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 is 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

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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,

Walter B. Jones

Neil Abercrombie

Ed Whitfield

Jim McDermott

Ron Paul

Bruce L. Braley

Pete Stark

Phil Hare

Lloyd Doggett

Ben Ray Luján (NM)

Yvette D. Clarke

John Lewis

Peter Welch

C S Malony

Adrian Smith

Diane E. Watson

John Conyers

Steve Cohen

Donald F. Edwards

Yvonne Pilchak

Michael A. Hoad

Jan Schakowsky

Daniel B. Moffitt

Steve Kagen MD

Michael E. Capuano

Raúl M. Grijalva

Curt Schrader

Mike Quigley

John W. Olver

Sam Farr

Bob Filner

Ed Pastor

Barbara Lee

Dennis J. Kucinich

Tammy Baldwin

Joe E. Serrano

Lynn Woolsey

Jerry F. Costello

Earl Blumenauer

Rush Holt

Alan Grayson (FC-8)

Luis V. Gutierrez

Maxine Waters

Luzzie K Sirano

Mike Quigley

Jared Polis

Peter DeFazio

[illegible] MD6 Joel J Duncan Jr.

Dana Rohrabacher Michael Michael

Jerrold Nadler

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 Lújan
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 Gutíerrez
Maurice Hinchey
Maxine Waters
Mazie Hirono
Jared Polis
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John J. Duncan, Jr.
Dana Rohrabacher
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Earl Blumenauer
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Peter DeFazio
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