

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to you as bipartisan members of the Senate Armed Services Committee to implore you to reconsider the current strategy in regards to the Turkish incursion into northeastern Syria. We are confident that a structured and deliberate strategy to support our Kurdish partners while reassuring Turkey of our commitment to regional peace will earn broad support across Congress, the National Security community and the American people.

As we have seen in recent days, even small shifts in force posture in Syria have allowed Turkey to begin a ground invasion, shelling, and bombing of Kurdish-held territory. Five years of fighting alongside the Kurds have demonstrated to us their skill and resolve, but without an American presence, even these fierce warriors stand little chance against the modern and sophisticated Turkish forces. In fact, in the face of our announced withdrawal they have already been forced to align themselves with the Assad regime and its Russian and Iranian partners in order to survive.

Furthermore, we have serious concerns about the state of the numerous prisons and camps that currently detain ISIS fighters and their families. We believe that trusting Turkey with such an essential responsibility with no oversight from the international community carries an unacceptable risk. The Kurds have demonstrated their capability in this task, and by allowing them to be attacked, we are accepting their diminished ability to provide security and protection to the region.


We are aware that one of your goals is to reduce US involvement in long term wars in the Middle East, and many of us are supportive of those efforts. However, leaving so abruptly without protection for those partners who have been with us in the fight against ISIS is not only perilous for them, but also dangerous for us and our national security. This decision will potentially degrade future relationships with allies and partners around the world, who may question our long-term commitment and resolve.

We come to you in the sincerest bipartisan fashion because of our grave concerns about our national security and foreign policy. We hope that you will urge Turkey to end their offensive and find a way to a peaceful resolution while supporting our Kurdish partners to ensure regional stability.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United State Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Martha McSally
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator