

RELEASE IN PART
B5, B6

From: PVerveer [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, March 21, 2010 4:03 PM
To: H
Subject: US-Afghan Women's Council in Texas

B6

I just wanted to tell you that the US Afghan Women's Council had a productive meeting and public forum at the Bush Institute at SMU. Both President and Mrs. Bush participated. They hosted a dinner the night before for the members of the Council, the acting Afghan minister of women's affairs, the Afghan ambassador, etc.

(I sat with the President and he told me how much he's enjoyed working with your husband, how they are going to Haiti soon and how they are even doing joint appearances together. He said, "I like the guy." Having just come to Dallas from CGI, I told him how hard President Clinton was working on Haiti and he responded that he knew that.)

In opening remarks at the public forum (which was the 2nd conference of the Bush Institute) and which got a lot of press attention there, Bush talked about the barbarism of the Taliban in general and towards women in particular. He introduced some female Marines who were about to be deployed to work with the women in Afghanistan and said it was a terrific idea.

I mentioned that the US Afghan Women's Council was born in the Bush Administration but continues in the Obama Administration with your strong support and that it represents the best of our country coming together in public/private collaborations. Several Afghan women participated, including the Vital Voices honoree this year. They talked about how women are still targeted and suffering harshly and how the violence against them has increased.

We had a very good meeting of the Council. Embassy Kabul was present via live video, so Amb Wayne, the Afghan education minister's COS and others participated. We had a good discussion among the US participants who included many from business, foundations, academia, etc on access to education, economic empowerment and other pressing challenges.

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B5

Finally, while I was in Texas, I heard about that the Afghan amnesty law was published in the official gazette, bringing it into force and providing amnesty for individuals responsible for large-scale human rights abuses before December 2001. It says they shall "enjoy all their legal rights and shall not be prosecuted." I understand SRAP has sent you a memo on this. At a time when discussions on reconciliation are already making the women fearful, this will only make matters worse.

Sima Samar said that after the amnesty law was passed by parliament in 2007, Karzai told her he would not sign it and therefore it would not be enacted. It is not clear when he did sign it, but it has just come to light as printed copies of the law were received by organizations that monitor the gazette.