital tool to expose anti-Semitism and discrimination as violations of international human rights commitments and norms. How might the Department of State under your leadership improve reporting on anti-Semitism and other human rights abuses?**
- **If you agree that effective prevention and response to anti-Semitism, hate crimes, and discrimination is an important American foreign policy priority, how would you pledge to enlist foreign governments in improving their efforts to counter these challenges?**

#### **Upholding America's Commitment to a Safe and Secure Israel at Peace with its Neighbors**

The U.S. must continue its historic support for a strong and secure Jewish State of Israel and its fundamental right to protect its citizens from terrorism, violence and harm, while promoting a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel, and providing vital military and strategic assistance, helps ensure that Israel retains its qualitative military edge to promote its security and support mitigation of the growing strategic dangers in a volatile region.

Just as programs like the Iron Dome anti-missile system have provided an important military shield, the U.S. must continue to provide a shield in the international political arena – to protect Israel against biased political attacks in forums like the United Nations and against efforts like the

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign which aim to isolate Israel and undermine its legitimacy.

Finally, the relentless campaign of incitement, implicitly and explicitly supported by the Palestinian Authority, has created an environment of hatred in the region. The constant demonization of the Jewish state and its citizens across a range of outlets, such as religious sermons and social media, has contributed to the rising tension and fueled spasms of violence.

ADL welcomed President Trump's announcement that the U.S. government will officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and is taking steps to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. At the same time, we highlighted the importance of ensuring that this important decision will not determine Jerusalem's status as it relates to final status peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

ADL believes the U.S. should maintain a central role in the promotion of direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with the aim of reaching a two-state solution. The U.S. should urge the Palestinians to re-engage in direct negotiations with Israel without any preconditions. The U.S. should be involved in facilitating direct negotiations. Palestinian efforts to circumvent direct talks with Israel through the pursuit of unilateral resolutions in international fora are counterproductive and a successful agreement can only be reached through direct talks between the two parties.

A mutually-negotiated two-state solution between the Israelis and Palestinians, which will involve difficult compromises on both sides, will require the Palestinians to recognize Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish State and the foregoing of their demands for an unlimited so-called "right of return." It will also necessitate the creation of a final border between Israel and a demilitarized Palestinian state that will be consistent with demographic realities and provide viable security guarantees for Israel. Territorial compromise could include "land swaps" whereby Israel will maintain the main settlement blocs and will exchange commensurate parcels of territory to a new Palestinian state. In recent years, numerous Secretaries of State have expended a tremendous amount of energy promoting direct bi-lateral talks between the parties.

We urge the Committee to ask the nominee questions on this topic:

- **What is your position on the two-state solution, and what should the US role be in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations?**
- **What steps do you plan to take to curb the campaign of Palestinian incitement and demonization of the Jewish State of Israel, its citizens, and the Jewish people?**
- **The United Nations continues to be a forum where equal treatment eludes the State of Israel. We commend Ambassador Haley for her forceful condemnations of anti-Israel bias in the UN and work to ensure that Israel is treated equally. What actions will you take to work within the United Nations to uphold and advance the U.S. commitment to work against and defeat one-sided anti-Israel resolutions in the General Assembly and Security Council and other UN bodies?**
- **What actions can the U.S. take to effectively stem efforts by the Palestinian Authority to circumvent direct negotiations with Israel through one-sided actions in international bodies and international organizations?**

- **What ideas do you have to leverage the United States role in multilateral bodies like the Human Rights Council to eliminate structural bias against Israel, and to promote Israel's recognition and full participation in international institutions?**

### **US Leadership Against Iranian Aggression**

ADL believes a nuclear-armed Iran poses one of the greatest threats to the U.S., Europe, Israel and our other allies in the Middle East. Despite the turmoil engulfing the country which appears to reflect popular antipathy toward the Supreme Leader and broader government, the Iranian regime is the leading state-sponsor of terrorism, and a source of extremism and destabilization in the region and around the globe. It has defied the international community with its support for terrorism and cultivation of extremist forces. Its leaders have repeatedly made incendiary threats against the U.S., called for Israel's demise, and propagated base anti-Semitism, including the denial of the Holocaust.

In recent years, Iran has established military and intelligence bases in different parts of Syria, including in close proximity to the border with Israel. Moreover, through its proxy Hezbollah, a terrorist organization whose rocket arsenal is estimated to be well over 100,000, including a number of long-range Iranian-made missiles capable of striking Israeli cities across the country, Iran has gained a foothold in Syria that directly threatens Israel and the surrounding region.

Additionally, Iran funds the terror group Hamas, which has carried out dozens of suicide bombings against innocent Israeli civilians and fired thousands of rockets and missiles against Israeli cities and towns. Hamas is behind the current "March of Return" which is creating deep tensions with Israel. In the major protests in recent weeks, it is Hamas militants who have transformed an ostensibly non-violent protest into violent efforts to damage and storm the barrier with Israel.

Iran's aggressive foreign policies and its engagements in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere directly challenge and threaten U.S. allies, such as the Gulf states. The U.S. must ensure that there are consequences for Iran's threats against Israel, its terrorist activities, and violations of binding international resolutions, including missile and weapons testing, and take steps to hold Iran accountable, including through the application of sanctions and additional tools. The U.S. must condemn Iran's propagation of base anti-Semitism, including the denial of or exploitation of the Holocaust.

Iran's human rights record is abysmal, and includes persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ persons, members of the press and opposition voices. The U.S. must make clear it remains committed to calling out Iran's human rights violations, including violations of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. This commitment must be backed up with sanctions and censure in international fora.

We urge Committee members to question the nominee on this issue:

- **What is your position on the JCPOA agreement with Iran?**
- **What steps do you propose the U.S. take to address Iran's growing military presence in Syria and the threat it poses to Israel? What should the U.S. be demanding from other powers in the area, including Russia, and what actions should the U.S. take to show that these are not empty threats?**
- **In your opinion, what is the best way to deal with Iran's support for terror, and its belligerence towards Israel, the U.S. and its allies?**



- **What is the role of the United States in condemning and speaking against repeated anti-Semitic pronouncements and Holocaust denial from Iranian leaders?**
- **How should the United States address Iran’s ongoing human rights violations, particularly its treatment of LGBTQ persons and religious and ethnic minorities?**
- **What steps, both proactive and reactive, can the U.S. take to bolster popular protests against the Iranian regime, similar to what erupted a few months ago in cities across Iran, and is still going on today at a lower level?**

**The Need for Strong American Leadership in Support of Marginalized Communities Abroad**

The Anti-Defamation League vigorously supports strong State Department leadership in support of human rights and equality abroad – including modeling best laws and practices to help ensure dignity and combat discrimination against LGBT communities.

As a Member of Congress, Mr. Pompeo opposed the repeal of the military's ill-conceived anti-LGBT "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and stated: "we cannot use military to promote social ideas that do not reflect the values of your nation."<sup>15</sup>

Following the landmark United States Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, upholding the constitutionality of marriage equality across the land, Mr. Pompeo issued a statement criticizing the ruling: "I am deeply saddened by the Supreme Court's ruling that imposes legalized gay marriage ...It is a shocking abuse of power. It is wrong. I will continue to fight to protect our most sacred institutions; Kansans and our nation deserve no less."<sup>16</sup> Mr. Pompeo co-sponsored two unsuccessful bills — the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act of 2013<sup>17</sup> and the State Marriage Defense Act of 2014<sup>18</sup>, legislation designed to limit or reverse rights to marriage equality.

Given Mr. Pompeo’s record of hostile anti-LGBT statements, we urge Committee members to question the nominee on these issues:

- **The United States Secretary of State must reflect America’s core values of equality, fairness, and respect for all persons. How would you plan to overcome the impression that your own oft-expressed hostility to LGBT communities and Muslims could hurt America’s reputation and global standing abroad, taint your ability to represent America’s promotion of human rights, and impede building coalition and partnerships, especially with Muslim-majority nations and organizations?**
- **The League strongly supports the appointment of a qualified diplomat for the State Department’s LGBTI human rights Special Envoy position, which is currently vacant. Do you share our belief that the United States has an important role to play in promoting the health and safety of threatened and marginalized community across the globe, including LGBT communities abroad? Will you commit now to promptly appoint a qualified diplomat to serve at the LGBTI human rights Special Envoy?**

<sup>15</sup> <http://religiondispatches.org/gay-bashing-the-religious-rights-forever-issue/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ksntnews/photos/a.264592363551963.76319.227750827236117/1018839604793898/?type=1&theater>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/3133/cosponsors>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/3829/cosponsors>

### **Rising Sectarian and Religious Violence in the Middle East**

The Middle East has long been volatile, but we have seen unprecedented levels of conflict in recent years. Such violence increasingly has been driven by sectarian divisions and interreligious tension. Shia-Sunni violence has grabbed headlines, but we also have seen high degrees of intolerance and extraordinary levels of brutality directed against religious minorities. This has included official, state-sponsored actions such as the policies and programs of Iran that historically have marginalized and persecuted ethnic and religious minorities. Iran's hostility toward minorities stands out, not just in the region, but around the world. Beyond Iran, many other governments, including prominent U.S. allies such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have contributed to this problem.

