



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0603

December 17, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
United States Department of State
2201 C. St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am following up on our exchange during the December 11, 2024, House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing: “An Assessment of the State Department’s Withdrawal from Afghanistan by America’s Top Diplomat.”

As I mentioned during the hearing, I was in communication with the State Department regarding a blocked departure from the Mazar-i-Sharif airfield for blue-passport holding American citizens. Specifically, when I was communicating with the State Department about the delayed departure flight and someone asked, “which tail number” I was referring to, this indicated that there were multiple flights being delayed. When I pointed this out during yesterday’s hearing, you responded by claiming that “I am not aware of blocking any U.S. citizens. On the contrary, we were doing everything possible to get Americans out...I’d be happy to look at any information you have on that.” This letter is a request for further information and context on the cause of multiple delays in evacuation for Mazar-i-Sharif.

Firsthand accounts as well as sworn committee testimony have described a process of unnecessary and unclear delays for people and flights in need of immediate evacuation from Mazar-i-Sharif, for reasons that remain opaque. The House Foreign Affairs Committee’s work this Congress has revealed critical testimony from Col. Francis Hoang, who’s testimony before the committee regarding the Mazar-i-Sharif evacuation efforts mentioned: “We spent three weeks hiding these nearly 400 people from the Taliban, keeping them alive and fed using funds from American donors.”¹ This testimony, in addition to what the State Department relayed to me about the

¹ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20230308/115427/HHRG-118-FA00-Wstate-HoangF-20230308-U2.pdf>

presence of potentially multiple delayed flights, demands an explanation. Lives were at stake and complete answers with full context have yet to be provided for these delays.

I request all relevant materials pertaining to the State Department's August 30, 2021, withdrawal from Afghanistan and particularly for the delays to evacuations at Mazar-i-Sharif. Pursuant to my constitutional responsibility for oversight of State Department policy, I request a prompt response within seven days to the following questions regarding the Mazar-i-Sharif evacuation:

1. How many planes did the U.S. State Department prevent from departing Mazar-i-Sharif airfield? What were the tail numbers or registration codes for the aircraft blocked by the State Department? How many flights were delayed from Mazar-i-Sharif?
2. Who made the call to clear or not clear flights and passport holders during this time?
3. Under what criteria would a flight or evacuee be blocked or delayed from departure?
4. How many evacuees lost their lives due to unnecessary delays in flight departures?
5. How did the U.S. State Department collaborate and communicate with the Taliban to clear departing flights and evacuees?

I ask that you preserve all related records relating to this important issue. Thank you for your prompt response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Warren Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Warren Davidson
Member of Congress