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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS
& OVERSIGHT

August 13, 2021

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you are undoubtedly aware, our ally, the Government of Afghanistan, is in a desperate fight to defend its country from the clutches of the Taliban and preventing the country from once again becoming a safe-haven for terrorism. Since your withdrawal decision and the subsequent pullout of American military, intelligence, and contractor resources, the situation in Afghanistan has rapidly deteriorated with the Taliban on the move, positioning themselves militarily to seize control. Just this week, the Taliban has launched offensives to capture Afghanistan's second and third largest cities, Herat and Kandahar, in a clear effort to isolate and seize Kabul.

Mr. President, the Afghan Government and its people desperately need our help and I urge you to reverse course and provide military resources to assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). There is still time to prevent complete catastrophe. The United States must respond to the Taliban's offensive with military force. Continuing to plead with the Taliban to negotiate diplomatically not only is an ill-fated pursuit it bolsters their standing in Jihadi circles and strengthens their narrative of eventual victory. The Taliban only understand strength and leverage.

First, I ask you to commit U.S. air support to blunt the Taliban offensive. Taliban forces are exposed on the ground much as they were in 2001. Air support will give the Government of Afghanistan and ANSF time to regroup and turn the tide of battle. They are doing the fighting and dying on the ground, but American air support will bolster their resolve and change the battlefield psychology.

Second, the United States should leverage our resources to influence Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan. Pakistan's military strategy is dictating the Taliban. At the least, Pakistan is complicit with Taliban advance and is choosing not to coordinate with the ANSF. At worst, the Pakistani military and intelligence services may be directly aiding the Taliban offensive. Accordingly, the United States must immediately cut off all aid to Pakistan.

Additionally, I ask that your Administration also consider sanctioning Pakistan unless they change course and make greater efforts to prevent the Taliban from using their border region to regroup between firefights.

Finally, I am baffled by recent statements by the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalizad, that seem detached from reality and sanity. He has claimed the Taliban have made “substantial progress” on their counterterrorism commitments, despite being behind bombings targeting innocent civilians in Kabul, the ruthless mass executions of surrendering ANSF, and the brutal reprisals against our Afghans allies, and their families, who supported American forces. Further, the Taliban are taking their abuses against women to new grotesque levels with multiple reports of forced marriages and sex slavery. Ambassador Khalizad has provided you with poor counsel and his diplomatic strategy has failed spectacularly. Ambassador Khalizad has convinced multiple administrations that the Taliban is interested in governing and peace. It is clear that the Taliban is only interested in brutality and power. In light of this catastrophe, Ambassador Khalizad should resign immediately or be relieved from his position.

Mr. President, you have stated that it is the responsibility of the Afghan people to fight this war. However, the War on Terrorism is a global war with a shared responsibility among the United States and like-minded Western democracies to fight the extremism that threatens our safety and values. Your intelligence officials have repeatedly briefed Congress that Al-Qaeda fully intends to regroup in the wake of Taliban advances and again strike the West. It will be far more costly in blood and treasure to allow Al-Qaeda to establish the same type of caliphate ISIS created in Iraq & Syria, threaten the homeland, and then once again try to defeat terrorism absent local bases and allies.

Mr. President, it is not too late to reverse course to prevent complete Taliban control, Al-Qaeda resurgence, and an unraveling of all our investments from the last twenty years. If you do not course correct now, Afghanistan could implode by the twentieth anniversary of September 11th. That will be a tragedy that will not only devastate the families and those who have sacrificed so much, but the collective conscience of our country. America’s national security and credibility are at stake. The world is watching.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Waltz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Waltz