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June 30, 2020

The Honorable John Ratcliffe
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

The Honorable Gina Haspel
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Director Ratcliffe and Director Haspel,

I write today to request a full congressional briefing regarding reports that elements of the Russian government offered bounties to Afghan militants for killing U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan.¹ Protection of our servicemembers serving overseas is one of the U.S. government's most solemn obligations. Reporting showing that the Administration was aware of this dire intelligence as far back as 2019 is deeply concerning, and Congress must be fully briefed.²

After it was reported that the Russian government had offered cash bounties to militants operating in Afghanistan for killing American and coalition forces, the Administration has thus far been unwilling to provide a full intelligence briefing for all Members of Congress. After initially only providing a briefing for Republican Members of Congress, the White House provided a briefing for a handful of Democratic Members, although the efficacy of the briefing was questioned by key members attending the briefing, with one member voicing frustrations that individuals who could have provided key information were not in the room.³ There are serious bipartisan concerns regarding these reports, with the 3rd ranking House Republican Liz Cheney saying that "if reporting about Russian bounties on US forces is true, the White House must explain..."⁴

A full bipartisan briefing with career intelligence officers is required to ensure Congress has the information it needs to protect servicemembers in Afghanistan. The briefing should fully answer the following questions:

1. Are the news reports true that Russia offered the Afghan militants bounties for killing coalition soldiers?
2. Was this in the Presidential Daily Brief and was the President verbally briefed on the matter? If not, why?
3. What is being done to protect the lives of our servicemembers in Afghanistan from Russian funded targeting?

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter, and I stand ready to work with you to ensure our servicemembers are given the protections they have earned and deserve.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html>

² <https://apnews.com/425e43fa0ffdd6e126c5171653ec47d1>

³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/30/house-democrats-russia-bounties-white-house-briefing-345276?nname=huddle&nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b4be0000&nrid=0000014e-f107-dd93-ad7f-f90708cc0000&nlid=630309>

⁴ <https://www.axios.com/russian-bounties-taliban-liz-cheney-1b8f1f58-9974-455c-90ca-b743f26a6387.html>