



**Congress of the United States**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0525**

August 26, 2021

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write to urge you to shift operational control in Afghanistan from the State Department to the Department of Defense and commit to evacuating every American citizen and Afghan ally who wishes to leave Afghanistan, even if that means remaining past August 31.

The events that have unfolded over the past 12 hours near the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKAIA) in Kabul, Afghanistan have fundamentally changed the situation there. We cannot continue to rely on diplomacy with the Taliban to resolve this situation. It is clear that this is now a military operation and it is high time it be treated as such.

Numerous American servicemembers have now lost their lives in heinous and cowardly attacks. Your administration's reliance on the cooperation and good faith of the Taliban are costing lives and precious time. Command of all facets of the ongoing evacuation operation must immediately be transitioned to the Department of Defense and military commanders on the ground at HKAIA to prevent further tragedy. The United States Armed forces are the most powerful fighting forces on the face of the planet. They must be allowed to properly defend themselves and the Americans and Afghan allies who are seeking to leave the country. No options should be taken off the table to protect American lives.

Strong, decisive leadership is needed. It is imperative that you make it clear to all hostile forces in Afghanistan that we will evacuate every American citizen and our Afghan allies still remaining in Afghanistan, regardless of the August 31st deadline. We can no longer allow the Taliban, ISIS-K, or anyone else to dictate terms to the United States.

As Commander-in-Chief it is your responsibility to ensure the protection of every American life in Afghanistan. I urge you to do what is clearly necessary to accomplish that mission and shift command of the operation to military personnel.

Sincerely,

Mike Garcia  
Member of Congress