

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write with urgency to request that you use the full authority of your office to convene international negotiations designed to stop the civil war in Syria, stabilize the country, effect the return to Syria of all refugees, provide for political change towards a popularly supported, accountable Syrian leadership, and develop a cohesive, international strategy for the defeat of ISIL.

The Syrian civil war has now dragged on for four long and bloody years, resulting in the deaths of more than 300,000 people, creating more than 4 million refugees, and displacing more than 6.5 million people within the country. The refugee crisis has been an immense and potentially destabilizing challenge to fragile regimes in the Middle East and is now affecting Europe and the United States.

Sadly, it appears that none of the efforts the U.S. and Europe have made so far in Syria have produced the desired results: a transition away from the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, and the return of peace and stability. In fact, with the introduction of Russian military equipment and personnel, and with increasing Western military efforts directed at both ISIL and Assad-regime forces, there is every possibility that violence will escalate. This would continue the devastation of the Syrian populace, worsen the refugee crisis, and risk an increasing probability of expanded military conflict in the region. For these reasons, it is time to devote ourselves to a negotiated peace, and work with allies, including surrounding Arab states that have a vested interest in the security and stability of the region, moving forward with both a peace plan and a coordinated assault against ISIL.

There is no guarantee that such negotiations would succeed; Russia and Iran, necessary parties to the process, are devoting substantial resources to preserving the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad. Furthermore, at any given time there will be lengthy debate regarding the state of the dynamic situation on the ground among the many factions operating in Syria and their various international supporters. But, all parties to our proposed negotiations have certain long-term, common interests in the neutralization of ISIL and other violent extremists in the region, and in stopping the carnage and increasingly unmanageable refugee crisis.

We urge you to take quick action on this matter. The situation worsens day to day and shows no sign of improving. Convening international negotiations to end the Syria conflict would be in the best interests of US and global security, and is also, more importantly, a moral imperative.

Sincerely,



JIM HIMES
Member of Congress



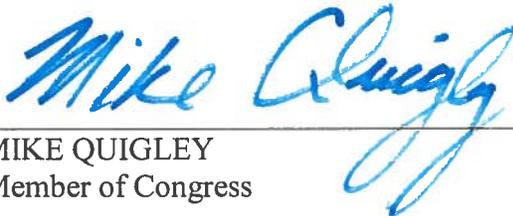
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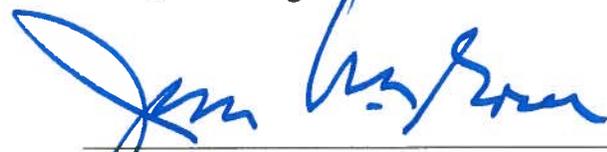
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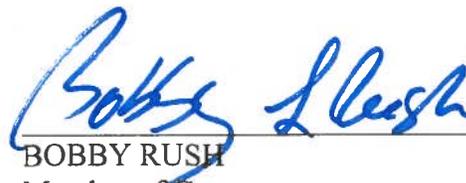
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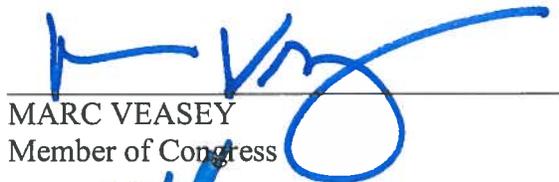
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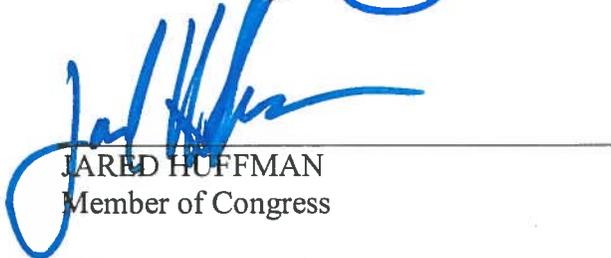
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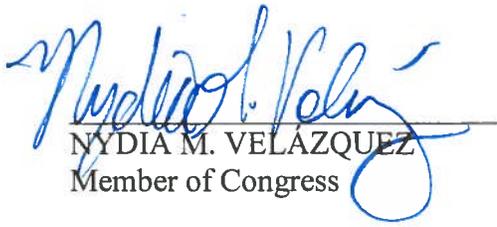
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