

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our strong support for your recent decision to bring our troops home from Iraq by year's end. We were relieved to learn that our service men and women will be home from Iraq for the holidays.

The ongoing war in Afghanistan, by contrast, threatens to stretch our commitment into another decade. In August you announced the gradual removal of the "surge" troops, and yet over 70,000 troops will remain in Afghanistan at this time next year. This is unsustainable and counterproductive. There is unanimous agreement that the future of Afghanistan depends on Afghans and their regional allies implementing a political solution. There is simply no military solution to the current challenges in Afghanistan and maintaining an American military presence only delays the inevitable political process while putting our brave men and women in uniform in harms' way.

Furthermore, it is crucial that Congress plays its proper Constitutional role in any decision to leave U.S. troops in a potential combat zone. While the United States is currently scheduled to hand over full control over security and remove all combat troops by the end of 2014, a new agreement could result in an indefinite military commitment and significant financial costs, all without further Congressional approval. Dating back to 2009, eleven acts authorizing and funding troop presence in Afghanistan have included a provision specifically prohibiting the establishment of permanent bases in Afghanistan. Any agreement that obliges the U.S. to a security commitment in Afghanistan must be bound by the Constitution, and be specifically authorized by an Act of Congress, or with the advice and consent of the Senate.

While reports indicate that President Karzai plans on requiring any future strategic partnership agreement with the U.S. to be approved by the Afghan Parliament, a traditional tribal gathering, or both, there is no plan to have similar Congressional input. It is unconscionable that America could make new, lasting military commitments of tens of thousands of soldiers and hundreds of billions of dollars without express approval from Congress.

Rebuilding America must remain our top priority, and this should be reflected in our budgetary priorities. We need to end the wars and invest the savings in job creation for our future.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones

WALTER B. JONES
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO
Member of Congress

Rush Holt

RUSH D. HOLT
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke

YVETTE D. CLARKE
Member of Congress

Michael Honda

MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.

JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

DANNY K. DAVIS
Member of Congress

Timothy V. Johnson

TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva

RAUL GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren

ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier

JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress

Bob Filner

BOB FILNER
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott

JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings

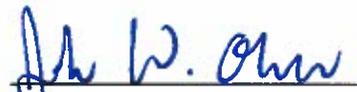
ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore

GWEN MOORE
Member of Congress


FERROL NADLER
Member of Congress


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Member of Congress

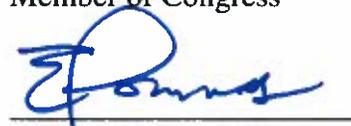

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Member of Congress

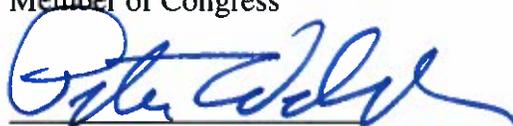

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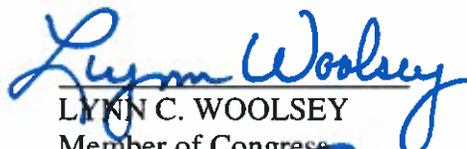

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Member of Congress

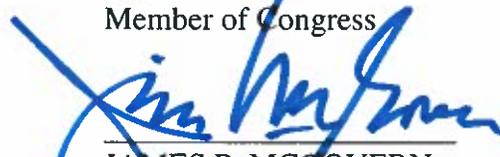

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TAMMY BALDWIN
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