

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 24, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Over the past weeks, the world watched with utter shock as the Taliban took over Afghanistan with astonishing speed, the result of unforced errors made by withdrawing completely the small remaining footprint of our main military force from Afghanistan, and by unnecessarily delaying the evacuation of U.S. personnel and our Afghan partners. The situation in Afghanistan has rapidly metastasized into Taliban rule with reinstated oppression of women and girls, the repression of civil society, the displacement of countless Afghans from their homes who the Taliban then use force to prevent from fleeing Afghanistan, and a power vacuum that China seeks to fill by increasing its ties to the Taliban.

The consequences of withdrawal from Afghanistan are not isolated to that country, or even to the Middle East region. The withdrawal carried geopolitical and strategic consequences that have already begun to unfold and will reverberate for decades. Dealing with these consequences means that we must take action now to chart the course for American strategy, while we manage the immediate repercussions of this self-inflicted crisis in Afghanistan.

To this end, we write to ask you to outline what your plan is to move America forward. There remain several unanswered, urgent questions, and we would like to know the following:

- What is your plan to evacuate Afghan SIVs and other vulnerable Afghans like women, girls, and former Afghan civil service employees from Afghanistan? Do you have a plan to protect prominent women journalists, scholars, and employees of prominent non-government organizations? Will you ensure that religious and ethnic minorities, like the Hazaras, are also prioritized for P1/P2 visas within this evacuation sequence?
- Will you commit to abandoning the arbitrary August 31 withdrawal deadline and continuing Noncombatant Evacuation Operation until all Americans, allies, and at-risk Afghans are processed for evacuation?
- The intelligence community has warned that Al Qaida and ISIS-K will be given carte blanche by the Taliban to use Afghanistan as a safe haven to train and equip for future terrorist attacks against the United States. What is your plan to ensure that Al Qaida does not resurge and regain a foothold in Afghanistan? What “over the horizon” operations are you prepared to use to counter this threat?
- Given that the Taliban has taken Kabul, does the Taliban now have de facto command and control over the Afghan security forces’ former personnel, equipment, and


infrastructure? If so, does this mean that the Taliban possess an air force through this de facto control? What is your plan to disable any air forces that operate under orders from the Taliban?

- What is your plan to ensure that more U.S. and Afghan military equipment does not end up in the hands of the Taliban? What is your plan to reclaim U.S. military equipment that has already fallen into the hands of the Taliban?
- How many U.S. funded aircraft have been taken out of the country by Afghan pilots, and what are you currently doing to retrieve said aircraft?
- What is your plan to secure Third Country Agreements for transit and resettlement functions for Afghan refugees?
- What is your plan to support Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA)'s air traffic control functions long-term? Are there sufficient Afghan personnel to maintain the operability of HKIA after U.S. troops fully withdraw?
- Do you plan to support any free Afghanistan resistance or security force that organizes outside of Afghanistan?
- What is your plan to counter the Chinese Communist Party's growing relationship with the Taliban?
- What is your plan to ensure that American influence in the Middle East does not erode after so rapidly dissipating in Afghanistan?
- Are you prepared to support regional allies militarily in the event that the Taliban militarize the Afghanistan border? What is your plan to help to ensure that the Taliban does not destabilize its nuclear neighbor, Pakistan?
- Do you have a plan to ensure that Afghanistan, under Taliban occupation, will never acquire a nuclear weapon?
- Since Afghanistan is a Major Non-NATO ally, how will you reassure the United States' other MNNA countries that this powerful symbol of our close relationship to those countries can still be relied on?


With respect to any answers that may involve sensitive or classified information, we would welcome a briefing from your national security team. We look forward to your response.


Sincerely,

  
John Cornyn  
United States Senator


  
Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator

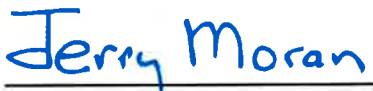
  
Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator


  
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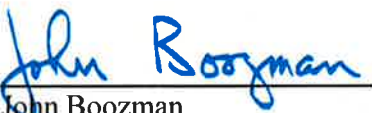
  
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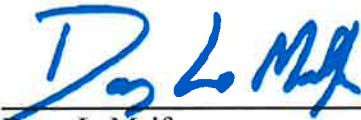
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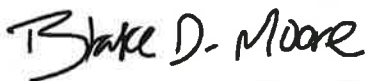
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Michelle Steel  
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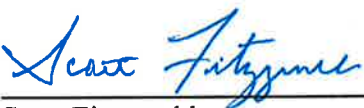
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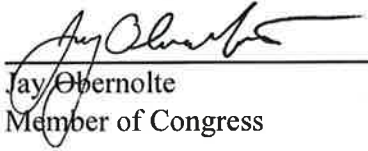
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