

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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September 29, 2021

Ms. Regina M. LaBelle  
Acting Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy  
1800 G. Street NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Acting Director LaBelle:

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan due to President Biden's reckless and chaotic withdrawal has created a power vacuum that has emboldened terrorist groups and threatened our vital national security interests. It has also led to the Taliban seizing control of the illicit drug trade in Afghanistan that will help to finance its terror activities.<sup>1</sup> With our porous southern border and serious domestic drug crisis, we write to request information on the Biden Administration's plan to counter the illicit narcotics trade in Afghanistan.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) reported that over 80 percent of the global heroin supply is sourced in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> ONDCP's most recent data showed that poppy cultivation actually increased in 2020, following a two-year decline.<sup>3</sup> The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction likewise has warned that the illicit drug trade in Afghanistan poses a serious threat to stability in the region, despite an American investment of nearly \$9 billion in support of counternarcotic efforts.<sup>4</sup>

To date, President Biden has not yet established a comprehensive counternarcotics strategy to tackle our country's drug crisis.<sup>5</sup> This failure is particularly concerning in light of the Biden border crisis and the surge of illegal alien encounters at the southwest border.<sup>6</sup> Drug seizures across the border continue to be high, and fentanyl seizures have increased by 34 percent.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, *A Memorandum for the Secretary of State on Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2022*, (Sept. 16, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Press Release, The Office of National Drug Control Policy, *The Office of National Drug Control Policy Releases Data on Afghanistan Poppy Cultivation and Potential Heroin Production*, (July 16, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> SPECIAL INSPECTOR GEN. FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION, 2019 HIGH-RISK LIST, AT 3, 7 (MAR. 28, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., (July 30, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Customs and Border Protection, *Southwest Land Border Encounters*, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters> (last visited Sept. 21, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Customs and Border Protection, *CBP Releases August 2021 Operational Update*, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-august-2021-operational-update> (last visited Sept. 21, 2021).

shows that 96,801 Americans lost their lives to drug overdoses in the 12-month period ending in February 2021, an increase of over 30 percent from the prior year.<sup>8</sup> Deaths in 2020 from opioids such as heroin and fentanyl alone accounted for nearly 70,000 fatal overdoses.<sup>9</sup>

To assist us in conducting oversight of the Biden Administration's drug control strategy, please provide the following information:

1. Explain whether the Biden Administration has a counternarcotics strategy to combat the illicit narcotics trade in Afghanistan due to the Taliban's takeover;
2. Explain whether and how the ONDCP currently convenes regular meetings with the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to coordinate and support drug eradication and interdiction efforts, to seize illicit narcotics in transit, or to deter access to drug trafficking routes;
3. Explain whether and how the ONDCP is coordinating with INL, DoD, and DEA, to enhance the capacity and improve the capabilities of U.S. allies and partner counternarcotic forces to stop the flow of illicit narcotics leaving Afghanistan; and
4. In July 2021, the ONDCP stated that the United States funds projects in conjunction with the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and supports the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Children's Program in Afghanistan. Explain whether these programs have now been terminated in the wake of the Taliban's takeover, and if so, what projects have replaced them, if any.

Please provide this information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 13, 2021. After you have provided this information in writing, we ask that your staff provide a staff-level briefing on this topic.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Chairman

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<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts*, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm> (last visited Sept. 21, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Bill Chappell, *Drug Overdoses Killed a Record Number of Americans In 2020, Jumping by Nearly 30%*, NPR, July 14, 2021.