

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
<https://oversight.house.gov>

December 6, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

House Oversight Committee Republicans are continuing to conduct oversight of the Biden Administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. In July 2021, prior to the withdrawal, President Biden claimed "[t]here's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy."¹ By August 2021, however, Americans watched in horror as the Taliban quickly gained control of Afghanistan, fleeing Afghans clung to and fell from planes departing Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA), and a suicide bomber murdered 13 U.S. servicemen and women and hundreds of innocent Afghans.² The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been responsible for screening and vetting Afghan nationals in the largest refugee resettlement effort in the history of the United States. The U.S. has spent over \$13.3 billion in this resettlement.³ Committee Republicans are seeking information about the vetting and screening of Afghan nationals who have been relocated to the United States and national security implications. Looking forward to the 118th Congress, this investigation will continue to be a priority for the Committee. Therefore, we are reiterating our previous requests for documents and information.

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

¹ Press Briefing, The White House, Remarks by President Biden on the Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan (July 8, 2021).

² Luke Harding & Ben Doherty, *Kabul airport: footage appears to show Afghans falling from plane after takeoff*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 16, 2021)

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

of “vulnerable Afghans,” and when parole into the U.S. has been granted.⁴ Additionally, we wrote to you and others asking for all documents, communications, and information DHS contributed to the planning of the Afghanistan withdrawal.⁵ Because you did not provide a fulsome response, we sent a follow up letter on February 25, 2022 asking for more details into the Afghan resettlement processes, and any national security concerns that process may present.⁶ Again, Committee Republicans have received no substantive responses.

Further, based on documents and information received from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the Biden Administration is obstructing oversight of the Afghanistan withdrawal. Several agencies, including Department of State, Department of the Treasury, and the U.S. Agency for International Aid are refusing to provide documents and information to assist SIGAR in its statutorily mandated oversight.

As noted, next Congress the Committee will continue to investigate the Biden Administration’s failure to conduct a safe withdrawal from Afghanistan, and all national security concerns that reverberated from it. DHS possesses information critical to this investigation. In addition to the documents requested in prior correspondence, please prioritize the following requests for production, covering the time period January 20, 2021 to present, as soon as possible but no later than December 20, 2022:

1. All documents and communications related to contingency planning for the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation that were presented to President Biden;
2. All inter-agency documents with the White House implementing the plan that unfolded in Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021;
3. All 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 documents and communications referring or relating to the planning and implementation of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) and Operation Allies Refuge (OAR); and

⁴ 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).

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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).

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas

December 6, 2022

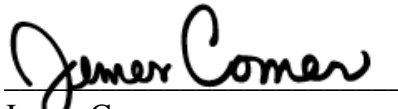
Page 3

5. All draft or final after-action assessment(s) of the Afghanistan evacuation DHS may have completed specifying areas of improvement or weakness.

To schedule the delivery of these documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Reform 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 in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

James Comer

Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform