

# **U.S. Rep. Grothman: We must ensure that Afghanistan and the Taliban are not the next Israel and Hamas.**

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WASHINGTON – Subcommittee on National Security Ranking Member Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.) opened today’s hearing titled “Examining Next Steps for U.S. Engagement in Afghanistan” by emphasizing President Biden’s withdrawal efforts in the region would not be possible without President Trump’s leadership and unprecedented peace agreements.

In his opening statement, Subcommittee Ranking Member Grothman noted the importance of prioritizing a withdrawal that stifles potential violence, prevents Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terror, and maintains social gains – especially those for Afghan women. He concluded by stating Congress must ensure any taxpayer assistance does not fall into the hands of terrorists and drug runners.

**Below are Subcommittee Ranking Member Grothman's remarks as prepared.**

Thank you, Chairman Lynch, for holding this hearing

And I thank the witness for being here.

I know you are very busy.

On April 14, President Biden announced his intentions for withdrawing all U.S. and U.S. allied forces from Afghanistan by September 11 - the twentieth anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

I would have preferred to see the date not set for one of such significance and remembrance.

Troops began to withdraw on May 1 - the date originally set by the Trump Administration.

In fact, this withdrawal would not be possible without the leadership in the region from President Trump.

Between his efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan and the numerous deals to normalize relations between the Arab world and Israel, President Trump's foreign policy was wildly successful.

But we are here today to discuss ending America's longest war.

For nearly 20 years, the U.S. has had a military presence in Afghanistan.

Peaking at over 100,000 soldiers.

We have lost 2,448 heroes and another 20,722 have been injured.

We owe them our sincerest gratitude.

The decision to withdraw has been contemplated over the course of three Administrations.

President Trump finally took concrete steps to ensure the withdrawal did not create significant negative consequences.

He conditioned our withdrawal on the Taliban disavowing al Qaeda, prevention of Afghanistan becoming a safe haven for terror, and begin working towards a broader peace.

President Biden's troop withdrawal is unconditional - meaning the Taliban does not have to do any of that.

We must reduce our global military footprint and bring troops home

But this withdrawal needs to be done safely and with the interests of both the U.S. and the Afghan people in mind.

Our witness is on the front lines of ensuring that happens.

We must prioritize a withdrawal that stifles potential violence, protects against a vacuum of terror, maintains regional stability, and maintains social gains - especially those for Afghan women and girls.

We must ensure that Afghanistan and the Taliban are not the next Israel and Hamas.

Through the groundwork laid by President Trump, I believe this is possible.

After troops are gone though, our job in congress is not over.

It is likely the American taxpayer will continue to provide assistance to the Afghan government.

What we have heard from others, like the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, is that this assistance must be conditional.

Sometimes the check is mightier than the sword.

In a country plagued by corruption, it is vital taxpayer assistance does not fall into the hands of terrorists and drug runners.

I look forward to discussing all of these topics today with both of you.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.