



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 3, 2020

## Will the Taliban Fighters Released Under New Peace Deal Really Stop Fighting?

Under an agreement signed by U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar on February 29 in Doha, Qatar, the United States has agreed to free up to 5,000 Taliban fighters — with the first 1,000 imprisoned Taliban militants set to go free by March 10. The signing was witnessed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.



The agreement states that those Taliban prisoners who are released “will be committed to the responsibilities mentioned in this agreement so that they will not pose a threat to the security of the United States and its allies.”

The United States plans to reduce its troop presence in Afghanistan from 13,000 down to 8,600 within the first 135 days of the onset of the agreement, with a full withdrawal of U.S. troops predicated on the Taliban’s ability to meet and adhere to its part of the deal.

However, some observers are concerned that the freed Taliban soldiers might disregard the limitations stated in the agreement and simply return to the battlefield, which is not an unreasonable concern.

The terms of the agreement also state that it is a U.S. goal to remove the Taliban, as an organization, from its sanctions list by May 29, 2020.

“With the start of intra-Afghan negotiations, the United States will initiate an administrative review of current U.S. sanctions and the rewards list against members of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban with the goal of removing these sanctions by August 27, 2020,” the peace terms state.

Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wy.), described by *The Hill* as “a fierce defense hawk whose father is former Vice President Dick Cheney,” organized the sending of a letter by 22 Republicans to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper, stating that they are “seeking assurances that you will not place the security of the American people into the hands of the Taliban, and undermine our ally, the current government of Afghanistan.”

When Cheney’s father was President George W. Bush’s Vice President, he and fellow CFR member, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice — both consummate interventionists — were instrumental in convincing Bush to invade Iraq. As we noted, many people are legitimately concerned that freeing the Taliban prisoners would allow them to resume fighting. However, as the daughter of such a staunch interventionist, one wonders if the younger Cheney’s greater concern is that the agreement might lead to the end of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan.

The *Washington Times* reported that in exchange for the removal of U.S. troops, the lifting of sanctions



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against it, and the freeing of prisoners, the Taliban has agreed to permanently sever all ties with terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and to never allow Afghanistan to be used as a home base for extremist organizations.

As we were reminded in a February 29 [article about the agreement](#) in *The New American*, the U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan began after the September 11, 2001 attacks upon the United States by agents of al-Qaeda, then led by Osama bin Laden, who was residing in Afghanistan as a guest of the Taliban government then running the country.

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