

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 19, 2009

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

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you to express our deep concern over the state of your Afghanistan policy. For over two months you have been engaged in a strategy review that has left the country, our military, and allies uncertain about your commitment to the war in Afghanistan and unsure about your will to do what it is necessary to win this conflict. Worse, we fear this process has emboldened our enemies.

We believe that it is long overdue for our military to be in the execution stage of the strategy instead of the evaluation phase. While no one disputes that a Commander-in-Chief should deliberate before making decisions, particularly in matters involving life and death, we believe this review is having a detrimental impact on our efforts in Afghanistan. While 68,000 U.S. forces are fighting on the battlefield, your strategy review in Washington has returned the country to the policy drift that undermined our efforts in Afghanistan for much of the war. Members who have just returned from visiting theater report that our military believes they can succeed, but are unsure whether Washington will give them the opportunity.

Mr. President, only you can put this conflict back on a path toward success in our mission to deny al-Qaeda and the Taliban safe haven in Afghanistan to plan and execute attacks on Americans. Our military forces want to know that their mission has the attention and support of the Commander-in-Chief. While you rightly speak of military sacrifice, we seldom hear you speak of success. We encourage you to make a spirited defense of your strategy. Absent your leadership and a public determination to win in Afghanistan we simply cannot succeed.

Our collective view is that General McChrystal's assessment and accompanying request for forces offer the best means to successfully implement your March 2009 strategy, which called for "[e]xecuting and resourcing an integrated civilian-military counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan." We encourage you to adopt General McChrystal's recommendation, and to provide him with the forces that will give us the highest chance for success with the lowest risk to the safety and security of our forces.

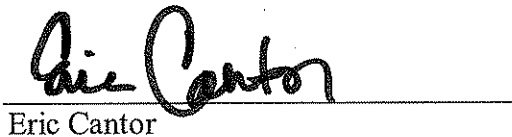
We respect your prerogative as Commander-in-Chief to validate that the assumptions underlying your strategy still apply in the current environment. However, we encourage you to heed General McChrystal's assessment that time is critical and failure to gain the initiative in the short term "risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible." We remind you that these words were written over two months ago.

Mr. President now is the time where the country needs your leadership. While our men and women in uniform are faithfully executing your mission in Afghanistan, they long for your voice to lead and guide the debate on the war here at home. Our military is the best fighting force in the world. Yet, it is the American will to win – not precision guided munitions – which is their most important weapon. As Commander-in-Chief you are responsible for ensuring this critical weapon is delivered.

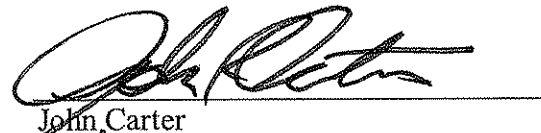
It is our desire to standby you and to support a strategy that is resourced to win decisively. We urge you choose this course of action.

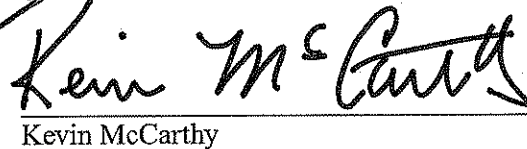
Sincerely,

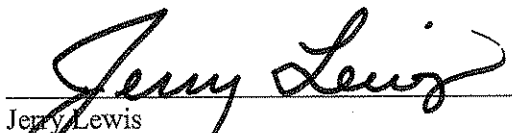
  
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon

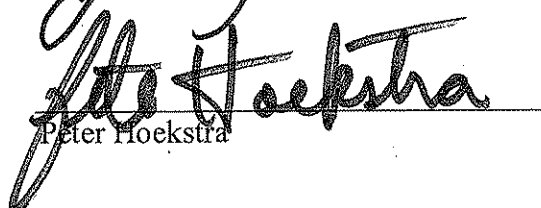
  
Eric Cantor

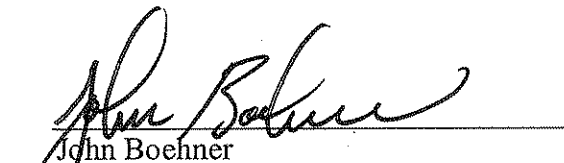
  
Thaddeus McCotter


  
John Carter

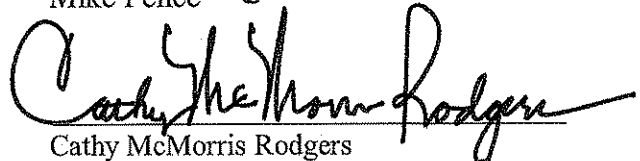
  
Kevin McCarthy

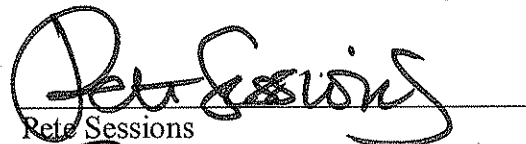
  
Jerry Lewis

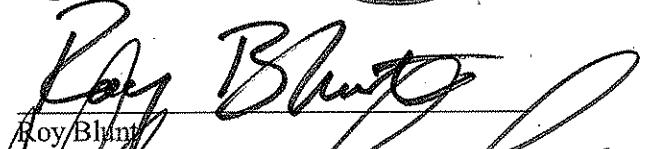
  
Peter Hoekstra

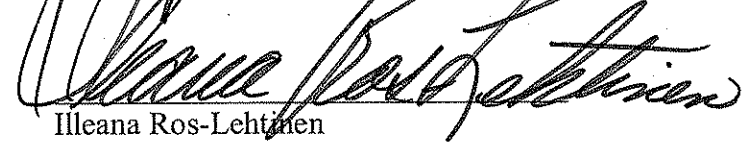
  
John Boehner

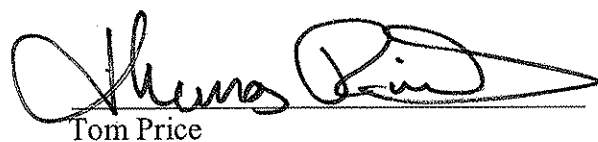
  
Mike Pence

  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers

  
Pete Sessions

  
Roy Blunt

  
Illeana Ros-Lehtinen

  
Tom Price