

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 7:21 PM
To: H

[redacted], and I know firsthand the tremendous affection for you around the world.

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I'm heading back from Bosnia and Croatia and, I must say I found it sobering to be back in the Balkans. The paralysis among the politicians in Bosnia continues to inhibit progress as they also continue to accentuate their grievances instead of working for a better future. The government --cantons, entities, national structure --is so complicated that it makes getting anything done difficult. There is very little harmonization of regs and laws and there is a great deal of segregation.

I met with govt leaders, journalists, NGOs, businesswomen and students and they were in one of two camps: the complainers (what you used to call [redacted] or the roll-up-your-sleeves work hard group, despite everything. The media and politicians were more into the blame game and devoid of any optimism, even though, in some ways, they had more power. I'm going to see what we can do to help spark more cross sectoral and cross ethnic work among the women leaders. Once again, I feel like I'm in pre- Hillary/vital voices Northern Ireland. Fortunately, Pat Moon gets it and his wife is a dynamo. He went to every single meeting with me from early morning til night and said he learned a lot. I'm going to see what we can cobble together to help the women make some more progress there despite the difficulties. By the way, many remembered with gratitude your trips to Tuzla and Sarajevo in the really tough days. The nice thing is that the US is still appreciated there.

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We held the women's entrepreneurship summit for the Balkans in Zagreb for some 200 small businesswomen from across the region. They were an impressive group and we had staff from all the relevant embassies who will continue to work with them on follow up. I really believe if economies can grow and women can do their part, it will be enormously beneficial to the region. We gave everyone a copy of your APEC speech so they can be armed with the best evidence-based arguments to promote women's entrepreneurship with policymakers. Once again, your video captured the local headlines (even though we merely reused the one you recorded for the Turkey entrep conf earlier this year).

The PM and Pres. of Croatia came and spoke, as well as the Kosovar President. They all send their best. I had a long talk with the Croatian Pres who is really working to improve relations with Serbia. With Croatia heading to the EU and if Serbia makes progress on EU demands, it could be the best hope for Bosnia and Kosovo.

I had an even longer meeting with the Kosovar president who is trying so hard. She has made fighting corruption her top priority (not an easy issue there). She's made some gutsy judicial appts and is striving to foster unity. She is immensely popular with women in Kosovo and maybe she can parlay some of that goodwill. She is planning to hold an international women's conf in Kosovo in October next year and desperately wants you to come. The Kosovars feel like they're still pariahs and she's struggling to better their image.

She and the Croatian president both spoke about the rule of law and ending corruption as critical to economic progress. We had no walkout by the Serbs, either from the conference or when the K pres spoke. Everyone spoke to the need to put grievances behind and to work for a better future.

In short, a small step forward with hopes that more will follow.

[redacted] and thanks for all you do.

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