

END ENDLESS WARS & COMPLETE A FULL

AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWAL



After nearly twenty years in Afghanistan, it is time for America's longest war to come to an end. Our troops have served valiantly, and with our main objectives long ago met, it dishonors their service and the will of the American people to continue a fruitless nation-building exercise that does not make us safer or more prosperous. The United States should continue to preserve the conditions of its 2020 Afghanistan agreement and complete a full withdrawal.

Background

The initial U.S. intervention in Afghanistan was justified. It was necessary to bring those responsible for the 9/11 attacks to justice and to severely punish the Taliban for harboring them. But our troops achieved those objectives long ago, and a longer-term nation-building mission ever since has proven fruitless, no longer serves vital U.S. interests, and makes our troops easier targets, costing America dearly.

Roughly 2,400 U.S. soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan since the war began. Tens of thousands more have been wounded. Many troops have endured double-digit deployments. Annually, \$45 billion in taxpayer dollars goes to support the Afghan war, and total direct war costs over the last nineteen years now exceed \$1 trillion. These costs are even higher when counting the future obligations in care and benefits we owe to wounded veterans and their families. Despite these costs, a military solution is nowhere in sight. A continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan aids our rivals by distracting us from more pressing foreign and domestic priorities.

Fortunately, America has a path forward. The 2020 Afghanistan agreement laid out a straightforward process for a full U.S. troop withdrawal and intra-Afghan negotiations. The United States has successfully reduced its forces to 2,500 thus far, and the President should continue further drawdowns until a full withdrawal is achieved. Congress

should avoid imposing restrictions on a withdrawal that is long overdue, in U.S. national interests, and overwhelmingly supported by the American people.

Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: **If the U.S. leaves Afghanistan it will become a terrorist haven, endangering our homeland.**

FACT: *America is right to be skeptical of any Taliban guarantees, but the United States' unparalleled over-the-horizon strike capability is its best insurance policy against allowing any terrorists with the intent and capability to target our homeland to use Afghan territory as a sanctuary. America does not need a permanent ground presence to eliminate such threats if necessary. Experience suggests that strong intelligence and law enforcement cooperation is our best long-term defense against terrorism. Finally, U.S. withdrawal makes any Afghan instability a liability for nearby adversaries like Russia and China. America is more secure when its adversaries are regionally competing rather than aligning against it.*

MYTH: **Military veterans and families support a continued troop presence in Afghanistan.**

FACT: *The overwhelming majority of veterans, military families, and the public support withdrawing from Afghanistan. According to [polling](#) conducted by Concerned Veterans for America in April 2020, 73 percent of veterans and 69 percent of military families support withdrawing from Afghanistan. August 2020 YouGov [polling](#) found that a further 76 percent of the American public supports withdrawal.*

