

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 591

Commending the Government of Afghanistan for certifying the results of the national election held on April 5, 2014, and urging the Government of Afghanistan to continue to pursue a “transparent, credible, and inclusive” run-off presidential election on June 14, 2014, while ensuring the safety of voters and candidates.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Commending the Government of Afghanistan for certifying the results of the national election held on April 5, 2014, and urging the Government of Afghanistan to continue to pursue a “transparent, credible, and inclusive” run-off presidential election on June 14, 2014, while ensuring the safety of voters and candidates.

Whereas, on May 11, 2013, in Kabul, Afghanistan, United States Deputy Secretary of State William Burns stated: “a successful political transition is an essential prerequisite for sustainable security. It is vitally important

that the elections next April be transparent, credible, and inclusive.”;

Whereas, on July 9, 2013, the United States Senate unanimously agreed to S. Res. 151: “A resolution urging the Government of Afghanistan to ensure transparent and credible presidential and provincial elections in April 2014 by adhering to internationally accepted democratic standards, establishing a transparent electoral process, and ensuring security for voters and candidates.”;

Whereas, on April 5, 2014, the Government of Afghanistan held the first round of a presidential election;

Whereas, on May 15, 2014, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (“IEC”) certified the results of the national election held 40 days prior, and announced a run-off election date of June 14, 2014, for the two top presidential candidate vote recipients;

Whereas voter participation increased from approximately 35 percent in the 2009 Afghan presidential election to almost 60 percent for the election held on April 5, 2014, and the percentage of newly registered female voters slightly increased;

Whereas the 2009 Afghan presidential election experienced low female voter turnout due to the insufficient number of female poll workers, and the United Nations Development Programme’s Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan approved a Ministry of Interior request to fund the hiring of 13,000 female election security officers in order to bolster female voter turnout for the 2014 presidential election—but 40 out of Afghanistan’s 407 districts still did not have female election staff due to security concerns;

Whereas 27 Afghans were killed on election day in 2009, and 17 members of the Afghan National Security Forces (“ANSF”) were killed over the course of nearly 300 insurgent attacks carried out during the election held on April 5, 2014;

Whereas after the 2009 Afghan presidential election, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (“IECC”) ordered the results from 210 polling stations be invalidated, and later, after investigating 579 more polling stations quarantined by the IEC, found that all but 18 of those should be excluded as well—and on May 14, 2014, the IEC, based on IECC decisions, invalidated the results from 331 polling stations during the 2014 election and removed them from the final tabulation;

Whereas, to date, 809,349 votes cast for the first place presidential candidate, 165,339 votes cast for the second place presidential candidate, and 39,555 votes cast for the third place presidential candidate during the June 14, 2014, election have been invalidated for fraud;

Whereas there have been widespread reports of voter and election monitor intimidation, as well as attempts to bribe members of the IEC, the IECC, and other election monitoring organizations;

Whereas vote counting by the IEC was performed behind closed doors instead of in front of international monitors, and information was leaked to some candidates but not others;

Whereas investigations by the IECC, and their coordination with the IEC, have not been conducted in a transparent manner;

Whereas the Government of Afghanistan eliminated text messaging capabilities the evening prior to the 2014 presidential election until 5:00 p.m. on election day—greatly inhibiting monitoring efforts by international organizations—explaining that the decision was made in response to two candidates sending more than one million text messages during the “silent period” and to combat further advertising—an explanation denied by the Chairman of the IEC who requested that texting capabilities be restored;

Whereas members of the National Democratic Institute (“NDI”) were killed during an attack at the Serena Hotel in Kabul on March 20, 2014, causing NDI to remove significant numbers of staff from Afghanistan and spreading fear among other monitors;

Whereas a run-off date of June 14, 2014, means the snows will have melted across Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban to move more freely, leading to a greater chance of disruption during the run-off presidential election;

Whereas some candidates, and some campaign staff, have proclaimed that should their opponents prevail, Afghanistan will be a less secure nation in which more civilians will die—thereby creating a climate that is not conducive to democratic transition;

