



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 29, 2011

Dear Friend:

Thank you for writing. I have heard from many Americans concerned about our Nation's security, and I appreciate your perspective. As Commander in Chief, I have no greater responsibility than keeping the American people safe.

My Administration is working every day to 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 as we continue working to disrupt and dismantle this terrorist network.

At home and abroad, our men and women in uniform are making extraordinary sacrifices to protect us all. As I promised, our combat mission in Iraq ended on August 31, 2010, and we are on track to have all our troops out of Iraq by the end of this year. We are building a strong partnership with the Iraqi people in support of Iraq's development and peace and security in the region. Meanwhile, we are focusing on the threat of al-Qa'ida and its extremist affiliates in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The September 11 attacks were planned in this region, and terrorists there continue to plot against the United States. That is why I increased the number of American troops fighting in Afghanistan, and we are continuing to work with our partners in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world to dismantle and defeat al-Qa'ida.

Our key national security agencies are working together to protect American lives, but we must address vulnerabilities in the system. We have taken steps to ensure our aviation screening, technology, and procedures are working more effectively. To improve our intelligence system, I directed the intelligence community to follow up on all leads on high-priority threats and to distribute reports more widely so the intelligence we have is acted upon. To strengthen our security, we are also coordinating with international partners to develop and deploy advanced screening and detection technologies, and to disrupt terrorist plots.

Thank you, again, for contacting me. For more information on these efforts, I encourage you to visit: www.WhiteHouse.gov/Issues/Homeland-Security.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama

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