

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 30, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write with concern that adversaries are exploiting our wide-open Southern border. Under the Biden Administration our nation has experienced an unprecedented number of apprehensions at our Southern border, now totaling over six million crossings. Also troubling, in Fiscal Year 2023 there were 169 individuals on the terror watchlist<sup>1</sup> apprehended at the border, compared to zero in Fiscal Year 2019. Considering the threats our nation faces from China, Russia, Iran, and other adversaries, it's past time this Administration secures our border and protects American citizens.

In light of the barbaric attack in Israel, we are also concerned about Iran's proxies and other terrorist groups taking advantage of the Southern border to launch a terror attack from within our homeland. As you are well aware, Hamas terrorists breached Israel's borders in an unprecedented multi-pronged infiltration using parachutes, motorboats, motorbikes, and bulldozers.<sup>2</sup> This invasion occurred despite Israel's extensive border fortifications.<sup>3</sup> These attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah on Israel have sadly so far resulted in the deaths of over 1,400 Israelis and 31 Americans. Given this Administration has left our Southern border wide open, our nation is threatened. In 2023, terrorists used the Southern border to their advantage.<sup>4</sup> It's no secret that Iran wants to assassinate U.S. officials,<sup>5</sup> and has repeatedly attacked U.S. service members through their proxies<sup>6</sup> in the region. This Administration's failure to secure our border is a deep vulnerability that only invites future threats from various terrorist groups.

Further, we know the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has increased their espionage efforts against the United States—from the CCP spy balloon that traversed over our country unchecked

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol Terrorist Screening Data Set Encounters Between Ports of Entry of Non-U.S. Citizens (last modified Sept. 22, 2023), <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics>.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Williams, *How the Hamas attack on Israel unfolded*, Reuters (Oct. 7, 2023), <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-hamas-attack-israel-unfolded-2023-10-07/>.

<sup>3</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, *Hamas Invasion Rewrites Rules in the Middle East*, Wall Street Journal (Oct. 12, 2023), <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-invasion-rewrites-rules-in-middle-east-1aeabbd4>.

<sup>4</sup> [Katie Bo Lillis](#), [Evan Perez](#), [Priscilla Alvarez](#) and [Natasha Bertrand](#), *Exclusive: Smuggler with ties to ISIS helped migrants enter US from Mexico, raising alarm bells across government*, CNN (Aug. 30, 2023), <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/29/politics/migrants-us-southern-border-smuggler-isis-ties/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Press Release, U.S. Department of Treasury, Treasury Designates Iranian Regime Operatives Involved in Assassination Plots in the United States and Abroad (June 1, 2023), <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1513>.

<sup>6</sup> Lara Seligman, *U.S. officials: Iran might see 'an opportunity' to attack American forces amid Middle East instability*, POLITICO (Oct. 11, 2023), <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/11/us-troops-middle-east-attacks-israel-00120941>.

to at least 100 recent attempts by Chinese nationals to access U.S. military installations.<sup>7</sup> In Fiscal Year 2023, there were over 20,000 Chinese nationals that crossed through our Southern border.<sup>8</sup> The CCP or any adversary through a proxy or otherwise, cannot be allowed to launch an attack against our country. It's difficult to project credible American military power and deterrence abroad when the Biden Administration cannot or will not even secure our own border.

That is why we demand your departments finally work to secure the border and protect American citizens. The U.S. Constitution is clear—the government must provide for the common defense. President Biden and this Administration have failed to live up to their most solemn Constitutional duty. We implore you, once and for all, to secure the border and protect the American people.

For these reasons we request a response to the following questions no later than December 13, 2023. If necessary please include a classified addendum:

- 1) Considering the ongoing conflict in Israel, please provide confirmation or intelligence as to whether Hamas, Hezbollah, or any Iranian proxy agents have infiltrated our Southern border. If this has occurred, how has the threat been mitigated?
- 2) Since 2021, are you aware of any planned terrorist attack by any terrorist organization being foiled by intercepting individuals illegally crossing the Southern border?
- 3) How many Chinese nationals with ties to the CCP have successfully crossed through our Southern border?
- 4) Have any Chinese foreign nationals who made unauthorized border crossing then attempted to access U.S. military installations?
- 5) What steps are DHS and DoD taking to ensure terrorists are not among the millions of illegal immigrants streaming through our Southern border?

Sincerely,

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon Lubold, *Chinese Gate-Crashers at U.S. Bases Spark Espionage Concerns*, Wall Street Journal (Sept. 4, 2023),

<https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/chinese-gate-crashers-at-u-s-bases-spark-espionage-concerns-cdef8187>.

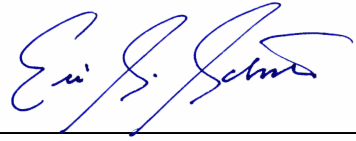
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Nationwide Encounters* (last modified Sept. 22, 2023),

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.



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Mark Alford  
Member of Congress



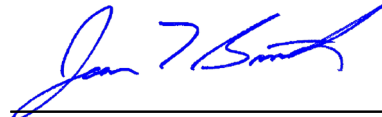
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Eric Schmitt  
U.S. Senator



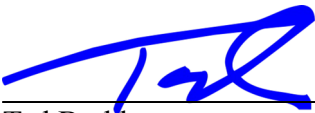
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Roger Wicker  
United States Senator



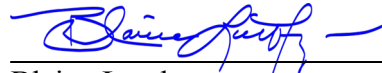
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Jason Smith  
Member of Congress



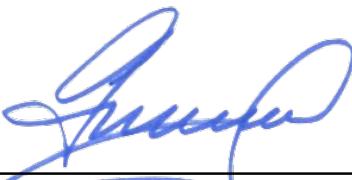
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Ted Budd  
United States Senator



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Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress



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Carlos A. Gimenez  
Member of Congress



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Ronny L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



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Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



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Morgan Luttrell  
Member of Congress



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Eric Burlison  
Member of Congress



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Randy K. Weber, Sr.  
Member of Congress



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Rick Scott  
United States Senator



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John Joyce, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



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Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



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Kat Cammack  
Member of Congress



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Ben Cline  
Member of Congress



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Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



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Mike Collins  
Member of Congress



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Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senator



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Nancy Mace  
Member of Congress



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Tommy Tuberville  
United States Senator