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In Afghanistan the US military decided to outsource most of its logistics to private contractors, who in turn have subcontracted the protection of military convoys to local Afghan security providers. This has had disastrous consequences: the decision to place the US military supply chain into private hands is fuelling extortion and corruption, as warlords, local mafia bosses, and ultimately Taliban commanders end up taking a significant share of the USD 2.2–3 billion spent on military logistics in Afghanistan. This amount surpasses the funding going to the Taliban from their ‘taxation’ of the narcotics industry (calculated by the UN at 15 % of their war budget).

Protection money and extortion at every level of the military supply chain are the most significant source of funding for the insurgency, as recognised by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in her testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 2009.

Since US and NATO military logistics follow similar lines, European taxpayers could end up funding the Taliban through the very entities that are supposed to combat them. NATO and all coalition forces in Afghanistan should, therefore, return to a situation whereby they provide their own military supply chain.

Can High Representative Catherine Ashton shed light on this issue and inform us what the EU is doing to remedy the situation?

Question for written answer to the Council - Rule 117

Pino Arlacchi (ALDE), Stanimir Ilchev (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Gianluca Susta (S&D), Robert Rochefort (ALDE), Alexandra Thein (ALDE), Anne E. Jensen (ALDE), Ivo Vajgl (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Anneli Jäätsenmäki (ALDE), Carl Haglund (ALDE), Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Luigi de Magistris (ALDE), Vincenzo Iovine (ALDE), Giommaria Uggias (ALDE), Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE), Ana Gomes (S&D), Mario Pirillo (S&D), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D)

Answer(s)

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