

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

His Excellency
Ashraf Ghani
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Kabul

Dear Mr. President:

I hope this letter finds you well. I will be sending a similar message to Chairman Abdullah.

I have appreciated the opportunity to speak with you and to consult regarding the United States' review of its strategy in Afghanistan. Your and your team's perspectives have added value to our deliberations.

I am writing today to provide you with an update on where we stand, the immediate road ahead, and the urgent leadership that President Biden and I ask of you in the coming weeks. Although we have not yet completed our review of the way ahead, we have reached an initial conclusion that the best way to advance our shared interests is to do all we can to accelerate peace talks and to bring all parties into compliance with their commitments.

To move matters more fundamentally and quickly toward a settlement and a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire, we are immediately pursuing a high-level diplomatic effort with the parties and with regional countries and the United Nations. This effort will include several elements:

First, we intend to ask the United Nations to convene Foreign Ministers and envoys from Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India, and the United States to discuss a unified approach to supporting peace in Afghanistan. It is my belief that these countries share an abiding common interest in a stable Afghanistan and must work together if we are to succeed.

Second, I have asked Ambassador Khalilzad, whose vital work President Biden and I asked that he continue, to prepare and to share with you as well as with Taliban leaders written proposals aimed at accelerating discussions on a negotiated settlement and ceasefire. These proposals reflect some of the ideas

included in the roadmap for the peace process that Ambassador Mohib shared with Ambassador Wilson. In sharing these documents, we do not intend to dictate terms to the parties. Rather, the documents will enable the Islamic Republic and the Taliban to move urgently to the tasks of developing a) the foundational principles that will guide Afghanistan's future constitutional and governing arrangements, b) a roadmap to a new, inclusive government; and c) the terms of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. I urge you to develop constructive positions on these written proposals to discuss with Ambassador Khalilzad.

Third, we will ask the government of Turkey to host a senior-level meeting of both sides in the coming weeks to finalize a peace agreement. I urge you or your authoritative designees to join other representatives of the Islamic Republic in this meeting.

Fourth, we share your view that every effort must be made to reduce the high levels of violence in Afghanistan, which are exacting an unacceptable toll on the Afghan people and deeply undermining efforts to achieve peace. We have prepared a revised proposal for a 90-day Reduction-in-Violence, which is intended to prevent a Spring Offensive by the Taliban and to coincide with our diplomatic efforts to support a political settlement between the parties. I urge you to positively consider the proposal, which Ambassador Khalilzad will share with you.

Unity and inclusivity on the Islamic Republic side are, I believe, essential for the difficult work that lies ahead. As you and your countrymen know all too well, disunity on the part of Afghan leaders proved disastrous in the early 1990s and must not be allowed to sabotage the opportunity before us. Your work together with Chairman Abdullah and your engagements with former President Karzai and Professor Sayyaf show promise toward building a more united Afghan front for peace. I ask that you work together to further broaden this consultative group of four such that Afghans regard it as inclusive and credible; to build consensus on specific goals and objectives for a negotiation with the Taliban about governance, power-sharing, and essential supporting principles; and to agree on overall tactics and public messaging that will demonstrate unity of effort and purpose. We will strongly support all efforts taken to make this united front work.

I must also make clear to you, Mr. President, that as our policy process continues in Washington, the United States has not ruled out any option. We are

considering the full withdrawal of our forces by May 1st, as we consider other options. Even with the continuation of financial assistance from the United States to your forces after an American military withdrawal, I am concerned that the security situation will worsen and that the Taliban could make rapid territorial gains. I am making this clear to you so that you understand the urgency of my tone regarding the collective work outlined in this letter.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as a partner.

Sincerely,

Antony J. Blinken

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antony J. Blinken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

TOLO
news