

# TRIP REPORT: KYRGYZSTAN & PAKISTAN FEBRUARY 2012



A delegation from the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) traveled to Europe and Central and South Asia from February 18-26, 2012, to inaugurate the commission's partnership with the Kyrgyz legislature, renew the commission's partnership with the Pakistani legislature, and conduct bilateral visits to Armenia and Sweden. The delegation was led by HDP Chairman David Dreier (R-CA), and included HDP member Joe Wilson (R-SC), along with Reps. Jim Moran (D-VA), Kenny Marchant (R-TX), and Adrian Smith (R-NE). This was HDP's sixth outbound legislative strengthening mission of the 112th Congress and 27th overall since 2005.

The delegation began its mission with a brief stop in Armenia (February 19) for a dinner with President Serzh Sargsian to discuss bilateral relations and Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Members also met with the Speaker of Armenia's National Assembly, Samvel Nikoyan to discuss preparations for upcoming parliamentary elections and efforts to make them more transparent and credible than past Armenian elections.

In Kyrgyzstan (February 20-22), the delegation inaugurated its partnership with the Kyrgyz legislature, known as the Jogorku Kenesh, or Supreme Council. The delegation met with Speaker Asilbek Jeenbekov to formally open the partnership between HDP and the Jogorku Kenesh and conducted a wide range of discussions on legislative processes. In addition to meeting



*Delegation Members Meet with Members of the Kyrgyz Jogorku Kenesh, or Supreme Council, to inaugurate HDP partnership.*



*Chairman Dreier hosts meeting with opposition officials in Kyrgyzstan*

with faction leaders and members of the opposition, the delegation hosted discussion seminars on oversight with committee chairs and on budget best practices with the Budget and Finance Committee. Staff traveling with the delegation held a training program for Jogorku Kenesh staff on the importance and methods of constituent outreach. The delegation also met with Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev to discuss the partnership's work, the consolidation of Kyrgyz democracy, the challenges Kyrgyzstan faces from its autocratic neighbors, economic development, and the future of the

Manas Transit Center which is a major hub for U.S. and NATO troops entering and departing Afghanistan. In addition, the delegation visited the Manas Transit Center to receive a briefing from U.S. military commanders and meet with constituents currently serving at the transit center.

In Pakistan (February 23-24), the delegation renewed its partnership with the Pakistan National Assembly and Senate. The visit began with a meeting with Chairman of the Senate Farooq Naek and other senators to discuss ongoing cooperation and U.S.-Pakistani relations. Following a luncheon hosted by Chairman Naek, the delegation met with Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza

Gilani to discuss bilateral relations and Pakistani-U.S. cooperation in the war against violent extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The following day, the delegation officially opened the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), whose modern building was donated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). PIPS is designed to be both a legislative research service and a center for training Pakistani legislators and their staff. Chairman Dreier made introductory remarks (<http://youtu.be/PJOkcs9AVf0>), and the delegation inaugurated the institute by holding four discussion sessions on oversight and committee operations with members of the National Assembly and Senate. A concurrent staff program focused on the role of a professional staff and running a congressional office.



*Rep. Marchant looks at the work plan for the soon-to-be-completed USAID-funded Pakistani Institute for Parliamentary Studies (PIPS).*

While in Pakistan, the delegation also met with officials of the U.S. military and Department of State to discuss the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the role of Pakistan in combating terrorism. Additionally, the U.S. Embassy hosted a dinner with members of the parliamentary foreign affairs committees to allow members of the delegation to discuss with their counterparts U.S. bilateral relations with Pakistan. The delegation hosted a roundtable discussion with members of U.S. and Pakistani non-governmental organizations to discuss freedom of the press, U.S. bilateral assistance to Pakistan, and the upcoming by-elections for the National Assembly and indirect elections for the Senate. A press roundtable enabled the delegation to discuss a variety of topics with leading Pakistani media figures. Finally, the delegation ended its program in Pakistan with a meeting with Interior Minister A. Rehman Malik, where they discussed Pakistan's cooperation in the war in Afghanistan and U.S. assistance to Pakistan.



*Chairman Dreier discusses cooperation between the U.S. and Pakistani legislatures with Chairman of the Pakistani Senate, Farooq Naek.*

Following its stop in Pakistan, the delegation traveled to Sweden (February 25) to meet with the Swedish Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Niclas Trouvé, and the head of the Swedish Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Relations, Karin Enström. The meeting allowed the U.S. delegation to discuss its findings from Pakistan with its Swedish counterparts and discuss ongoing U.S.-Swedish cooperation in the war in Afghanistan. Sweden has over 550 troops in Afghanistan and has spent over \$635 million in Afghanistan since 2001.

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 programs, please visit <http://democracy.house.gov>.