



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 17, 2023

The Honorable
Michael McCaul
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your May 5, 2023 letter regarding the Committee's March 28, 2023 subpoena, which concerns a Dissent Channel cable on Afghanistan policy and its response.

The Department remains committed to accommodating your need for information regarding the Afghanistan withdrawal. The Department has engaged extensively with the Committee to respond to your requests. We have provided numerous briefings, thousands of pages of documents, and public testimony from the Department's senior leaders. Our efforts to accommodate your stated interests regarding the Dissent Channel cable have reflected our broader commitment and have been done in good faith. Throughout our discussions, we have emphasized the unique importance of protecting the Dissent Channel and the personnel who choose to use it.

The accommodations that the Department has provided to date are extraordinary and, as stated in our prior correspondence, already create a serious risk of chilling both future use of, and future candor in, Dissent Channel cables.

The Department further believes that the accommodations it provided, in the form of providing the Committee with a written summary on April 25—which conveyed the cable's substantive concerns and recommendations—and a classified briefing on April 27—in which the briefers answered the Committee's questions about the cable for an

extended period—have satisfied the Committee’s informational needs and the Department’s obligations under the constitutional accommodation process.

Following those accommodations, you wrote to the Department on May 5, 2023, that you continued to seek access to the Dissent Channel cable and response. While we strongly disagree with many of the characterizations in your letter, the Department continues to seek to resolve this matter expeditiously and continues to commit itself to the accommodation process.

Despite the materially increased risk that additional disclosures of the Dissent Channel cable could further deter Department employees from using the Dissent Channel in the future for its intended purposes of informing internal deliberations, as an additional extraordinary accommodation, the Department is prepared to invite you and the Ranking Member of the Committee to visit the Department at your convenience to read this cable and its response, with the names of the signatories redacted and with the understanding that the Committee would suspend possible enforcement actions related to the Committee’s subpoena. As with our prior accommodations, this accommodation would not waive any privileges or other protections that apply to this Dissent Channel cable or others.

We are prepared to make these materials available to you and the Ranking Member as soon as possible. Please contact the Department to confirm your acceptance of this proposed accommodation and to schedule a time to review these materials.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoglu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Naz Durakoglu
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

cc: The Honorable Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee