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NAIEL IQBAL
Tiger Global Management

Chairman Bob Corker
Ranking Member Bob Menendez
United State Senate
Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Menendez,

On behalf of Muslim Advocates, a national legal advocacy and educational organization that works on the frontlines of civil rights to guarantee freedom and justice for all Americans of all faiths, I write to oppose the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the U.S. Secretary of State.

Few positions in government are as critical to representing the best of America – and establishing how we are seen around the world – as Secretary of State. The Secretary of State plays a critical role in fighting for the protection of human rights in the United States and around the world. With this in mind, Mr. Pompeo’s career-long record of bigotry and hostility toward Muslims and the LGBTQ community raise serious questions about his fitness to serve as the nation’s chief diplomat.

We are particularly troubled by Mr. Pompeo’s views, which dangerously frame the world as at war with Islam and in a clash between cultures and religions. For instance, he stated in remarks in 2014 that a minority of Muslims “abhor Christians, and will continue to press against us until we make sure that we pray and stand and fight and make sure that we know that Jesus Christ is our savior is truly the only solution for our world.”¹

Mr. Pompeo also stunningly accused American Muslim leaders of being “potentially complicit” in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. Specifically, he stated: “The silence of Muslim leaders has been deafening. Instead of responding, silence has made these Islamic leaders potentially complicit in

¹ <https://vimeo.com/192276878/33c5857cb8>

these acts, and more importantly still, in those that may well follow.”² Aside from promoting the offensive idea that American Muslims were collectively responsible for the actions of two men, his statements were inaccurate; many Muslim leaders and advocacy organizations issued statements condemning the attack.³

In addition, Mr. Pompeo’s rhetoric regarding Muslims and Islam garnered him high praise from the largest anti-Muslim group in America, ACT for America.⁴ ACT preaches anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, denigrates American Muslims, and equates Islam with violence. Brigitte Gabriel, founder of ACT, explicitly stated that a practicing Muslim “cannot be a loyal citizen of the United States of America.”⁵ In 2016, ACT presented Mr. Pompeo with the National Security Eagle Award, their highest honor, calling him a “steadfast ally of ours since the day he was elected to Congress.”⁶

The Committee should also be concerned about an incident from 2010 in which Mr. Pompeo’s congressional campaign tweeted a post referring to his Indian-American opponent, Raj Goyle, as a “turban topper.” The post included the comment, “This guy could be a muslim, a hindu, a buddhist etc who knows, only God, the shadow and . . . goyle knows! One thing’s for sure . . . goyle is not a Christian!”⁷ Pompeo blamed the tweet on a staffer, but declined to fire the individual responsible.

Finally, Mr. Pompeo has a troubling record of opposing civil rights protections for the LGBTQ community. For example, in a debate during the 2010 midterm elections, Mr. Pompeo stated regarding the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy: “when you’re in the army, you give up a few of your rights.”⁸ The following year, he returned to the issue – now settled by an act of Congress – stating in a speech that “[w]e cannot use military to promote social ideas that do not reflect the values of our nation.”⁹ He also expressed being “deeply saddened” by the Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that effectively legalized same-sex marriage.¹⁰

² <http://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article115666818.html>

³ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/anai-rhoads/muslim-groups-pompeo_b_3431339.html

⁴ See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/act-america>; <https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/act-for-america>.

⁵ <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/americas-most-anti-muslim-activist-is-welcome-at-the-white-house/520323/>

⁶ <http://www.actforamerica.org/bgeoy>

⁷ <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/article24590281.html>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tcku7HW4UTA&app=desktop>

⁹ <http://religiondispatches.org/gay-bashing-the-religious-rights-forever-issue/>

¹⁰ <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-advocates-see-pompeo-reckless-choice-top-diplomat-n856881>

Any one of these concerns independently could potentially disqualify a nominee for any high position in government. Combined, they are particularly problematic for an individual who will serve as the nation's chief diplomat. As we face crises both here and around the world, the State Department needs a leader who can move it forward. Whenever given an opportunity, Mr. Pompeo has expressed views, which, if acted upon, would force the nation backward. He is the wrong person to lead the Department of State. I urge you to oppose his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Farhana Y. Khera".

Farhana Y. Khera
President & Executive Director