

BACKGROUNDER

No. 3947 | JANUARY 26, 2026

BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION CENTER

Vetting of 80,000+ Afghans Brought to America Failed the National Security Test

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

U.S. government efforts to extract a theoretically limited number of Afghan allies after the chaotic U.S. withdrawal in 2021 were poorly targeted and reckless.

Vetting standards were inadequate for determining identities and backgrounds of countless Afghans flown to America and hence were a direct national security risk.

Further treatment of Afghan “allies” should concentrate on protecting them in the countries surrounding Afghanistan or in other safe third countries—not in the U.S.

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

The second stage, bringing Afghans to the United States, was known as Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). The Biden Administration then transitioned OAW 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 total putative Afghan allies and their claimed family members. Unlike the majority of immigrants from most other countries, these Afghans received

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <https://report.heritage.org/bg3947>

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almost immediate work authorization, legal assistance, health insurance, and a range of other benefits that cost billions of U.S. tax dollars.¹

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 visas, they were granted “parole” [sic], a temporary permission to enter and remain in the United States.²

It is probable, as some American activists claim, that some Afghans remain in Afghanistan or elsewhere outside the United States who have legitimate claims to protection after providing loyal service to the United States and due to 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 (SIV) pipeline,” as SIV recipients, as refugees, or to join relatives already here under various programs.³ Meanwhile, the United States has likely imported thousands of others with no such valid claims, as the Biden Administration deliberately lowered the bar for Afghans to qualify for SIVs or paroled them into the United States by blatant abuse of a limited and temporary discretionary power.⁴

At present, the United States has no people or means to vet anyone inside Afghanistan. The United States has no diplomatic, security, or 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 many other countries with U.S. embassies that they could reach. There, 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 reckless to resume processing of Afghan SIVs as long as these conditions persist.

Afghan Evacuations: OAR and OAW

As the Afghan government crumbled in July and August 2021, the Biden Administration believed that the United States had a duty to evacuate so-called Afghan allies from Afghanistan, where they and their families might be at risk of retribution from the Taliban regime. The OAR evacuation,

however, was so chaotic and indiscriminate that those evacuated were a mix of allies and completely random, unknown Afghans who happened to make it to the airport.⁵

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

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

The presumption at the time was that, once removed from Afghanistan, most of the “allies” and their relatives would be brought to the United States, 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 United States.⁶

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 do not have time to pursue U.S. visas. 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. Congress amended the parole statute to expressly state that refugees should not be paroled into

the United States. 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 Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Ukraine, and Venezuela, among other countries, and gave them work authorization.⁷

Of the 80,000 initial OAR Afghan evacuees, 72,550 were paroled into the United States under OAW.⁸ Once they were here on parole, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had insufficient processes and means to monitor their status and to deport them if they were found to be in violation of immigration statutes or otherwise ineligible to remain. A DHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report in 2024 found that the “DHS does not have a process for monitoring parole expiration.”⁹ Therefore, at least between August 2023 and May 2024, Afghans who had not applied for further immigration benefits before their initial two-year paroles expired could have remained in the country without any immigration 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 SIVs. However, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services “would also not initiate removal proceedings for a parolee whose application it had denied [because the applicant was ineligible or committed fraud] and whose parole later expired.”¹⁰ In other words, Afghans who were paroled into the United States using improper authority for two years and whose parole had expired would simply remain in the country unlawfully until something brought them back to the attention of U.S. immigration or law enforcement agencies.

Vetting Failures

Vetting means checking an applicant’s background to determine whether he or she has past criminal, terrorist, or other records that indicate a national security risk or an ineligibility to enter the United States. It requires U.S. agencies to gather and rely on biographic information (such as name, date of birth, place of birth) and biometric information (photo, fingerprints, and DNA). These data 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 (DOD), the Department of State, the DHS, and the FBI. According to a DHS OIG report in September 2022, “DHS officials said screening and vetting requirements were

decided on an ad hoc basis.”¹¹ For OAR, the DOD, State, or the DHS collected biometric and biographic data on Afghans while they were out of Afghanistan at “Lily-Pads” in other countries awaiting entry to the United States. The DHS coordinated the vetting of that information. Afghans who were cleared were again screened at ports of entry when they arrived in the United States.