Whereas some polling places used the entirety of their allotted 600 ballots in one to two hours leading some candidates, or their representatives, to call for more ballots—even though it is highly implausible that so many ballots could be exhausted in such a short time; and

Whereas the United States contributed approximately \$175 million toward conducting the 2009 Afghan presidential

election, and will contribute approximately \$200 million toward the 2014 Afghan presidential election: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) commends the Government of Afghanistan
3 for holding the first round of a presidential election
4 on April 5, 2014, and for preparing for the peaceful
5 transition to a new government, in accordance with
6 the rule of law;

7 (2) encourages the Government of Afghanistan
8 to continue to pursue the standard of “transparent,
9 credible, and inclusive” for the constitutionally re-
10 quired run-off presidential election to be held on
11 June 14, 2014;

12 (3) supports the mandate of Afghan electoral
13 bodies such as the Independent Election Commission
14 and Elections Complaints Commission to administer,
15 adjudicate, and manage polls, as well as oversee
16 logistical and technical preparations in a trans-
17 parent, fair, and credible manner to prevent fraud
18 and misconduct;

19 (4) encourages the Government of Afghanistan
20 to implement measures that will increase voter par-
21 ticipation—particularly among the Afghan female
22 population, and salutes the bravery of the citizenry

1 in facing violence, and even death, to exercise their
2 holy right to vote and determine their own destiny;

3 (5) encourages, on the other hand, the Govern-
4 ment of Afghanistan to not use security as an excuse
5 to shut down polling sites where there are minimal
6 security threats, at the expense of some candidates
7 and to the benefit of others;

8 (6) encourages all elements of Afghan society,
9 not just the recognized insurgency, to restrain them-
10 selves and their supporters from fomenting violence
11 and other disturbances in voting areas;

12 (7) advises, in the strongest terms, that the
13 Ministry of Communications leave texting capabili-
14 ties functional on election day;

15 (8) commends the Afghan Government for re-
16 ducing the number of casualties experienced on elec-
17 tion day, and urges the ANSF to continue to make
18 every necessary effort to ensure the safety of voters
19 and candidates during the June 14, 2014, presi-
20 dential run-off, including greater coordination be-
21 tween NATO's International Security Assistance
22 Force ("ISAF") and ANSF forces when deploying
23 troops to protect vote-counters, members of the IEC
24 and IECC, and members of international organiza-

1 tions dedicated to, and engaged in, election moni-
2 toring;

3 (9) solemnly remembers those members of the
4 ANSF who gave their lives protecting their democ-
5 racy on April 5, 2014, and honors those
6 servicemembers from United States, coalition, and
7 Afghan forces who have been killed or injured since
8 October 2001 in defense of the democratic rights of
9 the Afghan people;

10 (10) calls on the Government of Afghanistan to
11 continue to combat instances of voter fraud and im-
12 prove the transparency of the polling and counting
13 processes—particularly by opening the processes of
14 vote counting and complaint resolution to both can-
15 didate and international monitors;

16 (11) supports the United Nations mandate to
17 use its offices to assist Afghan electoral bodies and
18 other stakeholders with technical preparations and
19 the promotion of a timely and inclusive democratic
20 process so that the results of the presidential run-
21 off election will reflect the will of the people, leading
22 to broad acceptance;

23 (12) recommends a pause in the drawdown of
24 United States and ISAF security, intelligence, and
25 diplomatic assets until June 14, 2014;

1 (13) recognizes the substantial investments
2 made by United States taxpayers in support of sta-
3 bility, democracy, and the rule of law in Afghani-
4 stan, including efforts to end public corruption;

5 (14) reaffirms the policy position of the United
6 States that “successful political transition is an es-
7 sential prerequisite for sustainable security” in Af-
8 ghanistan, and legitimate governance is important to
9 ensuring its long-term stability; and

10 (15) concurs in the United States Senate’s urg-
11 ing of the U.S. Secretary of State to condition finan-
12 cial and logistical support for future Afghanistan
13 elections on the implementation of reforms that
14 would increase female participation and combat
15 fraud throughout the electoral process.

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