

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write you to urge caution in the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria, and respectfully request a briefing by Secretary Mattis and National Security Advisor Bolton on the details of this decision as soon as possible. While we wholeheartedly share your belief that America should not be the world's policeman (nor should we engage in endless, open-ended conflicts with poorly defined objectives), we are nevertheless concerned that too precipitous a withdrawal from Syria would deeply injure America's interests in the region.

We are especially troubled by the potentially devastating consequences a hasty redeployment would have for our partners—especially our Kurdish allies. The Syrian Democratic Forces have fought side-by-side with the U.S. military against the Islamic State when no one else in the region was willing or able. To abandon them at this critical moment, after they have shed so much blood and sacrificed so much to help us defeat our common enemy, would severely hamper our ability to secure allies in the future even as it endangers the significant gains we made against ISIS.

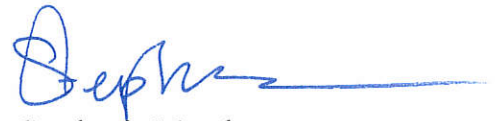
We are also concerned about the destabilizing ambitions Iran, Turkey, and Russia have in Syria. Even now it appears President Erdogan is preparing to occupy northern Syria and is willing to crush our Kurdish allies in the process, Iran will continue using southern Syria as a highway linking Tehran to their Hezbollah forces, and Russia remains content to engage in whatever geopolitical activities hurt American interests. If the United States withdraws too quickly it will create yet another power vacuum in the Middle East, undoubtedly leading to more chaos and regional conflict which in turn fosters stateless actors like ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

In short, we are concerned about the timing of this withdrawal of U.S. forces, and seek to productively engage with your administration on this most important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress



Steve King
Member of Congress



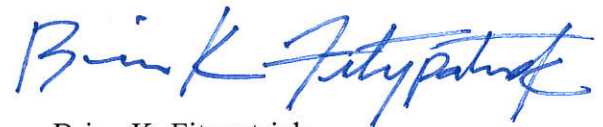
Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



Paul Mitchell
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Francis Rooney
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Jim Banks
Member of Congress




Will Hurd
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Garret Graves
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Andy Barr
Member of Congress



Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.
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Bill Huizenga
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Pete Olson
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Darin LaHood
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Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress