



# Truman National Security Project

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Progressive Security Groups Analyze and Show Support for New Afghanistan Strategy**

(Washington, DC) In a conference call on December 2, six leading progressive organizations came together to offer support and commentary regarding President Obama's newly announced Afghanistan strategy. Representatives from the Truman National Security Project, the Center for American Progress, the Progressive Policy Institute, the National Security Network, Third Way, and the New Strategic Security Initiative spoke on the call, offering thoughts and answering questions.

Points highlighted in the call included:

- The Obama administration's review produced a smarter, stronger strategy that stated clear objectives and is based on American security interests, namely preventing terrorist attacks.
- The administration's review process honored by America's commitment to maintaining civilian control of the military in a democratic society. General McChrystal's plan was war-gamed, challenged, and debated by military and civilian officials alike. Only then did the Commander in Chief sign on.
- Counter-intuitively, sending more troops will allow us to get out more quickly. A build-up of troops now will enable us to train Afghan forces more quickly, and thereby disengage US forces sooner.
- Only Afghans can win this war – the US can help, largely through training. Afghanistan had no army when the US arrived eight years ago. Now the ANA numbers nearly 100,000 troops, partners on 90% of NATO's missions, and undertakes 60% of their missions solo. But they cannot be trained without trainers, and cannot "partner" without partners.
- Progressives who care about the humanitarian cost of war should be relieved; the alternative to this strategy is a "counter-terror" approach that will use more drone attacks and claim more civilian lives.
- US commitment to Afghanistan is broader than military resources. We also need to take advantage of this unique moment to talk about security as a comprehensive effort -- one that must be led by civilians and that, ultimately, will require an Afghan political solution.
- Afghanistan is not Iraq, and it is not Vietnam. There are lessons we can draw from those conflicts, but the shape and purpose of US strategy in Afghanistan is of a wholly different nature.
- If there was a missed opportunity in President Obama's speech, it's that he didn't fully express a way forward in America's relationship with Pakistan.
- Afghanistan is far from a nation-building or an empire-building exercise, as indicated by the timeline the President set out for beginning to bring troops home.

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