

## United States Senate

March 17, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington D.C.  
20301

Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin,

I write today with concern regarding the Administration's use of the Section 907 waiver to provide continued military assistance to Azerbaijan. For more than two months, the Azerbaijani government has blocked the Lachin Corridor, resulting in a dire humanitarian situation for the 120,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh who have been denied freedom of movement. This blockade comes at a time when the Russian troops who have been entrusted to keep peace in this conflict are engaged in an illegal invasion of Ukraine. The military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan is becoming dangerously one-sided and the peace process has been ineffective.

In March 2022, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report reviewing Department of State and the Department of Defense (DOD) procedures and guidelines for coordinating and reporting on assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan. GAO recommended improvements to State Department reporting to Congress regarding U.S. assistance to the Azerbaijani government under the Section 907 waiver authority in order to comply with statutory reporting requirements. The Department of State and the Department of Defense concurred with these recommendations, yet according to GAO the implementation process is still ongoing. I write to respectfully request your perspective on the following questions.

1. How has Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacted Department of State and Department of Defense analysis of how U.S. assistance affect or could affect the military balance between Armenia & Azerbaijan, given that Russia is meant to be a third-party security guarantor? Such assistance includes, for example, resources made available through the Department of State, Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training and for the Department of Defense, Section 333 Building partner Capacity, Cooperative Threat Reduction, as well as other support which includes the State Partnership Program, Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid, Wales Initiative Fund, Traditional Command Activities, Aviation Leadership Program, and the European Deterrence Initiative.

2. How has the ongoing blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh impacted Department of State and Department of Defense decision making, if at all, in invoking the 907 waiver authority?
3. What are the monitoring processes established for the Azerbaijani government partners through the Department's assistance programs? These include authorized assistance through the Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, Section 333 Building partner Capacity, Cooperative Threat Reduction, State Partnership Program, Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid, Wales Initiative Fund, Traditional Command Activities, Aviation Leadership Program, and the European Deterrence Initiative program? How does this monitoring ensure that aid provided does not negatively impact the military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan and is not used for offensive purposes as required by law?
4. How have the recommendations from last year's GAO report impacted Department of State and Department of Defense decision-making process for invocation of the Section 907 waiver? Are there any additional updates on the implementation process since the last update provided to GAO?

I would appreciate your swift response in addressing these questions. Thank you both for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary C. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being the most prominent.

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator