

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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December 6, 2022

Mr. Jake Sullivan
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

House Oversight Committee Republicans are continuing to conduct oversight of the Biden Administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. In July 2021, prior to the withdrawal, President Biden claimed "[t]here's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy."¹ By August 2021, however, Americans watched in horror as the Taliban quickly gained control of Afghanistan, fleeing Afghans clung to and fell from planes departing Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA), and a suicide bomber murdered 13 U.S. servicemen and women and hundreds of innocent Afghans.² Amidst the chaos, you claimed that the U.S. government planned for all contingencies,³ and that the former Afghan government made a plea to not make a mass evacuation.⁴ In light of your claims, the mass casualties, taxpayer dollars spent, and ongoing national security concerns, Committee Republicans are seeking information about the planning, logistics, and steps the Biden Administration took to plan for the rushed exit from Afghanistan. Looking forward to the 118th Congress, this investigation will continue to be a priority for the Committee. Therefore, we are reiterating our previous requests for documents and information.

On September 28, 2021, Committee Republicans wrote to you examining the decision to deploy an AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-surface missile against Afghan citizen Zemari Ahmadi.⁵ In that letter we requested documents to justify this action. We did not receive a response to this

¹ Press Briefing, The White House, Remarks by President Biden on the Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan (July 8, 2021).

² Luke Harding & Ben Doherty, *Kabul airport: footage appears to show Afghans falling from plane after takeoff*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 16, 2021).

³ Press Briefing, The White House, Press Briefing by Press Sec'y Jen Psaki and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan (Aug. 17, 2021).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Letter from Hon. James Comer, et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Jake Sullivan, Assistant to the President for Nat'l Sec. Affairs (Sept. 28, 2021).

request. On February 15, 2022, we asked you and others to provide all documents relating to the planning and implementation of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation.⁶ Again, we received no response.

Committee Republicans are alarmed at the Biden Administration's efforts to avoid transparency and accountability for the failures of the Afghanistan withdrawal. On August 17, 2021, you claimed the Administration intends to examine the entire Afghanistan withdrawal operation from start to finish, and that examination would be made public.⁷ Has this examination been completed? If so, where is the report?

Further, based on documents and information received from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the Biden Administration is obstructing oversight of the Afghanistan withdrawal. Several agencies, including Department of State, Department of the Treasury, and the U.S. Agency for International Aid are refusing to provide documents and information to assist SIGAR in its statutorily mandated oversight.

As noted, next Congress the Committee will continue to investigate the Biden Administration's failure to conduct a safe withdrawal from Afghanistan and all national security concerns that reverberated from it. You possess critical information needed to inform Congress and the American people of the decisions and planning regarding the withdrawal from Afghanistan. In addition to documents requested in previous letters, please prioritize the following requests for production, covering the time period from January 20, 2021 to present, as soon as possible but no later than December 20, 2022:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to contingency plans for the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation;
2. All documents and communications between or among your office and the departments or agencies implementing the plan for withdrawal from Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021;
3. All documents, meeting records, and communications discussing or requesting a surge or draw down of troops in Afghanistan or in support of the mission in Afghanistan;
4. All documents, meeting records, and communications with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders regarding troop withdrawal and evacuation planning;
5. All intelligence assessments, reports, communications, and documents regarding al-Qaeda's posture in Afghanistan;

⁶ Letter from Hon. James Comer, et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, to Jake Sullivan, et. al., Assistant to the President for Nat'l Sec. Affairs (Feb. 15, 2022).

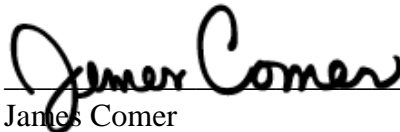
⁷ Press Briefing, *supra* note 3.

6. All documents and communications including but not limited to communications with the former Afghan Air Force (AAF), ANDSF, the Afghan Ministry of Defense, Afghan Ministry of Interior, or the Afghan Government regarding the closure of Bagram Airfield;
7. All documents and communications showing that the former Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan tried to persuade the U.S. government not to conduct a mass evacuation;
8. All documents, assessments, plans, and communications regarding the ability to conduct over-the-horizon operations in Afghanistan following the withdrawal;
9. All documents and communications referring or relating to the planning and implementation of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) and Operation Allies Refuge (OAR); and
10. All draft or final after-action assessments, completed by your office, of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation that specified any areas of improvement or weakness.

To coordinate the delivery of these documents or to ask any follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican 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.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

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