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# United States Senate

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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6475

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June 9, 2020

The Honorable John L. Ratcliffe  
Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director Ratcliffe:

As you begin your tenure as Director of National Intelligence, we request that you actively represent the interests of the Intelligence Community as the Administration plans a potential withdrawal from Afghanistan.

On February 29, 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement stipulating that our government would remove all military personnel from the country in 12 to 14 months, based on conditions on the ground. However, recent media reporting indicates that President Trump is seeking to expedite this process, and has requested plans to execute a complete U.S. military withdrawal by November.

During your confirmation hearing last month, you testified that you disagreed with the President's October 2019 decision to precipitously withdraw U.S. forces from Syria – a move that surprised U.S. and allied personnel in the region, and disrupted operations to defeat ISIS.

While we support the goal of bringing the war in Afghanistan to a responsible end, we are concerned that a repeat of our hastily-announced withdrawal from Syria could needlessly put more American lives at risk, increase the threat to allies and partners participating in the Resolute Support Mission, and squander important intelligence relationships and counterterrorism operations. A rushed and premature withdrawal would also risk losing the gains we have achieved in Afghanistan, not only in counterterrorism but also in building Afghan governance and military forces.

Our nation's intelligence professionals have spent nearly two decades establishing security arrangements with our Afghan partners. Now, it is incumbent upon our government to give them the time and space to prepare for an orderly,

conditions-based drawdown, in conjunction with military and diplomatic counterparts.

We urge you to ensure the Administration has access to the best intelligence available regarding stability and governance in Afghanistan, the threat posed by groups like the Haqqani Taliban Network, al-Qa'ida, and ISIS, and the risk posed by a precipitous U.S. withdrawal.

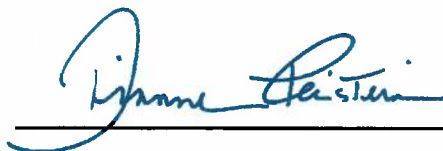
Accordingly, we request that, at the earliest date possible, you update us on the Intelligence Community's force posture planning for Afghanistan if the decision is made to withdraw the U.S. military by November. Please include a detailed description of future basing and personnel plans, security procedures, options for continued partner engagement, and intelligence collection contingencies.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

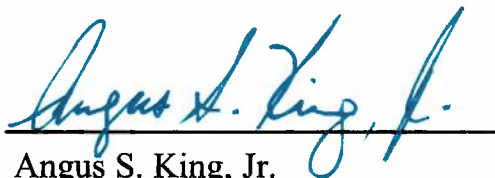
Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner  
Vice Chairman



Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
U.S. Senator



Jack Reed  
U.S. Senator