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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

June 16, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my deep concern about the situation in Afghanistan, and the current uncertainty regarding the U.S. commitment to maintain forces sufficient to secure our national security interests in the region. It is my sincere hope that you will not delay this critical decision further, and will accord our commanders' recommendations a response in advance of the July 8 NATO Warsaw Summit.

Warsaw represents the best opportunity to generate the essential continued support of each of our allies in this endeavor. You can foster this by delivering a clear message about U.S. leadership and commitment in the effort to secure a stable and democratic Afghanistan. Given the full agenda at the summit --dealing with a dynamic range of sustained threats on NATO's periphery-- it is important to counter any misgivings about our ability or commitment to confront terrorists that threaten the United States.

Following my visit to Kabul earlier this year, I am convinced that we have a solid opening with the current Afghan government to secure important gains and continue to achieve our national security priorities in the region. Beyond our own commanders' planning cycles and the restrictions associated with logistics trains, our allies have often complained that they are unable to plan for effective cooperation without U.S. leadership and timely decisions.

According to our commanders, retaining our current military footprint would provide political space while also affording the United States continued access to counter global terror networks operating in the region. It is important to reinforce our commitment in a timely way with Afghanistan and its partners. I hope your response to their recommendation will sustain current force levels going forward and will be delivered well ahead of the Warsaw Summit.

Please let me know your views on these matters at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Corker
Chairman