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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 25, 2011

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

HEINRICH.HOUSE.GOV

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

Dear Mr. President,

I write to express my strong support for beginning the drawdown of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan in July 2011. We have a responsibility to leave Afghanistan in a responsible way, and I believe it is time to begin this process.

Since your decision in December 2009 to increase American forces in Afghanistan, our brave men and women in uniform, and many American civilians, have pursued a comprehensive approach that has helped disrupt the insurgency, build the Afghan National Security Forces, and protect the Afghan people.

The gains achieved over the past year are notable, and having been among the first Members of Congress in May 2010 to visit Kandahar City— the birthplace of the Taliban movement— I have seen firsthand that progress is being made.

However, challenges remain that no amount of American blood or treasure will completely solve. Indeed, we must be realistic about what is achievable and what is not. I remain deeply concerned about Afghan governance since President Karzai continues to underperform and corruption is widespread. Meanwhile, Pakistan remains reluctant to take aggressive action against extremist groups operating within its own borders. I fear the inability and unwillingness of these two partners are elements that even the heroic service of our troops and diplomats cannot overcome.

As in Iraq, drawdown will be a complex process, and during that time I will continue to support our nation's efforts to ensure South Asia does not become a safe haven for violent extremism. But I believe we should follow through on the pledge we made to the American people to begin the drawdown of U.S. forces from Afghanistan this summer. I also request that the reduction of forces not be limited to support forces such as logistics specialists but also include combat troops.

We have spent over \$450 billion in Afghanistan since the start of this war. Our youngest soldiers now serving in some of the most dangerous places on earth were just eight years old when our nation was attacked on September 11, 2001. It is time we start bringing our troops home.

Thank you for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Heinrich".

MARTIN HEINRICH

Member of Congress