

# United States Senate

November 24, 2020

## VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Senator James M. Inhofe  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Inhofe:

I request that the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hold an open hearing as soon as possible to examine the future of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan. Given Acting Secretary of Defense Miller's recent announcement that U.S. troops in Afghanistan will be substantially reduced by the end of the Administration, it is imperative that Congress and the Senate Armed Services Committee fulfill its constitutional oversight duty and assess the impact this withdrawal will have on U.S. interests in Afghanistan.

On November 17, Acting Secretary Miller announced that American forces in Afghanistan would be reduced from 4,500 to 2,500 by January 15, 2021, a mere six days before the inauguration of President-Elect Joe Biden. In the wake of this announcement, there is substantial bipartisan interest in the future of the United States' longest war. Significant questions remain about U.S. policy and how it contributes to the National Defense Strategy's goal of preventing future terrorist attacks on the American homeland. Crucially, we must understand how the drawdown affects the U.S. government's leverage to achieve concessions from the Taliban, especially the return of American hostages Mark Frerichs and Paul Overby. Additional questions include the safety of American troops that will remain after the drawdown as well as the impact of the presidential transition on U.S. policy.

Accordingly, I ask that SASC hold an open hearing to receive testimony from the Acting Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation and the Commander of the Resolute Support Mission and United States Forces-Afghanistan. Should these witnesses be unavailable, outside witnesses would be helpful to provide a better understanding of the rapidly evolving dynamics in Afghanistan. SASC should also hold a closed hearing in a sensitive compartmented information facility to allow for discussion of classified information. Thank you in advance for consideration of my urgent request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator