

## Murphy to Obama: Begin Withdrawal from Afghanistan by July

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the nation approaches the ten year anniversary later this year of our engagement in the war in Afghanistan, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) is putting pressure on President Obama to stand by his plan to begin to withdraw troops by July. Murphy joined Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-9) and many of his colleagues in sending the letter, as Congress learned more about conditions on the ground from Gen. David H. Petraeus at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week.

“I cannot support an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan. After nearly a decade of war, we’ve lost too many men and women and spent too much taxpayer money to let this go on. I support President Obama’s plan to begin to bring a significant number of troops home by July, and if that doesn’t happen, I will do everything I can to pressure the White House to stand by their commitment,” said Murphy.

At last week’s hearing, Petraeus spoke about NATO and U.S. efforts to halt the Taliban’s momentum in much of the country, but cautioned that a spring offensive by the Taliban could pose significant challenges. At a time of severe economic distress, the war in Afghanistan is costing the United States more than \$100 billion per year, excluding the long-term costs of care for returning military service members. At the same time, military and intelligence officials agree that Al Qaeda’s presence in Afghanistan is diminished and that there will not be a military solution to resolve the current situation.

Murphy believes that a significant redeployment of U.S. troops from Afghanistan beginning in July 2011 will send a clear signal that the United States does not seek a permanent presence in Afghanistan. This transition will provide incentive for internal stakeholders to improve upon the political status quo, reduce corruption, and take meaningful steps toward the establishment of an effective, trustworthy, and inclusive governance structure.

“Depleted from multiple deployments to the war zone over the last ten years, our soldiers have gone above the call of duty. The time has come for the Afghans to take control of their country and for our brave men and women in uniform to come home,” said Murphy.

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