



June 25, 2024

An Open Letter of Concern,

Special Operations Association of America (SOAA) represents thousands of Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Raiders, Air Force Air Commandos, and other special operators who have fought and currently serve on behalf of our nation. We are gravely concerned by the current heightened risk of terrorist attacks against targets inside the United States and both U.S. and allied interests abroad. Our complete withdrawal from Afghanistan, without a viable stay-behind or over-the-horizon counterterrorism and intelligence capability to suppress threats, has created a vacuum in the region in which anti-American terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, are flourishing once again.

The United States has lost significant intelligence collection capabilities in the region, leaving federal authorities blind and deaf to emerging threats emanating from the region. The creation of new and reestablishment of previous terrorist training camps within Afghanistan has led to successful, deadly attacks by the Islamic State's regional branch against targets in Iran and Russia and elsewhere, adding further credence to the notion that the U.S. is at risk. This heightened risk has been verified by multiple departments and agencies of the federal government, mainstream journalists and publications, former senior officials from both parties, and from former allies with whom we maintain communication.

This risk is compounded by developments in the Middle East and the porous, unsecured southern border through which we have seen numerous instances of individuals on terrorist watchlists and others from adversarial countries attempt to enter the U.S. – and those are the ones we know about only because they were detected. We do not know how many other terrorists are already currently inside the U.S.

At the same time, the U.S. has continued to send the Taliban millions of dollars for “counterterrorism cooperation”, which has proved to be only marginally successful given developments on the ground in Afghanistan. Millions more in aid that is being repurposed by the Taliban to suit its own purposes.

As former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Mike Morell recently wrote, “The Terrorism warning lights are blinking red again – echoes of the run-up to 9/11.”

Time is not on our side and urgent executive action is needed to address this ever-increasing threat to U.S. national security, our families, our allies, and our homeland.

Signed,

The Hon. Christopher Miller, Chair

Daniel Elkins, President

Alex Plitsas, Secretary

Jaclyn Scott, Director

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