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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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Committees:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman, Subcommittee on
Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
(VICE CHAIRMAN)

Subcommittee on Space
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have been working to invite several prominent Afghan ethnic leaders to speak next month to policy makers here in Washington, DC. These Afghans, which include Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq (Hazara), General Abdul Rashid Dostum (Uzbek), and Ahmad Zia Massoud (Tajik) are friendly toward the United States and actively support our government in its fight against extremism. They have been working toward a coherent national political process that will enable a broad democratic election and a stable political transition. These individuals represent Hamid Karzai's political opposition and the majority of the Afghan people. For many years, I have attempted to arrange for Members of Congress to meet these specific leaders in Afghanistan, Europe, or elsewhere. Unfortunately, senior representatives of the State Department have consistently attempted to thwart my efforts.

The recent events of the past four days, namely the assassination attempt against Mr. Mohaqeq and the use of Mr. Karzai's appointed governor in Shibergan to attack General Dostum, are part of a consistent effort to obliterate ethnic opposition leaders who form the resistance against the Taliban and Pashtun domination of Afghanistan. These attacks come as Mr. Karzai has taken over military control of the country. I believe if not confronted forcefully, Karzai will undermine a democratic and political transition that our country has spent so much blood and treasure trying to secure.

Now that Afghanistan's own security forces are in the lead and NATO's troop drawdown is picking up pace, we need to ensure that real and significant opposition figures such as General Dostum, Mohammad Mohaqeq and Ahmad Zia Massoud and their ethnic communities play a significant role in Afghanistan's future. It was the support of these leaders and their communities (Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara), that drove the Taliban from power in 2001. Since then, they have been sidelined in favor of Mr. Karzai who rallies aggressive Pashtun notions to dominate a fragile multi-ethnic society. I would like to respectfully remind you that Mr. Karzai, prior to 2001, agreed to be the Taliban's representative to the United Nations.

Ignoring the decentralized nature of Afghanistan and relying on strategies which have clearly failed will not honor the sacrifices the United States has made. Ignoring the reality that sixty percent of Afghans are not Pashtuns and have a different cultural and ethnic heritage is truly an exercise in self delusion. As US military power recedes in the region, we must again count on the friendship of the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Hazaras and friendly Pashtuns to achieve our strategic goals and keep the Taliban from returning to power.

Negotiations between the United States and the Taliban, announced this week, will not succeed. It is a civil war. Negotiations should take place between the warring parties, the Northern Front which represents the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, and the Taliban. As long as the Northern Front is not at the negotiating table, the war will continue.

I respectfully request that you use the power of your office to help protect the lives of these valuable individuals and approve visas to permit them to come to Washington in July so they will be able to help us chart a way forward in Afghanistan and to ensure true negotiations take place between them and the Taliban. The United States should not enter into talks with Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, or his representative except to negotiate his surrender to US authorities for his terrorist acts against American citizens.

Sincerely,



Dana Rohrabacher
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia,
and Emerging Threats
House Committee on Foreign Affairs