

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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001. fax	To Alyse Nelson from Belquis Ahmadi (1 page)	12/03/1999	b(6)
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COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 20037

FOLDER TITLE:

HR [Human Rights] Awards - 1999

2013-0534-S

rv1577

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Monday, December 6, 1999

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1999

Final Schedule

SCHEDULING DIRECTOR:

STEPHANIE STREETT

HOME: 202-332-5651

OFFICE: 202-456-2823

WHCA PAGER: 4824

PRESS DESK:

ANNE EDWARDS

HOME: 301-565-3101

OFFICE: 202-456-2921

WHCA PAGER: 4208

EVENT COORDINATOR:

LAURA SCHWARTZ

HOME: 202-331-4339

OFFICE: 202-456-5655

WHCA PAGER: 4293

WEATHER:

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Partly sunny, becoming mostly cloudy with isolated showers by evening. Winds west to southwest at 8 to 12 knots. Low 43°F. High 56°F.

Monday, December 6, 1999

**SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1999
*Final Schedule***

DOWN UNTIL 11:00 AM

11:00	am-	MEETING
11:15	am	OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: John Podesta
11:15	am-	BUDGET MEETING
12:15	pm	CABINET ROOM Staff Contact: Gene Sperling, Jack Lew
12:20	pm-	MEETING
12:30	pm	OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Stephanie Streett
12:40	pm-	MAKE-A-WISH PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
12:50	pm	OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Karin Kullman WHITE HOUSE PHOTO ONLY
1:00	pm-	BRIEFING
1:05	pm	OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Larry Stein
1:05	pm-	HEALTH CARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY ACT OF 1999
1:15	pm	S 580 BILL SIGNING OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Larry Stein WHITE HOUSE PHOTO ONLY
1:15	pm-	BRIEFING
1:25	pm	OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Samuel Berger, Melanne Verveer
1:25	pm	THE PRESIDENT proceeds to Presidential Hall, Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building

December 3, 1999 (6:34 PM)

Monday, December 6, 1999

1:30 pm-
2:15 pm

**HUMAN RIGHTS DAY / ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AWARD
CEREMONY**

PRESIDENTIAL HALL

Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building

Remarks: Paul Orzulak

Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Samuel Berger, Melanne Verveer

Event Coordinator: Julie Eddy

OPEN PRESS

Note: There will be approximately 130 guests in attendance.

Note: There will be five award recipients.

- Off-stage announcement of Eleanor Roosevelt Awardees: Burke Marshall, Sister Jean Marshall, Charlotte Bunch, Delores Huerta, and Reverend Leon Sullivan.
- Off-stage announcement of **the President**, accompanied by the First Lady and Belquis Ahmadi, Afghan Refugee.
- The First Lady makes remarks and introduces Belquis Ahmadi.
- Belquis Ahmadi makes brief remarks and introduces **the President**.
- **The President** makes remarks.
- Citations are read by the Military Aide and **the President** and the First Lady present awards.
- **The President** and the First Lady depart and proceed to Room 459.

2:20 pm-
2:35 pm

VIDEO TAPINGS

ROOM 459

Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building

Remarks: Josh Gottheimer

Staff Contact: Heather Riley

Annual Seasons Greetings Video with The First Lady

Video Tribute to John Sykes with The First Lady

Tribute to Senator Lloyd Bentsen

Staff Contact: Minyon Moore

2:40 pm-
3:15 pm

LUNCH/PHONE AND OFFICE TIME

OVAL OFFICE

December 3, 1999 (6:34 PM)

Monday, December 6, 1999

3:15 pm-
3:30 pm **BRIEFING**
 OVAL OFFICE
 Staff Contact: Larry Stein

3:30 pm-
4:45 pm **CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS MEETING**
 CABINET ROOM
 Staff Contact: Larry Stein
 CLOSED PRESS

4:45 pm-
7:00 pm **PHONE AND OFFICE TIME**
 OVAL OFFICE

7:00 pm-
7:30 pm **DOWN TIME**
 RESIDENCE

Note: The following event is a black tie affair.

7:30 pm-
9:00 pm **CONGRESSIONAL BALL**
 MAP ROOM
 Staff Contact: Larry Stein, Capricia Marshall
 Event Coordinator: Laura Schwartz
 WHITE HOUSE PHOTO ONLY

Note: There will be approximately 1,300 guests in attendance.

- **The President** and the First Lady proceed to Map Room for photo receiving line.
- Upon conclusion of photo receiving line, **the President** and the First Lady depart.

BC RON **THE WHITE HOUSE**
 WASHINGTON, D.C.

HRC RON **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

December 3, 1999 (6:34 PM)

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

8768

December 2, 1999

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR SAMUEL R. BERGER

THROUGH:

ERIC SCHWARTZ *gm for*

FROM:

STEVEN J. NAPLAN *gm*

SUBJECT:

The President's Human Rights Day Event

Attached is a Meeting Memorandum to the President for his Monday event to commemorate Human Rights Day.

Concurrences by:

David Leavy, Tom Malinowski,

RECOMMENDATION

Via Email

That you sign the attached Memorandum to the President.

Attachments

Tab I Meeting Memorandum to the President

Tab A Draft Citations for the Five Awardees

Tab B Biographies of the Five Awardees and Afghan refugee
Belquis Ahmadi

Tab C Draft List (in-progress) of Invitees for Presidential
Hall Event

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

REMARKS TO COMMEMORATE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND ANNOUNCEMENT
OF RECIPIENTS OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

DATE: December 6, 1999

LOCATION: Presidential Hall, OEOB Room 450

TIME: 1:45 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER

MELANNE VERVEER

Acting Director for HR

I. PURPOSE

To commemorate annual Human Rights Day (the actual date of which is December 10) by delivering remarks detailing your commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights at home and abroad, and by honoring outstanding American human rights leaders.

II. BACKGROUND

This year's commemoration of Human Rights Day will mark the 51st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN General Assembly declaration affirming universal standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

-- The Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights

Eleanor Roosevelt was the driving force behind the Declaration. Last year, to honor her commitment to human rights and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration, you established the Award. The 1999 recipients of the second annual Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights will be:

- Charlotte Bunch, for her efforts to secure the inclusion of gender and sexual orientation on the global human rights agenda. Bunch was a critical leader for the inclusion of women's rights at UN Human Rights Conferences in Vienna (1993) and Beijing (1995).

- Delores Huerta, for co-founding and leading the United Farm Workers of America and a lifetime of labor rights activism.

- Burke Marshall, for his life-long commitment to civil rights, including his efforts to dismantle "Jim Crow" as Assistant Attorney General in the Kennedy Administration.

- Sister Jean Marshall, a Dominican nun who founded St. Rita's Immigrant and Refugee Center in the Bronx, which has served victimized immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, Russia, Albania, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

- Rev. Leon Sullivan, author of the "Sullivan Principles," which encouraged companies working in South Africa to take steps to end apartheid and "Global Sullivan Principles" which promote corporate social responsibility worldwide.

-- Your Remarks

In addition to issuing the second annual Eleanor Roosevelt Awards, you will deliver general remarks regarding your commitment to the continued promotion of human right globally. You will emphasize your particular concern about Taliban abuses of Afghan women, as well as a number of other significant human rights abuses (including PRC persecution of the Falun Gong and Russian violations of human rights in Chechnya).

III. PARTICIPANTS

(Greetings in Presidential Hall, OEOB Room 450 "Hold Room")

Burke Marshall
Sister Jean Marshall
Charlotte Bunch
Delores Huerta
Rev. Leon Sullivan

HH-madi
Belquis Ahmadi ("bell-KEEHS ~~Ah MAH-dee~~") (Afghan woman refugee)

The First Lady
Jim Steinberg
Melanne Vermeer
Eric Schwartz
Harold Koh

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open press coverage of remarks made in Presidential Hall, OEOB Room 450.

V. SEQUENCE

- You will greet the award recipients inside Presidential Hall's "Hold Room"
- Jim Steinberg, Melanne Verveer, Eric Schwartz, and Harold Koh will take their seats in Presidential Hall.
- Following an off-stage announcement, you will take the stage of Presidential Hall accompanied by the First Lady, Burke Marshall, Sister Jean Marshall, Charlotte Bunch, Delores Huerta, Rev. Leon Sullivan and Belquis Ahmadi (Afghan refugee).
- The First Lady will deliver brief welcoming remarks and will introduce Ms. Ahmadi.
- Ms. Ahmadi will deliver brief remarks regarding the plight of refugees from Taliban persecution and will introduce you.
- You will deliver remarks on human rights.
- A military aide will read the citations as you and the First Lady present the awards to the recipients. The five awardees will not be offering remarks.
- Following the awards ceremony you will thank the guests for coming and close the event.

Attachments

- Tab A Draft Citations for the Five Awardees
- Tab B Biographies of the Five Awardees and Afghan refugee Belquis Ahmadi
- Tab C Draft List (in-progress) of Invitees for Presidential Hall Event

DRAFT

1999 ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AWARD DRAFT CITATIONS:

CHARLOTTE A. BUNCH

Through her work at the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, Charlotte Bunch has built a worldwide network of activists and raised international awareness of discrimination against women, gender violence, gay and lesbian rights, and other crucial issues. She was a key leader in ensuring the inclusion of women's rights at the UN human rights conferences in Vienna and Beijing. We honor her for her courageous advocacy and activism.

DOLORES C. HUERTA

For more than thirty years, Dolores Huerta has been at the vanguard of the workers' and women's rights movement in the United States. As co-founder with Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers of America, she has helped farm workers secure their rights to organize and to bargain collectively, in the process educating millions of Americans on the central importance of these rights. We honor her today for her courage and determination and for her achievements in promoting the dignity and welfare of millions of American workers.

BURKE MARSHALL

As Assistant Attorney General in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, Burke Marshall played a key role in the civil rights struggle and the passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act. In the years since, he has inspired new generations to pursue public service. We honor him for his essential contribution to ending segregation and transforming our Nation.

SISTER JEAN MARSHALL

Sister Jean Marshall has helped make real the dreams of thousands of people who have fled persecution and abuse overseas. As founder of St. Rita's Immigrant and Refugee Center in the Bronx, she has helped refugees and asylum-seekers to learn English, find jobs and homes, and receive health and social services. We honor her for her outstanding humanitarian efforts.

REV. LEON SULLIVAN

Rev. Leon Sullivan has spent a lifetime helping to improve the lives of others. As author of the Sullivan Principles, and as a champion of civil and political rights, he has moved mountains to help end apartheid in South Africa, secure civil rights at home, and promote corporate responsibility and social justice worldwide. We honor him for his tireless crusade to help others find the greatness within themselves.

DRAFT

Come Stand Among Great Women®

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Fame](#)

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Center](#)

[How to
Nominate](#)

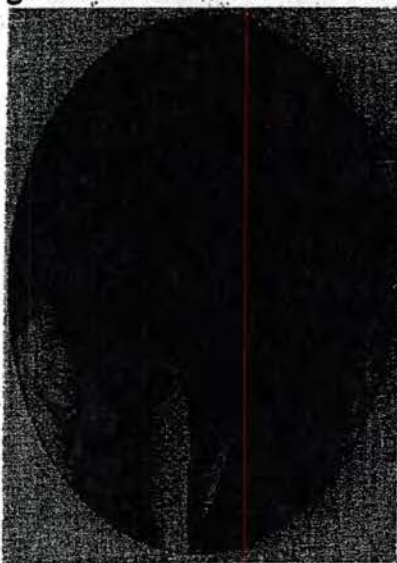
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Charlotte Bunch 1944-

A pioneering strategist and organizer, Charlotte Bunch is one of the foremost advocates of international attention to women's issues, and the inclusion of gender and sexual orientation on global human rights agenda.



