

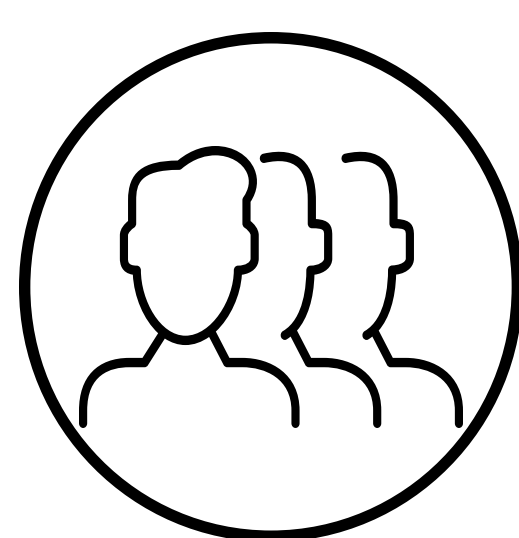
*The United States must end all of its military involvement in Afghanistan, and refocus its efforts on diplomacy, peacebuilding, and accountability for abuses during the conflict.*

Ongoing U.S. military operations have destabilized the country and prolonged the war. President Biden's decision to withdraw U.S. and NATO forces by September 2021 is a welcome step forward, but it must be accompanied by investments in alternative, non-military solutions to help facilitate peace, accountability, and justice.

- Congress must support and push President Biden to stick to his commitment to a full troop withdrawal by September 2021, in recognition that there is no military solution to the conflict.
- Beyond withdrawing troops, the U.S. must work multilaterally to end all aspects of the military combat mission, including special operations forces, the use of private military contractors, drone strikes, and CIA funding of violent non-state actors.
- The U.S. should focus on supporting Afghan civil society and building multilateral backing for an intra-Afghan peace process that meaningfully includes women, youth, and war victims in negotiations.

## THE LONGEST WAR IN U.S. HISTORY

An entire generation of American and Afghan youth have lived under the shadow of this war. \$2.26 trillion spent and nearly 20 years of war has shown that militarism won't lead to peace.



- The U.S. must recognize that nearly 20 years of major U.S. military presence has allowed the parties to avoid seeking a comprehensive, inclusive political solution.
- Afghan civilians are suffering from escalating violence, with civilian deaths from U.S.-led airstrikes increasing by 330% under the previous administration. Since 2001, over 71,000 Afghan civilians have died, and over 5 million have been displaced.
- Withdrawing U.S. forces does not mean cutting and running from Afghanistan, it means reorienting U.S. engagement to diplomacy, dialogue, and accountability rather than militarism.

## A DIPLOMATIC AND PEACEBUILDING SURGE

U.S. stabilization efforts have been undercut by widespread corruption, partly due to an overreliance on military-to-military relations and arming local warlords. The U.S. can reorient its approach to stabilization and development by focusing on bottom-up, locally-designed, -led, and -implemented initiatives that focus on building institutional capacity.



- This goes hand-in-hand with U.S. support for an inclusive peace process, acknowledging responsibility and providing reparations for U.S. abuses, and making long-term multilateral investments to build sustainable governance and peace.
- Congress should invest in multilateral institutions and substantially increase funding for the State Department and USAID, to help USAID programming be more nimble and responsive to partner organizations' needs in complex security environments.
- Overall, the U.S. must focus on implementing a conflict prevention and peacebuilding approach in Afghanistan, rooted in local consultation and relying on local implementation. It should evaluate programs on outcomes, rather than on money spent.

## REEXAMINE U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

Decades of drone strikes, civilian casualties, and human rights abuses committed by U.S. forces and partners in Afghanistan call into question whether counterterrorism works.



- The United States' military-first counterterrorism approach is ineffective and has caused irreparable harm in Afghanistan and beyond. Instead, the U.S. should prioritize long-term, local investments, primarily through multilateral mechanisms, that address economic grievances and governance failures in areas where violent groups have or may obtain influence.
- At minimum, Congress must conduct oversight to enforce the Foreign Assistance Act, Leahy Laws, and Arms Export Control Act to prohibit U.S. military assistance and training going to units that have committed gross violations of human rights.
- Congress must end CIA authority to conduct drone strikes and covertly fund non-state violent groups, seek the release of the executive branch's interpretations of existing war-related authorities, and reform how the U.S. military addresses civilian casualties.