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.”¹²

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.¹³

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 that were applicable to a given Afghan individual but were unrecorded or are unavailable to U.S. agencies do not count as derogatory information. Given the number of Afghans who were hastily evacuated under U.S. auspices—regardless of whether they had qualifying U.S. service—some of them inevitably 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 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, or not always the same one, and did not always spell it the same when entering their data. According to the DHS OIG report, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) “admitted or paroled evacuees who had questionable names and dates of birth partly due to cultural differences.”¹⁴ The report found that CBP guidance was to admit or parole Afghan evacuees into the United States even if they had improper identification documents so long as CBP had no specific derogatory information on those Afghans. The result: CBP “admitted or paroled evacuees who were not fully vetted into the United States.”¹⁵

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 United States and even admitted to the United States accompanied by underage girls they claimed as wives.¹⁶ 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 “how the Afghan authorities responsible for stopping these crimes are sometimes themselves complicit in the practice.”¹⁷ In 2015, *The New York Times* reported that the U.S. military had instructed soldiers to ignore sexual abuse of children by Afghan allies.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ These concerns do not appear to have resulted in any Afghans being denied benefits or being 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. Any of these activities would render any Afghan ineligible from receiving a visa of any kind to enter the United States and render him deportable if discovered after admission. Even if State and the DHS did check for such criminal records, the records would have existed only if the crimes had been committed in the United States. For the most part, U.S. authorities would have no way to know, before paroling or admitting them, if any of the Afghans brought to the United States 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 the 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 example, Afghans were more than 10 times as likely to be arrested for violent crime in Germany than Germans were.²⁰ In the United Kingdom, Afghans “were more than 20 times more likely to account for sexual offence convictions than British citizens.”²¹ It is naive to expect that, with a much larger population of recent Afghan migrants than most European countries, the United States should

have very different experience. Properly screening the Afghans evacuated and paroled into the United States during OAR and successor programs would have at least reduced that risk.

Deporting Ineligible Afghans

Once an Afghan was in the United States, each time he or she applied to adjust status, extend parole, or gain some other immigration benefit, his or her information should have been again compared to U.S. information holdings, and any derogatory match should have been addressed before the new requested benefit was granted. Addressing a match would mean either dismissing it as not applicable to the applicant concerned, waiving it, or denying the benefit and (if so warranted) beginning deportation proceedings based on a discovered ineligibility. However, a subsequent DHS OIG report in 2024 concluded that the DHS suffered from “a complex...process for removing OAW parolees to Afghanistan that depends on a third-party country.... DHS does not have a process for monitoring parole expiration.”²² Perhaps these deficiencies also applied to the Afghans who were let into the United States on parole after OAW.

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 through parole but also through SIVs and refugee admission via the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The Biden State Department used SIVs where feasible. In cases where SIVs were not possible or would take too long, the DHS used parole to bring Afghans into the United States 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 United States, 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.”²³ The State Department officially 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 staff. CARE was reportedly still bringing in Afghans until a few days before the terrorist attack on the National Guard soldiers in Washington, DC, in

November 2025. The CARE offices in Washington and Doha are still dealing with the remaining 1,200 Afghans at refugee Camp As Sayliyah in Doha.²⁴ At least 300 Afghans from that camp have voluntarily returned to Afghanistan without reports of retribution against them, which belies their initial claims of fearing persecution.²⁵ Ethnic and religious minority groups, such as Christians and Hazaras, are much more likely to face persecution from the Taliban than ethnic Pashtuns are. 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 or any credible fear of the Taliban regime that would qualify them for asylum or refugee status. Case workers and whistleblowers have identified systemic 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 “no capacity to or real interest in trying to expose fraudulent claims.”²⁶

Corruption is endemic in Afghanistan. A report from the State Department’s inspector general on the U.S. embassy in 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.” The report added that “so many of the applicants are found to be intending immigrants and therefore ineligible for [non-immigrant visas] regardless of the veracity of their supporting documentation.” Further, the report noted that even then—halfway through the two-decade U.S. presence in Afghanistan— “[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.”²⁷

When processing SIVs, State Department consular officers reportedly “overcame” significant “hits” 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.²⁸ 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 result in the termination of their legal status in the United States and render them removable under U.S. immigration law.

