

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

August 23, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin:

As a direct result of the Biden Administration's poorly planned and executed U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban is now armed with a significant arsenal of U.S.-made weaponry. Worse, it would appear the Biden Administration has no clue what or how many weapon platforms are now owned and operated by the Taliban.<sup>1</sup> With one U.S. official admitting, "[e]verything that hasn't been destroyed is the Taliban's now."<sup>2</sup> We are left wondering if the Biden Administration has a plan to prevent the Taliban from using our weapons against the U.S. or its allies, or selling them to foreign adversaries, like China, Russia, Iran, or North Korea.

According to a 2017 assessment, between 2003 and 2016, the U.S. military had transferred about 75,898 military vehicles, 599,690 weapons systems, and 208 aircraft to the Afghan National Defense Forces.<sup>3</sup> On August 17, 2021, President Joseph Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, "[w]e don't have a complete picture, obviously, of where every article of defense materials has gone but certainly, a fair amount of it has fallen into the hands of the Taliban, and obviously, we don't have a sense that they are going to readily hand it over to us at the airport."<sup>4</sup> Recent reporting supports Mr. Sullivan's suspicions and suggests the Taliban now control:

- Innumerable M4 and M16 rifles, M24 sniper rifles, and M2 .50 caliber machine guns;
- About 2,000 armored vehicles, including U.S. Humvees;

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<sup>1</sup> Press Briefing, Jake Sullivan, Nat'l Sec. Advisor, The White House (Aug. 17, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Idrees Ali, et. al., *Planes, guns, night-vision goggles: The Taliban's new U.S.-made war chest*, REUTERS (Aug. 19, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/planes-guns-night-vision-goggles-talibans-new-us-made-war-chest-2021-08-19/>.

<sup>3</sup> AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: U.S.-FUNDED EQUIPMENT FOR THE AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES, U.S. GOVT. ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-17-667R (Aug. 10, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Press Briefing, *supra* note 1.

- About 40 aircraft, including UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, Scout Attack helicopters, and Scan Eagle military drones; and
- Innumerable pieces of communications equipment and night vision goggles.<sup>5</sup>

Further, it would appear the Taliban seized biometric devices that could aid in their attempts to identify and, eventually, persecute Afghans that assisted in the U.S. mission.<sup>6</sup> This equipment contains data such as iris scans, fingerprints, and biographical information.<sup>7</sup> It is likely this information will be used to attack U.S. allies.

To assist the Committee in our continued oversight of President Biden’s execution of the withdrawal of U.S. and U.S.-allied forces from Afghanistan, please provide the following information as soon as possible but no later than September 7, 2021:

1. Documents sufficient to show a full accounting of all U.S. military equipment provided to the Afghan National Security Forces, or affiliated military group, since 2003.
2. Documents sufficient to show the following:
  - a. the amount of military equipment that has since been decommissioned or, for other reasons, was not in Afghanistan as of May 1, 2021.
  - b. the amount of military equipment that is inoperable without U.S. personnel.
3. All documents and information regarding planned or current efforts to recapture, destroy, or decommission the military equipment in (1) that remains operational in Afghanistan.

In addition to the above documents and information, we request staff-level briefing to cover the above questions as soon as possible but no later than August 30, 2021. To ask any follow-up or related questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform staff at (202) 225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

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<sup>5</sup> Ali, *supra* note 2; Jared Keller, *Here’s all the US military equipment that likely ended up in Taliban hands*, TASK & PURPOSE (Aug. 18, 2021), <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/taliban-weapons-afghanistan/>.

<sup>6</sup> Klen Klippenstein & Sara Sirota, *The Taliban Have Seized U.S. Military Biometric Devices*, THE INTERCEPT (Aug. 17, 2021), <https://theintercept.com/2021/08/17/afghanistan-taliban-military-biometrics/>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin

August 23, 2021

Page 3

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer

Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and Reform



Glenn Grothman

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on National Security

cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security