

United States Senate

February 22, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2210 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken:

We write to express our grave concern regarding the safety and evacuation of Americans in Ukraine. Given the disorderly and chaotic evacuation of U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and Afghan allies amid the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal in 2021—an evacuation mission that remains incomplete—Congress is willing and ready to conduct proper oversight responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

On February 18, 2022, President Biden said that he is “convinced” that Vladimir Putin made the decision to invade Ukraine. On January 24, the Department of State authorized the departure of U.S. government employees and ordered the departure of family members of U.S. government employees at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. In addition, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan urged all Americans in Ukraine to leave, emphasizing that they should not expect the U.S. military to rescue them in the event that air and rail transportation is severed during a Russian invasion. We therefore ask that you respond to the following questions immediately:

- (1) On February 9, 2022, a White House official said, “To be clear, we are not planning for a mass evacuation of American citizens from Ukraine.” What are the Biden Administration’s plans to evacuate U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents if they remain in parts of Ukraine occupied by the Russian military?
- (2) The State Department currently reports as many as 23,000 Americans reside in Ukraine. To the Department’s knowledge, how many U.S. citizens have safely evacuated from Ukraine?
- (3) What is the U.S. government’s plan to protect U.S. citizens and facilitate the evacuation of American citizens from Ukraine during a Russian invasion?
- (4) Is the Biden Administration sharing critical intelligence information with Ukraine to defend not only its sovereignty, but also American citizens in the country?
- (5) Is there an up-to-date Noncombatant Evacuation Operation plan for Ukraine in place as of today? Is the interagency conducting a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) walk on a potential Noncombatant Evacuation Operation out of Ukraine? If yes, please describe that ROC and what advice is being provided to senior leaders?
- (6) Do any war games consider an immediate, total seizure of Ukraine by Russian troops? If so, we request a classified briefing as soon as possible to update us on likely scenarios and response options.

We welcome an open dialogue, including ongoing regular principal-level classified and unclassified briefings to Senators, with the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and other relevant agencies on these matters. In the near-term, we look forward to a detailed response that addresses each of the above questions. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator