

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 27, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520-2204

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken:

On August 14, 2021, the United States began mass evacuations at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.¹ Since then, I have been receiving reports that contradict the Biden administration's narrative and are troubling to say the least. One such report, later publicized on Newsmax, is about a specific alleged incident that occurred before sunrise on August 26, 2021 at Karzai airport.

Specifically, Chad Robichaux, who has been working with non-government organizations to help evacuate American citizens and Afghan allies, stated that a group of over 400 individuals including U.S. citizens were turned away at the airport.² Robichaux alleged that after buses full of potential evacuees arrived at the airport they "were met by the commander of the 82nd Airborne Brigade" who told them to get back on their buses and turn around because "the rescue was over."³ It is not clear what happened to the Americans and the other individuals after they left the airport.

In order to better understand what occurred during this August 26, 2021 incident, please provide the following information:

1. It's hard to believe that any U.S. military official would deny Americans the ability to evacuate Afghanistan. What generalized or specific order was given to the commander that caused him to take this alleged action? Where did this order originate?

¹ Amanda Macias, *13 U.S. service members killed, 18 wounded in attack near Kabul airport, Pentagon says*, CNBC, Aug. 26, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/26/explosion-happened-outside-kabul-airport-pentagon-confirms.html>.

² @Newsmax, Twitter, (August 26, 2021, 6:19), <https://twitter.com/newsmax/status/1431018570822062081?s=20>.

³ *Id.*

2. Who gave the order to this commander? Provide that individual's name, title, and department.
3. Is the Department of Defense and/or State Department aware of this alleged incident? If so, is there an open investigation into this matter?
4. What actions are being taken to locate and evacuate the American citizens that were allegedly turned away?

Please provide this information as soon as possible but no later than August 30, 2021.
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations