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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

January 25, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write to express our profound disappointment and concern regarding your irresponsible statement this morning about NPR Reporter Mary Louise Kelly and the corrosive effects of your behavior on American values and standing in the world.

At a time when journalists around the world are being jailed for their reporting — and as in the case of Jamal Khashoggi, killed — your insulting and contemptuous comments are beneath the office of the Secretary of State.

The importance of a free press is enshrined in our Constitution precisely because the Founders recognized how vital a free press is for the public to hold their government accountable. Such accountability is paramount to any free and democratic nation. Instead of calling journalists “liars” and insulting their intelligence when they ask you hard questions you would rather not answer, your oath of office places on you a duty and obligation to engage respectfully and transparently.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Edward Markey
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Cory Booker
United States Senator