

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2009 11:36 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: 10/29 Senior Staff Meeting

From: Smith, Daniel B
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2009 10:22 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: 10/29 Senior Staff Meeting

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Afghanistan Civilian Plan

- Jack reported that his meeting with Lowey and Granger had gone well, noting that it offered a good opportunity to review our civilian staffing plan.
- There was a good story on our efforts on the civilian side on NPR this morning, Jack added, but it is set against the backdrop of increasing doubts by people about our overall strategy in Afghanistan.

Development Assistance

- Jack said that his dinner for the development community on the QDDR process last night also went well. It was clear from that session and his meeting with Congresswoman Lowey that one significant challenge we face is that we need to make the case that a whole of government approach provides more flexibility. The problem we confront, however, is that Members of Congress and various committees will balk at anything that takes money out of their jurisdiction. They want to be able to follow the "money lines," and anything that blurs those lines is problematic for them. Rich added that we need to show that our efforts will actually strengthen USAID. Jack agreed, noting that once we name an Administrator things should improve, but reiterated that members will still resist anything that takes money out of their "box."

Honduras

- Bill noted that Tom Shannon reports some progress in getting the parties back to the table, but the problem remains Zelaya's insistence on reinstatement and the issue of which Honduran institutions would bless that and how.

Iran

- The Iranians have made an unworkable counterproposal. So far, everyone on same page in response and ElBaradei is urging them not to go public.

Management Issues

- Pat reported that he had briefed the Hill on our efforts to consolidate aviation support for our mission in Iraq. Jack noted the need to demonstrate concretely that we are meeting USAID needs. Pat said this is absolutely the case, but noted the difficulty of proving a negative.

- Pat raised concerns about a DC paper [redacted] Cheryl asked for a copy.

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S/P

- Annemarie said she would be sending a package to the Secretary on interfaith dialogue for her speech.

Congressional Issues

- Rich noted that Berman's Iran sanctions bill was reported out of committee yesterday with broad support. Expects same for Dodd bill today.
- Rose will brief members of Senate National Security Committee via video conference on START negotiations today.
- Jack suggested taking Senator Lugar to see training of civilian personnel, including agricultural experts, at Camp Atterbury in Indiana.
- Congressman Murtha has asked to meet with Matthew Hoh, the 3161 employee who resigned in protest over policy in Afghanistan. Murtha also told Jack that while he is impressed with our civilian efforts in Afghanistan, he will not support a troop increase, believing it is not worth the sacrifice.
- November 13 is the cutoff for getting nominations to the Hill if we want them confirmed this year.

Public Affairs

- The press in the Department will be linked into Tom Shannon's noon press conference in Tegucigalpa.
- PA expects questions on the Iranian counterproposal which is leaking out.

Legal Affairs

- EB asked for a special exemption from the White House mandate of no lobbyists on advisory committees. Cheryl said we would not make that request.

Philippines

- I noted that yet another Typhoon, this one now a category two, is headed directly for the Philippines in the next 48 hours.