A 1966 Magna Cum Laude graduate of Duke University, Bunch became active on the national scene as a writer, lesbian activist and lecturer, particularly in movements for women's liberation and women's rights. She created and edited *Quest: A Feminist Journal* (1974), one of the first and the leading journals to promote analysis and policy making to improve women's status in society.

Expanding her activities into the international arena, Bunch built an international network of women, united by common concerns, and prepared by education and training for effective action. Through her speeches and organizing at international conferences, she served as a critical catalyst for action on women's issues. For example, her speech to Amnesty International in 1989 marked the beginning of that organization's efforts to address gender-specific human rights issues. Her leadership was crucial to the adoption by the 1993 U.N. Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna, of strong support for women, and at the 1995 U.N. Conference on Human Rights, in Beijing, for supporting woman's place in human rights advocacy.

In 1989, Bunch founded The Center for Women's Global Leadership at Douglass College, Rutgers University, where she serves as Director and Professor of Urban Studies. Through the Center, she continues her role as leader of national and international networking, advocacy and training, to advance women's well-being around the world.

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Dolores Huerta 1930-

Dolores Huerta is one the century's most powerful and respected labor movement leaders. Huerta left teaching and co-founded the United Farm



Workers with Cesar Chavez in 1962: "I quit because I couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes. I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children." Huerta has raised her own 11 children while organizing for the labor movement.

The 1965 Delano Grape Strike launched UFW into a period of fast-paced organizing, with Huerta negotiating contracts with growers, lobbying, organizing strikes and boycotts and well as spearheading farmworker political activities. Always politically active, she co-chaired the 1972 California delegation to the Democratic Convention. She led the fight to permit thousands of migrant/immigrant children to receive services. She also led the struggle to

achieve unemployment insurance, collective bargaining rights, and immigration rights for farmworkers under the 1985 Rodino amnesty legalization program. Huerta continues as an outstanding labor and political activist.



To learn more, explore the books available at our Book Shop.

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T. Charles Erickson, Office of Public Affairs
Burke Marshall '44 LLB, received the Law School's Medal of Merit during October's Law School Alumni Weekend.

[Back to text](#)

Yale Law School - Burke Marshall

Page 1 of 1

B.A., Yale, 1943, LL.B., 1951. LL.D., U. New Haven, 1990. Articles Ed. and Book Rev. Ed., Yale L.J. Admitted to bar: DC, 1952. Member, Covington & Burling, 1951-61. Asst. U.S. Atty. Gen. for Civil Rights Div., U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1961-65. Vice President and Gen. Counsel, IBM Corp., 1965-69; Sr. Vice President, 1969-70. Prof., Yale, 1970-78; John Thomas Smith Prof., 1978-86; Katzenbach Prof., 1986-93; Prof. Emeritus and Crawford Lecturer since 1993; Deputy Dean, 1970-75. Chairman, Natl. Adv. Comm. on Selective Service.

Author of: *Federalism, and Civil Rights*, 1964; *The My Lai Massacre and Its Cover-Up: Beyond the Limits of the Law?* (with J. Goldstein and J. Schwartz), 1976; *The Supreme Court and Human Rights* (ed.), 1982; *A Workable Government?* (ed.), 1989.

Subjects: Federal jurisdiction; legislation; political and civil rights; constitutional law.



Yale Law School

Sister Jean Marshall:

A Dominican nun, Sister Jean founded St. Rita's Immigrant and Refugee Center in the University Heights neighborhood of the Bronx in 1983. The center helps victimized immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, Russia, Albania, Ethiopia, and Bosnia, and most recently linked Kosovar refugees to the Area's ethnic Albanians.

The Center, which is financed with city, state and federal funds, teaches refugees and immigrants English language skills, helps them find apartments, get food, work and clothing, as well as health and social services. There is a staff of 10 as well as a two-person staff at another satellite site in Queens.

Sister Jean has done a great deal of work with Amerasians, who have had particular resettlement problems, helping to provide them with the skills and education needed to qualify for jobs. The Center houses an alternative high school for Amerasians.

St. Rita's has been home to fistfights and knife fights and small-unexplained fires. According to Newsday, Sister Jean is not above hauling the combatants into her office by the scruff of their frayed collars. She is fluent in Spanish and Khmer.

THE BACKGROUND ◀

I envision a bridge

A bridge builder

SUMMITS

Summit 1

Summit 2

Summit 3

Summit 4

Summit 5

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Debt Relief

Schools for Africa

The Best Bankers

Teachers for Africa

Physicians for Africa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Advisory Committee

IFESH Directors

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HOME

A BRIDGE BUILDER

*"The time is not far off
when Black technicians, artisans and craftsmen
will help mold a flourishing Africa into a new greatness."
-Rev Leon Sullivan*

THE REV. LEON SULLIVAN-



union organizer A. Philip Randolph, who Rev. Sullivan assisted in working on the first March on Washington movement in the early years.

Nicknamed the "Lion of Zion,"

when he was the charismatic minister of the 6000 member Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Rev. Sullivan established the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), one of the nation's most comprehensive and successful training programs. This community-based organization now provides job training and education to some 70 U.S. cities and 15 African countries, the Philippines and Poland. OIC has trained more than 3 million for jobs worldwide.

Rev. Sullivan has been recognized as a man of unparalleled vision and action. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded the president's Medal of Freedom, recipient of some 50 honorary degrees and board member of Mellon Bank and the Boy Scouts of America, Rev. Sullivan has enjoyed a personal relationship with every president since John F. Kennedy.

In 1971, Sullivan made history when he was elected to the Board of Directors of General Motors. He was the first African American ever elected to the board of a major corporation. In 1977, while still at General Motors, Sullivan created the landmark seven Sullivan Principles, which outlined guidelines for corporations and governments interested in doing business with South Africa's racially divided system and helped to end apartheid. With the dismantling of apartheid, Rev. Sullivan's talent for bringing world leaders together to discuss international issues and to find solutions has led to the establishment of the not-for-profit International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), sponsor of the first African-African American Summit.

African - African American Summit 5040 East Shea Boulevard
Suite 260 Phoenix, AZ 85254 - 4610

Tel: 1 - 800 - 835 - 3530 Fax: 1 - 602 - 443 - 1824

E-mail: SUMMIT_V@aol.com

Bio- Ms. Belquis Ahmadi from Afghanistan

Current address:

**Apt. 4, 4600 Louisiana Ave.
Saint Louis, MO 63111**

Ph: (314) 457-9224

E-mail: Belquisa@yahoo.com - or - Belquisa@hotmail.com

Belquis Ahmadi is 28 years old women's rights activist from Afghanistan. She has worked for women's rights in Afghanistan for over ten years. Currently, she is Afghanistan Advisor for the Women's Rights Advocacy Program of Washington DC based non-profit organization, the International Human Rights Law Group. Ms. Ahmadi has highlighted the women's rights situation in Afghanistan at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva as a NGO delegation member of International Human rights Law Group in 1998 and 1999.

Ms. Ahmadi is one of the three founding members of the Afghan Women's Network which was started in Kabul in 1996 after the Taliban takeover of the Afghan capital. She has also worked as Program Officer for Women's Affairs at ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief) in Peshawar, Pakistan and Kabul, Afghanistan from 1996 to 1999. Earlier, Ms. Ahmadi worked as Office Manager for CARE International office in Kabul, Afghanistan from 1995 to 1996. She started her work for women as a Deputy Head Nurse and Administrator for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRW) at the War Wounded Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan from 1988 where she worked till 1995.

Ms. Ahmadi has written articles and papers on Violence Against Women in Afghan Society and about the struggle for women's human rights in Afghanistan.

202 847 5337 PICW 12002

BELQUIS AHMADI

Belquis Ahmadi was born and raised in Kabul Afghanistan 27 years ago. She has worked for women's rights in Afghanistan for over ten years. She currently serves as an Advisor to the International Human Rights Law Group's work on Afghanistan. She has also been a member of the Law Group's delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in 1998 and 1999 where she eloquently highlighted the violations of women's rights in Afghanistan and appealed to the international community to support the rights of women in Afghanistan.

Ms. Ahmadi attended the Law Faculty of Kabul University and at the same time worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) first as an interpreter in 1988 and later as a nurse in the ICRC War Wounded Hospital. In 1992 she was promoted to the position of Head Nurse and Administrator.

She has also worked as Officer Manager with CARE International and later as Program Officer for Women's Affairs with the organization ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief). She is one of the three founding members of the Afghan Women's Network that was started two months before the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 1996. Its purpose was to create awareness among women about their rights and encourage them to take an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Ms. Ahmadi was one of the thousands of Afghan women who were forced to give up their jobs and stay at home after the Taliban took control of Kabul in September 1996. She subsequently moved to Pakistan where she worked from 1996-1999 as Program Officer for Women's Affairs at ACBAR in Peshawar. With the support of refugee students in Peshawar, she also formed the Refugee Students' Union in 1997. She continued her work as Coordinator of the Afghan Women's Network and the Students' Union until January 1999.

In January 1999, Ms. Ahmadi arrived in the United States as a refugee. She now works full time and also studies political science at a university. She is guardian of and is raising her two teenage sisters and brother. She has written a number of articles and papers on the struggle for women's human rights in Afghanistan.

GUEST LIST

Awardees and Family

Charlotte A. Bunch

Winifred Bunch (sister)

Dolores Huerta

Burke Marshall

Violet Marshall (wife)

Jean Marshall (daughter)

Catherine Marshall (daughter)

Nelson Bakermar (husband of Catie)

Grace and Pembroke Hart (sister and brother-in-law)

Sister Jean Marshall

Rev. Leon Sullivan

Grace Sullivan (wife)

Guests

Karen Abuzayd
UNHCR

Mahnaz Afkhami
Sisterhood Is Global Institute

Belquis Ahmadi

Zekia Ahmadzai, Senior Social Worker for Afghan Women
International Rescue Committee

Gani Mete Beqiri (Kosovar refugee) – Guest of Sister Jean Marshall

Robert Bonsignore
Akin Gump

Beverly Bruce, Chair
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

Ria Burghardt, Development Director
International Human Rights Law Group

Holly Burkhalter
Physicians for Human Rights

Sister Judy Cannon, RSM
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Roxanna Carrillo – Guest of Charlotte Bunch

Vilay Chaleunrath
Indochinese Community Center

Thomaseia G. Cotton, President & CEO
OIC of America – Guest of Rev. Leon Sullivan

Jewel Daney – Guest of Charlotte Bunch

Alicia Fernandez-Mott – Guest of Dolores Huerta

Felice Gaer, Director
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

Sister Theresa Girolamo – Guest of Sister Jean Marshall

Mary Hartman – Guest of Charlotte Bunch

Pharis Harvey
International Labor Rights, Education, and Research Fund

Jack Healy, President
Human Rights Action Center

Arlene Holt, Assistant to the President
AFL-CIO

Gloria Johnson, President
Coalition of Labor Union Women

Sister Kathleen Kane – Guest of Sister Jean Marshall

Rachel Kyte
World's Conservation Union

Bette Bao Lord – 1998 Winner

Elisa Massimino
Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

Sameena Nazir
International Human Rights Law Group
Women's Rights Advocacy Program

Karen Nussbaum
AFL-CIO

Eleanor Smeal
Feminist Majority Foundation

Prof. Alva Smith

John Salzberg
Center for Victims of Torture

Dorothy Thomas – 1998 Winner

Sima Wali, Director
Refugee Women in Development

Dr. C. T. Wright, Executive Director
International Foundation of Education and Self-Help (IFESH), Inc.

