

RELEASE IN PART B6

**From:** McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2010 8:39 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Impact of US assistance in Pakistan

See below. Terrific piece from the BBC which I will circulate.

Meant to mention yesterday that I am going to Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Santiago next week. In Buenos Aires and Montevideo I will speaking at two business conferences being hosted by Council of the Americas and in Chile I will be visiting some of the public diplomacy programs we launched after the earthquake.

You may recall that I have a long-standing relationship with Christina Kirchner going back to my Discovery days. We had quite a large and successful business there. We are trying to arrange for me to meet with her when I am in BA and Arturo has briefed me on points he would like me to make if I get to spend some time with her.

I thought yesterday went well although I think it is going to be hard going to keep the world interested and committed to raising the necessary funding.

[Redacted]

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jm

**From:** Mellott, Joseph  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2010 6:50 AM  
**To:** McHale, Judith A  
**Subject:** Fw: Impact of US assistance in Pakistan

Judith -

See below from [Redacted] at BBC.

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Joe  
Joe Mellott  
Sent from my Blackberry

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]>  
**To:** Mellott, Joseph  
**Sent:** Fri Aug 20 06:29:43 2010  
**Subject:** Impact of US assistance in Pakistan

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Joe

How are things?

I thought Judith might be interested in this piece by the BBC's Islamabad editor. [Redacted] The piece should be on BBC News website soon.

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[Redacted]

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Haroon Rashid,  
Kalam Valley, North West Pakistan

A population of around 70,000 in Pakistan's remote Kalam valley in Swat district is cut off after road links were swept away by flood waters three weeks back. Dozens of multi-story hotels perched on the river banks can't be seen anymore. The people are without electricity and telephone services too.

But despite this dismal picture, what follows natural disasters is not always all bad.

International assistance led by the US forces here is changing people's perceptions while local volunteers have joined hands to start rebuilding bridges and roads to restore their connection with the outside world.

Until last year Kalam, as rest of the Swat district, was hit hard by Islamic militancy. They espoused anti-US agenda. But Pakistani troops helped by local people flushed the Taleban out of the picturesque valley surrounded by tall green mountains. The incident of a few women too killing some Taleban is still proudly told here.

With the routing of Taleban last year and arrival of the US Marines helicopters in Kalam, local perception of the Americans is changing fast. Suddenly the local population, mostly Pashtoon, now appreciate the American presence.

Thirty-year old Habib Rasul, a local Taxi driver, says before floods they used to consider Americans enemy. "We used to consider them bad, our enemies. Muslim countries did not give us any assistance but they did so they're good."

Kalam is cut off by road. Depending on weather, US military helicopters are bringing in relief goods, mostly flour and medicines in a number of sorties each day. They land at Kalam's green Shahi ground where hundreds of affectees' sit around the helipad waiting for their turn for aid or to be taken on board.

Despite the helipad open to general public, no untoward incident has so far taken place. But the Pakistani authorities it seems don't wish to take any chances. Apart from two Pakistani military commandoes on each chopper, the helipad's security is in the Pakistani military's hands.

On their way back, these Blackhawks take the sick and the wounded out of the secluded valley.

'A friend in need is a friend indeed. In the past we thought the Americans were supporting militants, that it was their game, but now I am sure ninety-five percent of people in Kalam believe they are friends,' says a local social worker Ehsanul Haq. "We're grateful to them."

Kalam is a place for leisure lover and hikers. The small tourist resort had around 300 small and medium sized hotels. But the spread of militancy had badly affected the local hotel economy for two years. In a bid to attract tourists and restore their confidence, the military in July held a festival in Kalam. But a few days later, floods wreaked havoc with the local hotel industry. Over 4000 tourists had to be evacuated in helicopters. The local hoteliers fear getting the tourists back now would take a lot of time.

Another positive thing to come out of the current disaster is the local population's decision not to wait for any government help and start rebuilding bridges and clear roads.

Malik Ghazan Khan, head of local volunteers, told the BBC they know if they look towards the government it could take months or even years. "We are doing it on the basis of self help because who else can assist us at this moment except God. The Chief Minister has told us they can't do it immediately. He said they had to go through processes and procedures so it takes time. So we have decided to do it ourselves by taking God name. I salute the brave people of Kalam, they have so far reconstructed six bridges. We have made 18 to 20 kms road useable now."

These volunteers have their own problems. Three fell in the gushing river Swat in front of us while putting a log across the river. Luckily all three were rescued but one had his leg broken and had to be evacuated the next day.

Like food and medicines, fuel is in short supply too. A volunteer Noorul Ahad told me they don't have the fuels. "While fasting its impossible for us to travel 20 kms up and down a day."

**Haroon Rashid,**  
BBC Pakistan.

[www.bbcurdu.com](http://www.bbcurdu.com)

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