

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Regan Building  
Washington, D.C. 20525

Dear Administrator Power:

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,<sup>1</sup> Americans deserve answers and have received few from the Biden Administration. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has played an active role in Afghanistan's development, investing \$22 billion in assistance since 2002.<sup>2</sup> The Biden Administration's botched Afghanistan withdrawal jeopardized USAID's work and obliterated twenty years of reconstruction accomplishments in Afghanistan that have been subsidized by American taxpayers.<sup>3</sup> The Committee requests information regarding the Biden Administration's planning, logistics, and steps taken during its rushed exit from Afghanistan.

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.<sup>4</sup> The Commission has not met once. The Commission has the option to extend its investigation for a year,<sup>5</sup> potentially releasing findings after the Biden Administration has departed. This timeline unacceptable to address questions that are already past due.

On December 6, 2022, Committee Republicans sent you a letter requesting documents and information regarding USAID's planning for the troop withdrawal and evacuation from Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> This letter did not receive a substantive response. The Special Inspector General

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<sup>1</sup> SPECIAL INSPECTOR GEN. FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION, QUARTERLY REPORT TO CONG., 43 (Oct. 30, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> *Our Work: Afghanistan*, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (last updated Nov. 8, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> SPECIAL INSPECTOR GEN. FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION, SIGAR 23-02, AFGHAN CIVIL SOCIETY: THE TALIBAN'S TAKEOVER RISKS UNDOING 20 YEARS OF RECONSTRUCTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS (Oct. 5, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2)(A)(ii) (2021).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform to Samantha Power, Administrator, USAID (Dec. 6, 2022).

for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has notified the Committee of USAID's lack of cooperation in responding to its requests for information and refusal to participate in SIGAR's independent oversight work.<sup>7</sup> The Committee is concerned the Biden Administration is not prioritizing—or, indeed, intentionally deprioritizing—transparency regarding the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation.

Given USAID's role in the Afghanistan withdrawal, it possesses important information regarding what led to 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 21, 2021, to present referring or relating to the agency's preparation for the withdrawal;
2. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to any notices of program closures leading up to and after the withdrawal, including the dates on which those programs would be terminated;
3. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to staff protocols for the withdrawal;
4. All inter-agency records, documents, and communications referring or relating to the withdrawal;
5. All records, documents, and communication between USAID and its Afghan partners leading up to and after the withdrawal;
6. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to USAID programs currently operating in Afghanistan, including those in cooperation with any multilateral organization; and
7. All draft or final after-action assessments of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation completed by USAID, or an organization contracted by USAID, 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.<sup>8</sup> To coordinate the delivery

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<sup>7</sup> Letter from John Sopko, Special Inspector Gen. for Afghanistan Reconstruction, to Sen. Patrick Leahy, et al., Chairman, S. Comm. on Appropriations (June 22, 2022); Email from Robert Lawrence, Dir. Of Congressional Relations and Gov. Affairs, Special Inspector Gen. for Afghanistan Reconstruction to Mark Marin, Staff Director, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, et al. (October 11, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> See Attachment A.

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.

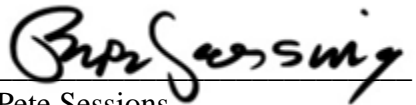
Sincerely,



James Comer  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



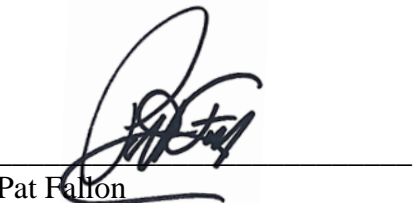
Glenn Grothman  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
the Border, and Foreign Affairs



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