

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Christopher C. Miller
Acting Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 22202

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Acting Secretary Miller,

As Members of Congress who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, we write to express our grave concern over the reports and subsequent announcement that the United States plans to significantly draw down our diplomatic and military personnel from the Republic of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

We support all efforts to protect United States diplomatic and military personnel overseas. However, we have serious reservations about any withdrawal of U.S. service members and embassy personnel without a clear plan to counter the multitude of security challenges we face in the region, including the Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Qaeda. There must be a well-structured transition of operational control to Iraqi and Afghani security forces.

Congress has a critical role in providing oversight of the military and promoting our diplomatic relations. With this in mind, we request that you respond to the following questions:

1. How would the announced drawdown of U.S. troops and diplomats in Iraq affect the domestic situation in the country? Please provide details and a timeline on your current review.
2. How would the announced reduction in U.S. troops and diplomats from the current level affect the threat of terror attacks originating from – or enabled by groups in – Iraq?

3. How would the announced reduction in U.S. troops and diplomats from the current level affect the threat of terror attacks originating from – or enabled by groups in – Afghanistan?
4. What risks does the announced reduction in U.S. troops and diplomats from the current level impose on the counterterrorism missions against al Qaeda and ISIS?
5. What effects would a further U.S. troop reduction have on NATO Member forces' ability to operate in Afghanistan?
6. How will the announced reduction in U.S. troops factor into the Taliban's decision-making regarding its future relationship with al Qaeda?
7. How will the announced reduction in U.S. troops from the current level affect the broader calculus of both the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan amidst ongoing negotiations?
8. How would the announced reduction in U.S. troops from the current level affect the possibility of a future increase in U.S. troops in the region?
9. What impact will the announced reduction of U.S. troops from the current level have on attacks on coalition forces by Afghanistan forces typically referred to as green-on-blue attacks?

We believe that there is strong bipartisan support from Congress and the Administration for both Iraq and Afghanistan. Any premature drawdown without thoughtful consideration of the real-world conditions on the ground would be ill-advised. Additionally, we continue to be concerned by the growing ISIS activity in Afghanistan and Iran's influence in Iraq. Intelligence shows that both issues are destabilizing factors in a critical region, and minimizing our military and diplomatic footprint allows malign forces to fill the vacuum we create.

Thank you for your attention to this timely issue. We stand ready to work with you to strengthen our national security and protect our troops, and we look forward to your response to this letter.

Sincerely,



SETH MOULTON
Iraq Caucus Co-Chair



ADAM KINZINGER
Iraq Caucus Co-Chair