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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2011 11:36 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: WSJ: Pakistan's Rabbani Khar Pales Next to Clinton

Wow

----- Original Message -----

From: Feldman, Daniel F
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2011 03:56 AM
To: Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Fw: WSJ: Pakistan's Rabbani Khar Pales Next to Clinton

Ouch, but true.

----- Original Message -----

From: Tomlinson, Christina
Sent: Saturday, October 22, 2011 11:22 AM
To: Grossman, Marc I; Feldman, Daniel F
Subject: WSJ: Pakistan's Rabbani Khar Pales Next to Clinton

Don't know whether you saw this on the road.

Pakistan's Rabbani Khar Pales Next to Clinton Wall Street Journal

By Tom Wright

October 21, 2011

When Pakistan appointed Hina Rabbani Khar, a 33-year-old politician, as its first female foreign minister earlier this year, there was some suggestion that she lacked experience for the job.

On Friday, sharing a podium with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, she certainly appeared out of her depth.

Mrs. Clinton masterfully chided Pakistan for not invading North Waziristan and managed not to sound too schoolmarmly in the process, although she did ask Islamabad to "squeeze" the Haqqani militant group a few too many times.

Ms. Khar, by contrast, seemed to get lost in her own rhetoric, saying very little during overly-long answers to reporters' questions. She often repeated phrases like "both sides of the border" numerous times in one response. It was unclear at points exactly what she wanted to get across.

At one stage, her loosely worn headdress, evocative of the late former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto, slipped off her head.

No doubt Ms. Khar will grow into the job and was noteworthy on a recent trip to the U.S. for standing her ground over allegations that Pakistani intelligence ran the Haqqani network.

But, fairly or not, Ms. Khar's performance next to Mrs. Clinton could give ammunition to cynics who believe her appointment was an attempt by Pakistan's military—the final arbiter of the country's foreign policy—to put someone junior and malleable in the position.

The last incumbent, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, was pushed out, reportedly after disagreements with the military.

Ms. Khar's rise in politics has been fast since completing a degree in hospitality management at the University of Massachusetts and returning to Pakistan, where she opened a restaurant in the grounds of the Lahore polo club.

She's from a powerful Punjabi political family and entered politics in 2002 with the political party of former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, switching at the last election to the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party.

Ms. Khar worked closely with the late U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke in a previous junior minister role in which she oversaw foreign aid contributions to Pakistan.

Mr. Holbrooke had nice things to say about her abilities. But since then, Ms. Khar has been fighting a losing battle to build a serious image.

Earlier this year, during peace talks in New Delhi with Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna, who is 79 years old, Ms. Khar won a warm reception from the normally-hostile Indian press.

But much of the coverage focused on Ms. Khar's choice of designer handbag and what shades she was wearing on top of her head.

It would be easy to ascribe much of this to old-style sexism. But, as Ms. Khar's performance alongside Ms. Clinton showed, she'll have to work harder to change the focus from her accoutrements to her achievements.

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