



## Rand Paul Drops Opposition, Now Backs Pompeo for Secretary of State

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who previously opposed President Trump's nomination of CIA Director Mike Pompeo to the position of secretary of state, has decided to drop his opposition and support Pompeo's nomination.

Paul said that he changed his mind about Pompeo after multiple conversations with Trump during which he had received "assurances" that the nominee sees the war in Iraq as "a mistake" and wants to wind down the U.S. presence in Afghanistan.



"President Trump believes that Iraq was a mistake, that regime change has destabilized the region, and that we must end our involvement with Afghanistan," Paul said in a statement. "Having received assurances from President Trump and Director Pompeo that he agrees with the president on these important issues, I have decided to support his nomination to be our next Secretary of State."

With Paul voting with the majority, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved Pompeo's nomination, 11 to 9.

The key issues that Paul had asked Pompeo about during a Senate confirmation hearing on April 12 were whether the nominee agreed with past statements Trump had made that the Iraq War was a mistake and that we need to bring our troops home from Afghanistan.

During that hearing, Paul asked Pompeo to say whether or not the president has the authority to bomb President Bashar al-Assad's forces or installations in Syria. After Pompeo had replied that we have done that in the past, Paul pressed Pompeo to be more specific, asking: "My question would be do you think it's constitutional? Does the president have the constitutional authority to bomb Assad's forces? Does he have the authority absent congressional action to bomb Assad's forces or installations?"

Pompeo answered, in part:

Every place we can, we should work alongside Congress to get that but yes I believe the president has the domestic authority to do that.... I don't think that has been disputed by Republicans or Democrats throughout an extended period of time.

Paul challenged Pompeo's assertion, saying:

Actually, it was disputed mostly by our Founding Fathers who believed they gave that authority to Congress and actually [they were] uniformly opposed to the executive branch having that power.

Trump praised Paul after the Kentucky senator voted to approve Pompeo's nomination, saying Paul "never let me down."

Paul did not say whether he and Pompeo had resolved their differences about the constitutionality of firing missiles against Syrian installations.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 24, 2018

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