



Walk-Out After Meeting with Voter Registration Workers

Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State

Remarks at the Joint Electoral Management Body Regional Office

Karte Parwan, Kabul, Afghanistan

July 16, 2004

8:45am

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for joining us on this lovely Friday. I am delighted to be at the JEMB. I must say it is a humbling experience to be in the presence of people who are working so hard to advance their nation.

As I understand it, already more than 7million Afghan citizens have been registered to vote through the efforts of the men and women here - and in other regional locations - and forty-percent of those registered to vote are women. This is a phenomenal achievement and it's not over.

After 23 years of war and all the difficulties of the Taliban regime, the people of Afghanistan are about to reclaim their futures. The attention of the entire world – the entire international community – is focused on Afghanistan as we approach October 9th and the presidential elections, and then the parliamentary elections next spring.

I was able to, on behalf of the United States, express my deep appreciation and gratitude for the activities of these men and women who are – there is no other word for it – patriots of Afghanistan.

My country has determined that we are going to be partners in this endeavor. We are going to see Afghanistan through to a successful future where all the people of this country can live in peace, in prosperity, and free of fear. So, let me close by expressing enormous support and appreciation for the activities of the Joint Electoral Management Body, to express my awe of the activities of these men and women who are leading the charge for a better Afghanistan, and to ensure every citizen of this country that the United States is going to stay alongside you through to the end.

Thank you all very much.

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