Carol Yost
Asia Foundation

12/05/99 Final
Orzulak

Gene Jackson

'99 DEC 5 PM 1:05

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS
WASHINGTON, DC
DECEMBER 6, 1999**

[Acknowledgments: First Lady; Belquis Ahmadi (Bel-KEYS AH-Mah-Dee); members of Congress including Senator Kennedy, Congresswoman Jackson-Lee, Congressman Romero-Barcelo, and former Senator Wofford; members of the Cabinet including Secretary Cuomo and Administrator Alvarez; distinguished honorees; last year's awardees including Congressman John Lewis, Bette Bao Lord, and Dorothy Thomas; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me say Happy Chanukah to everyone now celebrating the festival of lights; and to our Islamic friends preparing for the rise of the new crescent moon, I wish you Ramadan Mubarak.

It occurs to me that at some point tonight, somebody in America will be flipping through channels, and they will come across the speech we just heard. They may stop and listen, or they may not. They may know what the Taliban is, or they may not. But I wonder if that person will stop and think even for a moment that in nearly half the world, doing what Belquis (Bel-KEYS) just did -- simply standing and speaking freely -- could get her arrested, jailed, beaten, and even tortured. And I wonder if that person will realize that until people like Eleanor Roosevelt came along, the rest of the world did not recognize that the right to speak out is an international right.

Sometimes we forget how long it took the world to agree on a common definition -- a universal declaration -- of what freedom actually means. Half a century ago, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights said it in simple words: all human beings are free and equal in dignity and human rights. All have the right to life, liberty, and security. All are endowed with reason and conscience. All have the right to a standard of living adequate to health and well being.

The real genius of the Declaration of Human Rights is that it affirmed that basic human rights are not cultural but universal, that what a country does to people within its own borders is not its business alone, but the business of all of us.

We in the United States know how hard it is to achieve its aspirations. One hundred years ago, Eleanor Roosevelt was a 15 year-old girl growing up in a country where women could not vote. Half a century ago, if the standards of the Universal Declaration were held up to segregated schools and lunch counters, we would have failed the test.

This Century has taught us that even though human rights are endowed by the hand of our Creator, they are ensured by the hearts and hands of men and women who inch by inch have moved our world forward. We are here today to honor five brave Americans whose lives have made a difference.

It is said that when Burke Marshall first met Robert Kennedy, they sat across a table for ten minutes and didn't say a single word. Perhaps Burke can now tell us who spoke first. From that silent moment sprang an extraordinary partnership. As Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the Kennedy Administration, he was a bridge between the government and those activists fighting every day to oust Jim Crow. John Lewis, who received this same award last year, once recalled that whenever Martin Luther King or James Farmer needed to talk to somebody in Washington, they would simply say: call Burke. His work was crucial to passing the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act. After he had helped shape a new America, Burke Marshall later worked equally hard to shape young minds at Yale Law School. I know – because Hillary and I were two of them. Burke, thank you for all you have done for our country.

When Leon Sullivan was eight years old, he walked into a grocery store, slapped a nickel on the counter, and said, "I want a Coke." The place being segregated South Carolina, the shopkeeper threw him out. That moment was the beginning of his life's work. The pastor of two churches by the time he was 17, Reverend Sullivan went on to write the Sullivan Principles, which called upon companies around the world to act in a socially responsible fashion. By compelling dozens of businesses to de-segregate their plants in South Africa, his work helped pull down apartheid. Today, as the author of the new Global Sullivan Principles, Leon Sullivan is still changing the world. Reverend, thank you for keeping your eyes on the prize for nearly 80 years.

For those of you who wonder if there is a divine plan guiding our lives, consider this: in Spanish, the name Dolores Huerta means "sorrowful orchard." But if Dolores has her way, her name will be the only sorrowful orchard left in America. Dolores Huerta began her career teaching young migrant children, but she couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry. So in 1962, she and Cesar Chavez co-founded the United Farm Workers. While Cesar Chavez worked the fields, Dolores Huerta worked the boardrooms and the state houses -- negotiating contracts and fighting for laws that have lifted the lives of thousands of Americans. In the process, she found time to raise 11 children. Dolores, thank you for all you are still doing to promote the dignity of millions of American workers.

It is no accident that when America opened its arms to Kosovar Albanians earlier this year, one of the first calls that went out was to a Dominican nun in the Fordham section of the Bronx. Scripture tells us that "if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like noon day." If that's true, there are few people who live their lives in more sunshine than Sister Jean Marshall. Disturbed by the sight of refugee families picking up garbage off the street to feed their children, in 1983, Sister Jean founded St. Rita's Center for Immigrant and Refugee Services. In the days since, it has helped thousands of refugees -- from Vietnam to Cambodia to Bosnia -- find jobs, learn English, and live better lives. Sister Jean, we thank you for all you are doing to make democracy real and dreams come true for thousands fleeing human rights abuses.

Lastly, there are few people who have done more to directly build on Eleanor Roosevelt's work on women's rights around the world than Charlotte Bunch. Gloria Steinem once observed that for every question that comes up regarding women's rights, sooner or later someone asks, "what does Charlotte think?" As the founder of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, she has worked to build a world-wide network of activists. As a result, when the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna in 1993, for the first time, there was a

network in place to raise international awareness of issues like violence against women, and gay and lesbian issues. And for the first time, the UN acknowledged that women's rights are human rights. Today, I think the best way to thank Charlotte Bunch is for the Senate to finally ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We honor these five Americans today with the thanks of a grateful nation. But if we truly want to honor their work, we must stay committed in the places where the glory has not come yet, and continue to speak out for human rights around the world, from Burma to Cuba to Sudan, from Serbia, to North Korea and Vietnam. We must do so because it is the right thing to do – but also because it is the surest path to a world that is safe, democratic, and free.

In Afghanistan, we have worked with the United Nations to impose sanctions against the Taliban, while ensuring that the Afghan people continue to receive humanitarian assistance. We are Afghanistan's strongest critic but also its largest humanitarian donor, and today we take another step forward. I am pleased to announce that next year, we will spend at least \$2 million to educate and improve the health of Afghan women and children refugees. We are also making an additional \$1.5 million available in emergency aid for those displaced by the recent Taliban offensive. And we are dramatically expanding our resettlement program for women and children who are not safe. But these are temporary solutions. We must continue to work until that day when Afghanistan has a government that reflects the wisdom of its people. ✓

The whole world is also concerned about the plight of innocent people in Chechnya. Two weeks ago at the OSCE Summit in Turkey, I raised the issue directly with President Yeltsin. I made clear that Russia's fight against terrorism is right, but the methods it is using in Chechnya are wrong. We have seen rocket and artillery attacks on largely civilian areas, with heavy losses of innocent life and at least 200,000 people pushed from their homes. Innocent Chechens are bearing the brunt of this war, not just the militants that Russia is fighting. But Russia is also paying a heavy price. With each passing day, Russia is sinking more deeply into a morass that will intensify extremism and diminish its standing in the world.

Another country about which we must continue to express concern is China. China is progressing and opening to the world today in many ways that are welcome, including its entry into the WTO. Yet its progress is still held back by its government's response to those who test the limits of freedom. A troubling recent example is the detention by Chinese authorities of adherents of the Falun Gong movement. Its targets are not political dissidents, and their practices and beliefs are unfamiliar to us. But the principle is the same: freedom of conscience and association. And our interest is the same: seeing China maintain stability and growth at home by meeting, not stifling, the growing demands of its people for openness and accountability.

For all our challenges, we enter the new millennium more hopeful than we have been at any time the past 100 years. The second half of the Century began with delegates from 18 nations including the United States coming together to write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Century is ending with 18 nations having come together with the United States to reaffirm those basic rights in Kosovo. With progress from Indonesia and East Timor to Nigeria, more than half the world's people now live with governments of their own choosing. We must build on that progress as we enter a new Century.

But we also know this work must begin at home. On the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated a book called "In Your Hands." On that day, she reminded us that "human rights begin in small places, close to home . . . Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in a larger world." Today, we honor that message by honoring five people whose work close to home has made our world better. May their work inspire all of us for generations to come.

Commander, read the citations.



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Chair

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Chair

Secretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE: 12/9/99

TO: Katy Burton

ORGANIZATION: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: 456-6244

FROM: Shirley Johnson

PHONE: (202) 647 - _____ FAX: (202) 647 - 5337

MESSAGE:

The latest bio I put together on
Belquis Ahmad.

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): (2)

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BELQUIS AHMADI

Belquis Ahmadi was born and raised in Kabul Afghanistan 27 years ago. She has worked for women's rights in Afghanistan for over ten years. She currently serves as an Advisor to the International Human Rights Law Group's work on Afghanistan. She has also been a member of the Law Group's delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in 1998 and 1999 where she eloquently highlighted the violations of women's rights in Afghanistan and appealed to the international community to support the rights of women in Afghanistan.

Ms. Ahmadi attended the Law Faculty of Kabul University and at the same time worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) first as an interpreter in 1988 and later as a nurse in the ICRC War Wounded Hospital. In 1992 she was promoted to the position of Head Nurse and Administrator.

She has also worked as Officer Manager with CARE International and later as Program Officer for Women's Affairs with the organization ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief). She is one of the three founding members of the Afghan Women's Network that was started two months before the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 1996. Its purpose was to create awareness among women about their rights and encourage them to take an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Ms. Ahmadi was one of the thousands of Afghan women who were forced to give up their jobs and stay at home after the Taliban took control of Kabul in September 1996. She subsequently moved to Pakistan where she worked from 1996-1999 as Program Officer for Women's Affairs at ACBAR in Peshawar. With the support of refugee students in Peshawar, she also formed the Refugee Students' Union in 1997. She continued her work as Coordinator of the Afghan Women's Network and the Students' Union until January 1999.

In January 1999, Ms. Ahmadi arrived in the United States as a refugee. She now works full time and also studies political science at a university. She is guardian of and is raising her two teenage sisters and brother. She has written a number of articles and papers on the struggle for women's human rights in Afghanistan.



Steven J. Naplan
12/03/99 04:04:42 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: CFR's Barney Rubin says ...

Council on Foreign Relations' highly regarded South Asia expert Barney Rubin says that an Afghan with the last name "Ahmadi" almost certainly reflects nothing more than the likely fact of having a father named "Mohammad."

Most significantly, he says that he has never heard of an Afghan who was a member of the Ahmadi sect.

Looking forward to what Don Camp learns. (Hopefully something consistent!)

will review with everyone on 4:30 conf call

Thank's again to Charles Brown for sharp thinking and good heads-up call.

SN

Message Sent To:

Julie D. Eddy/WHO/EOP@EOP
Maureen T. Shea/WHO/EOP@EOP
Katharine Button/WHO/EOP@EOP
Donald A. Camp/NSC/EOP@EOP
charlesjbrown@hotmail.com



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Chair

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Chair

Secretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE:

12/3

TO:

Katy Buelton

ORGANIZATION:

PHONE:

FAX:

456-6244

FROM:

Lois Helman

PHONE: (202) 647 -

FAX: (202) 647 - 5337

MESSAGE:

Belgium's speech - 1st draft

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): (5)

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Folder: Inbox

From: Belquis Ahmadi <belquisa@yahoo.com> [Save Address](#) [Block Sender](#)**To:** Alyse Nelson <vitalvoices@hotmail.com>**Subject:** Re: speech for International Human Rights Day**Date:** Fri, 3 Dec 1999 11:53:55 -0800 (PST)[Reply](#)[Reply All](#)[Forward](#)[Delete](#)[Previous](#)[Next](#)[Close](#)

Dear Alyse,

I apologize for not submitting this to you on time, i am sorry it is not in good order. please call me if you have more questions.

Dear Alyse,

I apologize for the delay. Please contact me if you have further questions. I can be reached through my email or my work number, which is 314-457-9224.

My life and thousands of others changed overnight.

In 1996 I was working as office manager in an agency of about 350 people. My job included supervising engineers and employees working on projects that involved higher education, the water department and health management. I worked with men and women, and the decisions that I made at my work affected many people in the community.

On September 25, this was my life; on September 26, 1996 everything changed.

I no longer was allowed to go to work. I turned on the radio, and heard the announcement that women were not allowed to work anymore. Girls were not allowed to go to school. Women had to wear burqa outside the home and needed to be accompanied by a male. In 1997 all medical services and hospitalization was suspended for women.

The freedoms and violations did not just occur outside of the home, but inside as well. We were not allowed to listen to music or watch TV. Women were even allowed to walk freely inside of their homes.

Homes and buildings where women were present had to have painted windows. Women were not allowed to look out of the windows. because a woman was not allowed to walk in front of an unpainted

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I felt that I had no hope at all. It was like the end of the world. I could not do anything. I just hated to be a woman. I heard repeatedly that if women were given freedom, they would bring corruption on the society.

In the Mosque they make announcements to the men such as don't let your wife or daughter wear nail polish if they do, you should beat them.

On e family member was told, "Aren't you immodest to walk with your wife on the street?"

My ten-year old brother refused to go with his mother in public because being in public with a woman was considered shameful.

One of my family members was beaten because she was walking quickly on the streets. She was asked, "Why are you walking like a horse?"

Once, when I wore white shoes outside of my home, I was told to be careful. I could have been be beaten for having white shoes because it was disrespectful; the white color is on the flag.

This situation is more hateful and painful to bear because it is presented to be right in the name of religion, but these ideas are not a part of our religion or our cultural tradition. My grandmother did not wear a burqa; and in the history of Afghanistan citizens have never been humiliated and oppressed in this way.

Women are not the only ones suffering from human rights violations. Children have also suffered.

The Taliban said there was not enough security to allow girls to go to school. When people gathered in home schools to educate the girls, the Taliban closed the schools, and teachers were beaten. Children were not allowed to play with toys. In many cases children were beaten on the streets who were seen playing with toys.

One young girl told her mother, "I had a dream that I could go to school today." Her mother allowed her to visit her former school. When she went to the school, she was beaten at the gate.

Men were told that they had to grow a beard; men had to go to mosque five times daily. Men could not wear suits or western-style clothing.

Every single member of the society has been affected. The Taliban searched people's houses. They destroyed family portraits because they said photographs were against religion. People had to hide tv's and tape

Hotmail Inbox

recorders, and musical instruments. All weapons were taken from homes.

The Taliban encouraged people to report and spy on their neighbors; for example, reporting that a family had a gun would cause the Taliban to search the home. If the family did not have a gun they had to buy one to give the Taliban just because it had been reported by a neighbor.

My father had a long beard when he visited me in Pakistan. I didn't recognize my own father. When I sent him pictures, he couldn't take them from his office to his home because he would have been searched on the streets or on the bus and photographs are illegal.

I consider myself very lucky to be able to describe the situation. I can not emphasize enough the value of groups IHRLG, the US embassy in Pakistan, the United Nations, without their help I would not be here speaking to you today.

The situation continues today and millions of people are affected by the war and the oppressed political situation. Today people are being forced to disappear, people have lost lives, family members, basic human rights, human dignity and rights to be respected. Soon, they might lose something that destroys humanity. They might lose hope. The rest of the world should not allow this to happen. There is a need to end the war, and there is a need for internal and external pressure to be placed on the Taliban so that these violations of human rights do not continue.

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Gehrke

The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary ChairSecretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
ChairSecretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE:

12/1

TO:

Katy Button

ORGANIZATION:

PHONE:

FAX:

456 6244

FROM:

Liz Johnson

PHONE: (202) 647 -

FAX: (202) 647 - 5337

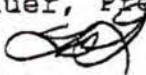
MESSAGE:

afghan woman speaker for
Human Rights day. - so you can vet
this name.
she can come.
we found funding.

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): (6)

December 1, 1999

TO: Katy Button for Melanne Verveer

FROM: Lois Gochnauer, President's Interagency Council
For Women 

SUBJECT: Afghan woman speaker for the Human Rights Day
Ceremony

Attached is a bio of Belquis Ahmadi, the young Afghan refugee woman this office would like to see speak at the Human Rights Day Ceremony. I have also attached an article that appeared in the London edition of Marie Claire magazine about Ms. Ahmadi. To protect her, however, she was given a different name.

She has been highly recommended by our Refugee Coordinator, Tom Hushek, at our Embassy in Islamabad and the former Refugee Coordinator who is now with our Mission to the UN in Geneva, Linda Thomas Greenfield. Both know her.

Ms. Ahmadi left Afghanistan after the Taliban took control because her two sisters could not go to school. She took her two younger sisters and brother to Peshawar so they could continue their education.

She accompanied the International Human Rights Law Group to Geneva in 1998 and 1999 where she gave an eloquent statement before the UN Human Rights Commission about human rights in Afghanistan. She impressed everyone. This was courageous because she had to return to Peshawar after that.

She was subsequently resettled as a woman at risk in January 1999 in St. Louis, Missouri. She is not the typical Afghan activist on the Feminist Majority's circuit. Rather, she is trying to build a new life in America and maintains a genuine love of her homeland. At age 28, she is the guardian of her two younger sisters and brother, all teenagers. She is raising them in St. Louis and working at the Hilton Hotel to make ends meet. On the side, she is taking some courses at a university there. Her parents and one handicapped sister remain in Kabul.

Attachments: Biography
Marie Claire article

FILE NO. 841 12/01 '99 15:14 ID:

FAX:

PAGE 2

Bio- Ms. Belquis Ahmadi from Afghanistan
Current address:
Apt. 4, 4600 Louisiana Ave.
Saint Louis, MO 63111

Ph: (314) 457-9224
E-mail: Belquisa@yahoo.com - or- Belquisa@hotmail.com

For Louis G.
President's Inter Agency
Council on Women

Belquis Ahmadi is 28 years old women's rights activist from Afghanistan. She has worked for women's rights in Afghanistan for over ten years. Currently, she is Afghanistan Advisor for the Women's Rights Advocacy Program of Washington DC based non-profit organization, the International Human Rights Law Group. Ms. Ahmadi has highlighted the women's rights situation in Afghanistan at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva as a NGO delegation member of International Human rights Law Group in 1998 and 1999.

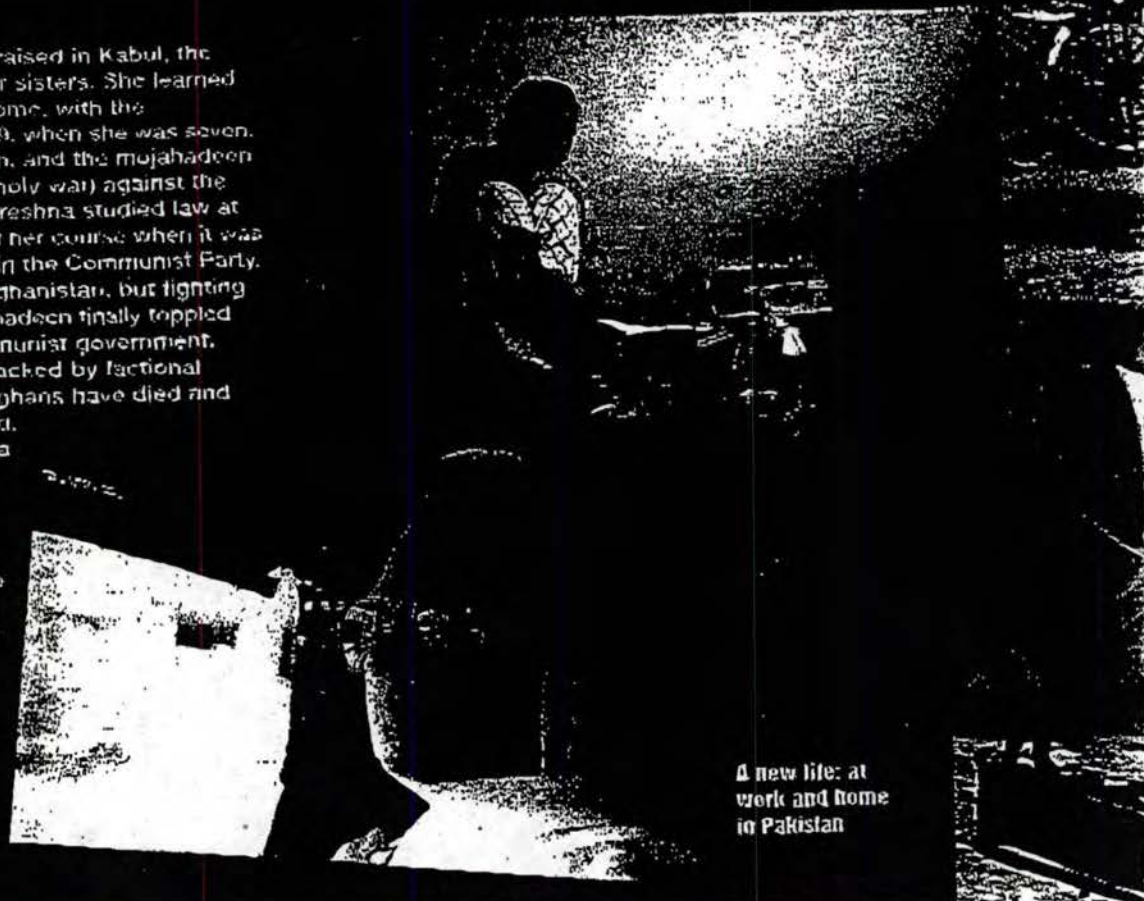
Ms. Ahmadi is one of the three founding members of the Afghan Women's Network which was started in Kabul in 1996 after the Taliban takeover of the Afghan capital. She has also worked as Program Officer for Women's Affairs at ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief) in Peshawar, Pakistan and Kabul, Afghanistan from 1996 to 1999. Earlier, Ms. Ahmadi worked as Office Manager for CARE International office in Kabul, Afghanistan from 1995 to 1996. She started her work for women as a Deputy Head Nurse and Administrator for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRW) at the War Wounded Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan from 1988 where she worked till 1995.

Ms. Ahmadi has written articles and papers on Violence Against Women in Afghan Society and about the struggle for women's human rights in Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN DIARY

When the ultra-religious Taliban militia seized control of the Afghan capital, Kabul, last year, the city's female population became prisoners overnight. Subject to the most repressive controls yet seen in the Islamic world, they were forced into a medieval existence, policed by a brutal and ignorant regime. Breshna Baktash, 26, escaped the Taliban to a life of relative freedom in neighbouring Pakistan. Here, at great risk to her own safety, she recounts her final days in Kabul. Photographs by Nick Danziger

Breshna Baktash was born and raised in Kabul, the eldest of three brothers and four sisters. She learned English at school and later at home, with the encouragement of her mother. In 1979, when she was seven, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and the mujahadeen (Islamic warriors) launched a *jihad* (holy war) against the Soviet Army. After leaving school, Breshna studied law at Kabul University, but she abandoned her course when it was made compulsory for students to join the Communist Party. In 1988 the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan, but fighting continued until 1992 when the mujahadeen finally toppled the country's Moscow-backed communist government. Since then, Afghanistan has been racked by factional infighting – tens of thousands of Afghans have died and countless more have been wounded. On leaving college, Breshna found a job with a Swiss aid organisation, working first as an interpreter and then as a health worker. When the Taliban took Kabul in September last year, she was forced to give up her job and stay at home with her mother and sisters. Eventually, she fled to Pakistan, where she now works for an agency assisting other Afghan women refugees. Breshna has written this personal account for *Marie Claire* in the hope of inspiring British women to take action to end the plight of women in Afghanistan.



A new life: at work and home in Pakistan

FILE No. S05 11/30 '99 14:34 ID:



Above: Brashna rents her own flat in Pakistan. Below right: members of the Taliban, who now control almost the whole of Afghanistan

Thursday 5 September, 1996
Today the Taliban took control of two cities in eastern Afghanistan. They are said to have banned women from working or leaving the house without a male relative, and education for women in those cities has been stopped. I am afraid they will take over the whole country now.

We have been living under the *mohajadeen* for many years, and are sick and tired of the fighting and the misbehaving soldiers. We had hoped that the Taliban might change things for the better, but now we are scared of what might happen if they take Kabul. We first heard of the Taliban in 1994, when they emerged from north-western Pakistan, where a Pakistani organisation called the *Jamiat Ulama-i-Islami* (JUI) sponsors religious schools to train destitute young Afghan boys and orphans as soldiers. The boys had no contact with female relatives and grew up in a totally gender-segregated setting - far removed from conventional culture and society. They have been trained to fight for what they are told is Islam, without really understanding what Islam is.

Wednesday 25 September, 1996

Today the Taliban captured Serobi, only 70km from Kabul. Every day there are rumours that they are getting closer.

Thursday 26 September, 1996

I woke up this morning and got ready for work as usual. At the office, nobody was interested in working. Everyone was talking about the Taliban and there were a lot of rockets being fired - both outgoing and incoming. We were all depressed that Kabul had once again become a battlefield.

All the foreigners in Kabul are making plans to leave. It made me angry - these people claimed they were here to help the Kabulis, and now, when we really need their help, they are leaving.

At the same time I also want to leave but I know I never would, because my family is here. I was once offered a scholarship to study medicine in the US, but I chose to remain with my people. In some ways I now regret that. I want to finish studying law but I doubt I will ever have the chance. At about 3pm I asked our office driver to take me around the city. Most of the shops had closed and there were few people on the streets. We drove in the direction of the front line. On the way we were stopped four or five times at checkpoints by government soldiers. They were clearly on the run to safer areas in the north. They were driving tanks and taking their women and children with them. It was a worrying sight. The whole family is at home now and everyone is horrified. None of us ate dinner this evening; no one was hungry.

Friday 27 September, 1996

I couldn't sleep last night until I took some sleeping pills, then I was woken at 1am by a big explosion. My mother came into my room and told me to go downstairs. 'Many rockets are coming,' she said. I didn't move. I just stayed in my bed. At that moment I didn't care if I died. At around 3am I got up and switched on the radio. There was nothing - Kabul Radio was not on the air. My father had heard

from a neighbour that the Taliban had taken control of Kabul. I didn't say anything. I went upstairs to my room, closed the door, and lay on my bed. Around lunch-time I tried the radio again. I found the BBC World Service or Voice of America. I don't remember which. It said Najibullah had been hanged by the Taliban. (Mohammad Najibullah was the Moscow-backed President of Afghanistan until April 1992.) I cried - not because I felt sorry for Najibullah, because he was one of the people responsible for the war in Afghanistan, but because they did cruel things to him. They broke his arm, stuffed banknotes in his nose and he had blood all over him. They put cigarettes in his dead hands.

Saturday 28 September, 1996

Today I managed to pick up Kabul Radio's signal. The Taliban have renamed it *Sharia Islamic Law Radio*, and used it to announce the new rules:

1. All sisters who have outside work must stay home until further

notice. Women cannot work in government offices in future. I tried to remember what life was like when I was young. Women were free to go to school and get a good job. They wore Western-style trousers and skirts, and many women wore make-up. There were no restrictions. This list went on:

2. Men must grow beards and wear hats.
3. Music, television and videos are banned.

4. Playing cards is banned.
5. People must pray in the mosques, not at home or work.
6. Gatherings of more than five people are forbidden.

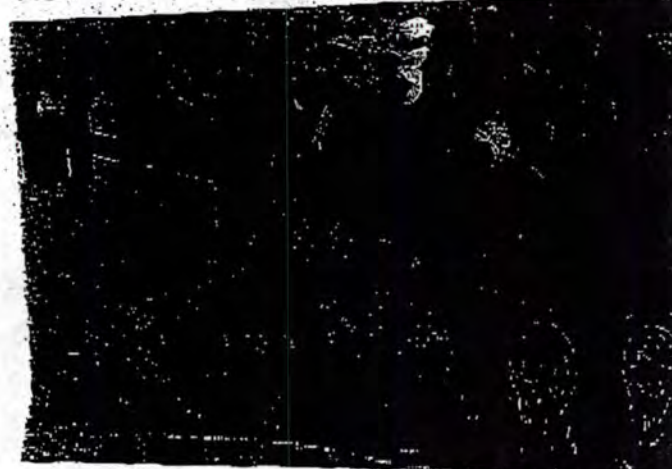
I am not surprised. They have done the same in the other cities. I expected this, but my younger sisters are very upset. They want to continue their studies.

The working ban affects many women very harshly, especially Kabul's estimated 30,000 war widows, many of whom have families to support. Without his relations to earn money or to chaperone them on the streets these women face isolation and starvation. Some are sending their children out to beg or sell belongings in the markets, and there have been reports of women selling children, to save them from starvation.

Monday 30 September, 1996

This morning I heard my father an engineer, leaving the house and driving off to work. I had leave for the office at the same

'The days merge into one. I have been crying for a week'



EXCLUSIVE

MAR - 1 1999

time, but today I had to stay inside. I lay on my bed all day.

Wednesday 2 October, 1998

The days are beginning to merge into one. I think I have been crying for a week and I can't remember the last time I made my bed. I watch television sometimes, even though it is forbidden. I watched the film *Ghandi* and wished I was like him, so I could make a difference to my country. Every day I wait for my father to come home. He is my link to the outside world. Today he saw a man beaten for wearing Western clothes. From tomorrow he won't wear Western suits any more, he will wear a *shalwar khamis* [long tunic and trousers] and a hat.

Thursday 3 October, 1998

Today my father said that the Taliban are going to search all homes for pictures, toys and televisions. We have begun hiding our books and pictures, and we buried the television in the garden.

Saturday 5 October, 1998

Every day is the same. I stay inside all day. I cannot see my girlfriends. I have been trying to read but I cannot concentrate. I listen to the BBC World Service hoping for an improvement in the situation. The family don't talk to each other except to argue.

Monday 7 October, 1998

Today I decided I must leave Afghanistan and go to Pakistan, where my grandmother lives. I do not want to leave my family, but I am going crazy here. Finally I plucked up courage to tell my parents. They said it's not possible for a young woman to live on her own, but I just kept saying that I am not a child any more. It is my life and I have to leave. In the end they agreed. I feel relieved but also very sad. I do not know what to take or how long I am going away for. I am going to take some clothes, my French text book and a French dictionary.

Wednesday 9 October, 1998

I left home today at dawn with my Uncle Abas and my female cousin

'I don't want to leave my family, but I am going crazy here'

Salima. I was very scared, and afraid that the Taliban would not let me go. I put a big black coat on over my clothes and a black scarf over my face and head. Salima wore the same.

We drove through the city, past my office. We passed the main bus station and I became more nervous. I pulled the scarf right over my face so no one could see my eyes.

We stopped at a checkpoint manned by Taliban soldiers and I closed my eyes. They started shouting, 'Who the hell are these women? Who is their relative? Why don't they wear a *burqa* [a head-to-toe cloak with a mesh panel to look through]? Women dressed like that make me lose my self-control.' [The Taliban believe that if a man sexually attacks a woman, it is her fault for not wearing a *burqa*.] My uncle pointed out that we were all covered up, but bystanders told him not to argue with the Taliban.

Eventually they let us pass, but we were stopped immediately at the next checkpoint. I was crying and I wanted to go home, but that would mean passing through the checkpoints again. A young Taliban came up to the car. 'Get out and show me your face,' he said. When I asked why, he said, 'These are the rules - I have to search you.' I said, 'If you come any further I will beat you.'

His superior came up and said, 'Sister, this is the rule, it is for security.' I said, 'Go and bring your mother or your wife to search women.' He became angry and said Kabul women liked to be touched by men. I felt sick and angry - it was such an insult.

Eventually we were allowed to leave, and we drove out of Kabul to the south of Afghanistan. I was scared all the way. We were stopped twice more but finally arrived safely at my uncle's house.

Thursday 18 October, 1998

This morning my aunt gave me a *burqa* to wear. I have never worn one before. I felt off balance and I couldn't see properly - it was like being in a prison with bars. My aunt told me I had to wear it because women who did not were being beaten in the streets. I said goodbye and drove on to Pakistan with my uncle. We reached the border late that afternoon and crossed with no problems. The Pakistani border guards seemed like my best friends - they did not shout, they did not threaten and they did not search me. Finally I felt safe.

Monday 23 October, 1998

Once we reached Pakistan I stayed with my grandmother for three days, then I rented a flat. Last week, my sixteen-year-old sister and fifteen-year-old brother joined me to go to school here. I found a job with an aid agency working on Afghan women's rights. We run workshops for refugee women on leadership, management skills and women's rights under Islam. Sadly, the situation is not much better here. Like the other women in my office, I am ignored by most of my male colleagues. Even some of the expatriates don't treat me with respect, or as an equal. My salary is not enough for the three of us to live on, so sometimes we don't have enough money for food, and eat just once a day. But we don't tell our parents, because we know how lucky we are to be able to work and study.

Wednesday 25 December, 1998

Earlier this month I returned to Kabul with my brother to visit my family. We went on the bus and when we arrived at the main bus station I was wearing a *burqa* but I was stopped by a Taliban and told to take my white shoes off. 'If you wear white shoes on the street you will be beaten,' he said. On

the way back I wore black shoes. I was so glad to see my family, but they are not happy in Kabul. My father is still working but my other sisters have to stay at home with my mother. The visit depressed me because I saw so many women leaving Kabul to seek a better life in Pakistan. But the situation here is also bad. The number of Afghan women - many of them educated - begging on the streets here is increasing every day.

Thursday 22 May, 1997

Today I received a letter from my youngest sister. She has not been out of the house for nine months. With her letter she sent a dried flower from our garden in Kabul. When I saw the flower and read her letter I burst into tears. I wished I had power to take revenge on the Taliban who keep her at home.

Sunday 25 May, 1997

Today Pakistan recognised the Taliban government and said they are planning to send refugees back to Afghanistan. How can Pakistan do this? I am so depressed at the prospect of being sent back.

In early June the Taliban gained and lost territory in northern Afghanistan, but the fighting continues. Brashna remains in Pakistan. 'In some ways I am more hopeful that the Taliban will be defeated,' she says, 'but that is not the solution, because then fighting will start again in Kabul, and there will be many more casualties.'

What you can do to help

Marie Claire is collecting donations which will be forwarded to Brashna for her work with Afghan women. Please send cheques, made payable to Afghan Women Appeal, to: Marie Claire/Afghan Women Appeal, 2 Hatfields, London SE1 9PG



URGENT

The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary ChairSecretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
ChairSecretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE: Dec 2

TO: Katy Button

ORGANIZATION:

PHONE: FAX: 4566244

FROM: Lois Gochbauer

PHONE: (202) 647 - FAX: (202) 647 - 5337

MESSAGE:

Please see that the speech writers for the Monday Human Rights Day event for both the President and the First Lady get a copy of these talking points on Women Of Afghanistan.

I also included an introduction for the Afghan refugee woman, Belquis Ahmadi.

Thanks

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): (11)

TALKING POINTS ON WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN
For Human Rights Day
December 6, 1999

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan:

- The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan has remained mostly unchanged since 1998. Although there have been reports of relaxation in their implementation, most of the Taliban's gender policies remain in place. In addition, the humanitarian situation for all Afghans, and particularly the most vulnerable women and children, continues to deteriorate as a consequence of the ongoing civil war between the mainly Pashtu Taliban and the mainly minority-dominated Northern Alliance.
- The situation of women and girls deteriorated rapidly with the resumption of fighting between the Afghan factions in 1992. Lawlessness, rape and kidnapping were rampant throughout much of the country, as a welter of local militia commanders dominated the country. When the Taliban appeared on the scene in 1994, they enjoyed a series of rapid victories and were initially popular with many that were tired of the war and general anarchy. When they took over Kabul in 1996, they began to enforce a series of ultra-conservative social strictures, many of which impacted women and their position in society. Although Afghan women traditionally have suffered disadvantages in many areas of Afghan society prior to the civil war, a limited but growing number of Afghan women, particularly in urban areas, worked outside the home in nontraditional roles. There were female lawyers, government officials and doctors in Kabul. These educated women have suffered the most from the Taliban's restrictions.
- The Taliban forbade women to work outside the home, but soon allowed exceptions for female doctors and nurses in restricted circumstances and have since stated that widows could work outside the home to support their families. In urban areas, women were forbidden to leave home unless accompanied by a male relative. Some changes have taken place since then. Women now can appear on the streets alone. However, particularly in cities, when they go out they must wear a traditional long robe called the "burqa" covering them from head to toe. A small mesh covered opening about five inches square provides the only means to see. Some women have been beaten by the Taliban "religious police" on the street for failure to wear the burqa or for not being fully covered.
- The burqa is a traditional women's garment in Afghanistan, and is similar to garments worn in a number of other Muslim countries. Many Afghan women wore the burqa before the Taliban took control. However, wearing the burqa was not part of a legally enforced dress code, as the Taliban have decreed. (The Taliban also enforce a dress code for men, which includes an obligatory wearing beards of a certain length.) Many women in Kabul, as well as most rural women, typically appeared in public wearing scarves that just covered the head. Many rural women continue to be unveiled today.

- The Taliban restricted education for girls, particularly in urban areas such as Kabul. Girls are restricted to receiving religious instruction only, at local mosques. Private home-based schools, which had quietly continued to operate, were ordered closed last year in Kabul. Those that continue to operate do so at the risk of being shut down. Although the Taliban claim that they are not against female education and have requested resources from foreign donors for educating both boys and girls, we have as yet seen no serious effort to provide wider educational opportunities for women and girls and they have yet to accept offers of assistance which are on the table.
- The impact of Taliban restrictions on women is most acutely felt in cities such as Herat and Kabul, where there are some numbers of educated and professional women. In rural areas women do chores, tend animals, gather water and fire wood and, when working in the fields, do not wear burqas and enjoy a greater degree of mobility. At one time before the Taliban takeover, Kabul University had several thousand women students while professional women worked in different capacities in the city. Especially hard hit has been war widows (there are over 30,000 in Kabul alone), many of who are the sole providers of their families. Many were reduced to begging on the streets to feed their children. Partly due to employment restrictions, but particularly as a result of deteriorating economic conditions throughout the country, many women and children have been forced to beg on the streets.
- Women and girls now do have access to medical services and hospitals in Kabul, with the exception of two military hospitals reserved for men. Male doctors can and do treat female patients and many female doctors have returned to work. Women and children patients need not be accompanied by a male relative. Access to medical facilities, however, is impaired for all by a critical and chronic shortage of medicine and equipment. This affects both male and female patients.

U. S. humanitarian efforts for women and girls:

- In FY 1999, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) provided \$3.14 million in funding to NGOs to carry out health and education projects for Afghan women and girl refugees principally in Pakistan. These contributions were in addition to those made to the South Asia regional programs of the UNHCR and ICRC, which include Afghan women and girls among the beneficiaries.
- In addition to continuing existing health and education programs with Save the Children, Church World Service and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (\$1.7 million), major new initiatives included an IRC project to expand and improve secondary education for Afghan girls in Peshawar and nearby camps (\$480,632); an IRC project to fund projects of local women's NGOs working to improve women's and girls' health and education (\$349,603); and funding for the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children to place a gender technical adviser in

Peshawar, who will assist other NGOs to improve the treatment of Afghan women in their projects (\$199,301).

- PRM is also providing \$408,000 to the International Medical Corps for the Afghan Women's Refugee Camp project. The project will be implemented with the Afghan NGOs Ibn Sina, Afghan Women's Resource Center and Afghan Women's Clinic. It will provide training and capacity building to mobilize educated Afghan women to meet the health needs of women and children in six refugee camps in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. It will also provide a donation of medicines and medical supplies to health units in those camps.
- In FY 2000 PRM is continuing to emphasize health and education programs for women and girls in Pakistan and, to the extent possible, in Afghanistan.
- The Bureau of South Asian Affairs, through its Regional Democracy Fund, will provide \$420,000 in FY 1999 funding for NGOs with programs in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and within Afghanistan to improve the civic participation and human rights status of Afghan women. One of these NGOs, the International Human Rights Law Group, will provide training and funding for human rights monitors in the refugee camps and in Afghanistan.

Resettlement of refugees:

- PRM is also strengthening resettlement efforts in FY 2000. As part of an overall increase in the regional ceiling for refugee admissions from the Near East and South Asia, PRM has established a working goal with UNHCR of identifying at least 400 Afghan Women-at-Risk cases (which include a woman head of household and family members in the same household).
- Besides traditional urgent protection and rescue cases, UNHCR will also refer for permanent U.S. resettlement, persecuted ethnic and religious minorities and other groups singled out by the Taliban. Under the expanded program, the U.S. government expects to resettle about 1,500 Afghan women and their families this year, a 500 percent increase over FY 1999.

U. S. diplomatic efforts:

- The efforts of the United Nations have been central to the peace process. The United States supported the efforts of the Secretary General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and the work of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan. The United States also has participated in the Six-Plus-Two Group's efforts to bring a peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict and the formation of a broad-based government. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, the Taliban offensive following the July Tashkent Six-Plus-Two meeting has called the group's effectiveness into question.

- The United States consults with other interested governments and continually raises the issue of the Taliban's treatment of women and girls in international fora – e.g., the UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Commission and the UN Commission on the Status of Women where the U.S. authored a resolution on women in Afghanistan in 1998 and again in 1999.
- We have raised the situation in Afghanistan with countries that have indicated support for the Taliban such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Our message to all factions within Afghanistan is the same: cease fire, negotiate, work with the UN, combat narcotics and terrorism and respect international norms of behavior, including rights of women and girls.
- Promoting the observance of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, is one of our highest foreign policy priorities in Afghanistan. We continue to press all Afghan factions, including the Taliban and their supporters, in public and private, and at senior levels, to extend humanitarian treatment to women and girls.
- We call upon the Taliban to lift restrictions on the mobility and employment of women and the schooling of girls. We also call upon the Taliban and all factions to abide by internationally accepted norms of human rights, including the rights of women and girls.
- President Clinton raised the issue of respect for the human rights of all Afghan citizens, including women and girls and ethnic minorities, with then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan during his visit to Washington last year.
- The United States is neutral toward the various Afghan factions fighting in that country, but we are not neutral about their violations of international norms of behavior. We condemn Taliban human rights violations, particularly against women and girls and minorities.
- The United States condemns the Taliban for sheltering international terrorists Usama bin Laden and his network, its facilitating narcotics production and trafficking and its failure to adhere to calls for a cease-fire and negotiations for a political settlement. In July, the President issued an executive order blocking property and banning business transactions with the Taliban. In August, a second executive order placed Taliban-owned Ariana airlines under sanctions. Since then the United States has frozen tens of millions of dollars in Taliban assets. Ariana's operations have been disrupted, thanks to cooperation from India and several other countries.
- In October, a U.S.-initiated resolution passed unanimously by the UN Security Council demands that the Taliban stop sheltering bin Laden and ensure that he is expelled and brought to justice. Since the Taliban failed to expel bin Laden by November 14, their assets are being frozen worldwide and Taliban owned or leased aircraft are now banned from landing and taking off from UN member state

territories. This resolution is the result of the intense efforts of the United States and others and represents a significant step in our campaign to end bin Ladin's terrorist activities.

- We have made clear to the world that even if the Taliban expel bin Laden, there are other issues, such as human rights, including the human rights of women and girls, and narcotics, that they must address before they can expect progress towards acceptance by the international community.
- The United States does not recognize the Taliban, the Northern Alliance or any other Afghan faction as the government of Afghanistan. The United States has made it clear that a future government in Afghanistan must be broad based and represent the interests of all Afghans. It must also observe international norms of behavior, such as the respect for human rights, particularly the human rights of women and girls, and actively reject narcotics and terrorism. We believe that only such a government can bring lasting peace to Afghanistan on its territory.
- We want to see the UN Afghan seat occupied by a broad-based, multi-ethnic representative government that respects international norms of behavior, including the human rights of women and girls.

Nazoo Anna School for Afghan Refugee Girls:

- At last year's Human Rights Day ceremony, the First Lady recognized Nazaneen Jabarkel, the founder and principal of the Nazoo Anna School for Afghan Refugee Girls which educates 700 children, mainly girls from five Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. Today Nazaneen is being supported by an ecumenical effort of Muslim and Christian NGOs. She has begun work with the International Rescue Committee's proposal to make the school a model school and resource center for other students and schools in the Peshawar area, thanks to the efforts of the State Department's Bureau of Population, Migration and Refugees.

