(U) Turkey and the PKK

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(TS//SI) The U.S. fears that Turkey may undertake cross-border raids into Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish PKK terrorists... NSA provides Turkey with SIGINT about the group.

(S//SI) NSA's robust SIGINT exchange with our two Turkish partners on indigenous terrorism targets is primarily focused on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*, and the PKK has been a sensitive topic of recent high-level US-Turkish discussions. The Turkish Government and general population strongly believe that the US should be doing more against PKK insurgents operating from northern Iraq to conduct terrorist operations inside Turkey.

(S//SI) The US condemns the PKK as a terrorist group and accepts that the coalition and the Iraqi Transitional Government and Turkey need to work together to do more against this threat. The US views Turkey as a valuable partner in NATO and in the global war on terrorism (the 1 March 2003 Parliamentary vote that prevented the Coalition from using Turkey for Operation Iraqi Freedom notwithstanding) but is all too aware that the Kurds per se in northern Iraq are friendly forces, and cross-border operations are an Iraqi sovereignty issue.

(U) The specter of 30 million Kurds coalescing into an autonomous Kurdistan is a long-standing political problem for Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurds are Turkey's largest non-Turkish ethnic group and the only minority that can pose a threat to Turkish national unity. The PKK, arguably the best known and most radical of the Kurdish movements, seeks to establish an independent Marxist state in predominantly Kurdish southeastern Turkey.

(U) Since 1984, the PKK has conducted a violent terrorist insurgency against the Government of Turkey, highlighted by attacks on Turkish security forces, bombings of tourist sites inside Turkey, and attacks on Turkish diplomatic and commercial facilities in dozens of West European cities. Turkey has responded by deploying army units and elite police forces to violently suppress the insurgents. After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraqi Kurds established a de facto state in northern Iraq and allowed the PKK to set up semi-permanent bases there. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, in an August 2005 Wall Street Journal piece, noted that Iraq should not be allowed to remain a training ground for terrorists, whether al Qaeda or the PKK, and asserted that the PKK has already killed more than 30,000 Turkish citizens.

(S//SI) The US Government is concerned that Turkey might lose patience and conduct cross-border operations inside Iraq while in hot pursuit of PKK insurgents. US National Security Adviser Hadley and SACEUR** General Jones met separately in September 2005 with senior Turkish officials to discuss the PKK. EUCOM, CENTCOM and State Department all have irons in this fire and the value of NSA's SIGINT support to our Turkish partners has been consistently highlighted by both the Charge' and the Office of Defense Cooperation in the US Embassy in Ankara.

(TS//SI) NCRTURK***, in Ankara, works closely with two Turkish SIGINT partners, GES (military) and ETI (civilian)****. NSA's collection efforts against the PKK, a third tier terrorist organization, are generally limited to operations in northern Iraq, in southeastern Turkey, and in Turkish tourist areas where bombings have occurred. We share SIGINT product, technical collection and analytic support, and unique US collection with both Turkish partners. NSA normally provides GES with a report every six hours locating a defined number of PKK handsets active within Turkey; no data is provided to the Turks concerning PKK handsets active in northern Iraq. NSA also provides data on insurgent handsets to ETI in support of Turkey's Law

Enforcement Access program.

(TS//SI) In an effort to support Turkey by doing more against the PKK, NCRTURK, CT/S2I3, and GEO, in October 2005, provided GES with hourly reports on the locations of handsets used by the PKK operating inside Turkey. This initiative was restricted by resource constraints to a two-week period in support of specific Turkish military operations. Feedback from the Turks on the effectiveness of this enhanced SIGINT support is pending at this time.

(S//SI) NSA, through the SINIO for Europe, is also actively participating in US Intelligence Community and Law Enforcement efforts to track financial support links for the PKK in Western Europe. NSA's very few expert "follow-the-money" analysts are generally deployed against tier zero and other very high priority targets so we can only support a very focused effort against PKK finances, one that targets individuals and organizations for which lead information is available. Any lead information will most likely come from the Turkish partners and that angle is being worked by NCRTURK.

(S//SI) As US political and military strategists grapple with the thorny issue of how to better assist the Government of Turkey in combating the PKK, NSA and our Turkish SIGINT partners are already fully engaged in this important subset of the global war on terrorism.

(U) Notes:

* (S//SI) This terrorist group changes names like a chameleon changes colors. Currently calling itself the People's Congress of Kurdistan (KGK, or Kongra-Gel), it has in the past been known as the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK), and it originated and is still referred to by most Turks as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). NSA also targets and shares SIGINT with Turkey on the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C).

** (U) SACEUR = Supreme Allied Commander, Europe - commander of NATO's military forces

**** (S//SI) The two Turkish SIGINT partners are the General Electronic Service (GES), a military command under the J2 of the Turkish General Staff; and the civilian Electronic and Technical Intelligence (ETI) Directorate of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (TNIO).

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