

# Statement by Department of Defense Chief Pentagon Spokesperson Jonathan Rath Hoffman

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Statement by Department of Defense Chief Pentagon Spokesperson Jonathan R. Hoffman:

Yesterday, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and Turkish Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar spoke by phone where they discussed the situation in northeast Syria. Secretary Esper made it clear that the United States opposes Turkey's uncoordinated actions as they place at risk the progress made by the Defeat-ISIS Coalition.

While the Secretary reaffirmed we value our strategic bilateral relationship, this incursion risks serious consequences for Turkey. The Secretary also reiterated his strong concern that, despite U.S. force protection measures, Turkey's actions could harm U.S. personnel in Syria.

As part of the call, Secretary Esper strongly encouraged Turkey to discontinue actions in northeastern Syria in order to increase the possibility that the United States, Turkey and our partners could find a common way to deescalate the situation before it becomes irreparable.