

RELEASE IN FULL

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2012 9:23 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: USAID story updates

See highlight

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**From:** Feldman, Daniel F  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 6:58 PM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D; Nides, Thomas R; Carland, Raphael  
**Subject:** FW: USAID story updates

Just flagging the negative USAID story expected in the WSJ Fri on its stabilization projects in Afg, alleging that they've "failed." I've asked our comms folks to work with AID on their TPs as soon as they can get them.

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**From:** Haq, Nayyera  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 4:41 PM  
**To:** Feldman, Daniel F  
**Cc:** Lucas, Laura D  
**Subject:** USAID story updates

Dan -- Story updates from USAID. Looks like they've done what's possible to manage the storylines.

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**From:** Edwards, Benjamin (LPA/AA) [<mailto:beedwards@usaid.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 3:27 PM  
**To:** Lucas, Laura D; Haq, Nayyera; Hayden, Caitlin  
**Cc:** Anderson, Lars (LPA/AA)

*Wall Street Journal reporter Dion Nissenbaum has indicated that the long-awaited story on USAID's stabilization projects in Afghanistan will run on Friday, February 10. The negative story will likely allege that USAID's stabilization effort in Afghanistan has failed. The narrative will focus on the strategic provincial roads project and argue that numerous challenges – including wasteful spending – caused this project to fall far short its goals. The reporter has interviewed numerous U.S. officials and partners, and USAID plans to send a final statement to him today that speaks broadly about USAID's stabilization program in Afghanistan. We have talking points, so we can respond to the article quickly if necessary.*

The WSJ story is the most pressing story right now, but USAID has been involved in a few other forthcoming press stories and outreach activities around Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I've summarized each of them below as FYI. Of particular note, I want to make sure you are aware that USAID is working on annual reports that highlight our spending and accomplishments in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past year. More details below.

***AP story on the Afghan Public Protection Force***

Associated Press reporter Heidi Vogt is writing a story on Afghanistan about the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), the new Afghan security force that President Karzai's mandated to replace the private security contractors currently used by donors, implementing partners, etc.... The story will likely paint a negative

picture of the APPF's readiness to assume authority on March 20, 2012 and may include criticism from implementing partners. The reporter inquired about how this might affect our work in Afghanistan, so the embassy in Kabul provided a statement. The reporter is still tweaking the story, but she expects it to run very soon. We have prepared talking points, so we will be ready to respond if necessary.

***NYT story on human rights and children***

New York Times reporter Alissa Rubin is writing a story about baad, the practice of trading young girls to settle disputes among adults. The reporter interviewed Mark Wilson, the COTR of USAID's program to combat baad, today about the prevalence of this practice in Afghanistan and USAID's program that educate Afghan's that this is a legal and human rights violation. We expect this story to fairly portray USAID's efforts to combat the practice of baad.

***WSJ story on compound life in Afghanistan***

Wall Street Journal reporter Dion Nissenbaum is writing a story on compound life in Afghanistan. He is interested in a number of compounds where USAID contractors live, but he is particularly interested in talking to USAID about one particular compound, run as a private business, where some of USAID's implementing partners are housed. The reporter has heard that the U.S. Government has told our contractors that we won't pay for them to stay there anymore, and he would like a response on background or off-the-record. We are waiting for guidance on this before responding.

***WSJ story on maternal health***

Wall Street Journal reporter Maria Abi-Habib is in the early stages of writing a story on maternal health in Afghanistan. She will interview Susan Brock, the head of USAID's health office in Afghanistan, on Saturday about our midwifery programs. The reporter may travel to Badakhshan in a few weeks if weather permits to see a midwifery program outside of Kabul. We will monitor this story as it develops to determine the best way forward.

***Afghanistan annual report***

USAID's annual report for Afghanistan is currently being edited by USAID/OAPA. The report will aim to inform the Washington audience about our progress and spending in Afghanistan over the past year.

***Pakistan annual report***

USAID's annual report for Pakistan is currently being drafted by USAID/OAPA. The report will aim to inform the Washington audience about our progress and spending in Pakistan over the past year.