

**RELEASE
IN FULL**

From: Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:35 PM
To: H
Subject: Thank you!

Thank you for all you did on behalf of the Afghan women on your whirlwind visit. Emails of gratitude to you are pouring in from Afghanistan. Many of the women listened to your intervention and commented on that as well as your small meeting.

Yesterday, I had to speak at an event with the Congressional Women's Caucus on Maternal Health in Afghanistan. I said that as we were meeting in the Cannon Caucus Room, you were making a major maternal health announcement in Afghanistan. The women Members were overjoyed as were all the health advocates.

This article from the Guardian was sent to me by a UK parliamentarian who intends to echo your remarks. Also, Andrea Mitchell did a great piece on your meeting with the women on NBC.

- > Hillary Clinton vows to defend rights of Afghan women
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- > US secretary of state tells foreign ministers meeting in Kabul women 'will not be sacrificed' in any peace deal with the Taliban
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- > Jon Boone in Kabul
- > Wednesday July 21 2010
- > The Guardian
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- > <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/20/hillary-clinton-afghan-women-taliban>
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- > Jon Boone
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- > Hillary Clinton today promised that any peace deal with the ultra-conservative Taliban movement would not come at the cost of the rights of Afghan women.
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- > The US secretary of state told a conference of the world's foreign ministers that women in the country "will not be sacrificed" and announced a number of initiatives to improve their situation.
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- > Her intervention came when many diplomats assume that any deal with hardline insurgents will inevitably involve compromises that would have been unthinkable nine years ago, when the US-led invasion of Afghanistan was in part justified by the desire to emancipate Afghan women.
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- > But in a meeting with leading Afghan women today Clinton told them that any deal "can't come at the cost of women and women's lives".
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- > "We are aware of the concerns that many of you have expressed about the reconciliation process and we understand why you would have those concerns," Clinton told them.
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- > Anxious to put the issue on the agenda of her fellow foreign ministers, she told the conference that women and civil society groups "will be essential to this country's success."
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- > "If these groups are fully empowered to help build a just and lasting peace, they will help do so," she said. "If they are silenced and pushed to the margins of Afghan society, the prospects for peace and justice will be subverted."
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- > She also announced extra US funding for projects to improve maternal and child health, including one scheme that will

use mullahs to encourage women to make use of clinics. In rural Afghan society, where they are often not allowed to leave the house without their husband's permission, women are sometimes discouraged from seeking medical care.

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> The final conference communique recognised "the centrality of women's rights to the future of Afghanistan".

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> Earlier this month, a report by Human Rights Watch said the Afghan government was already doing little to protect women and that their rights should be a priority in any political agreement with the Taliban.

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> The organisation said in areas under the control of militants, women suffer from violence and intimidation while girls' schools and female activists are attacked. The report identified one case where a female civil servant had to quit her job after receiving a "night letter" from insurgents threatening to kill her.

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