

September 3, 2019

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

Dear Mr. President,

We, retired General and Flag Officers of the U.S. military who served alongside our men and women in combat, write to express our grave concerns about recent reports that the administration may further reduce refugee admissions for FY2020. For decades, the refugee resettlement program has provided life-saving assistance, demonstrated our humanitarian leadership and values, supported allies hosting the vast majority of refugees, and served critical national security interests. While refugee resettlement has long received bi-partisan support, with a historic average admissions goal of 95,000 refugees annually, America's legacy of welcoming refugees is now on the line. Refugee admissions have been reduced to historic lows, with the FY19 refugee admissions goal at just 30,000, leaving thousands in harm's way. Further cuts would undermine commitments made to allies and partners on the ground, our national security missions overseas, and the domestic infrastructure here in the United States that supports the successful integration of refugees, including those who served alongside U.S. troops. We urge you to protect this vital program and ensure that the next refugee admissions goal is commensurate with global resettlement needs.

U.S. military, diplomatic, and intelligence operations abroad rely on the support of thousands of interpreters, translators, advisors, engineers, and others to fulfill their objectives. When their lives and those of their families are threatened because of this support, the U.S. refugee resettlement program provides a critical lifeline. Over nearly two decades, thousands of Iraqis and Afghans have put their lives on the line to support U.S. efforts overseas. The Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) and Iraqi direct access (P-2) programs were created to uphold our nation's commitment to leave no one behind, providing safety to those partners and their families who risk retribution for their support. We have personally borne witness to how these programs ensure the safety of our servicemembers and success of U.S. missions.

In conjunction with U.S. foreign aid, refugee resettlement offers concrete support to our allies and frontline nations hosting more than their fair share of refugees. Providing safe haven to the most vulnerable refugees--those that cannot be safe in their countries of first refuge--demonstrates America's humanitarian leadership and supports regional stability by preventing premature returns back to war-torn or unstable countries. When America turns its back on refugees, we are challenged to call on our allies to accept them, ultimately risking premature returns, like those of Syrians back to an unstable Syria, Somalis back to an unstable Somalia and

Afghans back to an unstable Afghanistan. Such premature returns not only put refugees in harm's way, they also further cycles of instability and insecurity in critical regions, increasing pressure on military action.

For these reasons, we urge you to protect this vital program and ensure that the refugee admissions goal is robust, in line with decades-long precedent, and commensurate with today's urgent global needs.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

General Keith B. Alexander, USA (Ret.)  
Director, National Security Agency ('05-'14); Commander, US Cyber Command ('10-'14)

General John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.)  
Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force and Commander, US Forces Afghanistan ('11-'13)

Admiral Thad W. Allen, USCG (Ret.)  
Commandant, US Coast Guard ('06-'10)

Lieutenant General John M. Bednarek, USA (Ret.)  
Chief, Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq ('13-'15)

General John F. Campbell, USA (Ret.)  
Commander, International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and NATO's Resolute Support Mission ('14-'16)

General Peter W. Chiarelli, USA (Ret.)  
Vice Chief of Staff, US Army ('08-'12)

General Wesley K. Clark, Sr., USA (Ret.)  
US Commander-in-Chief, US Southern Command ('96-'97); US Commander-in-Chief, US European Command ('97-'00); Supreme Allied Commander Europe ('97-'00)

General Martin E. Dempsey, USA (Ret.)  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff ('11-'15)

Major General Paul D. Eaton, USA (Ret.)  
Commander, Iraqi Army Training Program ('03-'04); Senior Advisor, VoteVets Foundation ('14-present)

Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, USN (Ret.)  
Commander, U.S. Pacific Command ('02-'05)

Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., USN (Ret.)  
Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff ('05-'07); Commander, US Joint Forces Command ('02-'05); NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation ('03-'05)

Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, USN (Ret.)  
Chief of Naval Operations, US Navy ('11-'15)

Lt. General Frank G. Helmick, USA (Ret.)  
Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps ('09-'12)

Lt. General Mark P. Hertling, USA (Ret.)  
Commanding General, US Army Europe ('11-'12)

Lt. General Claudia J. Kennedy, USA (Ret.)  
Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence, US Army ('97-'00)

Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, USN (Ret.)  
Commander, US Pacific Command ('12-'15)

Lt. General Douglas E. Lute, USA (Ret.)  
Special Assistant to the President and Senior Coordinator for Afghanistan and Pakistan, National Security Council, The White House ('09-'13)

General Stanley A. McChrystal, USA (Ret.)  
Commander, International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan ('09-'10)

Admiral William H. McRaven, USN (Ret.)  
Commander, US Special Operations Command ('11-'14)

Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, (Ret.)  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ('07-'11)

Admiral Robert J. Natter, USN (Ret.)  
Commander, Fleet Forces Command and Commander, US Atlantic Fleet ('00-'03)

General John W. Nicholson Jr., USA (Ret.)  
Commander, NATO's Resolute Support Mission and Commander, US Forces Afghanistan ('16-'18)

General Raymond T. Odierno, USA (Ret.)  
Chief of Staff, US Army ('11-'15), Commanding General, US Forces in Iraq ('08-'10)

General David H. Petraeus, USA (Ret.)  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency ('11-'12); Commander, Coalition Forces in Afghanistan ('10-'11) and Iraq ('07-'08)

Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN (Ret.)  
Commander, US European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe ('09-'13); Commander, US Southern Command ('06-'09)

General Joseph Votel, USA (Ret.)  
Commander, US Central Command ('16-'19)

General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret.)  
Commander in Chief, US Central Command ('97-'00)

CC: The Honorable John R. Bolton, U.S. National Security Advisor  
The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State  
The Honorable Mark T. Esper, Secretary of Defense  
The Honorable Alex M. Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Kevin H. McAleenan, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security