## END THE WAR, DO NOT SCALE BACK OR PRIVATIZE THE WAR

It will not be enough to simply wind down ground wars. The U.S. should stop using any tools of war in Afghanistan — including the use of drone and manned airstrikes, paramilitary forces, and covert funding of violent non-state actors. The U.S. must stop outsourcing its endless war approach to foreign partners, covert actors, or private contractors, and instead prioritize non-military tools.

SANCTIONS





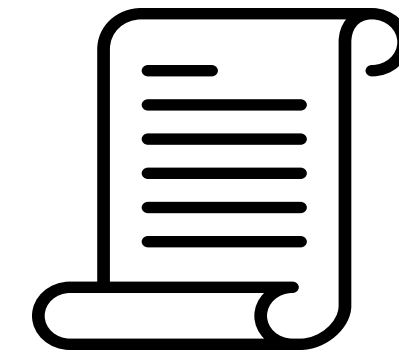
## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

There is no military solution to the war in Afghanistan. Congress can take action to help empower a peace settlement and reorient the U.S. approach to Afghanistan by advocating for and enacting the following policy recommendations:



### ENSURE A FULL U.S. MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

Hold President Biden to his commitment to withdraw all U.S. and NATO troops by September 11, 2021, and counter any congressional attempts to block such action. Conduct oversight over any continued U.S. funding, training, and security assistance to actors in Afghanistan and prohibit assistance without strict anti-corruption and human rights conditions.



### CO-SPONSOR LEGISLATION TO REPEAL THE 2001 AUMF

Passed in the hours after the September 11th attacks, the 2001 AUMF has been misused as authorization for the ensuing 19 years of war in Afghanistan (and elsewhere). Members can co-sponsor Rep. Barbara Lee's 8-month [sunset](#) of the 2001 AUMF in the House, and sponsor companion legislation in the Senate.



### ADOPT A CONFLICT-PREVENTION APPROACH TO STABILIZATION

Introduce or support legislation that reorients U.S. stabilization operations to a conflict prevention and peacebuilding approach that addresses state fragility, like the **Global Fragility Act**. Conduct oversight of U.S. diplomatic engagement in the Afghan peace process to ensure the full participation of women, youth, and war victims.



### SUPPORT REPARATIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE

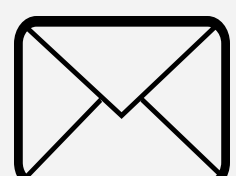
Hold hearings centering war victims. Support restorative justice and international accountability mechanisms for abuses in the conflict, including by the U.S. Urge Biden to remove the previous administration's cap on refugee admissions; provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Afghans and Special Immigrant Visas for anyone who aided the U.S. and NATO during the conflict, to help resettle Afghans displaced or threatened by remaining in the country.

## SELECT PAST LEGISLATIVE AND PRESIDENTIAL ACTION ON AFGHANISTAN

- **Sept. 18, 2001:** Congress enacts [P.L. 107-40](#), the 2001 AUMF.
- **Oct. 7, 2001:** President Bush launches U.S. war in Afghanistan.
- **February 19, 2009:** President Obama announces troop surge to Afghanistan.
- **FY2014:** The House passes a McGovern-Smith amendment by a vote of [305 to 121](#) to require the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan by Dec. 31, 2014, and that if a new authorization was required, Congress should authorize it by June 2014.
- **FY2017:** Congress enacts NDAA amendment that requires the DoD and IRS to publicly post the costs for each U.S. taxpayer of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria (Sec. 1090 of FY17 NDAA sponsored by Rep. John Lewis and adopted by voice vote).
- **FY2018:** The Senate rejects a Paul NDAA amendment [36-61](#) to repeal the 2001 & 2002 AUMFs.
- **FY2021:** The House rejects an Omar NDAA amendment [129-284](#) requiring the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Afghanistan within 14 months of enactment. The Senate rejects a Paul-Udall NDAA amendment [33-60](#) requiring withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and repeal the 2001 AUMF.
- **April 13, 2021:** President Biden announces the withdrawal of all U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021.



For further questions and additional resources:



**ERIC EIKENBERRY**, Govt. Relations Director  
[eric@winwithoutwar.org](mailto:eric@winwithoutwar.org)



**SAM RATNER**, Policy Director  
[sam@winwithoutwar.org](mailto:sam@winwithoutwar.org)

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