

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: PVerveer@
Sent: Saturday, December 18, 2010 1:22 PM
To: H
Subject: child marriage defeat

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The defeat of the Child Marriage bill, I fear, is a harbinger of what's to come. After passing the Senate unanimously, there was every expectation that it would fly through the House on suspension. How this too became an abortion issue is truly distressing. We have our work more than cut out for us.

On another note, I ran into Ray and Shaista the other night. They were recently in Pakistan and stayed with Zardari the whole time. It might make sense for someone to brief Ray. Zardari considers him his informal ambassador to the US.

How Ileana Ros-Lehtinen killed the bill to prevent forced child marriages

Posted: 17 Dec 2010 03:08 PM PST

Incoming House Foreign Affairs chairwoman **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen** (R-FL) defeated a bill Thursday evening that would have committed the United States to combating forced child marriages abroad, by invoking concerns about the legislation's cost and that funds could be used to finance abortions. The episode highlights the tough road that the Obama administration will face in advancing its women's rights and foreign aid agenda during the next Congressional session.

Non-governmental organizations, women's rights advocates, and lawmakers from both parties spent years developing and lobbying for the "International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2010," which the House failed to pass in a vote Thursday. The bill failed even though 241 Congressmen voted for it and only 166 voted against, because House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA) brought it up under "suspension of the rules." This procedure has the advantage of not allowing any amendments or changes to the bill, but carries the disadvantage of requiring two-thirds of the votes for passage.

Even still, supporters in both parties fully expected the bill to garner the 290 votes needed -- right up until the bill failed. After all, it passed the Senate unanimously Dec. 1 with the co-sponsorship of several Republicans, including Appropriations Committee ranking Republican **Thad Cochran** (R-MS), Foreign Relations Committee member **Roger Wicker** (R-MS), and human rights advocate **Sam Brownback** (R-KS).

If passed, the bill would have authorized the president to provide assistance "to prevent the incidence of child marriage in developing countries through the promotion of educational, health, economic, social, and legal empowerment of girls and women." It would have also mandated that the administration develop a multi-year strategy on the issue and that the State Department include the incidence of forced child marriage during its annual evaluation of countries' human rights practices.

So what happened? Ros-Lehtinen first argued that the bill was simply unaffordable. In a Dec. 16 "Floor Speech," she objected to the cost of the bill, which would be \$108 million over five years, and criticized it for not providing an accounting of how much the U.S. was already spending on this effort. The bill would have required

said the bill would authorize \$108 million, but would only require \$67 million in outlays from fiscal years 2011 to 2015.

Ros-Lehtinen introduced her own version of the bill, which she said would only cost \$1 million. But in a fact sheet (PDF), organizations supporting the original legislation said that Ros-Lehtinen's bill removed the implementation procedures that gave the legislation teeth. "Without such activities, the bill becomes merely a strategy with no actual implementation. And without implementation of a strategy, the bill will have an extraordinarily limited impact," they wrote.

Regardless, the supporters still thought the bill would pass because House Republican leadership had not come out against it. But about one hour before the vote, every Republican House office received a message on the bill from GOP leadership, known as a Whip Alert, saying that leadership would vote "no" on the bill and encouraging all Republicans do the same. The last line on the alert particularly shocked the bill's supporters.

"There are also concerns that funding will be directed to NGOs that promote and perform abortion and efforts to combat child marriage could be usurped as a way to overturn pro-life laws," the alert read.

The bill doesn't contain any funding for abortion activities and federal funding for abortion activities is already prohibited by what's known as the "Balancing Act" which has been boiler plate language in appropriations bills since 1973.

Invoking the abortion issue sent the bill's supporters reeling. They believed that it was little more than a stunt, considering that Republican pro-life senators had carefully reviewed the legislation and concluded it would not have an impact on the abortion issue.

Rep. **Stephen LaTourrette** (R-OH) criticized the Republican leadership for invoking the abortion issue to defeat the forced child marriage act in a floor speech Friday morning.

"Yesterday I was on the floor and I was a co-sponsor with [on] a piece of legislation with [Rep. **Betty McCollum** (D-MN)] that would have moved money, no new money, would have moved money so that societies that are coercing young girls into marriage... we could make sure that they stay in school so they're not forced into marriage at the age of 12 and 13," LaTourrette said. "All of a sudden there was a fiscal argument. When that didn't work people had to add an abortion element to it. This is a partisan place. I'm a Republican. I'm glad we beat their butt in the election, but there comes a time when enough is enough."

But it was too late for LaTourrette and other Republicans who had fought hard for the bill, including **Aaron Schock** (R-IL). The bill is even less likely to pass next year, when the GOP will control the House and Ros-Lehtinen will control the Foreign Affairs committee.

The main author of the bill was Senate Majority Whip **Dick Durbin** (D-IL), who was incensed when the bill failed in the House.

"The action on the House floor stopping the Child Marriage bill tonight will endanger the lives of millions of women and girls around the world," Durbin said in a Thursday statement. "These young girls, enslaved in marriage, will be

brutalized and many will die when their young bodies are torn apart while giving birth. Those who voted to continue this barbaric practice brought shame to Capitol Hill."

For the NGO and women's advocacy community, the implications of this defeat extend much further than just this bill. They also saw Republicans invoke the abortion issue when objecting to the International Violence Against Women Act and expect the new Congress to push for reinstatement of the "Mexico City Policy," which would prevent federal funding for any organizations that even discuss abortion.

"Any time a health bill that has to do with women and girls comes to the House floor, we're going to see a debate like the one we just saw," said one advocacy leader who supported the bill. "It's hard to imagine how any development bills are going to pass in this environment."

The protection of women and girls is a major focus of Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton**, who promised to elevate the issue Thursday when rolling out the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. She has said that forced child marriage is "a clear and unacceptable violation of human rights", and that "the Department of State categorically denounces all cases of child marriage as child abuse".

State's Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues **Melanne Verveer** has worked hard on the issue behind the scenes. But at the eleventh hour, when the going got tough, the bill's supporters said that the administration was nowhere to be found. In October, the White House decided to waive all penalties under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, another Durbin led bill that the NGO community supports.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 60 million girls in developing countries now between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before they reached 18. The Population Council, a group focused on reproductive and child health, estimates that the number will increase by 100 million over the next decade if current trends continue.

Federal act on security in North Waziristan when we are able -- and no
criteria

Posted: 17 Dec 2010 09:57 AM PST

One of the two biggest problems identified in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy Review released Thursday (12/16) is the Pakistani military's failure to crack down on some of the terrorist groups using Pakistan's tribal areas as a safe haven from which to launch attacks across the border into Afghanistan.

Pakistan launched a major offensive, involving approximately 30,000 troops, against extremists in South Waziristan in October 2009, and its military has also undertaken efforts to stamp out militants in other border areas. However, the military has yet to launch offensive military operations in North Waziristan, where insurgent groups wreaking havoc in Afghanistan reside.

Pakistan's envoy in Washington, Ambassador **Husain Haqqani**, reacted to the report by saying that Pakistan will engage Islamist groups in North Waziristan, including the Haqqani network (no relation), but only when there is

sufficient support in all areas of Pakistan's government for the effort, and not until they are confident that the mission can be completed effectively.

"Pakistan has made it very clear that we are fighting terrorists because they are a threat to our own existence as a modern democratic nation. We will fight all groups in all parts of our country," Haqqani said in an exclusive interview with *The Cable*. "But we will follow timelines that suit our own capabilities and can lead to success."

Haqqani said that the Pakistani army, which has taken the fight to six out of the seven regions inside Pakistan in which domestic militant groups operate and suffered thousands of casualties in the process, is simply not in a position to expand its war on the extremists now.

"Right now, it's only a question of operational capability and readiness. Our armed forces have been engaged in dealing with flood relief work," he said. "We have to see what resources we will allocate in which part of the country, and those rather than any political factors are responsible for any waiting period."

He also noted that "there is a fragile consensus in Pakistan in favor of military action against regional elements," and that Pakistan's government has no choice but to make the decision to attack North Waziristan groups on a timeline that prioritized Pakistani considerations over American ones.

"Sometimes it's easy for our allies to tell us what to do and for us to tell our allies what to do. But everyone makes decisions based on their own perceptions and analysis of on ground realities," Haqqani said.

In several discussions with other Pakistani officials, an even more complicated picture of the Pakistani position on attacking groups in North Waziristan emerges. The Pakistanis largely believe that the U.S. government is being unrealistic in terms of the timelines it wants for cracking down on terrorist safe havens along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, which have existed for decades.

"There will always be a gap between our two countries because the Americans want things done quickly and done their way," another Pakistani government official said.

A third senior Pakistani official said that many Pakistanis feel that the Obama administration is placing too much of the blame on Pakistan for the lack of progress in the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan.

"The U.S. keeps telling Pakistan to do more, but Pakistan keeps telling the U.S. to do more on certain questions such as speeding up building up of Afghan army, establishing a real process toward reconciliation, and providing Pakistan the means for large scale operations," the official said.

