

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price issued the following statement today in response to President Obama's speech outlining his revised strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan:

"Tonight, President Obama delivered what the American people have been waiting for: a clear and compelling explanation of our goals in Afghanistan and the strategy we will pursue in order to achieve them. I commend the President for taking the time he needed to consult widely and weigh his choices carefully. Decisions of this magnitude should not be taken lightly, and anybody who listened to the President's words can be confident that the strategy he outlined reflects his reasoned judgment about the best way forward and his profound concern for the wellbeing of our men and women in uniform.

As the President made clear, our overriding objective in this conflict is to defeat and deny safe haven to those who perpetrated the worst terrorist attack in our nation's history. But as he also recognized, military force alone will not achieve this goal. Stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan depends ultimately on effective governance, political reconciliation, social and economic development, and regional cooperation.

The United States cannot and should not bear full responsibility for these goals, but we can work with our allies to provide the stability and support needed for Afghans and Pakistanis to take ownership of them. The President's strategy calls for a short-term troop increase to accelerate this transition, but it also sets a clear goal of beginning to draw down combat forces within 18 months. Our commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan is enduring, but our military presence must not be.

Over the coming weeks, Congress will hear from Gen. McChrystal, Secretary Clinton, and other senior officials about the details of the President's strategy. Serious questions remain unanswered, particularly regarding the intentions and capabilities of the Afghan government, but we owe it to the country to give the President's decision the same level of careful scrutiny and reasoned debate that he showed in making it. I look forward to participating actively in these discussions."

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