

Houston, TX – This morning, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20), issued the following statement in response to President Obama's remarks on "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

"Last night, the President laid out a strong, well-reasoned strategy. I applaud him for recognizing the vital importance of the fate of nuclear-armed Pakistan; that al-Qaeda is our greatest enemy in the region; and that it is their connection to al-Qaeda that marks the Taliban's greatest threat to us. His pledge to apply all of our resources, not merely our military strength, to the conflict is commendable. I wish that such a strategy had been in place long ago. But our continued military presence in Afghanistan will continue to destabilize the region and make our job more difficult. We have never wanted to occupy Afghanistan, and we can deprive al-Qaeda of a safe haven for training terrorists without doing so. It is time that we turn our focus to training the Afghan security forces and withdrawing our troops from that country. That does not and should not mean that we disengage, but we have many tools that would allow us to help Afghans defend themselves without a large contingent of American soldiers stationed in Afghanistan."

###