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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ERIN C. CONATON, STAFF DIRECTOR

July 31, 2009

General Stanley McChrystal
Commander
NATO International Security Assistance Force
Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear General McChrystal:

We are writing to you to express our concern about the security of election monitors in parts of Afghanistan for the forthcoming elections.

Recent media reports have suggested that due to ongoing fighting and insecurity, the Afghan government may close a large number of polling places in predominantly Pashtun areas. Some observers have suggested that closing these polling places may negatively affect the legitimacy of the election and place some candidates at a disadvantage. However, should the Afghan government keep these polling places open, the election may still not be viewed as completely legitimate. Under such adverse security conditions, it may be impossible for the already inadequate number of election monitors to reach polling places and to observe the ballot-counting process.

Given these concerns, we are writing to ask that the NATO International Security Assistance Force work to help the Afghan Security Forces provide the needed security for Afghan and international election monitors. Without sufficient levels of security, election monitors may not have the ability to observe the entire election process from ballot place to counting section, which will threaten the legitimacy of the Afghan election. We believe that the sooner the Afghan population gains confidence in their government the sooner American forces will be able to return home. Ensuring the legitimacy of this election is fundamental to achieving this goal.

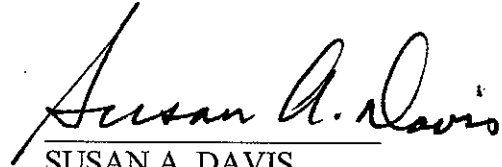
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Thank you for your kind attention to this matter. We deeply appreciate your efforts on behalf of our nation.

Very truly yours,



IKE SKELTON
Member of Congress



SUSAN A. DAVIS
Member of Congress



HOWARD BERMAN
Member of Congress



JANE HARMAN
Member of Congress

IS:mcc