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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

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AGING

November 17, 2020

The Honorable Christopher Miller  
Acting Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Acting Secretary Miller,

I write to express my support for President Trump's plan for the prompt withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

As President Trump has noted, and as you know better than most, Americans have been fighting in Afghanistan for more than 19 years. That makes the war in Afghanistan the longest war in our nation's history. Sons and daughters are now patrolling their parents' old routes, and many of the U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan were not even born when the 9/11 attacks occurred.

There was a time for war in Afghanistan, and there were very compelling reasons. In the aftermath of 9/11, it was imperative that we destroyed al Qaeda and punished the Taliban. But those objectives have long since given way to a broader nation-building mission in the region. This is a mistake. We have built a worldwide counterterrorism enterprise that allows us to disrupt, degrade, and destroy terrorist organizations far more effectively than ever before. So long as we stay focused on our counterterrorism objectives, maintain our ability to identify and strike targets as needed, and coordinate our withdrawal appropriately, we can prevent groups in Afghanistan from launching attacks on the United States without keeping thousands of American troops on the ground.

Meanwhile, the costs of the war in Afghanistan continue to mount, and they are borne disproportionately by working Americans. It is overwhelmingly their sons and daughters who are sent into harm's way and make the ultimate sacrifice. It is their families and communities that have been hurt most as policymakers in Washington sent hundreds of billions – if not trillions – of their hard-earned tax dollars to Afghanistan, instead of investing that money here at home. And it is they who will suffer most if we keep investing in Afghanistan at the expense of our ability to deal with other adversaries, especially China, which seeks to dominate the world – including the United States – and is rapidly building a military to do just that.

For these reasons, majorities of Americans, including veterans of the war itself, have long called for an end to the war in Afghanistan. Yet most of our nation's policymakers have

ignored them. They are certainly entitled to keep advocating nation-building, but they have no right to force working Americans to pay the price for their agenda. The American people deserve an end to this war. They deserve to know their sons and daughters will not be put in harm's way unless it is absolutely necessary. And they deserve to see their tax dollars actually being used to defend them – from Chinese domination, above all – or reinvested at home, in their families and communities.

You wrote recently, “All wars must end.” Acting Secretary Miller, the time has come to end the war in Afghanistan. I urge you to stand with President Trump and bring our troops home as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Hawley".

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator