

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Verma, Richard R <VermaRR@state.gov>
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Lowey to Remove Assistance for Afghanistan From Foreign Aid Bill

Chairwoman Announces Oversight Hearings on Corruption in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON – In light of two troubling news reports on corruption within the Afghan government, Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY), Chairwoman of the Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, today announced she is removing funding for Afghanistan beyond humanitarian aid from her 2011 bill scheduled for markup this week.

“The alleged shipment of billions in donor funds out of Afghanistan and allegations of Afghan government insiders impeding corruption investigations are outrageous,” said Lowey. “I do not intend to appropriate one more dime for assistance to Afghanistan until I have confidence that U.S. taxpayer money is not being abused to line the pockets of corrupt Afghan government officials, drug lords, and terrorists. Furthermore, the government of Afghanistan must demonstrate that corruption is being aggressively investigated and prosecuted.

“Rampant corruption fosters the conditions that threaten the security of our troops and the stability of the Afghan government and economy.”

The State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee will mark up its Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations Act on Wednesday June 30th. The subcommittee will not consider any bilateral assistance for the Afghan government other than lifesaving humanitarian aid at this time.

Lowey also announced the Subcommittee will hold oversight hearings after the July 4th recess to get to the bottom of these allegations.

“Too many Americans are suffering in this economy for us to put their hard-earned tax dollars into the hands of criminals overseas,” said Lowey. “We will not commit billions more in taxpayer money for Afghanistan until there are assurances that such funds will be used for their intended purposes and that the government of Afghanistan is willing and able to root corruption within its ranks. U.S. taxpayers deserve nothing less.”