As Philip Linderman of the Center for Immigration Studies 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.”²⁹

Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)

Normally, most SIVs are granted 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 that they have 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 buildup 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 creditable service and raised numerical limits to accommodate a large increase in applications from Iraqi nationals.³⁰

Pre-2021 SIVs at the Embassy in Kabul. The Kabul SIV process was similar to that of any other U.S. embassy, with some exceptions. The Principal Applicant for an SIV had to have an employment letter from the U.S. government plus a letter of recommendation from his or her 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 employed principal applicant’s personnel records.

After COM approval, the applicant had an SIV interview with a consular officer. Because of the high levels of fraud and corruption in Afghanistan, the embassy in 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 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 interagency 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 principal applicant and his or her family to fly to the United States.

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

Post-OAW SIVs for Afghans

After the U.S. withdrawal, the U.S. embassy in Kabul was transformed into the Afghan Affairs Unit at the U.S. embassy in Doha, Qatar. The unit has six consular officers, four of whom are entry-level officers who adjudicate visas, including SIVs for Afghans. It has an SIV Council, which reports to the COM, 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.³¹ In addition, Afghans who did not formerly qualify for SIVs because they did not work directly for the U.S. government could be eligible if they had worked for U.S.-funded contractors, projects, or programs or even if they merely worked for U.S.-based media companies or nonprofit organizations. A letter from an American employer was not required—an employer who was an Afghan citizen could recommend another Afghan.³² Verifying this recommendation and the alleged relationship between the Afghan SIV applicant and any American presence in Afghanistan presented serious and perhaps insurmountable obstacles. Data on Afghan individuals—criminal, military, terrorist, biographic, and any other information gathered by U.S. agencies in Afghanistan—has not been collected 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 information to work with every year. Afghanistan is a high-fraud country with poor document integrity and legendary corruption. Consular officers in Doha and other countries who process Afghan SIVs have, with some 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 alongside U.S. forces in the field or in crucial national security, combat, and intelligence roles. They do not have in mind ordinary laborers working for subcontractors, for foreign media organizations, or for non-governmental organizations (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.³³ One of these Afghans had worked in a warehouse allegedly affiliated with a U.S. contractor. Another had worked for a subcontractor 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 neither had a case file that could be cross-referenced with information presented in his 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 personnel files going back at least 15 (and normally 20) years. Afghan SIV applicants who 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 support their claims.

Afghan applicants for SIVs have submitted fraudulent employment letters, letters of recommendation, and even COM 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 COM approval from the U.S. embassy in 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 United States in April and granted legal permanent resident status in July 2024.³⁴ No experienced consular officer would imagine that Dilbar’s case is unique.

Fraudulent documents are easy to obtain on the local market in many countries and are available in the United States as well. 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.”³⁵

On June 4, 2025, President Trump issued a proclamation that “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.”³⁶ The first country on the list is Afghanistan.

Harmful Proposed Afghan Adjustment Act

In 2022, the Afghan Adjustment Act was proposed in Congress.³⁷ It would have expedited adjustment to legal permanent resident status for Afghans in the United States who:

- Are anywhere in the SIV process so long as they had COM approval;
- Were referred (usually by the U.N. refugee agency) to the USRAP;
- Had applied for SIVs before July 31, 2018; or
- Were merely physically present in the United States for the past two years.

The bill 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 bill and later legislation to fast-track Afghans to U.S. residency and citizenship. Provisions that would have facilitated rapid entry and residency for Afghans pushed by AfghanEvac and others were in draft versions of the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act but were removed before it passed.

Programs for Afghan Refugees

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 United States, such as asylum or, in the case of qualified Afghans, SIVs. Because few Afghans qualified for SIVs, even with the significantly lowered 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.”³⁸ In brief, the requirements were that the Afghan to be sponsored was at least 18, was not in the United States or Afghanistan, and had not previously been denied under the USRAP.³⁹ 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 honor their commitments.

Allowing private individuals, including non-citizens, to declare Afghans to be refugees raised serious risks of fraud and corruption. In 2023, the Biden Administration went further by allowing adult Afghans who were in the United States on parole to bring in as refugees their spouses and unmarried children up to age 21 or their parents, legal guardians, and unmarried siblings under 21.⁴⁰ That means that Afghans here on parole—and thus not technically “admitted” to the United States with no guaranteed ability to remain beyond two years, let alone be on a pathway to permanent residence—were able to bypass the normal programs and bring their relatives into the country.

