

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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MEMORANDUM

November 13, 2020

To: Members of the Subcommittee on National Security

Fr: Majority Staff

Re: Hearing on “Karshi-Khanabad: Honoring the Heroes of Camp Stronghold Freedom”

On **Wednesday, November 18, 2020, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building**, the Subcommittee will hold a hearing as part of its ongoing investigation into toxic exposures at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base in Uzbekistan. U.S. forces deployed to K2 between 2001 and 2005 to support military operations in Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Members can also participate via WebEx.

I. HEARING PURPOSE

The hearing will examine how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) are working to address the health concerns of veterans and servicemembers after the Subcommittee’s investigation revealed that U.S. forces were exposed to harmful toxins, chemicals, and other environmental hazards during their deployments to K2.

On February 27, 2020, the Subcommittee held a hearing to receive testimony from two K2 veterans and the gold star widow of a third servicemember who deployed to K2. The witnesses provided testimony about the environmental hazards they and their loved ones were exposed to while at K2, the health diagnoses they have received and believe are connected to their military service, and the obstacles they and other K2 veterans have had obtaining recognition and care from the VA.¹

¹ Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: Oversight Committee Seeks Information Related to Hazardous Conditions at Uzbekistan Air Base* (Jan. 14, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/oversight-committee-seeks-information-related-to-hazardous-conditions-at>); Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: Oversight Subcommittee Examined Hazardous Exposures and Health Conditions at Overseas Military Base* (Feb. 28, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/oversight-subcommittee-examined-hazardous-exposures-and-health-conditions-at>).

On July 9, 2020, the Subcommittee released previously classified operational health risk assessments of K2 produced by the U.S. military in 2001, 2002, and 2004. These documents show that servicemembers deployed to K2 were exposed to multiple harmful toxins, chemicals, and other environmental hazards during their deployments.²

II. WITNESSES

Dr. Patricia R. Hastings

Chief Consultant, Post Deployment Health Services
Department of Veterans Affairs

Dr. David J. Smith

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Readiness
Policy and Oversight
Department of Defense

Additional Witnesses TBC

Staff contacts: Dan Rebnord and Matthew Patane at (202) 225-5051.

² Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: National Security Subcommittee Releases Newly Declassified Documents Revealing How Servicemembers Were Exposed to Multiple Toxic Hazards on Karshi-Khanabad Airbase* (Jul. 9, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/national-security-subcommittee-releases-newly-declassified-documents-revealing>).