

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2021

Mr. Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear National Security Advisor Sullivan:

In light of last week's brutal attacks at Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) and tomorrow's looming withdrawal deadline, we urgently request you provide the plan to repatriate Americans and evacuate others that will be left behind in Afghanistan after the military withdrawal on August 31. The President has made this commitment to these individuals many times, and Congress has a right to know how these evacuations will be facilitated and conducted.

We have heard repeatedly how the administration is relying upon a sworn enemy of the United States to ensure access to HKIA for both Americans and Afghans. As you know, over the course of the evacuation operation, there have been reports of the Taliban refusing entry to those who should have been allowed safe passage, underscoring the Taliban's clear credibility problem. Meanwhile, the ISIS-K suicide bomb attacks that resulted in the deaths of 13 U.S. servicemembers reflect the Taliban's inability to maintain even the most basic security in Kabul that would allow for U.S. citizens and Afghan nationals to travel to, and depart from, the airport. Rescue and evacuation efforts have only become more difficult with the deterioration of the security situation and will become nearly impossible once U.S. military and diplomatic security personnel depart tomorrow. We are skeptical the Taliban can be relied upon to support any post-retrograde repatriations and are concerned that the administration repeats this as a viable option.

As we wrote in a letter to the President earlier this month, it is imperative that the Biden administration mitigate dangers associated with the withdrawal. Unfortunately, we have no clarity from the administration on what counterterrorism agreements, if any, have been reached with other countries, no idea how the administration will fulfill its promises to help get Americans out once our personnel have left, no concrete plans for protecting Afghan women, and no idea about how SIV, P1, and P2 applicants and other categories of at-risk Afghans will be processed when consular staff are based exclusively in other countries.

Because of the urgency involved, we request answers to the following questions as soon as possible, in a classified format if necessary:

1. What does the administration mean by its commitment to continue providing support to Americans and Afghans that wish to leave Afghanistan after our military and diplomats depart tomorrow, August 31?

2. Does the administration plan to conduct rescue and evacuation operations after the August 31 deadline? If so, which agencies will conduct these operations, and where (i.e., inside which country) will relevant teams be based? Will other countries assist our efforts? What specific role will the Taliban play in facilitating Americans and others leaving Afghanistan after the retrograde?
3. How will the gaps created by our drawdown in our intelligence collection and counterterrorism capabilities be filled after August 31? Have we entered into agreements with any neighboring countries to provide us with intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, basing, strike, and overflight capabilities? Could any of these agreements be utilized to support evacuation operations in Afghanistan?
4. How exactly will the administration assist Americans and our Afghan partners left behind enemy lines without a diplomatic presence on the ground in Kabul after August 31? How will we communicate with them? What measures will be taken to get in contact with others left behind whom we have not yet had success in contacting?
5. What is the current state of our embassy compound that has been evacuated in Kabul? What assurances do we have from the Taliban that the embassy compound will not be occupied, destroyed, or otherwise defaced?

We look forward to prompt answers to these critical questions.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Foreign Affairs



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Armed Services



Devin Nunes
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Permanent
Select Committee on
Intelligence