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Collection Code: **CTRACK**

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Document Date: **September 27, 2011**

Correspondent: **MR. KARL SCHMID**

Subject/Description: **THANK YOU FOR WRITING ME. EVERY DAY, WE ARE
HUMBLED BY THE LEGACY OF OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN
UNIFORM WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES FOR OUR
COUNTRY.**

September 27, 2011

Mr. Karl F. Schmid

P6/b(6)

Dear Karl:

Thank you for writing me. Every day, we are humbled by the legacy of our men and women in uniform who sacrificed their lives for our country.

I have heard from many families and friends of our fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who are concerned about both ongoing and former conflicts. They have made invaluable contributions to honoring our fallen heroes, and I take very seriously their views and concerns. Thank you for sharing your perspective with me.

The September 11 attacks were planned in Afghanistan and executed by al-Qa'ida, which has found sanctuary in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. That is why, in one of the most difficult decisions I have made as President, I increased the number of American troops fighting in Afghanistan. Our objectives in Afghanistan have been to deny al-Qa'ida a safe haven, to reverse the Taliban's momentum, and to strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so they can take responsibility for their future. To achieve this, our strategy has required a military effort to create the conditions for a transition, civilian assistance that builds the capacity of the Afghan government while holding it accountable, and an effective partnership with Pakistan to root out al-Qa'ida safe havens along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. I asked that our commitment be joined by contributions from our allies, and they have responded with additional troops and resources.

Thanks to our extraordinary men and women in uniform, our civilian personnel, and our coalition partners, we are meeting our goals. As a result, we will be able to bring home 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011, and a total of 33,000 by the summer of 2012. Our troops will continue to return at a steady pace as the Afghan government takes on greater responsibility for its country's security, a process that will be completed by 2014.

My Administration is working every day to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida and its extremist affiliates in Afghanistan and beyond. Shortly after taking office, I directed the

Central Intelligence Agency to make the capture or killing of Osama bin Laden, al-Qa'ida's leader, a top priority. On May 1, 2011, we achieved this mission, bringing to justice a terrorist responsible for the murder of thousands of men, women, and children in the United States and around the world. Bin Laden's death does not mark the end of our efforts against al-Qa'ida, and we will remain vigilant at home and abroad. We are working closely with key international partners to put relentless pressure on al-Qa'ida and its associated forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as in countries like Yemen and beyond. We will not stop until we disrupt, dismantle, and defeat these terrorist networks.

To protect our country, we are also investing in our homeland security, improving and better coordinating our intelligence, working with our allies and partners to secure loose nuclear materials from terrorists, using diplomacy to strengthen our alliances, and drawing on the strength of our values. For more information on my Administration's strategies in Afghanistan and around the world, please visit: www.WhiteHouse.gov/Issues/Foreign-Policy.

As we work to secure a safer, freer world, I appreciate your commitment to addressing the pressing issues we face at home and abroad. Our brave service members and their families are always in my thoughts and prayers. On behalf of a grateful Nation, thank you for your service and sacrifice.

POTUS AP

BO / EO / FR / MC / rm

Afghanistan / Goldstar Defense Views Unconfirmed

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA (A)

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- SL

RETURNED TO PRESIDENTIAL
CORRESPONDENCE

OCT 11 2011

Karl F. Schmid, PE; LEED AP

P6/b(6)

July 9, 2011

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

Re: Afghanistan

Dear Mr. President:

In his book *Obama's Wars*, Bob Woodward, reports that you asked members of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy review "Is there anybody who thinks we ought to leave Afghanistan," and everyone in the room was quiet. Clearly you and your civilian advisors have been co-opted by the military. As a result American and other NATO nations' soldiers are dying, Afghanistani people are dying, our nation's wealth is being frittered away, our armed forces are being worn down, and, most importantly of all by continuing the war in Afghanistan we are destroying the moral fiber that has made our nation great; we are as a nation selling our soul to the devil. Furthermore, despite all the promises of General Patraeus and the confident words written in FM 3-24, we will not win, indeed we cannot win for the following reasons:

- Speaking from memory, the following insurgencies and counter-insurgencies come to mind: our Revolution, the Philippines, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and several South American revolutions. In each case the winning side had a charismatic leader. Mr. Karzai is not a charismatic leader; he is a crook, plain and simple; everyone knows it. It is hard, indeed impossible, to imagine the Afghanistani people fighting to the death for him. It is beyond my comprehension why we continue to support him with our lives and our fortune.
- While our support for Mr. Karzai is both foolish and immoral, our support for Pakistan transcends all bounds of common sense and morality. We are knowingly giving money and arms to people who flaunt our moral code, use the money we give them to produce nuclear weapons, and provide intelligence and support to al Qaeda and the Taliban all the while thumbing their noses at us. Surely the reason you did not include Pakistan in the raid on bin Laden was that bin Laden would have been (with 100 percent assurance) alerted. Support of an untrustworthy ally was how it was in Vietnam and you know how that ended. It is not possible to win a war when the enemy is alerted to every aggressive move.

The Pakistanis want to keep the Afghan war going because it supports them in their efforts against India and makes them rich. As with our support for Mr. Karzai, it is beyond my comprehension why we continue to support Pakistan with our lives and our fortune, as we cannot win with them as our ally. Continuing this support goes beyond stupidity; it is immoral to do so.

- Take a look at any newspaper photo that shows both a US soldier and an Afghan. You will see a US soldier wearing all the finest military gear: night vision goggles, hi-tech weapon, helmet, etc. etc. He/she will be well fed. You will also see an Afghan in old clothes, possibly barefoot, and if he is carrying

weapon it will probably be an old AK-47; no helmet, no goggles, no flak jacket, nada. Now, General Patraeus can tell us his soldiers are living with the people, but they are not. Our soldiers are different, as if they are from another planet. And everyone there knows that they will leave soon. How can our soldiers be anything but resented? The Afghans have a long and proud tradition of preserving their culture and keeping foreigners out. They may tolerate us as long as we are pumping money into their country, but make no mistake they want us out. So why don't we leave?

- While the Afghans don't want us, I'm not sure the same can be said about the Taliban. The Taliban was in power after the Russians left. Governments require the support of their people to remain in power, so we should not assume that because they were oppressive (in our eyes) they were not wanted by a significant number of people. We ran them out and placed Mr. Karzai in office, so in one sense we overthrew the legitimate government and we are the insurgents. However you see it, the Taliban could not exist without at least a modicum of support from the people. Our supply lines are from the back to the fighting soldiers while the Taliban's is directly from the people. Furthermore, because it was the government when we arrived it undoubtedly has a shadow government in every nook and cranny of Afghanistan, undercutting the Karzai regime and ready to take over when the opportunity presents itself.

We supported a corrupt and unpopular government in Vietnam. There the choice presented to the people was not for a perfect government or the VC, but for the current government or the VC; the people selected the VC. The situation is similar in Afghanistan. The Taliban surely are not perfect, but the choices are Mr. Karzai and his family of corrupt thugs or the Taliban. As you well know, there is always hope that the outsider will improve things while there is no hope that Mr. Karzai will change. Putting yourself in the skin of an Afghan, Whom would you support?

In Vietnam, the people rounded the edges of a hard core Communist regime and it is now a favorite vacation spot. I and I suspect a sizeable number of Afghans are predicting the same will happen with the Taliban. This is not an environment for victory.

- It is clear that troop morale is low. I base this on newspaper reports and the many questions about going home that were made to Vice President Biden on his recent visit to Afghanistan. And also on the suicide rate of soldiers who are on orders to return to Afghanistan. I am not a psychologist but would venture that the suicide rate is a function of troops believing as I do that we won't win and what we are doing is immoral.

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I remember leaving on my third tour to Southeast Asia [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One was ok, a second not so ok, but when I left on my third tour one of my sons hid, he just couldn't say goodbye again. My wife suffered greatly, having had to deal with the distaff side of the war: she had a baby, her best friend's husband was killed, our best man was killed and so too numerous colleagues. We are now married for 49 years and I am still hearing about how difficult it was to have a child on her own, to explain to the kids why daddy was away, and simply to deal with three young children on her own. I assure you that as our soldiers and their families add tours their zeal for supporting this war lessens. This is another reason we won't win.

- I could go on, but you have heard it all. The bottom line is, we really can't win, sir, we really can't. If you are continuing this war because it is the honorable thing to do or to save face, fuhgedaboutit. We are losing our wealth and our soul. Time is on the side of the Taliban. The Russians put Afghanistan and we Vietnam behind us in no time at all. The same will be true for Afghanistan and us. Get out.

So, if we can't win, what should we do, roll over and die? No. My suggestions are these:

- Get control of the Pentagon. As Colon Powell told you (as reported in Woodward's book), you are the president. The next time a general officer drags his feet following a request or disobeys an order from you, fire him. You are the CIC! We have too many generals anyway.
- Leave Afghanistan, but continue with Special Operations against al Qaeda; as best I can discern we are having great success destroying al Qaeda's and the Taliban's top leadership. Do not worry about what Pakistan and Afghanistan think. Operate in their territories. What will they do about it but scream? They, especially Pakistan, are our enemy, not our ally and you should treat them as such; you can't buy love. They are making a fool of us. Do not fear Pakistan because they have nuclear weapons. We have more. Simply lay it on the line: make one wrong move and you are through. We stood up to the Soviets when it was far stronger than Pakistan; mutual deterrence worked.
- Launch a psychological operations campaign aimed at turning the people against the Taliban, especially its oppression against women, and al Qaeda. Instead of wailing and mashing our teeth over every suicide bomber, point out the evilness of these people. I would direct a campaign toward women: ala, "don't raise your children to be suicide bombers," and another that points out that women around the world have rights and can aspire to greatness and so should Afghan women. Stir the pot.
- Use some of the money that you save from leaving Afghanistan on police agencies that search out terrorist cells in the USA, Europe, and wherever they are suspected and use some to pay down our debt that an issue that is giving you great concern. Our greatest successes have been outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan: Hamburg, London, New York City, etc., etc. Why are we beating ourselves up in the harsh environment of Afghanistan?

Respectfully yours,



Karl F. Schmid

CC:

Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Diane Feinstein
Representative Xavier Becerra