

August 3, 2022

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas  
Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We are sure you are well aware of the recent drone strike killing al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul, Afghanistan. While we applaud the operation that brought this despicable terrorist to justice, we are unnerved by what it means for the current threat level in Afghanistan. To have the leader of al-Qaeda staying in the home of a top aide to Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of one of the largest terrorist networks in Afghanistan, is beyond brazen. A recent United Nations report indicates several thousand foreign terrorist fighters are flocking to Afghanistan following our withdrawal, and it is clear from this recent strike that al-Qaeda is out in the open, and welcomed by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Prior to his death, Zawahiri was publicly calling for and encouraging attacks on the American homeland. We have been sounding the alarm for several years about how our broken border is a ripe opportunity for terrorists to enter the homeland. With all due respect, Mr. Secretary, our border is not secure. We have lost complete operational control of the southern border, and it serves as a calling card for terrorists everywhere.

Accordingly, it is imperative that you report to us about your plan to secure the border against terrorist infiltration. The presence of Zawahiri in Kabul in such a brazen fashion should be a “five alarm fire” for the Biden Administration. The refusal to fix our broken asylum system, the reimplementing of catch and release, the abandonment of Remain in Mexico, and other policy choices by the Biden Administration have acted as pull factors which directly led to a virtual invasion by illegal immigrants. It is only a matter of time until terrorists and other transnational criminal organizations take full advantage of these vulnerabilities.

While this is dangerous for our country, the most devastating event would be an organized terrorist attack, originating from Afghanistan, against our homeland via our southern border. We are tremendously exposed, as the unrelenting surge of illegal immigration on our southern border is tying up resources, and taking our eye off the ball when it comes to terrorism, drugs, and crime. The Border Patrol union and others have raised concern regarding the diversion and misuse of resources at the border. We must not ignore their concerns.

Because of the ever-unfolding chaos at our southern border, terrorist groups that have already found a foothold in Central and South America, including in the Tri-Border area and elsewhere, now have an opportunity to enter the United States by way of Mexico. In the past nine months, the Border Patrol has apprehended at least 56 individuals who were on the Terrorist Screening Database. Given the unprecedented number of “got-aways” – 500,000 that we know about since

last October – it is a near certainty that other individuals on the Terrorist Screening Database have entered the United States undetected, via our open southern border.

Mr. Secretary, you must reverse course on the policies that have caused a virtual invasion of our country via our southern border. If the administration continues to stand by idly, over time, the biggest beneficiary of this debacle will be international terrorist groups like al-Qaeda. Within a year of the collapse of Afghanistan and return to Taliban control, we see proof positive through Zawahiri’s presence in Kabul that Afghanistan is once again a safe haven for terrorists. This view is not only reinforced by the presence of Zawahiri in Kabul, but the United Nations through numerous reports has shined a light upon this problem.

There are al-Qaeda training camps emerging all over Afghanistan. Unless something changes, it is just a matter of time until we are hit here. We are urging you and those within your agency to change the policy at our border before it is too late.

Sincerely,



Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator



Ted Cruz  
United States Senator



Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator