

Senator Peter Welch
Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security and
Subcommittee on Crime and Counterterrorism
Written Questions for Mr. Perry Blackburn
Joint Hearing on “Biden’s Afghan Parolee Program – A Trojan Horse with Flawed Vetting
and Deadly Consequences”
Wednesday, January 21, 2026

1. Based on your experience serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, how would your work—and safety—have been influenced if you had not had the support of in-country partners?

Answer: My answers to all of the questions are inclusive of the tremendous efforts military men and women have taken to help our Afghan partners. My content is based on first hand knowledge and military members who also had a touch point with Afghan partners over a 20-year war.

The ISAF Countermine-IED staff and IJC C-IED Branches would have been completely ineffective. The NATO and US efforts to develop a culturally appropriate Afghan National C-IED policy and program would have completely failed. Our counterparts at MOD, MOI, GFC and NDS would have provided their interpretation of policy, ops and log reports with zero technical depth. The ANP EOD and ANA Route Clearance stats for trained/equipped would have continued to be filled with ‘ghost soldiers’ funneling off critical resources and providing no meaningful tactical capability.

In addition, our in-country partners were mission critical. It would have been impossible to transact business and accomplish our goals without the support of Iraqis and Afghans who worked with us and/or for us. During both deployments, Iraqi and Afghan workers who supported us provided cultural context and background information that helped guide us to reach our goals. Our interpreters, especially, were critical assets, opening lines of communication and also advising us not only of legal considerations, but cultural and safety considerations as well. They would recommend alternate routes for traveling or advise us on days that there seemed to be heightened security considerations, and advising us not to travel, at all. Additionally, one interpreter in Afghanistan heard about Afghans stealing fuel and he reported it. An Afghan who worked at MoD Legal also reported concerns that he had regarding Afghan procurement fraud. These were acts of bravery, where they went against cultural norms and were trying to combat corruption, as risk to themselves personally.

Tactically our Afghan partners provided information on the enemy, they knew the cultural and tribal issues that enabled us to leverage against the Taliban and AQ. They were also the first to identify that the enemy was coming from all over the world to fight Americans. This was critical as USG worked with other countries to apprehend transnational terrorists.

2. To your knowledge, what has happened to individuals who are still in Afghanistan who have been accused of working with Americans after the U.S. withdrawal of forces in August 2021?

Answer: Afghans who worked with NATO were hunted, beaten and often disappeared. We believe they disappeared because other family members told us and contact with the person seized to exist. Fortunately, many of Afghans were able to apply for Special Immigrant Visas and make their way to the United States. However, an Afghan General Officer, who was actively hunted by the Taliban went underground, moving from one location to another, to remain undetected. Many attempts were made with limited success, to get him to the United States. He was tentatively approved for a P3 visa for Afghans in December of 2021 and advised to move to Pakistan to continue processing. He moved to Pakistan with his family, but the processing of the P3 was slow. He was able to immigrate to the United Kingdom with his son. Had he remained in Afghanistan, he surely would have been killed...not only as an enemy of the Taliban, but even those internal to MoD, who knew he reported procurement fraud. Afghans remaining in Afghanistan with no way to the US; one was in the Afghan National Army, Major, who worked on Camp Resolute Support. He was part of a DV protocol team and even welcomed Secretary Carter (SecDef). After the fall of Afghanistan, he has had to go underground and survival has become very difficult. The other individual was an Afghan Colonel, who has had to hide his identity and limit his existence to the outside world. Food is a scarcity and they fear their prior service being discovered. They are living in constant anxiety because of their prior service to us.

3. The Trump Administration has halted all immigration processing and ordered a review of all approved applications for individuals from Afghanistan who seek to enter the United States.
 - a. What do you believe are the long-term consequences of halting the admission, resettlement, and support of Afghan refugees and servicemember partners to the United States?

Answer: Most likely outcome, best option, is a complete lack of confidence in US forces as we look for reliable partners in future competition and conflict scenarios. It's always transactional to some extent, but in the future, it will be binary, black and white with even small partner force risks costing US ridiculously. There will be less willingness to act on our behalf, until the 'checks clear' or we deliver meaningful practical action.

The United States lost credibility. We told Afghans who supported us that we would stand beside them, shona ba shona (shoulder to shoulder). It's hard now for some U.S. persons who deployed to Afghanistan to wear military uniform, the same uniform they deployed in, and feel pride in it

when I know we failed so many. We encouraged them to embrace our ideals and offered the possibility of a better future in Afghanistan and then possibly coming to the United States at a later point in time. However, Afghanistan would require a multi-generational effort and that it's a society to ever change, we pulled out too soon and did not have a plan for those Afghans who supported us. Our abandonment was a failure to follow through on our promise; we failed to honor our covenant. We left people who supported us without protection, when they had protected us. We left them for dead, without due regard to their security.

- b. How do you anticipate President Trump's policies towards Afghan allies will influence the United States' ability to recruit local partners in future conflicts?

Worst case scenario, some of our well-trained partners switch teams and carry a grudge. We watched on videos as Afghans stood with armed with the Taliban, we knew exactly who worked with us by their stance and weapon presentation. They had little choice particularly when the U.S. invited the Taliban back. There will almost always be a few willing to take a chance and work with us, but the relationship will remain purely transactional. Undeniably, it will have a detrimental effect in future conflicts. No allies will trust us after the manner in which we pulled out of Afghanistan.

We can certainly understand advocating halting processing to overhaul security measures and to encourage more thorough vetting, but painting allied partners with a broad brush, in a negative light, to score political points is disrespectful to those who served honorably alongside of us; those who supported and protected us.

There are many Afghans who have relocated here and have become patriotic law-abiding Americans who are thankful for the freedom and safety they have here. They have integrated into American society and became part of the fabric of our society. It is truly unfortunate that the current climate discounts the loyal service that some of these Afghans previously provided; service that caused their own lives to be put at risk.

