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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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July 1, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In the three months since you announced the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. servicemembers from Afghanistan, your administration has failed to provide Congress with a plan to conduct counterterrorism operations and protect remaining American citizens and our national security interests in the country. Now nearly all U.S. servicemembers have been removed and the Taliban is seizing more territory each day. I am very concerned the failure to properly plan for security contingencies in Afghanistan could lead to the same chaotic environment that fostered the rise of Al Qaeda twenty years ago.

In recent weeks, the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Staff, CENTCOM Commander, and other senior defense officials have appeared before the House Armed Services Committee for hearings and briefings. In each of these, I, and several of other Members, asked for specifics on your plan moving forward in Afghanistan. In response to these questions, we received some variation of the same response - "those details are still be finalized." Frankly, it's astonishing your administration still cannot articulate a plan with the withdrawal now all but complete.

Below is a list of questions these officials have not been able to answer:

1. Prior to the withdrawal announcement, did the administration conduct a threat assessment and risk analysis to determine whether the unconditional withdrawal would impede counterterrorism operations?
2. How does the administration plan to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan moving forward?

3. An airbase in, or very near, Afghanistan is required to launch intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, protect Americans remaining in the country, and serve as a logistics hub for strikes against terrorists.
- Where will this base be located?
 - What commitments have been made to Afghanistan or neighboring countries to secure basing and overflight rights?
 - Which airfields in proximity to the U.S. Embassy have the administration secured to ensure protection and if necessary, the timely evacuation of American citizens?

I understand your desire to bring our servicemembers home safely and as quickly as possible. But Congress and the American people need to understand how you plan to defeat terrorist threats to our homeland before they reach our shores. We cannot afford to allow Afghanistan to become a blind spot again.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Rogers", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services