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August 9, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken:

I write with grave concern regarding the recent findings that at least \$293 million in U.S. taxpayer dollars has been sent to the Taliban since 2021. This massive oversight occurred due to the State Department's failure to properly vet award recipients, as detailed in the latest report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

According to the SIGAR report, the State Department's divisions, Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), disbursed these funds to implement development projects intended to support American foreign policy and national security goals in Afghanistan. However, the agency failed to comply with its own counterterrorism partner vetting requirements before awarding at least 29 grants to various local entities.¹ This failure has resulted in an increased risk that terrorist and terrorist-affiliated individuals and entities have illegally benefited from your administration's spending in Afghanistan.

The report highlights that DRL failed to properly screen the recipients of seven awards totaling about \$12 million, while INL did not provide any supporting documentation for 19 of its 22 awards totaling about \$295 million.² This lack of compliance with vetting procedures and record-keeping is unacceptable and jeopardizes our national security.

¹ <https://theleadingreport.com/u-s-government-has-sent-239-million-to-taliban-since-2021-due-to-state-depts-vetting-failures-report-reveals/>

² [https://www.judicialwatch.org/taliban-gets-239-million/#:~:text=At%20least%20%24239%20million%20have,for%20Afghanistan%20Reconstruction%20\(SIGAR\).](https://www.judicialwatch.org/taliban-gets-239-million/#:~:text=At%20least%20%24239%20million%20have,for%20Afghanistan%20Reconstruction%20(SIGAR).)

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In 2021, I wrote to express significant concerns regarding the Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control's (OFAC) issuance of General Licenses authorizing the flow of U.S. taxpayer dollars through the Taliban and the Haqqani network.³ Clearly, your administration did not take these concerns into account and has since funneled more funds to potentially support terrorist activities.

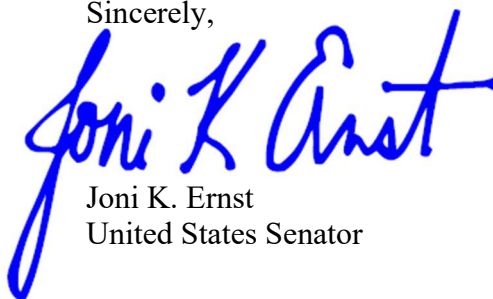
Oversight and accountability continue to be issues for this administration. For this reason, I introduced the *Tracking Receipts to Adversarial Countries for Knowledge of Spending (TRACKS) Act* to ensure transparency.

and accountability for U.S. taxpayer dollars by requiring every penny paid to any organization in adversarial countries of concern be tracked and publicly disclosed, ultimately hoping to prevent the misuse of funds.⁴

Given the significant amount of money involved and the importance of ensuring that U.S. aid does not benefit terrorist groups, it is essential that the State Department take immediate action to rectify these issues. The blood, and now the taxes, of American citizens are in the hands of the Taliban thanks to the Biden-Harris administration, which should be sanctioning rather than subsidizing the terror group's activities. This lack of accountability and abuse of taxpayer money is grossly unacceptable.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your prompt action and a response by August 23, 2024.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

³ <https://www.ernst.senate.gov/download/2022/01/13/202201-ofac-money-to-taliban-citationspdf>

⁴ <https://www.ernst.senate.gov/news/press-releases/ernst-tracks-over-13-billion-of-us-tax-dollars-sent-to-china-and-russia-promises-accountability-for-every-penny>