Correspondence between Committee Staff and the Department of Press Operations in the Office of the United States Secretary of Defense on 3 February 2017

Question from Committee Staff:

Could you clarify which armed elements in northern Syria have been provided weapons by the Global Coalition against ISIL in general, and the US Department of Defense in particular?

Answer from the Department of Defense:

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

The Coalition has provided equipment to the Syrian Arab Coalition, which are vetted Arab elements of the Syrian Democratic Forces. This equipment has included ammunition and other military equipment. Under section 1209 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2015, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, is authorized to provide assistance to appropriately vetted groups or individuals. This assistance is critical to the coalition's counter-ISIL operations. The U.S. has not, to date, provided materiel support to Kurdish elements of the SDF.

Question from Committee Staff:

Does the Department of Defense have an answer to the specific allegation put to us in Ankara that weapons supplied by the US in northern Syria are being transferred so as to end up being used by the PKK in Turkey?

Answer from the Department of Defense:

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

The PKK is a designated foreign terrorist organization, and we stand with our NATO Ally Turkey and condemn attacks by any terrorist group against Turkey, including attacks by both ISIL and the PKK. We certainly do not provide any support whatsoever to the PKK and have had no indications that any DoD equipment has been transferred to the PKK.