Ambassador John B. Emerson

U.S. Embassy Berlin

Clayallee 170

14191 Berlin

…speak for the Hazara

caught in the tangle of geo-political tragedy

speak for those who resist

machinations of power on all sides

caught in a treacherous web

sweet custom ,losing heritage

…land, language…bright indomitable spirit

Poem by American poet Anne Waldman, from the anthology Poems for the Hazara

Dear Ambassador John B. Emerson,

I have a dream today! Like Martin Luther King, I have a dream that one day being a Hazara is no longer a crime. Today, I and the other Hazara want to establish a connection between the Hazara rise and the American Civil Rights movement in 20th century.

As a Hazara, I especially recognize the importance of the U.S.A's role in promoting global non-discrimination laws and activities. Millions of Hazara share a common history with a large part of the American people through American Civil Rights movement and Hazara rise to take the whole society of Afghanistan out of the contemporary medieval period.

With tremendous international expertise and financial assistance, Afghanistan is embarking on a $10 billion upgrade to its electrical power grid. This will enable the people to jump from its medieval industrial capacity into the 21st century. All involved hope that this will help bring stabilization, education, industrial productivity, and peace to Afghanistan, Asia, and the entire international community.

As the details of this grand electrification plan are refined, I strongly encourage you to ensure that the decisions regarding the infrastructure of the grid will benefit the most people, without social discrimination, and in the most cost-effective manner, despite political pressures to do otherwise.

I am concerned about this, because the Hazara, as a large ethnic community, have suffered serious discrimination throughout Afghanistan's history. Systematic crimes against the Hazara have included slavery, genocide, and forced displacement. The Hazara people experience current and past discrimination in education, labor, healthcare, the judiciary, and infrastructure. We still suffer from regular violent Taliban attacks. Sadly, many of these situations have occurred with little government action or protection. As in many places around the world, official discrimination is deeply embedded, and needs to be monitored and avoided.

I ask the U.S government to closely monitor the planning and construction of the power grid, so that its funds are used fairly. For example, the planned TUTAP project will use U.S funds to build a 500 kV transmission line. The planners, after thorough study, strongly recommend the Bamyan route (which will electrify much of the traditional Hazara region/ Hazaristan), as the most cost-effective route. However, the Afghan government is demanding an alternative route—which would avoid the Hazara region.

We can only think that the Afghan government is continuing past discrimination, and favoring one ethnic group over another for political purposes. This is unproductive for the people and the region, and we hope that with honest oversight, it will not happen.

Sincerely,

For more information about the Hazara, please visit www.HazaraPeople.com.