

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2024

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

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretaries Austin and Blinken,

We write regarding the deteriorating situation in Niger that is impacting thousands of American citizens, servicemembers, and diplomats. Following the Biden Administration's announcement that the U.S. will retreat from Niger, we are concerned with the well-being of Americans abroad and the void that will be filled by our adversaries and violent extremist organizations.

Following the failed Afghanistan withdrawal, the Biden Administration evacuated 11 embassies and consulates across the globe. In recent weeks, the Federal Bureau of Investigations Director Christopher Wray and U.S. Central Command Commander General Michael Kurilla warned that the Islamic State – Khorasan Province will have the capability to attack the West within six months. We also continue to see our adversaries undermine our interests across Africa, Europe, South America, and Asia without consequence. This is a direct result of the president's failed foreign policy agenda that emboldens our adversaries, empowers violent terrorist organizations, and undermines U.S. and allied interests abroad.

On March 16, 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated, "Niger is a really an extraordinary model at a time of great challenge – a model of resilience, a model of democracy, a model of cooperation." More than a year later, the secretary's statement could not be further from the truth in yet another foreign policy blunder for the Biden Administration.

According to reports, the junta in Niger has restricted U.S. presence in the country, which has resulted in a lack of safety for Americans, troop resupplies, and diplomatic overflights. Earlier this month, Secretary Austin confirmed that the Russian military has gained access to Airbase 101 in Niger, where American forces are currently stationed.

Recent reports have indicated that Russian forces and their paramilitary partners, equipment, and air defense systems have been installed near U.S. forces. This follows the United States' investment of millions of dollars in training for Niger's military and the construction of a \$100 million military installation at Airbase 201 that was completed just last year. Undoubtedly, Russian forces and their paramilitary group will occupy this taxpayer-funded base once we fully withdraw from the country.

In Niger, President Biden's weakness has resulted in another chaotic withdrawal to the benefit of Russia, China, and violent extremists aligned with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. This will certainly be yet another failed chapter of the president's leadership.

We urge you to provide transparency to Congress, ensure no buildings, weapons, or equipment are handed over to the Russians or Niger military, and request a follow-up classified briefing by July 1st to members of Congress regarding this crisis.

Sincerely,



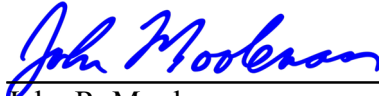
Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



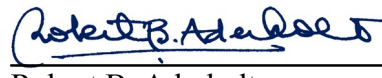
Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs
Committee



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



John R. Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



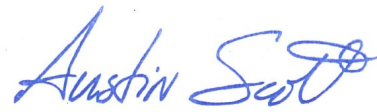
Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



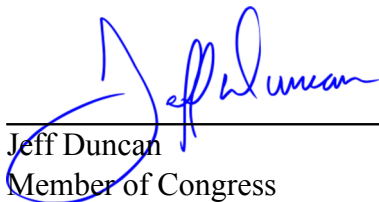
Ben Cline
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