

# Lindsey Graham says Trump is slowing down his Syria troop withdrawal, will protect the Kurds and thwart Iran

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), a close ally of President Trump who has been sharply critical of his plans to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, emerged from a two-hour lunch at the White House on Sunday saying he felt “a lot better” about the situation. He suggested that Trump has slowed down his troop withdrawal. “I think we’re in a pause situation where we are re-evaluating what’s the best way to achieve the president’s objective of having people pay more and do more,” Graham told reporters outside the White House.

Graham didn’t elaborate, but *The New York Times* speculates he “may have been referring to assurances that Mr. Trump is said to have given some military officials that they can have more time than 30 days to ensure a proper drawdown of troops.” Graham later went on Twitter to reiterate the main points he took away from his meeting with Trump, though with few details on how Trump will achieve these goals:



*Lindsey Graham@LindseyGrahamSC*

*I learned a lot from President @realDonaldTrump about our efforts in Syria that was reassuring. (1/3)*



*Lindsey Graham@LindseyGrahamSC*

*The President will make sure any withdrawal from Syria will be done in a fashion to ensure:*

*1) ISIS is permanently destroyed.*

*2) Iran doesn’t fill in the back end, and*

3) *our Kurdish allies are protected.*

Graham said that Trump is suitably “worried about Iranian influence and the potential dangers to Israel from having a superhighway from Beirut to Tehran in terms of delivering weapons into Lebanon, and he’ll be talking to Turkey about making sure we don’t have a war between the Turks and our allies the Kurds.” Before his lunch, Graham said on CNN’s *State of the Union* that “if we leave the Kurds and abandon them and they get slaughtered, who’s going to help you in the future?” The White House had no comment on Graham’s assessment of the lunch. You can watch Graham’s full comments, which also touch on the government shutdown, below. *Peter Weber*

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