

Readout of the President's Call with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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The President spoke today by phone with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan about the situation in Syria and U.S.-Turkish cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The President condemned and offered condolences for the February 17 terrorist attack in Ankara, which killed and wounded both military personnel and civilians, and the February 18 terrorist attack against a Turkish military convoy in Diyarbakir Province. President Obama expressed concern about recent Syrian regime advances in northwest Syria and urgently called for a halt to actions that heighten tensions with Turkey and with moderate opposition forces in northern Syria, and undermine our collective efforts in northern Syria to degrade and defeat ISIL. President Obama stressed that YPG forces should not seek to exploit circumstances in this area to seize additional territory, and urged Turkey to show reciprocal restraint by ceasing artillery strikes in the area. He emphasized the unwavering commitment of the United States to Turkey's national security as a NATO Ally. The two leaders expressed their support for the understanding reached in Munich last week on the cessation of hostilities in Syria and called on Russia and the Assad regime to halt airstrikes against moderate opposition forces. The leaders pledged to deepen cooperation in the fight against all forms of terrorism, including the PKK, and reiterated their shared goal of degrading and ultimately destroying ISIL.