Foreigners who are in the United States on parole are not supposed to be able to access federal welfare benefits. Cubans and Haitians are an exception 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 United States.⁴¹ Therefore, Afghan refugees are eligible without a waiting period for certain federal public benefits, including Medicaid, Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance, Refugee Social Services, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and federal student aid.

Post-2021: Afghan Criminal and Terrorist Activity in the United States

Even “successful” vetting cannot predict future radicalization or action. As Nayla Rush writes, “shared values and successful integration are the best shields against radicalization.”⁴² Admitting aliens, however vetted, has inherent risk that varies with the countries 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 offenses committed in the future.

In 2021, Afghans committed various crimes—including four sexual assaults—on or near U.S. military bases.⁴³ Some were not prosecuted, and others were downgraded from felonies to misdemeanors. The following are a few recent cases involving Afghan perpetrators, most of whom came to the United States after 2021:

- **December 3, 2025:** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested Jaan Shah Safi in Waynesboro, Virginia. The DHS said he was linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan, which claimed responsibility for the August 2021 bombing at Kabul airport that killed 13 U.S. servicemembers. Safi came to the United States under OAW.⁴⁴
- **December 2, 2025:** 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 Justice Department press release, Attorney General Pam Bondi said, “This Afghan national came into America during the Biden administration,” but she was not specific about how.⁴⁵
- **November 26, 2025:** Rahmanullah Lakhawal shot two National Guard members in Washington, DC, killing one. He came to the United States in 2021 on parole under OAW. Reportedly, he applied for asylum, and his case was approved in 2024.⁴⁶
- **June 13, 2025:** Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi pleaded guilty in federal court to conspiring and attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State. He and another Afghan had been arrested in November 2024 for plotting to kill Americans at polling stations in Oklahoma City on Election Day.⁴⁷ Tawhedi reportedly came to the United States in 2021 under OAW.⁴⁸
- **April 23, 2025:** Jamal Wali was pulled over by Fairfax, Virginia, 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 United States in 2014.⁴⁹

Recommendations for the United States

In the interest of national security, the Trump Administration should:

- **Stop** accepting new Afghan SIV applications, and
- **Resettle** remaining Afghans who were true allies to the U.S. government and have a valid fear of persecution in Afghanistan to a safe third country near Afghanistan.

The DHS should:

- **Determine** the immigration status of all Afghans who entered the United States since July 2021, and
- **Review** all parole cases and pending asylum, permanent resident, and citizenship applications from Afghans who entered the U.S. since July 2021 to verify family relationships with DNA testing, check for ineligibilities, and initiate removal proceedings where applicable.

The Department of Justice should:

- **Pursue** denaturalization of Afghans who were wrongly or fraudulently naturalized or who violated the law after becoming U.S. citizens.

The Department of War should:

- **Share** with relevant agencies, within 90 days, all information, from whatever source, however held, in its possession pertaining to Afghan nationals since 2000 to confirm identity, ascertain national security risks, and confirm criminal background.

Conclusion

After two decades, thousands of lives lost, and billions of tax dollars spent, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan did not achieve its desired objective of turning Afghanistan into a functional democracy that is neither hostile to the United States nor a sponsor of terrorism. The U.S. exit in summer 2021 was rushed and ignominious. U.S. efforts to extract a theoretically limited number of Afghan “allies” were poorly targeted and reckless. The initial

vetting standards were inadequate for the purposes of determining the identities and biographies—and, hence, national security risk—of many Afghans who were allowed into the United States under parole, with SIVs, or as refugees. Efforts to bring in as many Afghans as possible resulted in egregiously lowered vetting standards, making it impossible to weed out dangerous, unstable, or otherwise undesirable individuals from actual allies.

U.S. efforts should re-examine all Afghans who were brought to the United States by the government or entered on their own since 2021. Those unqualified to remain should be deported to Afghanistan or third countries. Any further treatment of “allies” should consist solely of resettling them in their own region, where Afghans with bona fide fear of Taliban persecution could be relocated more easily, cheaply, and safely than to the United States.

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Endnotes

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