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September 13, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I am writing as a follow up to my previous requests for information regarding Operations Allies Refuge, Allies Welcome, and Joint Task Force Liberty at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB-MDL) in my congressional district.

As you are aware, JB-MDL is expected to house up to 13,000 Afghan refugees, playing a critical role in this humanitarian crisis by meeting the basic needs of temporary housing, food, medical care, resettlement assistance and transportation. In welcoming Afghan evacuees to the U.S.—and out of an abundance of respect and concern for all Americans as well as genuine refugees—it remains absolutely essential that comprehensive and effective vetting occurs to ensure that no terrorist surreptitiously slips into any American community.

On September 2, 2021, I joined members of the New Jersey congressional delegation and the Governor of New Jersey for a high-level briefing at JB-MDL by U.S. Northern Command Commander General Glen VanHerck. While this briefing and [FAQ Fact Sheet](#) provided some insight to Joint Task Force Liberty's objectives, many questions remain unanswered.

Please provide answers to the following:

- 1) Do Afghan evacuees have unfettered access, i.e. an ability to leave the base at any time—at the hour or date of their choosing—and return to JB-MDL or any other military facility upon which they are housed?
- 2) Is there an ability to determine who is on the base within the housing compound each day and/or who may have left?
- 3) Are the entry/access policies for JB-MDL identical to the other military bases assisting in Operations Allies Refuge and Allies Welcome?
- 4) What federal assistance—including health, legal services, or job training— would any Afghan evacuee lose if they leave the base?
- 5) Is there a biometric and historical database to vet and confirm the identity of any Afghan evacuee who has arrived at a military base, including information about one's history before leaving Afghanistan? If so, is that list with DOD, DHS, or Department of State

and do leadership at each military installation have access to that information with an ability to update it as needed?

- 6) What has been the communication with local fire, police, and EMT authorities to ensure that they are aware of their obligations to those who may need emergency assistance at base housing, so first responders can provide such assistance in the safest and most time-efficient manner?

Accordingly, I respectfully request an expeditious response to these questions, as the safety of my constituents and Afghan evacuees is paramount. I look forward to your earliest response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", written in a cursive style.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress