

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you consider the latest assessment of U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan by General Stanley A. McChrystal, we urge you to reject any recommendation to increase the number of combat troops there, particularly in the absence of a well-defined military exit strategy.

We have enormous confidence in the ability of the U.S. military, but we question the effectiveness of committing our troops to a prolonged counterinsurgency war that could last ten years or more, involve hundreds of thousands of troops, and impose huge financial costs on taxpayers already saddled with trillions of dollars of government debt.

According to General Charles Krulak (retired), the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, the current strategy of protecting the people of Afghanistan with U.S. forces would require an escalation of several hundred thousand additional troops. He warns that our military has already been overburdened: "Not only are our troops being run ragged but, equally important and totally off most people's radar screens, our equipment is being run ragged." It is unlikely that our NATO allies will be able to sustain the political support necessary for continuing such a mission placing even more of a burden on American forces and the American people.

2009 is already the deadliest year for U.S. forces since the war began eight years ago. Fifty-one of the seven hundred and thirty-eight U.S. soldiers who have lost their lives in Afghanistan were killed last month alone.

The national Afghanistan election that U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry hoped would lead to a "renewal of trust of the Afghan people for their government" was a disaster and will almost certainly have the opposite effect. The official Electoral Complaints Commission in Afghanistan has announced that it has found "clear and convincing evidence of fraud." A government already mired in allegations of widespread fraud and incompetence is now facing serious charges and compelling evidence that it has attempted to steal the national election.

A February 2009 ABC/BBC/ARD poll found that only 18 percent of Afghans support increasing the number of U.S. troops in their country. This should come as no surprise. Historically, Afghans have always forcefully resisted the presence of foreign military forces, be they British, Soviet or American. The presence of our forces strengthens the hand of Taliban

recruiters. Indeed, an independent analysis early this year by the Carnegie Institute concluded that the presence of foreign troops is probably the single most important factor in the resurgence of the Taliban.

We support your administration's declared goals of defeating Al Qaeda and reducing the global terrorist threat. But, we believe that adding even more U.S. troops to the military escalation that your administration ordered in March would be counterproductive. We urge you to consider and pursue the full range of alternative options including applying the lessons of the Cold War where we isolate and contain those who pose a threat to our national security.

Mr. President, the last thing that our nation needs as it struggles with the pain of a severe economic crisis and a mountain of debt is another military quagmire. We believe that this is why recent polls consistently show that a majority of Americans are opposed to a military escalation in Afghanistan. We urge you to reject any recommendation for a further escalation of U.S. military forces there.

Sincerely,

James Lee Dowd

Walter B. Jones

Neil Abercrombie

Ed Whitfield

Jim McInerney

Ron Paul

Bruce L. Braley

Tim J. Wirth

Pete Stark

Ch. Hare

Ally Doughty

Ben Ray Lujan (NM)

Yvette D. Conko

Theresa J. Conko

John Lewis

Peter Welch

C. S. Malone

Edmund Hood

Liane F. Watson

John Long

Steve Cohen

John Long

Robert E. Edwards

Yvonne P. Edwards

Edmund Hood

Jan Schalm

Daniel B. Murphy

Steve Fagen

Michael E. Caproni

Raul M. Dujalwa

Kent Schuster

Mike Quigg

John W. Oliver

Sam Lane

Bob Felner

Ed Pastor

Bartram Lee

Dennis J. Kuminich

Tammy Baldwin

Joe E. Swann

Lynn Woolsey

Jimmy H. Costello

Earl Blumstein

Ruth Holt

Allen Grayson (FC-8)

Ann V. Cutler

Maureen Dandery

Chuck

Alma Waters

Tracy K. Ariano

Mike Luff

Jared Palm

Pat Pelz

~~Partek MD6~~

Dana Rohmatan

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Mekah Mekah

Journal Naellu

List of Signatures on Bipartisan Letter to President Obama Urging the Rejection to an Increase in Number of U.S. Combat Troops in Afghanistan:

James P. McGovern

Walter Jones

Ron Paul

Ed Whitfield

Neil Abercrombie

Jim McDermott

Pete Stark

Bruce Braley

Phil Hare

Raúl Grijalva

Lynn Woolsey

Lloyd Doggett

Bob Filner

John Olver

José Serrano

Barbara Lee

Jerry Costello

Ben Ray Lujan

Alan Grayson

Peter Welch

Kurt Schrader

Tammy Baldwin

Ed Pastor

Yvette Clarke

Sheila Jackson Lee

John Lewis

Carolyn B. Maloney

Richard Neal

Diane Watson

John Conyers, Jr.

Dennis Kucinich

Tim Johnson (IL)

Steve Cohen

Keith Ellison

Donna Edwards

Laura Richardson

Michael Honda

Jan Schakowsky

Daniel Maffei

Steve Kagen

Michael Capuano

Sam Farr

Chellie Pingree

Luis Gutiérrez

Maurice Hinchey

Maxine Waters

Mazie Hirono

Jared Polis

Roscoe Bartlett

John J. Duncan, Jr.

Dana Rohrabacher

Mike Michaud

Earl Blumenauer

Rush Holt

Mike Quigley

Peter DeFazio

Jerrold Nadler