

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

LETTERS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA ON STRENGTHENING OUR NA- TIONAL SECURITY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I want to share the following letters that I have sent to President Obama urging him to implement four bipartisan proposals to strengthen our national security. It is disappointing that the administration has not adopted these proposals that would make our country safer.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
January 12, 2010.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
President,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: "National Security is too important to become a partisan issue." This sentence was the opening line in a January 11 USA Today op-ed jointly authored by Lee Hamilton and Thomas Kean, co-chairs of the 9/11 Commission. Last week, you, too, said, "Now is not a time for partisanship, it's a time for citizenship—a time to come together and work together with the seriousness of purpose that our national security demands." I could not agree more with this sentiment.

No nation, including America, can hope to win this long battle against al Qaeda and like foes if the war effort is marked by partisanship. Sadly, not only has partisanship infused the rhetoric surrounding national security discussions, it has actually obstructed the critical role of congressional oversight. Too often in recent months partisanship has resulted in withholding of information, unanswered letters and briefings denied by this administration.

The stakes are too high and the cost of failure is too great for petty politics to rule the day. The White House has a moral obligation to actively and consistently reach out to the minority party in Congress, to be forthcoming with information and to provide access to all levels of government.

Hamilton and Kean go on to write, "We intend to monitor the implementation of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations and report on new national security threats." I urge you to encourage this effort by bringing back these two co-chairs for a six-month period to conduct a formal review and 9/11 Commission follow-up. They would be charged with evaluating which of the Commission's original recommendation have been implemented and to what end, and which have failed to be implemented and at what cost.

This past weekend, The Washington Post featured an op-ed by Bruce Hoffman, respected professor of security studies at Georgetown University and a senior fellow at the U.S. Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center. Hoffman wrote, "(W)hile al-Qaeda is finding new ways to exploit our weaknesses, we are stuck in a pattern of be-

lated responses, rather than anticipating its moves and developing preemptive strategies. The 'systemic failure' of intelligence analysis and airport security that Obama recently described was not just the product of a compartmentalized bureaucracy or analytical inattention, but a failure to recognize al Qaeda's new strategy. The national security architecture built in the aftermath of Sept. 11 addresses yesterday's threats—but not today's and certainly not tomorrow's. It is superb at reacting and responding, but not at outsmarting . . . a new approach to counterterrorism is essential."

Distinct from temporarily bringing back the two 9/11 Commission co-chairs, I also urge the creation of a "Team B." As you may know, historically the phrase "Team B" refers to a group of outside experts, commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency in the 1970's and headed by Richard Pipes, to analyze the threats posed by the Soviet Union to the United States and counter the positions of intelligence officials within the CIA, known as "Team A." In your remarks last week following the review of the attempted Christmas Day terrorist attack, you rightly referred to our enemy as "nimble." Too often our response to the evolving threat posed by al Qaeda, and others sympathetic to their murderous aims, is anything but.

The Team B concept has been successful in previous administrations when fresh eyes were needed to provide the commander-in-chief with objective information to make informed policy decisions. I believe it can work now, too, and suggest that among the individuals, but not exclusively, whose expertise and forward-thinking would be well-suited to a Team B are: Bruce Hoffman; Andrew McCarthy and Patrick Fitzgerald, both of whom were involved in the prosecution of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman in the first World Trade Center bombings; Fouad Ajami, professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University; Jean Bethke Elshain, professor of social and political ethics at the University of Chicago; economist Judy Shelton, National Endowment for Democracy board member; foreign policy columnist and author Anne Applebaum; Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., author of *Seven Deadly Scenarios: A Military Futurist Explores War in the 21st Century*; Elliot Cohen, professor of Strategic Studies at SAIS; Philip D. Zelikow, diplomat and author who worked as executive director of the 9/11 Commission, and Joshua Muravchik, formerly a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and presently a Foreign Policy Institute fellow at SAIS.

The 9/11 Commission report was issued nearly six years ago. Even if every recommendation had been implemented, which it has not, our enemy has evolved since that time. Our current intelligence infrastructure is at times overwhelmed by data, information and the urgency of daily events, and as such is unable to dedicate the time and resources necessary to think outside the box and better comprehend this multidimensional threat. "Team B" would possess the necessary expertise but would be free from

these daily pressures. The team would represent a "new approach to counterterrorism" which focuses not just on connecting the dots of intelligence, but which seeks to stay a step ahead in understanding how to break the radicalization and recruitment cycle that sustains our enemy, how to disrupt their network globally and how to strategically isolate them.

I also believe there is an urgent need to make the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) administrator a long-term position. Since TSA's inception following the 9/11 attacks, there have been six Transportation Security Agency administrators and acting administrators. For a position of this import to turn over with such frequency and to automatically change hands with each new administration simply does not make sense. I am introducing legislation that mirrors the language used to establish a 10-year term and Senate confirmation for FBI directors. I am hopeful that members of both parties will see the merits of this proposal and I urge your support for this change.

America is a great nation facing an enemy unlike any other we have ever known. We must steel ourselves for the struggle ahead, frankly assessing the nature and scope of the threat we face and guarding against partisanship at all costs. The people of this country deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 17, 2010.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
President,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Over the last year, I have written you and members of your administration numerous letters concerning terrorism. In these letters, I have proposed a series of actions that should immediately be taken and that would make the country safer and receive strong bipartisan support. I have compiled these proposals into a single letter for your convenience and urge you to take swift action. The American people are looking for strong bipartisan leadership on matters of national security and I believe these proposals could be an important start.

I believe that these amendments would garner bipartisan support from the American people. The proposals and requests are as follows:

I. BRING BACK 9/11 CO-CHAIRS FOR A REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND UPDATE REPORT

In 1998, I authored language that created the bipartisan National Commission on Terrorism, also known as the Bremer Commission—which released its final report in 2000, tellingly featuring the World Trade Center "Twin Towers" on its cover. The report was ignored by administration and congressional leaders—both Republican and Democrat—until after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Again, in 2005, I authored language creating the Iraq Study Group whose report included the recommendation for the counterinsurgency troop "surge" in its final report. Both of these experiences

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