

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JIM INHOFE  
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ROOM SD-G50**

**Thursday, September 30, 2021**

**To receive testimony on Afghanistan**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

*Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for appearing today.*

*We learned a lot in our hearing on Tuesday about how President Biden completely mismanaged the withdrawal from Afghanistan from start to finish. I hope that's just the beginning of our oversight of what happened.*

*Today, I want to hear more from our experts about what comes next. We haven't received any detail on that yet from the Biden administration, but I hope they create a better plan than they had for the drawdown.*

*We did hear one message very clearly on Tuesday. As a result of our withdrawal from Afghanistan, the threat of radical Islamist terrorism is increasing even as our capabilities to combat terrorism are decreasing.*

*General McKenzie told us he is [quote] "not confident" that we can prevent Afghanistan from being used as a launchpad from terrorism right now.*

*Our generals have repeatedly told us just how hard it is to find and track terrorists without partners on the ground. Our intelligence capabilities are also drastically reduced. And these are understatements.*

*We will discuss that today, and take a closer look at the threat that al Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, and ISIS pose from a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.*

*President Biden has completely dismissed this threat. He said al Qaeda is "gone" from Afghanistan. We heard on Tuesday that's not right. We're going to examine that threat more closely today.*

*Here's just one example. The Biden administration claims that the core al Qaeda threats are in Yemen, Somalia, and West Africa.*

*But the leaders of those organizations came from Afghanistan's training camps. And those training camps will fully resume operations under Taliban rule.*

*I'm afraid that over twenty years of successfully preventing an attack from Afghanistan, many have forgotten the scale and scope of the threat.*

*The withdrawal from Afghanistan has made our counterterrorism job much, much harder. We've got to figure out how to get it right to protect Americans.*

*Mr. Chairman.*

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