

United States Senate

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Anthony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write today with extreme concern over the return of Taliban governance to Afghanistan. The hasty and ill-conceived withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Afghanistan created a security vacuum which the Taliban exploited through a country-wide offensive that deposed governing authorities in all Afghan provinces and in the capital city of Kabul.

Since reestablishing control of Afghanistan, the Taliban resumed the same murderous and oppressive habits that characterized their leadership tenure prior to the arrival of U.S. forces in 2001. Even as the administration concluded the withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces from Afghanistan, we saw public attacks on individuals, beatings of women and girls, and search teams actively pursuing allies and partners. Most concerning to us is that among those beaten and chased by Taliban forces were American citizens and their families still living in Afghanistan. This is in addition to the horrific and deadly attacks on our own servicemembers at Hamid Karzai International Airport on August 26, 2021.

We are also concerned that the Taliban now controls significant quantities of advanced military equipment intended for use by the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. That captured military equipment has significantly expanded the Taliban's military power and provided them with the capability and capacity to cause great harm to their intended targets.

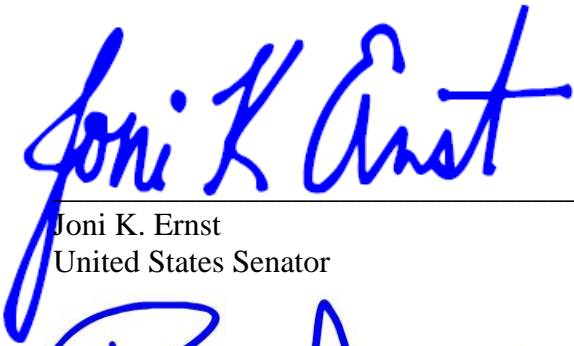
The Taliban appointed Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network and a known terrorist wanted by the FBI for the murder of American citizens, as Interior Minister and allowed terror organizations to join the government. Given their history of supporting terror attacks on the United States, their brutal style of governance, their continued display of atrocities against Americans and our allies, and now, their enhanced military capability, the current version of the Taliban government presents a significant threat to the United States. Further, the Taliban display the will and the means to attack Americans and American interests.

Pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Secretary of State is authorized to designate foreign organizations as terrorist organizations if they meet three criteria:

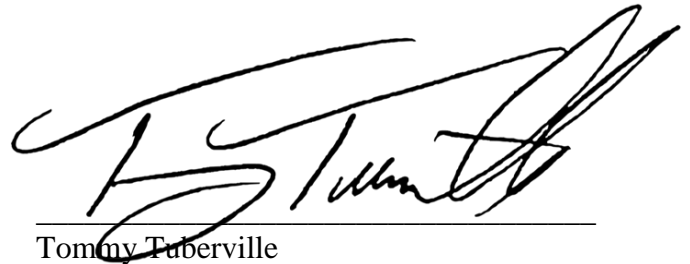
- (A) the organization is a foreign organization;
- (B) the organization engages in terrorist activity or retains the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism; and
- (C) the terrorist activity or terrorism of the organization threatens the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States.

We believe the Taliban easily meets all three criteria and urge you to consider designating the Taliban as a foreign terrorist organization and treating them as such to the maximum extent of the law.

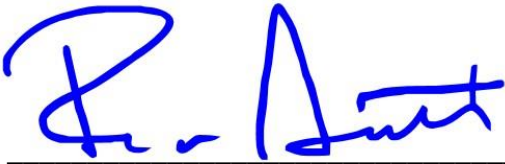
Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator