

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

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

The Honorable John Brennan  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Secretary Carter, Secretary Kerry, and Director Brennan:

We write to express our deep concern about the Syria Train and Equip Program and to call for an end to this failed initiative. When Congress was considering the program last year, many of us expressed concerns about this program endangering Americans and further escalating the conflict. The evidence further supports our belief. It is time for the Department to find a new path forward.

Authorized at \$500 million for Fiscal Year 2015, the program has struggled to graduate “vetted” opposition fighters. When General Lloyd Austin III, the commander of United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), recently testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he said that only “four or five” U.S.-trained opposition fighters were on the ground fighting in Syria. It has since been reported that another 75 United States-trained rebels have entered the fight, but this is still a far cry from the 5,000 fighters the program aimed to train each year.

The Syria Train and Equip Program goes beyond simply being an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars. As many of us initially warned, it is now aiding the very forces we aim to defeat. On Friday, USCENTCOM confirmed that some of the fighters that we trained and equipped had turned over ammunition and trucks to al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Syria, Al Nusra Front. In exchange for safe passage, the fighters, trained by the U.S., gave up approximately 25% of their U.S.-issued equipment.

With over 200,000 persons killed, 4 million refugees, and 7.6 million internally displaced people, the situation in Syria is absolutely tragic, and we must ensure that any U.S. efforts do not cause additional harm. We ask that you cease the Syria Train and Equip Program and look for alternative ways forward.

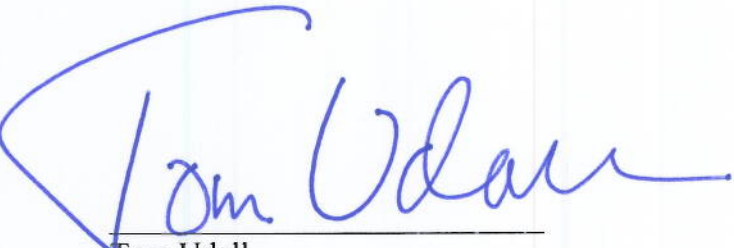
Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

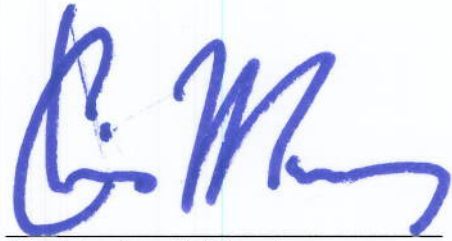


Mike Lee  
United States Senator



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Tom Udall  
United States Senator



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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator