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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

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November 11, 2009

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

Dear President Obama:

We write to you as members of the Senate on Veteran's Day as we are all focused on the sacrifices the men and women of our armed forces have made over the last eight years and united in honoring the service of all our veterans in the defense of our country.

It has been two months since you were given General Stanley McChrystal's assessment of our success in achieving the national security objectives in Afghanistan you outlined so boldly and correctly in March. In his report, General McChrystal described our fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban as a situation that is deteriorating, saying that if the Taliban's momentum is not reversed in the coming 12 months, defeating the insurgency may no longer be possible. "Time matters; we must act now to reverse the negative trends and demonstrate progress."

We must succeed in Afghanistan for many reasons, but one stands above all: the world walked away from Afghanistan once, and it descended into a cauldron of violence, hatred and human rights atrocities that served as the base for the worst terrorist attack in history against our homeland. We cannot let that happen again, and we cannot let the Taliban and its al Qaeda allies conquer Afghanistan once more. Failure of this kind would also destabilize the entire strategically vital region, including nuclear-armed Pakistan.

We supported your call for a counterinsurgency plan in March, and we did so again when you deployed General McChrystal to lead the command in Kabul. We agree with General McChrystal's assessment of the security situation as "deteriorating" and that our civilian and military leaders urgently need more resources, including more combat troops, to turn the tide toward success.

On this Veteran's Day, young Americans are fighting in Afghanistan in what General McChrystal describes as a situation headed toward defeat unless we act while we still have the opportunity to turn the tide and regain the initiative. We understand that sending men and women into harm's way is the most difficult decision that a commander-in-chief must make. However, over 68,000 Americans are already serving in harm's way in Afghanistan, and the sooner we can provide the reinforcements and resources they need, the safer and more successful they will be.

Success in Afghanistan will emerge, as it did in Iraq, when local leaders and citizens are more and more able to take responsibility for governing and securing their own sovereign country without substantial international assistance. This won't be perfect or easy, but it will allow America's fighting men and women to leave Afghanistan with honor, and it will enable Afghans to build a better, more peaceful future. That is our goal, and we must stay in the fight until it is won. So we urge you to move now to fully support General McChrystal's call for additional resources and troops.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator



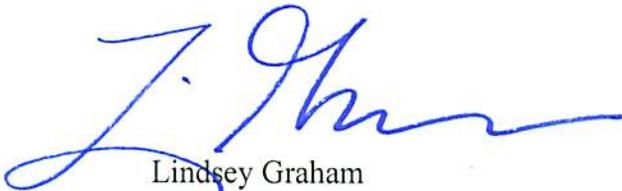
James Inhofe
United States Senator



Jeff Sessions
United States Senator



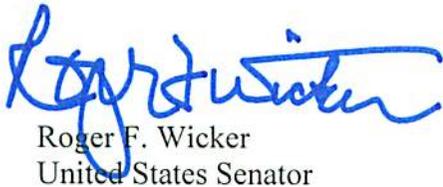
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