H. R. ______

To limit the use of funds to reduce the total number of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who are deployed to Syria, and for other purposes

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MALINOWSKI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ________________

A BILL

To limit the use of funds to reduce the total number of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who are deployed to Syria, and for other purposes

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS TO REDUCE
4 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE
5 ARMED FORCES SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY
6 WHO ARE DEPLOYED TO SYRIA.
7 (a) LIMITATION.—None of the funds made available
8 to the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2019 may
be used to reduce the total number of members of the United States Armed Forces serving on active duty who are deployed to Syria below 1,500, unless and until the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Director of National Intelligence submit to the relevant congressional committees a report that addresses the following questions:

(1) What is the current strength and regenerative capacity of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)? This should include an assessment of how many fighters ISIS fields in Syria and Iraq, the threat it continues to pose to the United States and its allies, its likely reaction to the withdrawal of United States and coalition forces, and of the operational risks involved with conducting counter-ISIS operations following a withdrawal.

(2) What is the Administration’s military and political strategy for meeting any remaining threat from ISIS?

(3) Can the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remain a viable fighting force in the absence of a United States military presence in Syria?

(4) Will the Euphrates remain the aerial and land deconfliction line between United States-backed forces and Assad regime forces and their allies, and
if so, how will the Administration ensure it will be respected?

(5) What actions does the Administration plan to take to ensure the safety of Syrian nationals who took part in or provided support to the coalition to defeat ISIS, including members of the SDF, and what form and amount of assistance does the Administration plan to provide to the SDF following a withdrawal of United States and coalition forces?

(6) What is the likelihood that the Assad regime and its allies, including Hezbollah and Iranian forces, will retake areas where United States personnel and Syrian allies have operated or created demilitarized zones, and what actions does the Administration plan to take to ensure the safety, and prevent the exodus, of civilians living in those areas?

(7) What actions does the Administration plan to take to ensure the safety of civilians living in refugee camps that may fall under the control of the Assad regime following withdrawal of United States forces, including Rubkan Camp, and to ensure access by humanitarian organizations to areas being vacated by United States forces and Syrian allies?

(8) If the Assad regime or its allies retake areas currently held by United States-allied groups,
what is the expected windfall in oil revenue the regime or its allies are likely to require?

(9) What impact would any withdrawal from Syria have on Iranian power and influence in the Middle East? This should include an assessment of the current status of Iranian backed forces in Syria, whether withdrawal is likely to make easier Iranian advanced weapon transfers to Syria and Lebanon, the impact on the security of Israel, the prospect of large scale conflict between Israel and Iran in Syria and Lebanon, and a strategy to counter any such threats.

(10) What impact would any United States withdrawal from Syria have on Russian power and influence in the Middle East?

(11) What impact would any United States withdrawal have on diplomatic efforts to end the Syrian conflict, and on United States influence on those efforts? This should include a statement of the Administration’s current diplomatic objectives in that process.

(12) What commitments has Turkey extended with respect to fighting ISIS and refraining from military action against the Kurds following a withdrawal of United States forces?
(13) What precise commitments have Saudi Arabia, and any other countries, made to assist in Syria’s reconstruction? This should include how and where any such funds will be spent, and what actions the Administration plans to take to ensure that these efforts are transparent and accountable, including by ensuring that no Saudi assistance supports educational or religious programs that foster radicalization.

(14) What efforts does the Administration plan to undertake to support legitimate, effective and democratic local governance in areas from which United States and coalition forces are withdrawing, to diminish the likelihood that extremist forces will return?

(15) What consultations have taken place with coalition allies in Operation Inherent Resolve about withdrawal of forces from Syria, and how are the governments of Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Russia, Iran, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government likely to respond to any withdrawal?
(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex.

(c) WAIVER.—The Secretary of Defense may waive the limitation under subsection (a) if, upon advice of the relevant military commanders, the Secretary determines that the waiver is necessary due to an imminent and extraordinary threat to members of the United States Armed Forces in Syria.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to obstruct or prevent the normal rotation of United States Armed Forces into and out of Syria.

(e) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “relevant congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.