

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Ed Royce
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Royce:

Thank you for your leadership of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Our Committee has maintained a strong record of addressing the most critical foreign affairs issues before our nation to illuminate U.S. policy options, from Russia's interference in our elections to North Korea's ballistic missile tests. Recently, you and Ranking Member Engel agreed to hold a classified briefing at the request of members of our Committee to review the U.S. arms sale to Saudi Arabia, for which I am greatly appreciative. In light of recent decisions by the Administration to expand the U.S. military role in Afghanistan, I believe it is again incumbent on our Committee to act by holding a hearing on the Administration's strategy, or lack thereof, in Afghanistan.

As you may know, Defense Secretary Mattis confirmed in a statement last week that the President had granted authority to the Department of Defense to set U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan, which currently stand at approximately 8,500 servicemembers. While the Administration has still yet to complete its review of Afghanistan or articulate a comprehensive strategy to the American people, media outlets are reporting that the Pentagon had already decided to send up to 5,000 additional U.S. troops.

After 16 years of war in Afghanistan, a surge to 100,000 U.S. troops, and hundreds of billions of dollars spent, it is clear that there is no military solution to the conflict. Yet the Administration appears to be conflating military tactics with a comprehensive strategy. A decision on U.S. military operations in Afghanistan should stem from clearly-defined political objectives—not the other way around. In the absence of a broader strategy articulated by this Administration, it is difficult to evaluate either our military or non-military efforts.

Having served on active duty in the Air Force, I believe one of Congress' most important duties is to scrutinize any plan to send American men and women into battle. Given our Committee's role in overseeing both U.S. foreign policy and war powers, we should require the Administration to articulate its strategy for Afghanistan to our Committee and explain the political objectives our military operations are trying to support.

I look forward to working with you to continue improving U.S. foreign policy and national security, and I stand ready to assist with our Committee's actions.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu

Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Eliot Engel, Ranking Member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs