

***Biden's Afghan Parolee Program - A Trojan Horse With Flawed Vetting and Deadly Consequences***

**Testimony Before  
Committee on the Judiciary**

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**I. Summary**

The Afghan government collapsed in the summer of 2021, after nearly 20 years of U.S. efforts to sustain a democracy in a soil where it could not flourish. Amid the chaos, the U.S. evacuated around 80,000 Afghans to staging areas outside Afghanistan in **Operation Allies Refuge** (OAR).

The second stage, bringing Afghans into the U.S., was known as **Operation Allies Welcome** (OAW). The Biden Administration then transitioned the effort to a permanent program to bring in Afghans called **Enduring Welcome** and created an office at the State Department to run it, the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE).

Starting with the initial 80,000 evacuees, the Biden Administration ultimately brought in more than 200,000 putative Afghan “allies” and their claimed family members. Unlike legal or illegal immigrants from most other countries, the Afghans were given work authorization, legal assistance, health insurance, and a range of other benefits that cost billions of U.S. tax dollars.<sup>1</sup>

In a recent report, Nayla Rush of the Center for Immigration Studies wrote:

Contrary to popular narratives, most Afghans admitted during and after the evacuation had nothing to do with the U.S. government or any of its contractors. They were not U.S. “allies,” nor were they “persecuted” individuals in need of refugee resettlement. Lacking immigrant

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<sup>1</sup> Nayla Rush, “How did ‘Operation Allies Welcome’ work, and how did he benefit?” Center for Immigration Studies, December 5, 2025, <https://cis.org/Rush/Rahmanullah-Lakanwal-One-200000-Afghans-Brought-Here-2021>

visas, they were granted “parole”, a temporary permission to enter and remain in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

It is probable, as some American activists claim, that there remain some Afghans in Afghanistan or elsewhere outside the U.S. who have legitimate claims to protection after both providing loyal service to the United States and due to current fear of the Taliban. AfghanEvac, a “nonprofit working to resettle Afghan nationals,” told the Wall Street Journal that “[s]ome 265,000 Afghans are still being processed abroad, including about 180,000 in the Special Immigrant Visa pipeline” as SIVs, refugees, or to join relatives already here under various programs.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, we have likely imported thousands of others with no such valid claims, because the Biden Administration deliberately lowered the bar for Afghans to qualify for Special Immigrant Visas or paroled them into the United States by blatant abuse of a limited discretionary power.

At present, the U.S. has no people or means to vet anyone inside Afghanistan. We have no diplomatic, security, or overt official presence in the country. Until the Trump Administration paused all entry for Afghans in 2025, the State Department was still allowing them to apply for SIVs in other countries they could reach. Their applications were processed by local staff with no knowledge of Afghanistan. They were interviewed by junior consular officers with no experience of Afghanistan. There were no penalties for submitting false applications, or for applying more than once under a false identity. It would be foolhardy to resume processing of Afghan SIVs as long as these conditions persist.

## **II. Afghan Evacuation – OAR and OAW**

As the Afghan government crumbled in July-August 2021, the Biden Administration believed the United States had a duty to remove so-called “Afghan allies” from Afghanistan, where they and their families might be at risk of retribution from the Taliban regime. Unfortunately, the OAR evacuation was so chaotic and indiscriminate that those evacuated were a mix of some “allies” along with random Afghans who made it to the airport and were let on a plane.<sup>4</sup>

OAR was created in an emergency, in haste, and without adequate planning. The deliberate decision was taken to evacuate tens of thousands of Afghan nationals and their immediate relatives on the premise that the principal applicants had rendered significant service to the U.S. government effort in Afghanistan. However, the U.S. had insufficient time and means to determine with accuracy (a) which Afghans seeking evacuation and then entry to the U.S. had really served the U.S. as “allies,” (b) who their family members were, (c) whether they had criminal records or for other reasons were ineligible from entering the U.S. under our immigration law, (d) whether they had any connections with the Taliban or terrorist organizations, and (e) even the true identity of the Afghans in question.

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<sup>2</sup> Rush, *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Sune Engel Rasmussen, “Trump’s Immigration Crackdown Targets Even Closest Wartime Allies,” December 6, 2025, Wall Street Journal, [https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/trumps-immigration-crackdown-targets-even-closest-wartime-allies-f2b62074?gaa\\_at=eafs&gaa\\_n=AWetsqexoFOXbclUGYSmBv2-5tbAGIqTmPk4bs8fDPyBkrNCEvcuLXhkymk0JnU3bE%3D&gaa\\_ts=693c4383&gaa\\_sig=-zmKIH97eTTdN59GZHHAhzzbi43q40ai\\_xq-XuYrDtM\\_VKZW3Z\\_BodUuKvaMZlckfBOjmrKsLzYshEr1q8Tc7g%3D%3D](https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/trumps-immigration-crackdown-targets-even-closest-wartime-allies-f2b62074?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWetsqexoFOXbclUGYSmBv2-5tbAGIqTmPk4bs8fDPyBkrNCEvcuLXhkymk0JnU3bE%3D&gaa_ts=693c4383&gaa_sig=-zmKIH97eTTdN59GZHHAhzzbi43q40ai_xq-XuYrDtM_VKZW3Z_BodUuKvaMZlckfBOjmrKsLzYshEr1q8Tc7g%3D%3D)

<sup>4</sup> Nayla Rush, “Operation Allies Refuge: Who Exactly Was on Those Planes?” Center for Immigration Studies, September 14, 2021, <https://cis.org/Rush/Operation-Allies-Refuge-Who-Exactly-Was-Those-Planes>

To make OAR possible in a rush, the U.S. government improvised a complex web of “vetting” through which every Afghan coming to the U.S. was intended to be properly identified and then screened for any derogatory information that would render them ineligible from entering – or otherwise unsafe to admit to – the U.S.

The presumption at the time was that once removed from Afghanistan, most of the “allies” and their relatives would be brought to the U.S. where they would eventually be able to apply for permanent residency through various means. Permanent residency is the final stage before U.S. citizenship. OAR brought Afghans to locations outside Afghanistan known as “lily pads” where they were processed for later entry into the United States, mostly using immigration parole. Other evacuated Afghans were brought directly to what grew to be eight “Safe Havens,” areas on U.S. military bases where they were housed and processed for onward resettlement in the U.S.<sup>5</sup>

### **III. Abuse of Parole**

Parole is supposed to be temporary, used on a case-by-case basis for individuals based on humanitarian reasons or public benefit to the United States for aliens who don’t have time to pursue a U.S. visa. The typical examples are emergency surgery and testifying in a criminal case. When that temporary activity is over, parole is supposed to terminate and the alien departs. Given the purpose and temporary nature of parole, Congress logically did not provide work authorization for parolees. It is important to note that Congress amended the parole statute to expressly state that refugees should not be paroled into the U.S. In violation of many of these statutory provisions, the Biden Administration used parole as a mass migration program to bring a million and a half aliens from, *inter alia*, Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Ukraine, and Venezuela and gave them work authorization.<sup>6</sup>

Of the 80,000 initial OAR Afghan evacuees, 72,550 were paroled into the U.S. under OAW.<sup>7</sup> Once they were here on parole, DHS had insufficient processes and means to monitor their status and to deport them if they were found to be in violation of immigration status or otherwise ineligible to remain. A DHS Office of the Inspector General report in 2024 found that “DHS does not have a process for monitoring parole expiration.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, at least between August 2023 and May 2024, Afghans who had not applied for a further immigration benefit before their initial two-year parole expired could have remained in the country with no legal status.

The Biden Administration’s aim was that all the Afghans on parole would apply to remain in the United States by applying for asylum, immigrant visas based on family petitions, or Special Immigrant Visas. However, if U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) denied those petitions because the applicant was ineligible or committed fraud, “USCIS would also not initiate removal proceedings for a parolee whose application it had denied and whose parole later expired.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, Afghans who were paroled into the U.S. using questionable authority for two years

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<sup>5</sup> USCRI Policy Brief, “Allies Welcome Phase I & II Analysis – Domestic & International Intermediary Sites,” June 14, 2022, <https://refugees.org/allies-welcome-conference-safe-havens-and-lily-pads-initiative/>

<sup>6</sup> Simon Hankinson, “Liberal Judge Tries To Block Trump Over Bogus Biden-Era Parole for Countless Illegals,” April 29, 2025, <https://www.heritage.org/border-security/commentary/liberal-judge-tries-block-trump-over-bogus-biden-era-parole-countless>

<sup>7</sup> Rush, *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, “DHS Has a Fragmented Process for Identifying and Resolving Derogatory Information for Operation Allies Welcome Parolees,” OIG-24-24, May 6, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> OIG-24-24, *Ibid*.

and whose parole had expired would simply remain unlawfully, until something brought them back to the attention of U.S. immigration or law enforcement agencies.

#### **IV. Failures of Vetting**

“Vetting” means checking an applicant’s background to determine whether they have past criminal, terrorist, or other records that indicate they are a national security risk or show an ineligibility to enter the U.S. It requires U.S. agencies to gather and rely on biographic information (name, date of birth, place of birth, etc.) and biometric information (photo, fingerprints, and DNA). This can then be compared to all data held in U.S. official military, intelligence, and law enforcement databases. “Hits” or matches to derogatory information must be cleared as not applicable, waived, or addressed by administrative measures or law enforcement.

The vetting of Afghans in OAR was a coordinated U.S. interagency effort including but not limited to the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and FBI. According to a DHS inspector general report in September 2022, “DHS officials said screening and vetting requirements were decided on an ad hoc basis.”<sup>10</sup> For OAR, DoD, State, or DHS collected biometric and biographic data on Afghans while they were out of Afghanistan at “lily pads” in other countries awaiting entry to the U.S. DHS coordinated the vetting of that information. Afghans who were cleared were again screened at the port of entry when they arrived in the U.S.

The FBI “served a critical support function in OAR and OAW by providing the lead partner agencies with timely information to help them determine whether Afghan evacuees, including individuals who may pose a risk to national security, entered or remained in the United States.”<sup>11</sup>

According to an internal FBI audit:

“the need to immediately evacuate Afghans overtook the normal processes required to determine whether individuals attempting to enter the United States pose a threat to national security, which increased the risk that bad actors could try to exploit the expedited evacuation.”<sup>12</sup>

Even the best vetting can only find information that is available. The saying in computing goes: “garbage in, garbage out.” For vetting, the corollary would be “nothing in, nothing out.” Any criminal convictions, terrorist links, Taliban connections, or actions in Afghanistan applicable to a given Afghan individual but which were unrecorded or are unavailable to U.S. agencies does not count as derogatory information. Given the number of Afghans – regardless of whether they had qualifying U.S. service - who were hastily evacuated under U.S. auspices, there were inevitably some who presented security concerns of various kinds.

Regarding the OAR evacuees, the 2022 DHS/OIG report found that “some information used to vet evacuees... such as name, date of birth, identification number, and travel document data was

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, “DHS Encountered Obstacles to Screen, Vet, and Inspect All Evacuees during the Recent Afghanistan Crisis,” September 6, 2022

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, “Audit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Participation in the Handling of Afghan Evacuees During Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome,” Audit Division 25-056, June 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

inaccurate, incomplete, or missing.” The report found that 11,110 records among the roughly 80,000 Afghans they looked at had the birthday, January 1. Some applicants used only one name, not always the same one, and not always spelled the same by those entering their data. According to the DHS/OIG report, “CBP admitted or paroled evacuees who had questionable names and dates of birth partly due to cultural differences.”<sup>13</sup> DHS/OIG found that CBP guidance was to admit or parole Afghan evacuees into the U.S. even if they had improper identification documents, as long as they had no derogatory information. The result: CBP “admitted or paroled evacuees who were not fully vetted into the United States.”<sup>14</sup>

## **Sex Crimes Ignored**

Unrevealed connections to the Taliban and terrorist groups are only one of the risks of admitting tens of thousands of Afghans with limited background information. Afghan men were reportedly evacuated by the U.S. and even admitted to the U.S. accompanied by underage girls they claimed as wives.<sup>15</sup> Some girls alleged they were forced into marriage or raped as the price of getting out of Afghanistan with the older men. In 2010, a PBS documentary revealed the practice of powerful Afghan men using boys for sex and “documenting how the Afghan authorities responsible for stopping these crimes are sometimes themselves complicit in the practice.”<sup>16</sup> In 2015, the New York Times reported that the U.S. military had instructed soldiers to ignore sexual abuse of children by Afghan allies.<sup>17</sup> The State Department’s Afghanistan Task Force noted cases of probable child marriage and polygamy when processing Afghans at a “safe haven” U.S. military base. These concerns do not appear to have resulted in any Afghans being denied benefits or deported.

Whatever is customary or tolerated in Afghanistan, adults having sex with children is statutory rape in the United States. Here, polygamy and child marriage are also illegal. All of these activities would render any Afghan ineligible from receiving a visa of any kind to enter the United States and render them deportable after admission. Even if State and DHS did check for such criminal records, they would only have existed if the crimes had been committed in the U.S. For the most part, U.S. authorities would have no way to know, before admitting them, if any of the Afghans brought to the U.S. since 2021 had committed sex crimes in Afghanistan. Members of the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and other armed Afghan forces were eligible for evacuation and parole under OAR. However, the U.S. military reportedly did not share all the derogatory information it possessed about members of these forces with the State Department and DHS. Therefore, any such information would not have been revealed in vetting of these individuals.

Several studies from Europe have shown that Afghan refugees and immigrants (along with those of some other countries) commit violent crime at much higher rates than native-born people. For

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<sup>13</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, “DHS Encountered Obstacles to Screen, Vet, and Inspect All Evacuees during the Recent Afghanistan Crisis,” September 6, 2022

<sup>14</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, “DHS Encountered Obstacles to Screen, Vet, and Inspect All Evacuees during the Recent Afghanistan Crisis,” September 6, 2022

<sup>15</sup> Mathew Lee, “Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking,” AP, September 3, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-child-trafficking-27d93a340c4834d497eb36e22bb72f42>

<sup>16</sup> PBS Frontline, “The Dancing Boys of Afghanistan,” April 20, 2010, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/dancingboys/>

<sup>17</sup> Jeff Goldstein, “U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Allies,” New York Times, September 20, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/asia/us-soldiers-told-to-ignore-afghan-allies-abuse-of-boys.html>

example, Afghans were more than ten times as likely to be arrested for violent crime in Germany than Germans.<sup>18</sup> In the United Kingdom, Afghans “were more than 20 times more likely to account for sexual offence convictions than British citizens.”<sup>19</sup> It is naive to expect that with a much larger population of recent Afghan migrants than most European countries, the experience of the United States should be radically different. Properly screening the Afghans evacuated and paroled into the United States during OAR and successor programs would at least have reduced that risk.

### **Removing Ineligible Afghans**

Once in the U.S., each time an Afghan applied to adjust status, extend parole, or for some other immigration benefit, their information should have been again compared to U.S. information holdings and any derogatory match addressed before granting the benefit desired. Addressing a match would mean either dismissing it as not applicable to the applicant concerned or waiving it; or denying the benefit and, if so warranted, beginning deportation proceedings based on a discovered ineligibility. However, a subsequent report from DHS/OIG in 2024 concluded that DHS suffered from “a complex ICE process for removing OAW parolees to Afghanistan that depends on a third-party country,” and that “DHS does not have a process for monitoring parole expiration.”<sup>20</sup> Perhaps these deficiencies also applied to the Afghans let into the U.S. on parole after OAW.

### **V. Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE)**

From the U.S. withdrawal in 2021 until the end of the Biden presidency, CARE brought to America more than 200,000 Afghans, mostly using parole but also with SIVs and refugee status via USRAP. The Biden State Department used SIVs where feasible. In cases where an SIV was not possible or would take too long, DHS used parole to bring Afghans into the U.S. for two years, and then in 2023, allowed them to apply to renew their parole for another two years. Once the Afghans were in the U.S., the government provided legal assistance and encouraged them to use the USRAP, apply for SIVs, or apply for immigrant visas under family reunification as “pathways” to the ultimate end – making them permanent residents and then citizens.

From 2021 to 2025, CARE spent around \$5 billion ostensibly to “assist Afghans who cooperated with the US mission in that country.”<sup>21</sup> The State Department official closed the CARE office in the summer of 2025 but transferred its responsibilities to the South and Central Asia Bureau’s Afghanistan Desk, where it is still operating with a few dozen contract (not direct hire federal) staff. CARE was reportedly still bringing in Afghans until a few days before the terrorist attack on the National Guard soldiers in Washington, D.C. in November 2025. The CARE offices in Washington and Doha remain open to deal with the remaining 1,200 Afghans at refugee Camp Al Sayliyah in Doha. At least 300 Afghans from that camp have voluntarily returned to Afghanistan without reports

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<sup>18</sup> “German Police: Afghan, Syrian Newcomers Linked To Higher Violent Crime Rates In Germany,” December 9, 2025, <https://www.afintl.com/en/202512090838>

<sup>19</sup> Charles Hymas, “Foreigners convicted of up to 23pc of sex crimes,” The Daily Telegraph, March 10, 2025, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/03/10/foreigners-commit-up-to-quarter-of-sex-crimes/#:~:text=Source:%20Freedom%20of%20information%20request,population%20in%20England%20and%20Wales>

<sup>20 20</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, “DHS Has a Fragmented Process for Identifying and Resolving Derogatory Information for Operation Allies Welcome Parolees,” OIG-24-24, May 6, 2024.



of retribution against them, which belies their initial claims to protection. Ethnic and religious minority groups such as Christians and Hazaras are much more likely to face persecution from the Taliban than ethnic Pashtuns. However, most of the remaining families in Doha are Pashtuns. The Taliban is dominated by Pashtuns.

According to several whistleblowers and others familiar with Afghan case work, CARE permitted the entry of thousands of Afghans with no legitimate experience working for the United States, nor any credible fear of the Taliban regime that would qualify them for asylum or refugee status. Case workers and whistleblowers have identified systematic fraud in the program, including forged recommendation letters from U.S. officials and fraud in identity and personal documents. In addition, they allege, CARE employed contractors, around 200 of them from Afghanistan, with insufficient vetting and oversight. Some contractors reportedly facilitated the approval of cases for family and other reasons rather than connection to the U.S. effort in Afghanistan. Whistleblowers and other Americans familiar with case processing have said that CARE supervisors had no ability to verify applicants' claims and documents, and that "CARE has no capacity to or real interest in trying to expose fraudulent claims."<sup>21</sup>

Corruption is endemic in Afghanistan. A report from the State Department's Inspector General on U.S. Embassy Kabul in 2010 said, in a section on fraud prevention in consular operations, that "it is widely acknowledged that Afghan documents are unreliable and that corruption is rampant in both government and social sectors," adding that "so many of the applicants are found to be intending immigrants and therefore ineligible for NIVs [non-immigrant visas] regardless of the veracity of their supporting documentation." Further, the report noted that even then – halfway through the U.S. two-decade presence – "[t]he high number of travelers absconding from government-sponsored training programs, youth exchanges, and official travel, with many of those absconders requesting asylum in Canada, suggests that there may be organized smuggling rings operating both in Afghanistan and the United States."<sup>22</sup>

When processing SIVs, State Department consular officers reportedly "overcame" significant "hits," or records in the U.S. consular database indicating criminal, terrorist, or Taliban ties, in various cases, allowing these cases to proceed despite not confirming whether the "hits" were indicative of national security threats. According to officers who worked in or with CARE, some Afghan recipients of SIVs who claimed a fear of persecution by the Taliban returned to Afghanistan after they became legal permanent residents of the United States. Some of these Afghans worked for the CARE office, so American supervisors would have been aware of their travel home. Their return to Afghanistan after claiming fear of persecution indicates that these individuals committed immigration fraud when applying for their SIVs and later for their green cards. This should normally result in the termination of their status in the U.S. and render them removable under U.S. immigration law.

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<sup>21</sup> Phillip Linderman, "The Afghan Refugee Program Is an Unfixable Mess—and May Bring the Next Terrorist Attack," *The American Conservative*, March 13, 2025, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/the-afghan-refugee-program-is-an-unfixable-mess-and-may-bring-the-next-terrorist-attack/>

<sup>22</sup> United States Department of State, Office of Inspector General, Report of Inspection, Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, Report Number ISP-I-10-32A, February 2010, [https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report\\_pdf\\_file/isp-i-10-32a\\_1.pdf](https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/isp-i-10-32a_1.pdf)

As Philip Linderman writes, whistleblowers within CARE alleged that the process for approving SIV applications was “riddled with payoffs and other Afghan-to-Afghan reward kickbacks about which the American CARE supervisors know little and, apparently, care even less.”<sup>23</sup>

## **VI. Special Immigrant Visas (SIV)**

SIVs are granted annually to long-serving or meritorious foreign employees of U.S. missions abroad, long known as Foreign Service Nationals and now as Locally-Employed Staff (LES). Normally, to qualify for an SIV, LES have to show they’ve worked at least 15 years for the U.S. government (at the State Department or other agency present at the U.S. mission) with outstanding service, or 20 years with good service. With the massive scale-up of U.S. personnel and LES in Iraq and Afghanistan after 2001, Congress lowered the qualification requirements for SIVs to one year (later raised to two) of service, and raised numerical limits to accommodate a large increase in applications from Iraqi nationals.<sup>24</sup>

### **(i) Pre-2021 SIVs at Embassy Kabul:**

The Kabul SIV process was similar to that of any other U.S. embassy, with some exceptions. The Principal Applicant (PA) for an SIV had to have an employment letter from the U.S. government, plus a letter of recommendation from his American supervisor. Each case needed a final Chief of Mission (COM) approval, in a memorandum, which was based on those letters and a review of the employee’s personnel records.

After COM approval, the applicant had an SIV interview with a consular officer. Because of the high fraud and corruption levels in Afghanistan, Embassy Kabul subjected every SIV application to an automatic fraud interview with the Assistant Regional Security Officer/Investigator (A/RSO/I), an officer from Diplomatic Security agent assigned to the consular section to fight visa fraud. The A/RSO/I was assisted by Afghan LES investigators and staff with experience in local languages, traditions, and other information helpful to discovering fraud.

After that interview, the State Department submitted a Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) cable to the State Department, which triggered a standard inter-agency review for security concerns. Only after that process was complete – with COM approval and SAO clearance - did the consular section issue the SIV, allowing the PA and his family to fly to the U.S.

After the initial evacuation of the 80,000 Afghans and total takeover of the country by the Taliban government, the U.S. State Department lowered the standards and eased the process for Afghans to apply for SIVs.

### **(ii) Post-OAW SIVs for Afghans**

Since the U.S. withdrawal, U.S. Embassy Kabul is now the Afghan Affairs Unit (AAU) in Doha, Qatar. Within U.S. Embassy Doha, the AAU has six consular officers, four of whom are Entry Level Officers who do the adjudicating of visas, including SIVs from Afghans. The AAU has an SIV

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<sup>23</sup> Linderman, Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Policy Manual, Chapter 10 – Certain Afghan and Iraqi Nationals,” <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-7-part-f-chapter-10>, (accessed December 12, 2025).



Council which reports to the Chief of Mission, who signs the COM Approval memorandum required for all SIVs.

After OAR, the State Department reportedly made a number of procedural changes to the processing of SIVs for Afghans that weakened an already fraud-prone program with many vulnerabilities. Starting in late 2022, Afghans who had not worked for the U.S. government could be considered for the USRAP.<sup>25</sup> In addition, Afghans who did not formerly qualify for an SIV because they did not work for the U.S. government directly could be eligible if they had worked for a U.S. -funded contractor, project, or program, or even if they worked for a U.S.-based media or non-profit organization. A letter from an American employer was not required - an Afghan citizen employer could recommend another Afghan.<sup>26</sup> Verifying this recommendation and the alleged relationship between the Afghan SIV applicant and any American presence in Afghanistan presented serious, perhaps insurmountable obstacles. Data on Afghans – criminal, military, terrorist, biographic, and any other information gathered by U.S. agencies when they were present in Afghanistan – has not been gathered or properly updated since the summer of 2021 because the DoD, State Department, and other agencies responsible for entering information are no longer there.

This gives consular officers outside Afghanistan less and less to go on every year. Afghanistan is a high-fraud country with poor document integrity and legendary corruption. Consular officers in Doha and other countries that process Afghan SIVs have, with rare exceptions, never served in Afghanistan and do not speak any of its languages.

When American citizens, veterans, and politicians speak of “Afghan allies,” they most likely think of soldiers, translators, and others who risked their lives beside our forces in the field or in crucial national security, combat, and intelligence roles. They are not thinking of casual laborers working for sub-contractors, or for foreign media organizations, or for NGOs tangentially connected to the U.S. effort. One Foreign Service officer interviewed several Afghans for SIVs when he was working as a consular officer in a nearby country.<sup>27</sup> One of these Afghans had worked in a warehouse allegedly affiliated with a U.S. contractor. Another had worked for a sub-contractor to build latrines on a military base used by American forces. Neither had been interviewed in Kabul by the A/RSO/I and fraud unit, so therefore neither had a case file which could be cross-referenced with information presented in their SIV application.

Case notes from previous applications filed in Kabul are very useful. In another case, the aforementioned consular officer found case notes from a fraud interview showing that the applicant had never worked for the U.S. government. The applicant had, presumably, hoped that applying in a country outside Afghanistan would avoid revelation of his previous fraud. Normal SIVs for U.S. embassy employees are accompanied by the personnel file going back at least 15, and normally 20 years. Afghan SIV applicants who actually worked for the U.S. government have files going back only one or two years. Those who claim to have worked for NGOs and contractors may have no records at all. They can also submit fraudulent documents to back their claims.

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<sup>25</sup> Rush, *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Person interviewed by author on background (“FSO-1”)

<sup>27</sup> FSO1, *ibid.*

Afghan applicants for SIVs have submitted fraudulent employment letters, letters of recommendation, and even Chief of Mission approvals. In May 2025, Dilbar Gul Dilbar was arrested and charged with visa fraud in the United States, after his application for an SIV was found to have a counterfeit Chief of Mission approval from U.S. Embassy Kabul, a fraudulent letter of employment, and a fraudulent Letter of Recommendation. Despite all these fake documents, Dilbar's SIV was approved on March 20, 2024. He was then admitted into the U.S. in April and granted legal permanent resident status in July 2024. No experienced consular officer would imagine that Dilbar's case is unique.<sup>ii</sup>

Fraudulent documents are easy to obtain on the local market in many countries – and are available even in the United States. In 2024, U.S. Navy reserve officer Jeromy Pittman of Florida was sentenced to two years for accepting bribes from Afghans for “drafting, submitting and verifying fraudulent letters of recommendation for Afghan citizens who applied for SIVs with the State Department.”<sup>28</sup>

On June 4, 2025, President Trump issued a Proclamation which “fully restricts and limits the entry of nationals from 12 countries found to be deficient with regards to screening and vetting and determined to pose a very high risk to the United States.”<sup>29</sup> The first country on the list is Afghanistan.

## **VII. Afghan Adjustment Act**

In 2022, the Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA) was proposed in Congress.<sup>30</sup> This would have expedited adjustment to Legal Permanent Resident for Afghans present in the U.S. who:

- Were anywhere in the SIV process, as long as they had Chief of Mission approval; or
- Were referred (usually by the U.N. refugee agency) to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program; or
- Had filed an SIV before July 31, 2018; or
- Merely were physically present in the U.S. for the past two years.

The AAA would have lowered already low standards for approving Afghan SIVs, and introduced additional fraud risks into a program already vulnerable to malfeasance. The bill did not pass. The umbrella group AfghanEvac lobbied for the AAA and later legislation to fast-track Afghans to U.S. residency and citizenship. Provisions that would have facilitated rapid entry and residency for

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<sup>28</sup> Louis Casiano, “Naval officer sentenced in Afghan SIV bribery scheme amid scrutiny of visa program after terror plot exposed,” Fox News, October 28, 2024, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/naval-officer-sentenced-afghan-siv-bribery-scheme-scrutiny-visa-program-terror-plot-exposed>

<sup>29</sup> The White House, “Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Restricts the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats,” June 4, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/06/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-restricts-the-entry-of-foreign-nationals-to-protect-the-united-states-from-foreign-terrorists-and-other-national-security-and-public-safety-threats/#:~:text=Pursuant%20to%20President%20Trump's%20Executive.entry%20serves%20U.S.%20national%20interests.>

<sup>30</sup> Simon Hankinson, “The Afghan Adjustment Act Would Not Facilitate Safe or Orderly U.S. Entry of Afghan Allies,” Heritage Foundation, December 2, 2022, <https://www.heritage.org/homeland-security/report/the-afghan-adjustment-act-would-not-facilitate-safe-or-orderly-us-entry>

Afghans pushed by AfghanEvac and others were in draft versions of the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act but were removed before it passed.

### **VIII. Refugee Programs for Afghans**

Parole is temporary and can be revoked as easily as it can be granted – letting Afghans (and other aliens) in this way was merely a means to allow them physical presence while they pursued other means of remaining in the U.S. such as asylum or, for qualified Afghans, SIVs. Because not that many Afghans qualified for SIVs, even with the significantly lower bar discussed above, the Biden administration tried to process them as refugees through the USRAP. The administration created a program (Welcome Corps) by which groups of at least five American citizens or legal permanent residents could “sponsor Afghan refugees who are outside of Afghanistan, do not already have a case with the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program or Special Immigrant Visa program, and meet all of the program’s eligibility requirements.”<sup>31</sup> In brief, the requirements were that the Afghan was 18, not in the US or Afghanistan, and hadn’t previously been denied under the USRAP.<sup>32</sup> The sponsors had to commit to “providing a set of core services,” but the refugees they sponsored (families of up to 10 people) would automatically be eligible for work authorization and resettlement benefits paid for by taxpayers, and there was no apparent mechanism - let alone intent – to compel sponsors to fulfil their commitments.

Allowing private individuals, including non-citizens, the power to declare Afghans to be refugees raised serious risks of fraud and corruption. In 2023, the Biden administration went further, by allowing Afghans in the U.S. on parole to bring their spouses and unmarried children up to 21 in as refugees (if the parolee was over 18) or their parents, legal guardians, and unmarried siblings under 21 (if the parolee was under 18).<sup>33</sup> That means that Afghans here on parole, and thus not technically “admitted” to the U.S., with no guaranteed ability to remain beyond two years, let alone pathway to permanent residence, were able to essentially bypass the normal programs and bring their relatives into the USRAP.

Foreigners here on parole are not supposed to be able to access federal welfare benefits. Cubans and Haitians are an exception to this due to a quirk in immigration law, so they can tap into welfare immediately on arrival. Refugees are also able to access a wide range of federal welfare benefits immediately on arrival in the U.S.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Afghan refugees can be eligible with no waiting period for certain federal public benefits, including Medicaid, Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance, Refugee Social Services, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Federal Student Aid.

### **IX. Post-2021 Criminal and Terrorist Activity in the U.S. by Afghans**

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<sup>31</sup> Welcome Corps, “Welcome Corps for Afghans,” <https://welcomecorps.org/become-a-sponsor/help-afghan-refugees/> (accessed December 12, 2025).

<sup>32</sup> A requirement that they also be registered with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees could be waived.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Family Reunification for Afghans,” <https://www.state.gov/afghanistan-family-reunification/> (accessed December 12, 2025).

<sup>34</sup> The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was passed to prevent legal (and illegal) immigrants from getting federal welfare benefits for their first five years in the U.S. However, the PRWORA exempted “qualified aliens,” which includes refugees.

Even successful vetting cannot predict future radicalization or action. As Nayla Rush writes, “shared values and successful integration are the best shields against radicalization.”<sup>35</sup> Admitting aliens, however vetted, has inherent risk that varies with the country of origin, the age and sex of the aliens, and other factors. The higher the crime rate in the country of origin of those brought in, the higher the risk to the host country. The more people brought in, the more likely there will be offences committed in the future.

In 2022, there were reports of various crimes by Afghans - including four sexual assaults - on or near U.S. military bases. Some were not prosecuted and others were downgraded from felonies to misdemeanors. Below are a few recent cases involving Afghan perpetrators, most of whom came to the U.S. after 2021.

- 03 DEC 2025 – ICE arrested Afghan **Jaan Shah Safi** in Waynesboro, VA. DHS said he was linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan (ISIS-K). ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the AUG 2021 bombing at Kabul airport which killed 13 US servicemen. Safi came to the U.S. under Operation Allies Welcome.<sup>36</sup>
- 02 DEC 2025 – Afghan **Mohammad Dawood Alokozay** was arrested in Texas on charges of making terroristic threats after he allegedly posted a video to social media threatening to carry out a suicide bombing attack against Americans. In a DoJ press release, Attorney General Pam Bondi said that “This Afghan national came into America during the Biden administration,” but she was not specific as to how.<sup>iii</sup>
- On 26 NOV 2025, **Rahmanullah Lakhanwal** allegedly shot two national guard members in Washington, DC, killing one. He came in 2021 on parole under Operation Allies Welcome. Reportedly, he applied for asylum and his case was approved in 2024.<sup>iv</sup>
- In June 2025, **Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi** pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiring and attempting to provide material support and resources to ISIS. He and another Afghan had been arrested in November 2024 for plotting to kill Americans at polling stations in Oklahoma City on Election Day.<sup>v</sup> Tawhedi reportedly came to the U.S. in 2021 under Operation Allies Welcome.<sup>37</sup>
- In April 2025, **Jamal Wali** was pulled over by Fairfax, VA, police officers for speeding. After ranting at the officers, Wali pulled a gun and was shot by the police. Wali, a former translator for the military in Afghanistan, came to the U.S. in 2014.<sup>vi</sup>