The United States has provided Pakistan with several billions of dollars in military and economic aid to support its war against domestic insurgents. But many in the Pakistani government have criticized what they say characterize as the slow arrival of these funds, which they say are in any case too small to address Pakistan's severe problems.

"It's very simplistic to measure success in amount of assistance provided to Pakistan," one Pakistani official said.

In remarks delivered during the rollout of the strategy review Thursday, President Obama was diplomatic when discussing his administration's ongoing drive to push Pakistan to do more in North Waziristan.

"Increasingly, the Pakistani government recognizes that terrorist networks in its border regions are a threat to all our countries, especially Pakistan. We've welcomed major Pakistani offensives in the tribal regions. We will continue to help strengthen Pakistanis' capacity to root out terrorists," said Obama. "Nevertheless, progress has not come fast enough. So we will continue to insist to Pakistani leaders that terrorist safe havens within their borders must be dealt with."

Undersecretary of Defense for Policy **Michèle Flournoy** acknowledged in an interview the same day that there was more work to be done on the relationship before the Pakistanis were willing to fully support the U.S. and NATO-led mission in Afghanistan.

"Given the ups and downs of our historical relationship with Pakistan, they fear our abandonment," she said. "Their calculus is very much affected by the long-term commitment they feel from us and in working in a strategic partnership."

The White House recognizes that its efforts have fallen short so far. "The bottom line is that Pakistan is a country where we have little influence, little access and little credibility," one of Obama's aides told *The New York Times*.

The administration's official line, therefore, is to agree with the Pakistani government and express sensitivity to its claim that they simply can't expand their war against extremists at this time.

"We would like them to move tomorrow, we would like them to take out these people tomorrow," said the new U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan **Cameron Munter**. "But we understand they're telling us honestly about the capacity of their military, and when they are able, we are convinced they will move in."

But for many in Washington, the open-ended delay in Pakistan's promise to expand military operations into North Waziristan represents a strategic choice, and is not just a result of the military's operational limitations. But whatever Pakistan's reasons, the delay doesn't inspire confidence that the Obama administration can meet its timelines for making progress in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan, meanwhile, is hedging its bets, supporting proxy actors like the Quetta Shura Taliban and Haqqani Network that might counter Indian interests in Kabul after the United States and its allies eventually withdraw," argued **Andrew Exum** of the Center for a New American Security. "The insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan are one of the two Achilles heels in the NATO strategy."

Congress to honor Holbrooke

Posted: 17 Dec 2010 04:42 AM PST

In a rare instance of bipartisanship, the House of Representatives moved to pass a resolution Friday honoring the life and work of the recently departed Ambassador **Richard Holbrooke**.

The resolution (H. Res. 335) was sponsored by outgoing House Appropriations State and Foreign Ops Subcommittee chairwoman **Nita Lowey** (D-NY), and cosponsored by incoming House Foreign Affairs chairwoman

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), **Howard Berman** (D-CA), and **Mike Turner** (R-OH). The bill is "a concurrent resolution honoring the exceptional achievements of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and recognizing the significant contributions he has made to United States national security, humanitarian causes and peaceful resolutions of international conflict."

"The passing of Ambassador Holbrooke on Monday, December 13th, is a great loss for the American people," Lowey said in a statement. "One of our nation's most talented diplomats, Richard Holbrooke possessed a fierce determination and unsurpassed brilliance in advocating for American security, diplomatic, and development interests around the world - in Southeast Asia and post-Cold War Europe, at the United Nations, and most recently in Afghanistan and Pakistan. His exceptional accomplishments as a peace-maker, diplomat, writer, scholar, manager and mentor will define his legacy as one of the true great foreign policy giants of our time."

Ros-Lehtinen praised Holbrooke as "one of the most consequential world diplomats of the last half-century," and said that "his tireless work in pursuit of United States national interests and international peace have put us all in his debt."

After praising his career -- which included two stints as assistant secretary of state, peace negotiator in the Balkans, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., and service as U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan -- Ros-Lehtinen called for reform of the United Nations and protection of Israel within its bodies.

"In New York at the UN, [Holbrooke] did much of the heavy lifting on Congressionally-led efforts to rein in UN spending, to make more equitable the dues paid by the United States, and to improve the standing of Israel in that multinational body," she said. "Sadly, those concerns have returned with a renewed urgency -- with the need for fundamental reform of UN budget and the virulently anti-Israeli UN Human Rights Council -- and the Congress can only hope to have such a tenacious, principled partner in the future."

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