

TRIP REPORT:
AFGHANISTAN
JUNE 2012



DAVID DREIER, CHAIRMAN • DAVID PRICE, RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

A delegation from the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) traveled to Afghanistan on June 3-4, 2012, to renew the commission's partnership with the Afghan National Assembly. The delegation was composed of HDP Chairman David Dreier (R-CA) and Ranking Democratic Member David Price (D-NC). Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) accompanied the House Members. This was HDP's eighth outbound legislative strengthening mission of the 112th Congress and 29th overall since 2005.

Upon arrival in Kabul the morning of June 3, the delegation was briefed by U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Gen. John Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), on the political and military situation in Afghanistan. The delegation was also briefed by officials of the USAID-funded Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Program.



Reps. Dreier and Price in the Wolesi Jirga.

The delegation opened its meetings in parliament with office calls on Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi, the speaker of the Wolesi Jirga (lower house), and Fazul Hadi Muslimyar, the speaker of the Meshrano Jirga (upper house). The meetings were the first for HDP Members with the speakers since they were elected to their posts in 2010. Chairman Dreier and Mr. Price provided an overview of the Commission's partnership with the Afghan National Assembly and future HDP programming.

A meeting with the committees on international affairs and the committees on the budget from both chambers provided the HDP Members with an opportunity to discuss the recently concluded U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement just hours after the Meshrano Jirga approved the pact. Members also discussed parliamentary budget formulation and oversight.

The delegation met with President Hamid Karzai to discuss the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the 2014 transition from ISAF to Afghan National Army leadership in the security realm, and the political transition after Mr. Karzai steps down in 2015.

On June 4, the delegation met with the women's affairs committees of both chambers to discuss issues of concern to Afghan women and with the national security committees of parliament to discuss defense oversight and the military transition. The delegation ended its program in Kabul by meeting with opposition leader Dr. Abdullah to discuss the 2014 elections.

The delegation concluded its mission by visiting Camp Leatherneck, the main U.S. base in southwestern Afghanistan. Maj. Gen. Charles Gurganus and other commanders briefed Members on the military situation in Helmand and Nimruz provinces, and the delegation observed techniques and equipment for U.S. and coalition forces to detect and counter improvised explosive devices.

Overall, the delegation successfully advanced HDP's mission of strengthening democratic institutions abroad and fostering closer ties between the U.S. Congress and key partners. For more information about HDP's programs, please visit <http://democracy.house.gov>.