Feminist Majority Scholarship program:

- Last March the President met with the Feminist Majority Foundation to discuss the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. Out of that meeting came the idea of a scholarship program for qualified Afghan refugee girls to attend higher education in the United States. The Feminist Majority has located several colleges that have offered scholarships for this purpose.
- The United States continues to emphasize health and education programs for Afghan girls in Pakistan where it has increased its funding of education programs in refugee camps.

International Human Rights Law Group and Belquis Ahmadi who will be a featured speaker at today's event: (The Law Group should also be recognized by the President and First Lady):

The International Human Rights Law Group (in particular Sameena Nazir and executive director, Gay McDougall) have been instrumental in arranging for the appearance of Ms. Belquis Ahmadi, who will be recognized and, we expect, a featured speaker at today's White House event.

The International Human Rights Law Group is a non-profit organization of human rights and legal professionals engaged in human rights advocacy, litigation and training around the world. It works in 85 countries during its 20-year history. The Women's Rights Advocacy Program of the Law Group supports the work of women's rights activists in Afghanistan, Morocco, Yemen, Pakistan and Turkey to help empower local women's groups and to ensure that women everywhere enjoy the full range of human rights.

Ms. Belquis Ahmadi, an Afghan refugee from Kabul, has courageously worked for women's rights in Afghanistan for over ten years. She currently serves as an Advisor to the International Human Rights Law Group's work on Afghanistan. She has also been a member of the Law Group's delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in 1998 and 1999 where she eloquently highlighted the violations of women's rights in Afghanistan and appealed to the international community to support the rights of women in Afghanistan.

U. S. government's public condemnation of the Taliban's treatment of women:

U.S. government officials have all condemned the treatment of women and girls of Afghanistan by the Taliban.

President Clinton:

- President Clinton pledged this government's continued assistance to "women suffering under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan" at the December 10, 1998 Human Rights Day ceremony.
- The President pledged U. S. assistance to Afghan women and girls suffering under the Taliban at the March 11, 1998 International Women's Day celebration.
- In a joint statement issued on December 4, 1998, President Clinton and the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, "...agreed to work for an immediate end to the conflict in Afghanistan and the restoration of durable peace, stability and normalcy in the country based on the principals of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs, as well as a political reconciliation and respect for the human rights of all Afghan citizens, including women and girls and ethnic minorities."

- At a Vogue magazine reception on October 26, 1999, the President stated, "And the last thing I would like to say, because no one has mentioned this yet - perhaps the most difficult place in the world for women today is still Afghanistan. And I hope that the fact that we have had two Afghan women here in one of our human rights events, and the fact that we continue to push for changes in the lives of those people and to take as many in as we can here, will someday lead to a change in that country - because no women should have to undergo what those women have experienced."

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton:

- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has consistently spoken out against the treatment of women by the Taliban in forums around the world. At the Human Rights Day ceremony December 10, 1998, she recognized two Afghan women in the audience for their invaluable work on behalf of women and girls of Afghanistan and said "We cannot allow these terrible crimes against women and girls - and, truly, against all of humanity - to continue with impunity. We must all make it unmistakably clear this terrible suffering inflicted on the women and girls of Afghanistan is not cultural, it is criminal. And we must do everything we can in our power to stop it."
- At the United Nations International Women's Day celebration on March 4, 1999, the First Lady said "There probably is no more egregious and systematic trampling of fundamental rights of women today than what is happening in Afghanistan under the iron rule of the Taliban."
- In her remarks at the United Nations on the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1997, the First Lady spoke about the importance of education for girls and the Taliban's prevention of girls from receiving an education. "Two-thirds of the 96 million people worldwide who can neither read nor write are women. Even now, the Taliban in Afghanistan are blocking girls from attending school. Not only that - they are blocking those, like Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, who would speak out on behalf of this injustice."

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright:

- Secretary of State Albright aptly characterized the Taliban's treatment of women in Afghanistan as "despicable" when she visited the Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Pakistan in 1997. She said "We are opposed to their [the Taliban] approach to human rights, to their despicable treatment of women and children, and their lack of respect for human dignity, in a way more reminiscent of the past than the future."
- At the March 11, 1998 International Women's Day celebration, Secretary Albright said "In Afghanistan, all the major factions are guilty of violence against women. But the most powerful, the Taliban, are determined to drag Afghan women from the dawn

of the twenty-first century back to the thirteenth. The only female rights they seem to recognize are the rights to remain silent, and invisible, uneducated and unemployed."

- At her induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame, at Seneca Falls, New York on July 11, 1998, Secretary Albright reaffirmed our government's commitment to the women of Afghanistan when she said "Afghan women and girls have asked for our help. I know because last fall, I sat in a tent in the high mountains of Central Asia and listened to their stories. I'll tell you what I told them. The United States cannot and will not abandon them. We are increasing our support for education and training. And we have made it clear that if leaders of the Taliban or any other Afghan faction want international acceptance, they must treat women not as chattel, but as people; and they must respect human rights."
- At a speech before the California Women's Conference October 5, 1999, Secretary Albright reiterated U.S. support for the women of Afghanistan. "The United States can not and will not abandon you. We are increasing our support for education and training. And we have made it clear that if the leaders of the Taliban or any other Afghan faction want international acceptance, they must treat women not as chattel, but as people; and they must respect human rights."

Theresa Loar, Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues and Director of the President's Interagency Council on Women:

- Appearing before Senator Dianne Feinstein on March 2, 1998, Ms. Loar said "At the time women are moving forward in most other countries of the world, the Taliban have cruelly pushed Afghan women backwards. Since the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, there has been increasing agreement in the international community on the importance of women's human rights. The situation in Afghanistan presents us with a test of this principle. This is a pivotal moment for human rights. If the international community is steadfast and united in its resolve, the human rights of women will prevail and the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan will go forward."

Julia V. Taft, Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration:

- Before the Senate Appropriations Committee/Foreign Operations Subcommittee on March 9, 1999, Assistant Secretary Taft commented on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. "We have publicly condemned the Taliban's human rights violations in multiple fora – for example the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, the U.N. Security Council and the Afghan Support Group. But beyond the human rights issue, the Taliban's position on women constrains the delivery of humanitarian assistance, because it challenges the basic humanitarian principle that such assistance must be available equally to beneficiaries, without regard to gender, race or other characteristics."

Karl F. Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs:

- On April 14, 1999 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee/Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Assistant Secretary Inderfurth referred to the situation of women in Afghanistan. "We are also paying very close attention to the Taliban's reprehensible policies toward women, raising this issue directly with the Taliban and senior Pakistani officials as well as speaking out publicly in international fora."

Drafted: Lois Gochnauer, G, S/PICW, Dec. 1, 1999

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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Office of the Senior Coordinator for
International Women's Issues

November 22, 1999

WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan:

The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan has remained mostly unchanged since 1998. Although there have been reports of relaxation in their implementation, most of the Taliban's gender policies remain in place. In addition, the humanitarian situation for all Afghans, and particularly the most vulnerable women and children, continues to deteriorate as a consequence of the ongoing civil war between the mainly Pashtu Taliban and the mainly minority-dominated Northern Alliance.

The situation of women and girls deteriorated rapidly with the resumption of fighting between the Afghan factions in 1992. Lawlessness, rape and kidnapping were rampant throughout much of the country, as a welter of local militia commanders dominated the country. When the Taliban appeared on the scene in 1994, they enjoyed a series of rapid victories and were initially popular with many who were tired of the war and general anarchy. When they took over Kabul in 1996, they began to enforce a series of ultra-conservative social strictures, many of which impacted women and their position in society. Although Afghan women traditionally have suffered disadvantages in many areas of Afghan society prior to the civil war, a limited but growing number of Afghan women, particularly in urban areas, worked outside the home in nontraditional roles. There were female lawyers, government officials and doctors in Kabul.

The Taliban forbade women to work outside the home, but soon allowed exceptions for female doctors and nurses in restricted circumstances and have since stated that widows could work outside the home to support their families. In urban areas, women were forbidden to leave home unless accompanied by a male relative. Some changes have taken place since then. Women now can appear on the streets alone. However, particularly in cities, when they go out they must wear a traditional long robe called the "burqa" covering them from head to toe. A small mesh covered opening about five inches square provides the only means to see. Some women have been beaten by the Taliban "religious police" on the street for failure to wear the burqa or for not being fully covered.

The burqa is a traditionally women's garment in Afghanistan, and is similar to garments worn in a number of other Muslim countries. Many Afghan women wore the burqa before the Taliban took control. However, wearing the burqa was not part of a legally enforced dress code, as the Taliban have decreed. (The Taliban also enforce a dress code for men, which includes an obligatory wearing beards of a certain length.) Many women

in Kabul, as well as most rural women, typically appeared in public wearing scarves that just covered the head. Many rural women continue to be unveiled today.

The Taliban restricted education for girls, particularly in urban areas such as Kabul. Private home-based schools, which had quietly continued to operate, were ordered closed last year in Kabul. Those that continue to operate do so at the risk of being shut down. Although the Taliban claim that they are not against female education and have requested resources from foreign donors for educating both boys and girls, we have as yet seen no serious effort to provide educational opportunities for women and girls and they have not accepted offers of assistance which are on the table.

The impact of Taliban restrictions on women is most acutely felt in cities such as Herat and Kabul, where there are some numbers of educated and professional women. In rural areas women do chores, tend animals, gather water and fire wood and, when working in the fields, do not wear burqas and enjoy a greater degree of mobility. At one time before the Taliban takeover, Kabul University had several thousand women students while professional women worked in different capacities in the city. Especially hard hit has been war widows (there are over 30,000 in Kabul alone), many of who are the sole providers of their families. Many were reduced to begging on the streets to feed their children. Partly due to employment restrictions, but particularly as a result of deteriorating economic conditions throughout the country, many women and children have been forced to beg on the streets.

Women and girls now do have access to medical services and hospitals in Kabul, with the exception of two military hospitals reserved for men. Male doctors can and do treat female patients and many female doctors have returned to work. Women and children patients need not be accompanied by a male relative. Access to medical facilities, however, is impaired for all by a critical and chronic shortage of medicine and equipment. This affects both male and female patients.

Political situation in Afghanistan:

The fighting in Afghanistan has gone on for over 20 years and continues today. The Taliban now occupy ninety percent of the country, including all major cities, but do not fully control occupied areas. Resistance continues from the Northern Alliance Forces, largely those of Commander Ahmed Shah Masood.

The international community, through the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the UN Security Council and the UN's informal Group of Six-Plus-Two (the six countries bordering Afghanistan: Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China, plus the U.S. and Russia) has called on the parties to declare a cease-fire, to negotiate to establish a broad-based, multi-ethnic representative government that respects international norms on human rights, including the rights of women and girls. Sadly, this call has been ignored.

During military clashes that started with a Taliban offensive in July 1999, there were numerous reports of abuse of civilians, by the Taliban. There have been reports of a deliberate scorched earth policy by the Taliban that has left scores of thousands of Afghans homeless and destitute. These actions came during a series of seesaw battles in the Shomali valley and in the north that have since settled into stalemate. There were also credible reports of attacks by Taliban forces on the Hazara Shia residents in Mazar-i-Sharif, including the killing of innocent civilians, when it fell to the Taliban forces on August 8, 1998 and in Bamiyan in April 1999 when the city was recaptured by the Taliban from the Hazara forces. The Taliban have since agreed to an international investigation of all of these and other killings, including some where the Taliban were the victims. The Taliban also agreed to the stationing of UN civil affairs monitors in the country.

