

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

January 11, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President,

As your Administration reviews a range of options that will determine our troop strength in Afghanistan, I respectfully urge you to adopt a plan that minimizes our military footprint. Our mission should be significantly narrowed to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a haven for international terrorists. Further, I urge you to bring our troops home as quickly as possible so that we can focus our resources on rebuilding America, not Afghanistan.

***Our troops have accomplished their mission:*** Osama bin Laden is dead, extremist networks in Afghanistan have been disrupted so that they are no longer a credible international threat and the Afghan Security Forces have received training and equipment for nearly a decade.

Americans have sacrificed their lives and treasure to build up the Afghan Security Forces. Yet nearly a decade into this mission, we still face many of the same challenges that the Soviets did building a similar force. According to a recent Rand report sponsored by the U.S. Army, the Soviet goal was an Afghan force of 315,000, but they fell short because the Afghan military was plagued with corruption, illiteracy and desertion. Our stated goal is to build the Afghan security forces to 352,000; and after almost 10 years of building this force, we also face corruption, illiteracy and desertion.

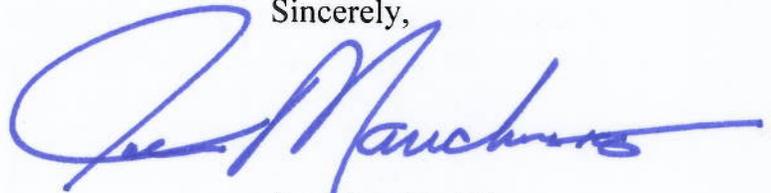
It is now time to let Afghanistan determine its own future. Diplomats can now maintain America's relationship with Afghanistan, with support from a focused counter-terror force.

I understand your decision is not an easy one; 2,044 Americans have died in Afghanistan, including 15 brave West Virginians. Countless others service members and their families have been forever changed by war. Narrowing our mission does not mean they sacrificed in vain; it means that our nation has given

enough. The nation is proud of our military, and will support our troops and their families who have carried this heavy burden.

Our troops have accomplished their mission and it is time to bring them home from America's longest war. I hope you consider my views as you weigh your decision as commander-in-chief in the months ahead. It is time to rebuild America, not Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator