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Congress of the United States
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WATER, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES

October 13, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

General Daniel R. Hokanson
Chief National Guard Bureau
1636 Defense Pentagon Ste 1E169
Washington, DC 20301-0001

Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels
Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command
6075 Goethels Road
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

Dear Mr. Secretary, General Hokanson, and Lieutenant General Daniels:

I write to provide the strongest commendation of the contributions of the following servicemembers to the evacuation from Afghanistan of American citizens, Afghan partners and others at risk: [REDACTED]

These dedicated servicemembers joined other individuals and organizations in assisting the Afghan evacuation through what is referred to as Task Force North Star.

As you know, over the past months both before and after our final withdrawal from Afghanistan on August 31st, the United States and our Coalition partners undertook a massive effort to evacuate not only U.S. citizens but Afghan nationals at risk of persecution or retribution from the Taliban. This effort required coordination and partnership between our Armed Forces, multiple federal agencies, Congress, non-profit organizations and committed groups of U.S. citizens. As it became clear that the evacuation effort could not reach the scale and scope necessary to fulfill our duty to our Afghan allies, groups such as Task Force North Star, Pineapple, Exodus and Dunkirk were stood up to evacuate some of America's closest Afghan allies. These groups worked

tirelessly to make sure we did everything possible for those who were at risk of being left behind.

Task Force North Star started with a handful of veterans and civilians and grew to over 75 members. My office and I personally worked closely with Task Force North Star over several long weeks to evacuate individuals from Afghanistan. We witnessed this network leverage their skills to advise and assist with the evacuation, on their own time after business hours, while also managing their careers, tending to their families and placing personal priorities on hold. The Task Force initially focused on assisting a small group of 56 evacuees who were isolated outside the North Gate of Hamid Karzai International Airport, but grew rapidly into a mission to help over 2,000 evacuees at various locations throughout the country. To date they have helped evacuate close to 500 Afghan refugees since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan.

With the indispensable assistance of Task Force North Star, the Afghans my office was working to extract from Afghanistan were eventually able to leave. Without the assistance of the Task Force, I am certain these individuals would not have been able to leave Afghanistan and would in all likelihood have been killed or at a bare minimum forced into lives of extreme hardship and risk.

Over the course of these very difficult weeks, my staff and I were able to observe personally the extreme dedication, perseverance and adaptability of the above servicemembers of Task Force North Star. They could have walked away any number of times, but they refused to give up and ultimately achieved much of their mission. They represented the best of our Armed Services and America in a time when that was needed the most.

I hope you will find the appropriate way to recognize and commend these servicemembers and those of the other Task Forces for their service. I stand ready to continue working with them, your department, and the rest of the Biden administration to continue to assist our Afghan national allies and partners whether still in Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Thank you for your consideration.

With aloha,

Ed Case

Congressman Ed Case
Hawai'i-First District

EC/JC