

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
14TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

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CHAIRMAN
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COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

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COURTS AND COMPETITION POLICY

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2214

December 23, 2010

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2426 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2214
PHONE: 202-225-5126
FAX: 202-225-0072

DETROIT OFFICE:
669 FEDERAL BUILDING
231 WEST LAFAYETTE
DETROIT, MI 48226
PHONE: 313-961-5670
FAX: 313-226-2085

TRENTON OFFICE:
2615 W. JEFFERSON AVENUE
TRENTON, MI 48183
PHONE: 734-675-4084
FAX: 734-285-5443

E-MAIL AND WWW:
JOHN.CONYERS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV
HTTP://WWW.CONYERS.HOUSE.GOV

Dear President Obama:

We write today to respectfully request that General David Petraeus be made available to testify before the Members of the House of Representatives on your administration's December Strategy Review and the status of conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. We believe that the enormous cost and importance of our war policy in Afghanistan warrants vigorous constitutionally-mandated congressional oversight as early as possible next year.

We believe that this bipartisan call for oversight is warranted by the uncertain progress being made securing the country, minimizing American casualties, combating corruption, expanding governing capacity, promoting political reconciliation, addressing links between the insurgency and Pakistan, limiting the Taliban's ability to project violence, and furthering other important components of our Afghanistan-Pakistan policy. The limited analysis provided in your December Strategy Review, although important, cannot replace in-depth and substantive congressional hearings and oversight.

Many Members are also concerned about the incredible costs associated with the current policy. The War in Afghanistan is costing the American taxpayer \$2 billion per week and will total \$125 billion this year alone. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted this past August that "the most significant threat to our national security is our debt." We need direct access to our lead commander on the ground in order to fully consider the costs and benefits of a policy that is significantly contributing to our \$1.5 trillion deficit and \$15 trillion debt.

The American people deserve transparent oversight and a robust and comprehensive review of our Afghanistan policy by both the Administration and the new Congress next year. We urge you to make General Petraeus available to testify early next year so that we can properly and appropriately fulfill our constitutional duties.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin

Richard Shea

Barbara Lee

Paul Tonko

Shelley Berkley

Bob Filner

John Garamendi
