



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

DEC 16 2019

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Esper dated November 18, 2019, regarding recent testimony by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Alexander Vindman and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. I am replying on his behalf. Let me assure you, the Department will not tolerate any act of retaliation or reprisal against them. Further, we are committed to taking whatever steps are necessary, consistent with Section 714 of Title 10, U.S. Code, to ensure the security of LTC Vindman and Ms. Cooper. We continue to monitor their security situation, and will make available any appropriate resources necessary to ensure their safety and that of their families.

In your correspondence, you asked that all civilian and military personnel are notified of their legal rights to make protected disclosures to Congress. The Department takes this matter very seriously. Under the No FEAR Act, all personnel are required to receive discrimination and whistleblower protection training on a regular basis. New employees are required to receive No FEAR Act training within 90 calendar days of their appointment to service. Further, all employees are required to complete refresher training every two years to ensure continued understanding of their rights and responsibilities. On October 22, 2019, the Department issued an internal memorandum entitled, "Whistleblower Protection Prohibited Personnel Practices." The memorandum includes Office of Special Counsel guidance, and employees were directed to acknowledge receipt of the memorandum.

Again, please know we take our responsibility to protect our people very seriously. I appreciate your continued support of the men and women of the Department of Defense and will keep you apprised of any developments as appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "R. L. M. T.", is located below the "Sincerely," text.

