

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0550

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I write to request a security briefing for the House of Representatives regarding the ongoing heightened security posture across the Capitol Complex.

As you have said, "Protecting the Capitol, which is the heart of our Democracy, is essential to upholding our Constitutional duty to serve those whom we are privileged to represent." I agree. We should all be grateful for the daily efforts of our men and women in the Capitol Police, the U.S. National Guard and the range of support service personnel working on behalf of this institution. Their service has been exemplary, although I must note numerous public reports have detailed a severe lack of proper sleeping quarters and even a lack of food for them.

Protecting the Capitol, however, also means preserving a "government of the people, by the people, for the people." By any objective measure, that is not happening. Today, more than a month after January 6, the Capitol Complex remains surrounded by tall fencing, barbed wire borders, concrete barricades, restricted sidewalks, and the continued presence and patrol of thousands of National Guard troops. For more than a month, escorted guests, student class tours, and even families who wish to see the people's house in person are completely blocked from these spaces.

This is an unprecedented perpetual posture and one that every elected official must have the information underlying these decisions. The briefing that is required must be comprehensive, available for Members' questions and above all else, it must provide a transparent status plan. This should include full information about the National Guard's mission and mandate, the justification for the Guard's continued deployment, all current plans for their use and a detailed readout of how their daily needs are met now and will be in the future. Further, the briefing must provide sufficient detail regarding the Department of Homeland Security's National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin of January 27 stating, "... due to a heightened threat environment across the United States, which DHS believes will persist in the weeks following the successful Presidential Inauguration" and "(I)information suggests that some ideologically-motivated violent extremists with objections to the exercise of governmental authority and the presidential transition, as well as other perceived grievances fueled by false narratives, could continue to mobilize to incite or commit violence."¹

¹ [National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin - January 27, 2021 | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

Fundamentally, the need for security must not instead become primarily a show of force. As our Capitol continues in lockdown, blocked from the citizens it works to represent, I retain serious concern that this is doing lasting damage to the institution of this House. The underlying justification must be known in order to make critical open government decisions in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Issa', written in a cursive style.

DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Kevin McCarthy,
Republican Leader