Insecure conditions in Afghanistan have led to the periodic withdrawal of international humanitarian agency staff. UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) withdrew expatriate personnel from Afghanistan in August 1998. Some personnel returned in March, following UN discussions with the Taliban regarding credible security guarantees for humanitarian workers. Some emergency assistance continued through locally hired staff during the interim. In November 1999, crowds of Afghans protesting the implementation of UN sanctions against the Taliban for not turning over terrorist Usama bin Laden stoned, and in one case burned, UN buildings across the country. UN workers are again operating after Taliban leaders assured them that they would receive protection.

Afghanistan has now become the world's largest opium poppy producer. Elements of all Afghan factions have links to and have received benefits from the narcotics trade. These narcotics are trafficked through Pakistan, Central Asia and Iran to supply Pakistan, the Middle East and Europe, with some going to the U.S. market.

United States diplomatic efforts:

The efforts of the United Nations have been central to the peace process. The United States supported the efforts of the Secretary General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and the work of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan. The United States also has participated in the Six-Plus-Two Group's efforts to bring a peaceful negotiated settlement of the conflict and the formation of a broad-based government. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, the Taliban offensive following the July Tashkent Six-Plus-Two meeting has called the group's effectiveness into question.

The United States consults with other interested governments and continually raises the issue of the Taliban's treatment of women and girls in international fora – e.g., the UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Commission and the UN Commission on the Status of Women where the U.S. authored a resolution on women in Afghanistan in 1998 and again in 1999.

We have raised the situation in Afghanistan with countries that have indicated support for the Taliban such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Our message to all factions within Afghanistan is the same: cease fire, negotiate, work with the UN, combat narcotics and terrorism and respect international norms of behavior, including rights of women and girls.

Promoting the observance of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, is one of our highest foreign policy priorities in Afghanistan. We continue to press all Afghan factions, including the Taliban and their supporters, in public and private, and at senior levels, to extend humanitarian treatment to women and girls.

We call upon the Taliban to lift restrictions on the mobility and employment of women and the schooling of girls. We also call upon the Taliban and all factions to abide by internationally accepted norms of human rights, including the rights of women and girls.

As First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said at the 1998 Human Rights Day celebration, "We cannot allow these terrible crimes against women and girls - and, truly, against all of humanity - to continue with impunity. We must all make it unmistakably clear this terrible suffering inflicted on the women and girls of Afghanistan is not cultural, it is criminal. And we must do everything we can in our power to stop it."

President Clinton raised the issue of respect for the human rights of all Afghan citizens, including women and girls and ethnic minorities, with then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan during his visit to Washington last year.

The United States is neutral toward the various Afghan factions fighting in that country, but we are not neutral about their violations of international norms of behavior. We condemn Taliban human rights violations, particularly against women and girls and minorities.

The United States condemns the Taliban for sheltering international terrorists Usama bin Laden and his network, its facilitating narcotics production and trafficking and its failure to adhere to calls for a cease-fire and negotiations for a political settlement. In July, the President issued an executive order blocking property and banning business transactions with the Taliban. In August, a second executive order placed Taliban-owned Ariana airlines under sanctions. Since then the United States has frozen tens of millions of dollars in Taliban assets. Ariana's operations have been disrupted, thanks to cooperation from India and several other countries.

In October, a U.S.-initiated resolution passed unanimously by the UN Security Council demands that the Taliban stop sheltering bin Laden and ensure that he is expelled and brought to justice. Since the Taliban failed to expel bin Laden by November 14, their assets are being frozen worldwide and Taliban owned or leased aircraft are now banned from landing and taking off from UN member state territories. This resolution is the

result of the intense efforts of the United States and others and represents a significant step in our campaign to end bin Ladin's terrorist activities.

We have made clear to the world that even if the Taliban expel bin Laden, there are other issues, such as human rights, including the human rights of women and girls, and narcotics, that they must address before they can expect any movement towards acceptance by the international community.

The United States does not recognize the Taliban, the Northern Alliance or any other Afghan faction as the government of Afghanistan. The United States has made it clear that a future government in Afghanistan must be broad based and represent the interests of all Afghans. It must also observe international norms of behavior, such as the respect for human rights, particularly the human rights of women and girls, and the forbiddance of narcotics and terrorism. We believe that only such a government can bring lasting peace to Afghanistan on its territory.

We want to see the UN Afghan seat occupied by a broad-based, multi-ethnic representative government that respects international norms of behavior, including the human rights of women and girls.

United States humanitarian efforts for women and girls:

The United States is committed to providing humanitarian assistance to women and girls of Afghanistan. United States officials play a key role in making the issue of assistance to women in Afghanistan a major focus of the donors' Afghanistan Support Group.

In FY 1999, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) provided \$3.14 million in funding to NGOs to carry out health and education projects for Afghan women and girl refugees principally in Pakistan. These contributions were in addition to those made to the South Asia regional programs of the UNHCR and ICRC, which include Afghan women and girls among the beneficiaries. In addition to continuing existing health and education programs with Save the Children, Church World Service and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (\$1.7 million), major new initiatives included an IRC project to expand and improve secondary education for Afghan girls in Peshawar and nearby camps (\$480,632); an IRC project to fund projects of local women's NGOs working to improve women's and girls' health and education (\$349,603); and funding for the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children to place a gender technical adviser in Peshawar, who will assist other NGOs to improve the treatment of Afghan women in their projects (\$199,301).

PRM is also providing \$408,000 to the International Medical Corps for the Afghan Women's Refugee Camp project. The project will be implemented with the Afghan NGOs Ibn Sina, Afghan Women's Resource Center and Afghan Women's Clinic. It will provide training and capacity building to mobilize educated Afghan women to meet the health needs of women and children in six refugee camps in the Northwest Frontier

Province of Pakistan. It will also provide a donation of medicines and medical supplies to health units in those camps.

In FY 2000 PRM is continuing to emphasize health and education programs for women and girls in Pakistan and, to the extent possible, in Afghanistan.

In addition, the Bureau of South Asian Affairs, through its Regional Democracy Fund, will provide \$420,000 in FY 1999 funding for NGOs with programs in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and within Afghanistan to improve the civic participation and human rights status of Afghan women. One of these NGOS, the International Human Rights Law Group, will provide training and funding for human rights monitors in the refugee camps and in Afghanistan.

PRM is also strengthening resettlement efforts in FY 2000. As part of an overall increase in the regional ceiling for refugee admissions from the Near East and South Asia, PRM has established a working goal with UNHCR of identifying at least 400 Afghan Women-at-Risk cases (which include a woman head of household and family members in the same household).

Besides traditional urgent protection and rescue cases, UNHCR will also refer for permanent U.S. resettlement, persecuted ethnic and religious minorities and other groups singled out by the Taliban. Under the expanded program, the U.S. government expects to resettle about 1,500 Afghan women and their families this year, a 500 percent increase over FY 1999.



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Chair

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Chair

Secretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE:

12/2

TO: Katy Burton

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MESSAGE:

EYI just so you can see what
Belquis is like this is the statement
made by her before the UN Human
Rights Commission in 1998

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): (4)

International
Human Rights

Statement made by Belgues
LAW GROUP

Annex - 6

United Nations Commission on Human Rights
Fifty-Fourth Session
Oral intervention - April 9, 1998

Agenda Item No. 9: Violence Against Women

Oral Intervention by the International Human Rights Law Group, an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC (category II).

Thank you Mr. Chairperson:

I am speaking on behalf of International Human Rights Law Group and Afghan women who have come to this Commission to seek support from the international community. We speak to highlight the systematic institutionalization of violence against women in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairperson:

In Afghanistan, violence against women occurs at various levels, including the forms reported by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. This year, the Special Rapporteur has focused on violence against women during armed conflict. Today, women in Afghanistan are facing violence as result of strategic war policies adopted to control the civilian population. Today, in two thirds of Afghanistan, it is a crime for women and girls to come out of their homes to go to schools, offices, hospitals, or to go out for simple tasks like buying food or travel alone. It is a crime for Afghan women to wear their traditional dress that they have been wearing for centuries. Now they must wear what the new military rulers have decided for them.

Mr. Chairperson:

As the world prepares to enter the 21st century, the women in Afghanistan are being forced to disappear from public life. Today, Afghan women are being forced to adopt a culture defined by men and carried out by teen age boys who have the guns to silence anyone who disobeys.

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Mr. Chairperson:

This Commission faces a challenge. Will the world community step backwards and give up the rights we have already secured as fundamental rights of all human beings?

In Afghanistan, violence against women has continued in various forms during its 20 years of armed conflict. For example in 1980s, the Soviet soldiers held Afghan women hostage for money, tortured and raped the victims and threw their bodies in the streets at night.

From 1992 to date, various Mujahedeen factions torture, rape and gang rape women for revenge. As the Special rapporteur has stated in this year's report, it is the perceived honor of the enemy that is targeted in the perpetration of sexual violence against women.

With the arrival of Taliban in 1994, extreme forms of violence against women were imposed in the name of peace, religion, and culture. Taliban leaders argue that they do not rape women but protect them by making sure that women do not come out of their homes. In November 1996, women in Herat city held a peaceful demonstration to protest against such policies. They were attacked by Taliban police. Two women were killed and twenty others were imprisoned. Due to Taliban policies, thousands of war widows are practically locked inside their homes.

Mr. Chairperson:

The International Human Rights Law Group welcomes the report of Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. We regret that her joint mission with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan could not take place and we hope that she can visit Afghanistan in 1998.

We urge the Special Rapporteur to examine the link between economic hardships and violence against women in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairperson:

For the last two years, this Commission has adopted strong resolutions to highlight the situation of women's human rights in Afghanistan and to appeal for peace. While, these resolutions are extremely important to declare that the world community is concerned about violence against women in Afghanistan, the Afghan women have found that these resolutions are not enough to restore their human rights. It is now time to move from fine words to firm actions.

Mr. Chairperson:

The armed conflict in Afghanistan has continued for 20 years for many reasons. One of the main reasons is the continued supply of weapons to Afghanistan by a number of countries who are supporting various factions. The fighting will not end until the flow of arms is ended.

Mr. Chairperson:

We welcome the efforts of the international community for the economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Violence decreases when families have economic security. We urge the member states of this Commission to ensure that Afghan women also benefit from such efforts.

Mr. Chairperson:

In the absence of a unified judicial system, women victims of violence have no place to seek justice in Afghanistan. We urge the Commission to set up a Field Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Afghanistan which can monitor violations and provide appropriate protection and assistance. This Commission should ensure that this office is staffed with women, so that Afghan women, including those speaking only local languages, can also contact it without fear of reprisal.

Mr. Chairperson:

We urge the member states of this Commission to take practical steps for establishing peace in Afghanistan by requesting all warring factions to resolve their differences through dialogue and by holding free and fair elections in which all Afghan men and women can participate.

The armed conflict in Afghanistan has affected women in extreme ways. Afghan women have suffered long enough in this international politics of warm waters, cold war and oil and gas pipelines. Today, they are being forced to disappear. Afghan women have lost lives, family members, basic human rights, human dignity and right to be respected. Soon, they might lose something that destroys humanity.

Mr. Chairperson:

They might lose hope. The international community should not let that happen.

Thank you.

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