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December 9, 2019

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Reed:

We all read today the striking report by The Washington Post, suggesting that administration officials, potentially including military officials, have misled the American public about the war in Afghanistan. I am writing to request hearings to address these deeply concerning revelations about the Afghan war.

I appreciate the many hearings that you, and Chairmen McCain and Levin before you, have held to review the war in Afghanistan. As the story reports, based on the Defense Department's own figures, "since 2001, more than 775,000 U.S. troops have deployed to Afghanistan, many repeatedly. Of those, 2,300 died there and 20,589 were wounded in action, according to Defense Department figures," and approximately a trillion dollars spent, without accounting for classified figures. It is with these great costs to our nation in mind, that I recently introduced the War Powers Reform Resolution to end the manipulation of the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for the Use of Military Force to conduct nearly two decades of war, and to fundamentally reform how Congress would authorize future wars so that we no longer send Americans into military action unless Congress has approved the purpose, location and duration of such action, and clearly stated whom we are fighting.

Given these costs in American lives and funds, it is deeply troubling to read a report of interviews with U.S. Government officials that appear to contradict the many assurances we have heard at committee hearings that the continuing war in Afghanistan has a coherent strategy and an end in sight.

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The committee owes it to the American public to hold hearings to examine the questions raised by this reporting and provide clarity with respect to our strategy in Afghanistan, a clear definition of success, and an honest and complete review of the obstacles on the ground. It is the duty of the Senate Armed Services Committee to obtain answers to these important questions and I look forward to working with you to fulfill our oversight obligations.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator