

as we honored our fallen heroes in their final journey home.

Mike, you have fulfilled the pledge you made at the beginning to represent our troops with “unwavering dedication.” And so has Deborah, who we thank for her four decades of extraordinary service, her extraordinary support to our military families, her kindness, her gentleness, her grace under pressure. She is an extraordinary woman, Mike. And we’re both lucky to have married up.

Now the mantle of leadership passes to General Marty Dempsey, one of our Nation’s most respected and combat-tested generals. Marty, after a lifetime of service, I thank you, Deanie, Chris, Megan, and Caitlin for answering the call to serve once more.

In this sense, today begins to complete the transition to our new leadership team. In Secretary Panetta, we have one of our Nation’s finest public servants. In the new Deputy Secretary, Ash Carter, we will have an experienced leader to carry on the work of Bill Lynn, who we thank for his outstanding service. And the new Vice Chairman, Admiral Sandy Winnefeld, will round out a team where, for the first time, both the Chairman and Vice Chairman will have the experience of leading combat operations in the years since 9/11.

Leon, Marty, Ash, Sandy, men and women of this Department, both uniformed and civilian, we still have much to do: from bringing the rest of our troops home from Iraq this year to

transitioning to Afghan lead for their own security; from defeating Al Qaida to our most solemn of obligations, taking care of our forces and their families when they go to war and when they come home.

None of this will be easy, especially as our Nation makes hard fiscal choices. But as Commander in Chief, let me say it as clearly as I can: As we go forward we will be guided by the mission we ask of our troops and the capabilities they need to succeed. We will maintain our military superiority. We will never waver in defense of our country, our citizens, or our national security interests. And the United States of America and our Armed Forces will remain the greatest force for freedom and security that the world has ever known.

This is who we are as Americans. And this is who we must always be: as we salute Mike Mullen as an exemplar of this spirit, we salute him for a life of patriotic service; as we continue his legacy to keep the country that we love safe; and as we renew the sources of American strength here at home and around the world.

Mike, thank you, from a grateful nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Mullen, wife, and Michael and John Mullen, sons, of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN; and Deanie Dempsey, wife, and Christopher Dempsey, Megan Dempsey Bailey, and Caitlin Dempsey, children, of Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Related to Afghanistan and Pakistan *September 30, 2011*

Dear _____:

In response to section 1117 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111–32) (the “Act”), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing the attached report related to Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the fourth report submitted under section 1117 of the Act and follows the April 2011 submission.

This report covers the period from January 1, 2011, through June 30, 2011. To the extent possible, the report also provides an assessment through August 31, 2011. Events continue to evolve since that time, for example in our relationship with Pakistan, but these developments fall outside the scope of this report. As I noted in my remarks on the way forward in Afghanistan on June 22, we have seen great progress in our fight against al-Qa’ida; we have

reversed the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan; and we continue to see progress in training the Afghan National Security Forces. This will allow us in the coming year to fully recover the 33,000 U.S. troop surge I announced at West Point in December 2009. Beyond that change, we continue to implement the strategy and do not believe further modifications or adjustments to the metrics, resources, or authorities are required at this time. Huge challenges remain, and this is the beginning—but not the end—of our effort to wind down this war.

As the Congress continues its deliberations on the way ahead in Afghanistan and Pakistan, I want to continue to underscore our Nation's interests in the successful implementation of this policy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate; Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid; Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and John S. McCain III, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; John F. Kerry, chair-

man, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Joseph I. Lieberman, chairman, and Susan M. Collins, ranking member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Dianne Feinstein, chair, and Saxby C. Chambliss, vice chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner; House Majority Leader Eric I. Cantor; House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Norman D. Dicks, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chair, and Howard L. Berman, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Peter T. King, chairman, and Bennie G. Thompson, ranking member, House Committee on Homeland Security; Lamar S. Smith, chairman, and John J. Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; and Michael J. Rogers, chairman, and C.A. "Dutch" Ruppertsberger, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser *September 30, 2011*

Well, to Jim and Jeff, thank you so much for the hospitality; to all of you, for being here. I have to say that the good doctor could run for office. [*Laughter*] He's quite an orator. So that was an extraordinarily gracious introduction, and thank you for opening up your home. To all of you who are here, some of you who've been longtime supporters, some of you who I'm seeing for the first time, it's wonderful to be here.

And what I want to do is have more of a conversation than a monologue, so I'm just going to say a few words at the top very briefly, and then we'll open it up for questions.

I was just on the West Coast, traveling across the country, talking to people about the jobs act and why we need to put people back to work, talking to them about a wide range of issues like energy and health care. And I made the argument to them that I'll make to you, which is that this election is in some ways even more consequential than 2008.

I think in 2008 we understood that for decades there had been a host of problems that had been building up over time. That the dream of middle class folks or folks who were aspiring to the middle class—being able to work hard, get a good education, get a good job, act responsibly, buy a home, make sure