Potential Candidates for 2009

Abdullah Abdullah, Afghanistan's minister of foreign affairs from 2001 to 2006, is running as the candidate for the National Front. In a 2 February interview with Jawad.com, he supported the presence of international forces to promote the national situation in the country. Regarding the Taliban, he said that the door for negotiation should be kept open to anyone willing to lay down their arms and join the peace process, except for Mullah Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whom he claimed were "pushing the country to destruction." On 14 August, he was appointed as a special representative for a stalemate in Afghanistan and not of any other country. In February Kabul Post article, citing this requirement, questioned the eligibility of Ghani, Jalali, and Khalilzad to run for president.

Alavi Sa'ed Qanooni was a leading presidential candidate in the 2004 election, particularly among the Tajik population, finishing in fourth place (boston.com). During the resistance to Soviet rule, Qanooni founded and led the National Islamic Front, one of the original parties of the Pakistan-based resistance groups. His daughter, Fatima Gailani, heads the Afghan Red Crescent Society and is a presidential candidate (quraqos.com).

Shahjahan Dostum is a prominent leader of Uzbeks in Afghanistan. He was previously governor of Herat Province, and he was the leading presidential candidate in the 2004 election, and finished in fourth place (boston.com). During the resistance to Soviet rule, Dostum helped the mujahedeen forces in northern Afghanistan. He is the current water and energy minister. An influential figure in western Afghanistan, he has a strong influence among the Uzbek population, finishing in fourth place (boston.com). In the 1980's, Dostum was a mujahid leader in eastern Afghanistan, but his term ended following differences with President Karzai and former Finance Minister Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal.

Abdul Rashid Dostum is the current chief of staff to the commander in chief of the Afghan National Army, an honorary position. He previously served as President Karzai's security and defense advisor. A prominent leader of Uzbeks in Afghanistan, Dostum heads the National Islamic Movement party, a mainly Uzbek party. Dostum was a leading presidential candidate in the 2004 election, particularly among the Uzbek population, finishing in fourth place (boston.com). In the 1980's, Dostum was a regional military commander under President Najibullah, but he later joined the mujahidin who were trying to control Mazar-e-Sharif and northern Afghanistan. After 9/11, he helped coalition forces to fight against the Taliban at the Mazar front. Dostum is a member of the National Front (http://afghan-web.com/bios).