

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to express our concern regarding your Administration's consideration to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria. We believe that such action at this time is a premature and costly mistake that not only threatens the safety and security of the United States, but also emboldens ISIS, Bashar al Assad, Iran, and Russia.

The United States currently retains a small and limited military presence within Syria. The approximately 2,000 American troops stationed in Syria serve as a vital shield against ISIS cells operating within Northeast Syria. While you believe the threat of ISIS has dissipated, the conditions on the ground paint a very different picture.

In addition, our troops provide critical support for our Kurdish partners, who have been crucial in the fight against ISIS. If our Kurdish partners in the region lose the support of the United States, we run the risk of a resurgence of ISIS and the possible capitulation or all out destruction of Kurdish resistance in the region.

Furthermore, hundreds of foreign fighters being held in captivity by our Kurdish partners are at risk of being released or worse if our support is withdrawn.

If you decide to follow through with your decision to pull our troops out of Syria, any remnants of ISIS in Syria will surely renew and embolden their efforts in the region. However, ISIS is not the only threat. The brutal dictatorship of Bashar al Assad continues to weigh heavily upon the Syrian people, and we fear that a withdrawal of our troops may embolden Bashar al Assad to take further actions to solidify his power.

The withdrawal of American presence from Syria also bolsters two other adversaries to the United States, Iran and Russia. As you are aware, both Iran and Russia have used the Syrian conflict as a stage to magnify their influence in the region. Any sign of weakness perceived by Iran or Russia will only result in their increased presence in the region and a decrease in the trust

of our partners and allies. Your administration must not repeat the same mistakes that previous administrations have made and concede to these bad actors.

In conclusion, we encourage you to reconsider your proposal to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria to ensure that our nation's strategic interests are secured.

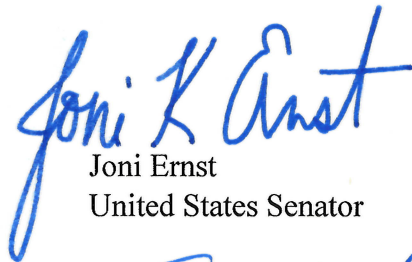
Sincerely,



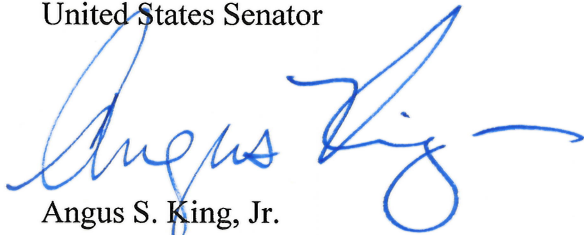
Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



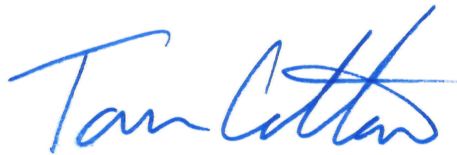
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



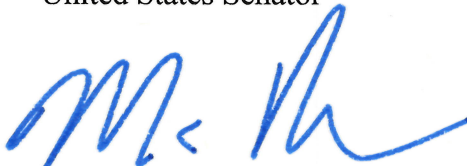
Joni Ernst
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator