

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 2, 2016

The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

The Honorable James R. Clapper  
Director of National Intelligence  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Secretary Carter and Director Clapper:

We write with concerns about the direction and goals of our Syria train and equip program as the Congress considers a reprogramming to finance the vetted Syrian Opposition Force. A March 27 report in the *Los Angeles Times* (“In Syria, militias armed by the Pentagon fight those armed by the CIA”) alleges that various opposition forces backed by either the Department of Defense (DoD) or other agencies may in fact be fighting each other.

We recognize that some of the opposition groups we support may have goals and priorities that are secondary to the national security interests of the United States. Kurdish and Arab groups we support have different objectives and are distrustful of each other. If and when the opportunity to supplant the Assad regime presents itself, these groups could choose to pursue their own interests at the expense of others.

We respectfully request additional information about our Syria train and equip program, including how the administration is de-conflicting our support for opposition groups with different interests. In particular:

- Is the *Los Angeles Times* report accurate? If so, who are these groups; what are their goals?
- Which U.S. agency or organization is responsible for coordinating our train and equip activities in Syria?
- How is this agency or organization coordinating U.S. activities and ensuring that there is unity of effort among U.S. agencies involved in Syria? Specifically, how is DoD coordinating its activities with other agencies?
- What is our plan to stop fighting between U.S.-supported groups, if that should occur?

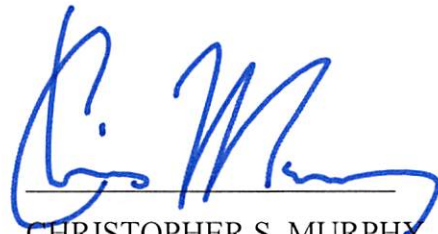
We would appreciate a response at a proper level of classification to ensure that we are not appropriating funds for activities that could undermine our interests in Syria.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Schatz", written over a horizontal line.

BRIAN SCHATZ  
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Murphy", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
U.S. Senator