

Johnson, colleagues: Sign letter to secretary of defense demanding accountability for U.S. military equipment left in Afghanistan

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OSHKOSH — U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), along with Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and 23 of their Republican colleagues, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin demanding a full account of U.S. military equipment left behind in Afghanistan, which has already fallen into the hands of the Taliban and their terrorist allies or is at risk of doing so.

“It is unconscionable that high-tech military equipment paid for by U.S. taxpayers has fallen into the hands of the Taliban and their terrorist allies,” the senators wrote. “Securing U.S. assets should have been among the top priorities for the U.S. Department of Defense prior to announcing the withdrawal from Afghanistan.”

The letter is also cosigned by U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.), Bill Cassidy (R-La.), Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), Rick Scott (R-Fla.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W. Va.), Mike Braun (R-Ind.), John Hoeven (R-N.D.), John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), Michael Rounds (R-S.D.), John Boozman (R-Ark.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), John Cornyn (R-Texas), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), and Roger Marshall (R-Kan.).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below.

August 18, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd Austin

Secretary

U.S. Department of Defense

1000 Defense Pentagon

Washington, D.C. 20301 – 1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

We write with grave concern regarding the status of U.S. military equipment left behind in Afghanistan as a result of our poorly executed withdrawal from the country. As we watched the images coming out of Afghanistan as the Taliban retook the country, we were horrified to see U.S. equipment – including UH-60 Black Hawks – in the hands of the Taliban.

It is unconscionable that high-tech military equipment paid for by U.S. taxpayers has fallen into the hands of the Taliban and their terrorist allies. Securing U.S. assets should have been among the top priorities for the U.S. Department of Defense prior to announcing the withdrawal from Afghanistan. We therefore request detailed information on the following:

1. A full account of military equipment provided to the Afghan Armed Forces in the last year;
2. All military equipment, owned by either the U.S. or Afghan Armed Forces, that was removed or destroyed prior to the U.S. withdrawal, or is rendered inoperable without U.S. logistics personnel;
3. All U.S. military equipment that remains operational in Afghanistan;
4. A list of what military equipment has been seized by the Taliban;
5. An assessment of how long it will take the Taliban to use each of the captured equipment;

6. An assessment of the likelihood that the Taliban will seek to work with Russia, Pakistan, Iran, or the People's Republic of China for training, fuel, or infrastructure necessary to utilize the equipment they do not have the capabilities to use on their own; and
7. Any efforts by the administration, planned or underway, to recapture or destroy equipment that remains in Afghanistan and is at risk of being used by terrorist entities.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,