In addition to the policies of these governments, the emergence of powerful non-state actors - such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas - has destabilized the region. These groups have committed horrendous acts of violence against religious minorities including enslavement, rape, and genocidal slaughter of groups such as the Yazidi religious minority in Syria and Iraq. Indeed, the Syrian Civil War has been a bloodbath that has swept up numerous ethnic and religious minorities and generated levels of suffering in the region that have not been seen for generations.

Beyond the horrific toll of such violence on the victims and their families, this terror has changed the character of the region. It has robbed this part of the world of much of the rich ethnic and religious diversity that distinguished the Middle East for millennia. The great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam were born in this region, but today Israel remains as one of the only countries in the region where Jews and Christians are free to practice their religion openly and safely.

We urge Committee members to question the nominee on these issues:

- **What steps would you take to address discrimination against religious minorities across the Middle East, such as Copts in Egypt, Bahais and Christians in Iran, and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq?**
- **What tools and initiatives would you take to isolate and stem the flow of weaponry and other materials to terror groups like Hezbollah and state sponsors of terror like Syria and Iran?**

### **U.S. Leadership to Counter International Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Ethnic Cleansing**

Over sixteen years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States continues to be at the forefront in the battle to stop the threat of global terrorism and the extremism that feeds it. These include maintaining military efforts against terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, and a sustained, robust effort to halt the flow of funds to terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas and states that sponsor them, such as Iran.

As an organization dedicated to fighting bigotry and persecution, ADL strenuously rejects efforts to demonize and dehumanize Muslims and others as would-be terrorists because of the violence and ideology of a small extreme group. We find policy proposals that foment this kind of stereotyping and the singling out of anyone on the basis of their religion, including creating a so-called "Muslim registry," or "Muslim Ban," deplorable, and contrary to the democratic values and principles upon which this country was built.

Beyond terrorism, the issue of addressing ethnic cleansing of minority populations must remain a priority for U.S. foreign policy. One of the most pressing is the issue of the ethnic cleansing

campaign being waged by the Burmese military against the Rohingya people in Myanmar. Since August 2017, over 650,000 Rohingya people have fled into neighboring Bangladesh to escape violent and deadly persecution in Myanmar. Discriminatory policies and recent violent attacks by the Myanmar military include reports of mass rape, murder and arson. A vast number of Rohingya villages in the Rakhine state were burned down by Myanmar security forces and associated groups. Former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has stated that the situation in the Rakhine state "constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya."

We urge Committee members to question the nominee on these urgent matters:

- **In your view, what are the best tools at the U.S.'s disposal to counter violent extremism and individuals that become radicalized and commit acts of terrorism?**
- **How would you engage multilaterally to assist those countries most impacted by radicalized homegrown terrorists, such as France and Belgium? How would you work to prevent the flow of aspiring radicals from joining ISIS and other terrorist organizations in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere?**
- **In your view, what is the most effective way to prevent/hinder the ability of terrorists and their state sponsors to finance their nefarious activities?**
- **The Trump Administration has taken very limited steps to address the atrocities being committed against the Rohingya people, including imposing sanctions against certain Burmese military officials and providing a small amount of humanitarian aid to the Rohingya. What additional steps do you think the U.S. should be taking to address this urgent moral and security issue?**

We know you share our view of the importance of the Senate's "advise and consent" role in the nomination process and we very much appreciate your leadership in promoting the important views expressed in this letter. We trust that the nominee's answers to Committee members' questions on these areas of interest and concern will help in the Committee's overall evaluation of Mr. Pompeo for the important position of United States Secretary of State.

As America's top diplomat, the Secretary of State must be prepared to faithfully represent the United States in building international partnerships and coalitions and negotiating delicate treaties and agreements. Mr. Pompeo's long, documented record of anti-LGBT and anti-Muslim prejudice threatens to undermine the essential work our Secretary of State does in representing American interests and values abroad. In our view, it is essential for the nominee to repudiate his past anti-LGBT and anti-Muslim views and to renounce any associations with anti-Muslim conspiracy-haunted organizations.

Sincerely,



Marvin D. Nathan  
National Chair



Jonathan A. Greenblatt  
CEO and National Director