

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, October 15, 2011 10:33 PM
To: H
Subject: Afghanistan Trip

I hope that when you are in Kabul you can do a small, (no matter how brief) meeting with some of the key women leaders, even if you do a larger NGO meeting. It is my strong sense from recent visits and emails that the women are feeling particularly apprehensive and isolated. They tell me all the time that because of you they have whatever standing they've been able to maintain. Rina Amiri is just back and told me that the women told her they "bought almost 3 years" because you've been their validator with their own govt -- from the London Conf to Kabul Conf to peace jirga and more. This is a very challenging time for them. No one knows better than you the ongoing upheavals, and they are worried they will be more marginalized in the transition and pushed back, even though their contributions have been significant. Rina also feels it important to meet with the women.

Also with the ramp up to Bonn, their participation in their own government's delegation remains a question. Almost 10 years ago at the first Bonn conf, there was significant women's representation in both the official delegation and civil society meeting. Karzai has committed 25 percent for the December Bonn meeting, but we have to hold him to it. Also, some of the women members in the House are planning a Codel to Bonn to support the Afghan women.

I'm told that the segment on Afghanistan in "Women, War and Peace" series is very strong and has very moving footage of your meeting with the Afghan women before the Kabul Conf -- which when premiered on the Hill was met with applause. I also met with Kay Granger this week and she asked that we let her know how she can better support the Afghan women.

I feel very strongly that even a brief meeting with the women (with the cameras capturing it) will have huge substantive and psychological value. Moreover, since we have all new US personnel in Kabul, the women don't have the same kind of access that they did in the past.

Lastly, re: Central Asia and the Silk Road vision, we have been working to incorporate the economic role women can and must play from ag to small business in the region. The Bishkek econ conf we did with SCA is already paying dividends. For example, we are developing cross border econ projects between Tajik and Afghan women. If there's a chance to do even a photo with some of the businesswomen in Tajikistan, it would validate their efforts. I hope the celebrations in LA are terrific.

Thx