

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 17, 2023

Mr. Jake Sullivan  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

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. You were at the center of planning the withdrawal and evacuation, and you advised President Biden on decisions that amounted to tactical and strategic failures. Further, you contrived a narrative of success and orderliness as the Taliban retook Afghanistan, as Afghans clung to and fell from planes departing Hamid Karzai International Airport, and a suicide bomber murdered 13 U.S. service members and hundreds of innocent Afghans.<sup>2</sup> The Committee requests information regarding this series of costly and deadly failures in 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>3</sup> The Commission has not met once. The Commission has the option to extend its investigation for a year,<sup>4</sup> potentially releasing findings after the Biden Administration has departed. This timeline unacceptable to address questions that are already past due.

During the 117th Congress, Committee Republicans sent you three letters. The first—sent September 28, 2021—questioned the decision to deploy an AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-surface missile against innocent, Afghan citizen Zemari Ahmadi.<sup>5</sup> On February 15, 2022, Committee

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

<sup>2</sup> *See, e.g.*, Press Briefing, The White House, Press Briefing by Press Sec'y Jen Psaki and Nat'l Sec. Advisor Jake Sullivan (Aug. 17, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> Nat'l Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 1094 (2)(A)(ii) (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Letter from James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, et. al., to Jake Sullivan, Assistant to the President for Nat'l Sec. Affairs (Sept. 28, 2021).

Republicans asked the Biden Administration to preserve all documents relating to the planning and implementation of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation.<sup>6</sup> Finally, on December 6, 2022, Committee Republicans asked you for specific documents and communications relating to the withdrawal and evacuation.<sup>7</sup> None of these letters received a substantive response.

Given your role advising President Biden on all national security matters, you possess 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 20, 2021, to present referring or relating to contingency plans for the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation;
2. All records, documents, and communications between or among your office and the departments or agencies implementing the plan for withdrawal from Afghanistan;
3. All records, documents, and communications discussing or requesting a surge or draw down of troops in Afghanistan or in support of the mission in Afghanistan;
4. All records, documents, and communications with North Atlantic Treaty Organization leaders regarding troop withdrawal and evacuation planning;
5. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to al-Qaeda and other terrorists organizations' posture in Afghanistan from January 20, 2021 to present;
6. All records, documents, and communications relating to the decision to use Taliban forces and the former Afghan government's National Directorate of Security to secure Hamid Karzai International Airport during the Afghanistan evacuation;
7. All records, documents, and communications detailing any intelligence sharing with the Taliban from January 20, 2021 to present;
8. All records, documents, and communications regarding the closure of Bagram Airfield, including but not limited to communications with the former Afghan Air Force, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, the Afghan Ministry of Defense, Afghan Ministry of Interior, and the Afghan Government;
9. All records, documents and communications referring or relating to the former Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan attempting to persuade the U.S. government not to conduct a mass evacuation;

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, et. al., to Jake Sullivan Assistant to the President for Nat'l Sec. Affairs, et. al. (Feb. 15, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Letter from James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, et. al., to Jake Sullivan, Assistant to the President for Nat'l Sec. Affairs (Dec. 6, 2022).

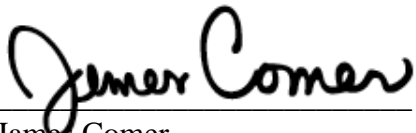
10. All records, documents, and communications regarding the ability to conduct over-the-horizon operations in Afghanistan following the withdrawal;
11. All records, documents, and communications referring or relating to the planning and implementation of Operation Allies Welcome and Operation Allies Refuge; and
12. All draft or final after-action assessments of the Afghanistan withdrawal and evacuation completed by your office, or an organization contracted by your office, 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 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.

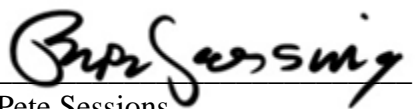
Sincerely,



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

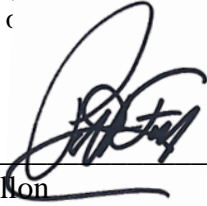


Nancy Mace  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity,  
Information Technology, and  
Government Innovation

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

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Pat Fallon  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,  
Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs



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Lisa McClain  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Health Care and  
Financial Services

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability