Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement in reaction to President Obama's announcement on planned troop withdrawals from Afghanistan.

"After 10 years of fighting and with over $10 billion still being spent per month in Afghanistan, it's time to bring our troops home. During the course of this year, I've written to President Obama and supported legislation to urge him to make a significant and sizable reduction of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan beginning July 2011. I welcome the president's announcement that he will order the withdrawal of 10,000 American troops this year, and another 20,000 troops by the end of next summer, and remain hopeful that we can accelerate the pace of withdrawals so that our only remaining mission in Afghanistan is the capture and elimination of the terrorists who pose a direct threat to our homeland.

"International terrorist networks remain a grave threat to the United States, as al Qaeda affiliates now have a significant presence in countries like Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan. But we cannot defeat this decentralized enemy if we continue to maintain current troop levels in Afghanistan. With Osama bin Laden killed and al Qaeda largely driven from Afghanistan, it is time to accelerate the transfer of security responsibilities to the Government of Afghanistan and to reduce the U.S. military footprint there."