## X. Conclusion

The U.S. presence in Afghanistan did not achieve its desired objective, after two decades, thousands of lives lost, and billions of tax dollars spent. Our exit was rushed and ignominious. Our efforts to extract a theoretically limited number of Afghan “allies” were poorly targeted and feckless, satisfying no one. The vetting standards initially were inadequate for the purposes of determining the identity, biography, and hence national security risk for many Afghans who were allowed into the United States

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<sup>35</sup> Rush, Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Press Release, “Miles from Nation's Capital, ICE Arrests ISIS-K Afghan Terrorist Who Was Released into the U.S. Under Biden's Operation Allies Welcome,” December 3, 2025, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/12/03/miles-nations-capital-ice-arrests-isis-k-afghan-terrorist-who-was-released-us-under>

<sup>37</sup> Todd Bensman, “Afghan Evacuee Added to CIS National Security Vetting Failures Database,” Center for Immigration Studies, December 10, 2024, <https://cis.org/Bensman/Afghan-Evacuee-Added-CIS-National-Security-Vetting-Failures-Database>

under parole, SIVs, or as refugees. Efforts to bring in as many Afghans as possible resulted in standards being dropped far below the level plausible to bring actual “allies” to safety while preventing dangerous, unstable, or otherwise undesirable individuals to enter and/or remain in the United States. Henceforth, U.S. efforts should concentrate on re-examining all Afghans brought to the U.S. by the government or who entered on their own since 2021. Those unqualified to remain should be removed to Afghanistan or third countries. In future, further treatment of “allies” should concentrate on protection efforts in the countries surrounding Afghanistan or other places where Afghans in fear of the Taliban could more easily, cheaply, and safely be relocated.

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<sup>i</sup> Phillip Linderman, “Afghan refugee office is a corrupt failure — Trump is right to shut it down,” New York Post, June 10, 2025, [https://nypost.com/2025/06/10/opinion/afghan-refugee-office-a-corrupt-failure-best-to-shutter-it/?utm\\_campaign=iphone\\_nyp&utm\\_source=mail\\_app](https://nypost.com/2025/06/10/opinion/afghan-refugee-office-a-corrupt-failure-best-to-shutter-it/?utm_campaign=iphone_nyp&utm_source=mail_app) (last accessed June 23, 2025).

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Press Release, “Afghan citizen charged with visa fraud,” May 1, 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdny/pr/afghan-citizen-charged-visa-fraud> (last accessed June 23, 2025).

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/afghan-citizen-federally-charged-posting-threats-build-bomb-and-kill-americans>

<sup>iv</sup> Jack Morphet, “Who Is D.C. Shooting Suspect Rahmanullah Lakanwal?” Wall Street Journal, December 1, 2025, [https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/who-is-d-c-shooting-suspect-rahmanullah-lakanwal-c44ef1cd?gaa\\_at=cafs&gaa\\_n=AWetsqe8KGDsNLcO-ZkQlIMllzQ89SYW4x-fddgUavvPGOIbVvNBezZleghV&gaa\\_ts=692f447d&gaa\\_sig=MtWFUSt-ociYo-4IroOVDEy4WPYeILE7SGWgZiNxscRLjzuCDx2QV12\\_li17IbKbe9pQw5iwdkJFU7lX8e62-g%3D%3D](https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/who-is-d-c-shooting-suspect-rahmanullah-lakanwal-c44ef1cd?gaa_at=cafs&gaa_n=AWetsqe8KGDsNLcO-ZkQlIMllzQ89SYW4x-fddgUavvPGOIbVvNBezZleghV&gaa_ts=692f447d&gaa_sig=MtWFUSt-ociYo-4IroOVDEy4WPYeILE7SGWgZiNxscRLjzuCDx2QV12_li17IbKbe9pQw5iwdkJFU7lX8e62-g%3D%3D)

<sup>v</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Press Release, “Afghan National Pleads Guilty to Plotting Election Day Terror Attack in the United States,” June 13, 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/afghan-national-pleads-guilty-plotting-election-day-terror-attack-united-states> (last accessed June 23, 2025).

<sup>vi</sup> Shane Galvin, “Driver exclaims ‘I should have served with f–king Taliban’ moments before fatal traffic-stop shootout with police: bodycam footage,” New York Post, May 25, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/05/25/us-news/virginia-police->

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