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June 23, 2008

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

Dear Mr. President:

Recently, there has been speculation about whether the Administration intends to establish permanent military bases in Iraq. Earlier this month, several members of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki's Dawa party stated that the Administration had proposed a status of forces agreement to the Iraqi government that would "allow U.S. troops to remain in the country indefinitely."¹

In response to these reports, your top diplomat in Iraq stated that U.S. policy is not to establish permanent military bases in Iraq. During a press briefing on June 5, 2008, Ryan Crocker, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, stated: "I can tell you that we are not seeking permanent military bases in Iraq. That is just flatly untrue."² He also stated that your Administration is committed to being "out there in the open" on the issue of U.S. military bases in Iraq.³ As he stated, "This will be a transparent process."⁴ He stated that there would not be "any secret provisions, attachments, protocols or whatever" relating to military bases in Iraq.⁵

In light of these statements, I respectfully request that you exercise your authority under Executive Order 12958 to declassify information regarding the plans for military bases in Iraq.

¹ *U.S. Seeking 58 Bases in Iraq, Shiite Lawmakers Say*, McClatchy Newspapers (June 9, 2008).

² U.S. Department of State, *Briefing on Recent Developments in Iraq* (June 5, 2008) (online at www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/105638.htm).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

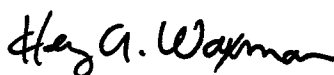
⁵ *Id.*

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Specifically, I request that you declassify provisions contained in the "Joint MNF-I/U.S. Embassy-Baghdad Campaign Plan" that refer to the establishment of U.S. military bases in Iraq and the timeline for their existence. I also request that you declassify a report issued this morning by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO report is titled "DOD Should Identify and Prioritize the Conditions Necessary for the Continued Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Iraq." The report is significant because it addresses how the Joint Campaign Plan has been changed over the past year.⁶

Mr. President, many Americans believe that a plan exists to establish military bases in Iraq that will remain indefinitely. Declassifying information about your intentions for the bases is the best way to address these concerns. I respectfully urge you to take this action as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

cc: Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member

⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *DOD Should Identify and Prioritize the Conditions Necessary for the Continued Drawdown of U.S. Forces in Iraq* (GAO-08-700C) (June 23, 2008) (classified).