

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability continues to investigate the Biden Administration's 2021 Afghanistan evacuation. After more than \$2 trillion spent on the war and reconstruction efforts,¹ Americans deserve answers and have received few from the Biden Administration. You were at the center of planning the withdrawal and evacuation and advised President Biden on decisions that amounted to tactical and strategic failures. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been responsible for screening and vetting Afghan nationals in the largest refugee resettlement effort in United States history. The United States has spent over \$13.3 billion for Afghan resettlement.² The Committee is seeking information about the vetting and screening of Afghan nationals who have been relocated to the United States and the national security implications of the Biden Administration's policies. The Committee requests DHS produce certain information to assist the Committee in its investigation.

We are concerned that the Biden Administration continues to delay long overdue transparency to the American people about the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation. The Afghan War Commission, established by the FY2022 National Defense Authorization Act, does not have to produce a report for three years after its first meeting.³ The Commission has not met once. The Commission has the option to extend its investigation for a year,⁴ potentially releasing findings after the Biden Administration has departed. This timeline unacceptable to address questions that are already past due.

During the 117th Congress, Committee Republicans requested documents, communications, and information from DHS and DHS Office of the Inspector General regarding evacuation planning of Afghan nationals. Specifically, Committee Republicans requested information on the screening and vetting of Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) and U.S. Refugee

¹ SPECIAL INSPECTOR GEN. FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION, QUARTERLY REPORT TO CONG., 43 (October 30, 2022).

² Felicia Sonmez, *Spending bill directs \$7 billion to resettle Afghan evacuees over some GOP objections*, WASH. POST (Dec. 3, 2021).

³ Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2021).

⁴ Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2)(A)(ii) (2021).

Admissions Program Priority 1 (P-1) or Priority 2 (P-2) applicants, what procedures are in place for cross-referencing vetting practices with other agencies, how many SIV applications have been approved, wait times for processing, a definition of “vulnerable Afghans,” and when parole into the U.S. has been granted.⁵ Committee Republicans also sent three subsequent letters asking for all documents, communications, and information from DHS regarding its role in planning the Afghanistan withdrawal.⁶ None of these letters received a substantive response.

Given your role advising President Biden on the ability to resettle Afghan refugees in the United States and how DHS interacted with other federal agencies during the withdrawal from and evacuation of Afghanistan, you possess critical information regarding the events that unfolded in Afghanistan in 2021. To assist the Committee with its investigation of the Biden Administration’s strategy in Afghanistan, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but by no later than March 3, 2023:

1. All records, documents, and communications from January 20, 2021, to present referring or related to contingency planning for the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation;
2. All inter-agency records, documents, and communications implementing the plan that unfolded in Afghanistan;
3. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan trying to persuade the U.S. government not to conduct a mass evacuation;
4. All inter-agency records, documents, and communications referring or relating to the vetting of Afghan refugees;
5. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to the planning and implementation of Operation Allies Welcome and Operation Allies Refuge; and
6. All draft or final after-action assessments of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation completed by the DHS, or an organization contracted by the DHS, that specified any areas of improvement or weakness.

The Committee has provided instructions regarding how these materials should be produced and defined certain terms in the accompanying attachment.⁷ To coordinate the delivery

⁵ Letter from Hon. James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm on Oversight & Reform, to Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas, Sec’y, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Sec. (Aug. 25, 2021); Letter from Hon. James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm on Oversight & Reform, to Hon. Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector Gen., U.S. Dept. of Homeland Sec. (Oct. 6, 2021).

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); Letter from Hon. James Comer, et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm on Oversight & Reform, to Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas, Sec’y, Dept. of Homeland Sec. (Feb. 25, 2022); Letter from Hon. James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform to Sec’y Alejandro Mayorkas (Dec. 6, 2022).

⁷ See Attachment A.

Secretary Mayorkas
February 17, 2023
Page 3 of 3

of these documents or to ask any follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability 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 for your prompt attention to this important investigation.

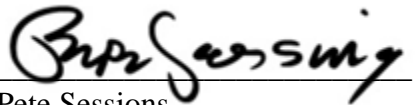
Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



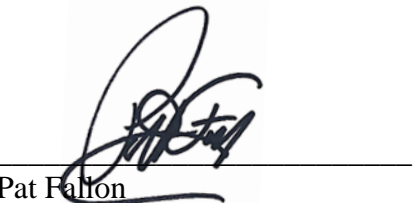
Glenn Grothman
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security,
the Border, and Foreign Affairs



Pete Sessions
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations
and the Federal Workforce



Nancy Mace
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity,
Information Technology, and
Government Innovation



Pat Fallon
Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,
Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs



Lisa McClain
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Health Care and
Financial Services

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability