

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

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our support for the Administration's announcement on February 1st that the United States will complete combat operations in Afghanistan by the end of next year.

From information reported in the media, the U.S. intends to transition from major combat operations in Afghanistan to a "training, advice and assist role" by the middle-to-latter part of 2013. We applaud this announcement by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to accelerate the transition away from combat operations, and it provides assurance that the timeframe outlined in your 2009 speech at West Point will be carried out. As you know, many of us support an even more rapid withdrawal of all our troops from Afghanistan.

The majority of Americans want a safe and orderly military withdrawal from Afghanistan as quickly as possible, as recent public opinion polls indicate. The desire by the American people for an accelerated transition in Afghanistan was reflected in votes taken in Congress last year, in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate during their respective debates on amendments offered by Representatives McGovern and Jones and by Senator Merkley to the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act. These votes show there is strong bipartisan political support to take bold steps regarding U.S. policy in Afghanistan.

The past 10 years have cost America dearly in the blood and sacrifice of our military servicemen and women and their families, and in our nation's fiscal health and security. The United States intervened in Afghanistan to destroy al Qaeda's safe haven, remove the Taliban government that sheltered al Qaeda, and pursue those who planned the September 11th attacks on the United States; those objectives have largely been met and no longer require a large presence of combat troops in Afghanistan. While questions remain about the details of the announced transition – when and how quickly U.S. troops will be coming home, the number and purpose of troops that might remain in Afghanistan and for how long a period, the costs and the savings of accelerating the completion of combat operations – the February 1st announcement clearly signals that now is the moment to initiate the transition, end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home.

Sincerely, Members of Congress

As of February 10, there are 33 signers:

Justin Amash (MI)  
Bruce Braley (IA)  
Lois Capps (CA)  
Judy Chu (CA)  
Steve Cohen (TN)  
John Conyers, Jr. (MI)  
Jimmy Duncan, Jr. (TN)  
Keith Ellison (MN)  
Sam Farr (CA)  
Bob Filner (CA)  
Barney Frank (MA)  
John Garamendi (CA)  
Charlie Gonzalez (TX)  
Raul Grijalva (AZ)  
Janice Hahn (CA)  
Martin Heinrich (NM)  
Mike Honda (CA)  
Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL)  
Walter Jones (NC)  
Barbara Lee (CA)  
John Lewis (GA)  
Ben Ray Luján (NM)  
Carolyn Maloney (NY)  
Jim McGovern (MA)  
Gwen Moore (WI)  
Gary Peters (MI)  
Chellie Pingree (ME)  
Jan Schakowsky (IL)  
Jackie Speier (CA)  
Pete Stark (CA)  
Ed Towns (NY)  
Henry Waxman (CA)  
Lynn Woolsey (CA)