Representatives met with Pres. Karzai, Gen. McKiernan and NY troops

Washington, DC— Today, Rep. Steve Israel (D-Long Island) returned from leading a Congressional Delegation trip to Afghanistan. Joining Rep. Israel on the trip were New York Reps. Michael Arcuri (D- Utica) and Tom Reynolds (R- Buffalo), Nevada Rep. Shelley Berkley (D- Las Vegas), and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth William Caldwell.

The Delegation met with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, Commander for the NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan General David McKiernan, United States Ambassador to Afghanistan William Wood, and New York service members.

“Our troops are doing an extraordinary job in Afghanistan despite an increasingly difficult environment,” said Rep. Israel. “They are there to find Osama bin Laden and end the war on terror where it began. In my view, the Administration hasn’t made it easier for our troops because of its fixation on Iraq. One of the casualties of the war in Iraq has been the war in Afghanistan.

“Moving forward, the Administration needs to use diplomacy to get our NATO allies to increase their commitment in Afghanistan. President Karzai needs to focus on more reforms within his own government. And, we need an orderly redeployment from Iraq so that we can find Osama bin Laden and finish the job in Afghanistan.”

Rep. Israel previously visited Afghanistan in November 2007. Rep. Israel founded the Afghanistan Working Group in the House of Representatives and is a member of the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations.

Congressional Delegation at the United States Embassy in Afghanistan.