

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Sens. Johnson, Hawley letter on whistleblower allegations leads Pentagon watchdog to open review into Biden administration Afghan vetting failures

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WASHINGTON – On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) received a response to their August 4, 2022 [letter](#) from the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) announcing a review into whistleblower allegations that the Biden Administration failed to properly vet hundreds of Afghan evacuees during its disastrous retreat from Afghanistan. DoD OIG also announced they will review allegations that DoD and National Security Council officials failed to appropriately review relevant databases when vetting and processing evacuees in Afghanistan and at staging bases before they were ultimately released into the United States.

In their August letter, Sens. Johnson and Hawley called for an immediate investigation into new DoD whistleblower allegations, including:

- The Biden Administration evacuated 324 individuals from Afghanistan into the United States who appeared on DoD's watchlist, which includes known suspected terrorists.
- The White House and DoD officials directed agency personnel to cut corners and not conduct full fingerprint tests of Afghan evacuees.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) staff have been authorized to delete old biometric data, whenever they personally believe such information is out of date, which could compromise the integrity of existing databases and undermine national security.

The full response from the Acting Inspector General can be found [here](#) or below.

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee

The Honorable Josh Hawley
United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Johnson and Senator Hawley,

This is in response to your August 4, 2022 letter requesting that the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) review whistleblower allegations that hundreds of Afghan evacuees were allowed to enter the United States despite appearing on the DoD's Biometrically Enabled Watchlist, and that officials at the National Security Council and DoD did not follow proper procedures when processing evacuees in Afghanistan and at staging bases.

As part of our ongoing body of work on Afghan evacuees, we are initiating an evaluation, to commence in the first quarter of FY 2023, to address your questions pertaining to the DoD's role in reviewing DoD databases for information on Afghan evacuees when requested by other agencies. In February 2022, we issued Report No. DODIG-2022-065, "Evaluation of the Screening of Displaced Persons from Afghanistan," that detailed the extent to which the DoD managed and tracked displaced persons from Afghanistan through the biometric enrollment, screening, and vetting process. In addition, we have an ongoing evaluation on security and life support practices for Afghan evacuees at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

For the remainder of the questions in your letter, we determined that the OIGs for the respective agencies with jurisdiction over those matters, copied on my response, are better suited to respond.

We appreciate your interest in our work and we will keep you informed about the

progress about our current and future work. If you have any additional questions, please contact me or direct your staff to contact Mr. Michael C. Zola, Assistant Inspector General for Legislative Affairs and Communications, at (703) 604-8324.

Sincerely,

Sean W. O'Donnell

Acting Inspector General