



## Klein Travels to Middle East, Afghanistan *Holds High-Level Meetings with Military, Political Leaders*

**Washington, D.C.** – Congressman Ron Klein (FL-22), the Vice-Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, returned late Tuesday night from a Congressional delegation to Cyprus, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Belgium. Klein and the delegation held high-level meetings with political and military leaders in each country, including Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and met with American troops stationed in both Kabul and Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

“This delegation provided an extraordinary opportunity to meet with the men and women on the front lines of the fight against terrorism,” Klein said. “Our service members spend every day working to improve the quality of life in Afghanistan, and I told them that the American people stand behind them every step of the way.”

“Additionally, by meeting with key political leaders in flashpoint countries like Lebanon and Afghanistan, we were able to build personal relationships, an essential first step in our monumental task of rebuilding American alliances and keeping our country safe in these dangerous times,” Klein said.

In Cyprus, talks focused on efforts to resolve the dispute between the island’s Greek and Turkish communities. In Lebanon, the delegation discussed the current political situation as well as Lebanon’s relationship with Syria, Iran’s role in Lebanon and the status of the investigation into the death of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

In Afghanistan, Klein and his colleagues assessed the fight against the Taliban and other extremist organizations, progress on reconstruction, and efforts to combat narcotics and train Afghan security forces. The group spent time in Kabul and also traveled to Jalalabad to review the functions of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), which assists Afghan citizens with infrastructure and rebuilding projects, including irrigation, roads and agricultural alternatives to poppies. Meetings about the future of Afghanistan continued in Brussels, Belgium, the headquarters of NATO, where the delegation discussed this critical issue with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker.

The delegation, which traveled from December 11-16, was led by Congressman Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, and also

included Congressman Brian Higgins (D-NY), Congressman Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC).

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