

This trend was reversed in 1992 and now, under the Taliban, "women and girls became, and remain today, virtually invisible."

Education is a major concern, where edicts prevent girls from attending school and receiving an education. A small, low-profile, "home school" movement has started, with an estimated 6,500 girls and boys attending classes in Kabul. These home schools, however, are no substitute for access to a real education.

On September 6, 1997 the Taliban government issued a statement demanding that admission of female patients to hospitals cease immediately, and that all female medical staff stop working. After negotiations with the ICRC the Taliban government reconsidered, but women still face great difficulties in getting access to medical care.

Many Non-Governmental Organizations are doing work which I can describe as nothing short of heroic to provide medical and humanitarian assistance under the most adverse of circumstances. But they are faced with numerous constraints, from difficulties in collecting data and verifying beneficiary cards, to laws and practices which prevent the distribution of assistance or services directly to the women in need.

The U.S. State Department's 1997 human rights report states: "Women were beaten for violating increasingly restrictive Taliban dress codes, which require women to be covered from head to toe. Women were strictly prohibited from working outside the home, and women and girls were denied the right to an education. Women were forbidden from appearing outside the home unless accompanied by a male family member. Beatings and death resulted from a failure to observe these restrictions."

The women of Afghanistan, who have seen their families destroyed by war, are now having their economic life and their fundamental human rights stripped away, and an already war-torn and war-weary Afghanistan has been pushed to the brink of disaster.

Fully half of Afghanistan's population cannot work for a living or be educated. Fully half the population of Afghanistan are being systematically denied their basic human rights. We must act to stop these injustices and to bring peace to Afghanistan.

Ambassador Richardson's recent initiative, which led to the unprecedented peace talks between representatives of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in Islamabad last month and an agreement to set up a 40-member Ulama commission to find a solution for the civil conflict, represents perhaps the best opportunity for a comprehensive peace in Afghanistan in over a generation.

The ultimate outcome of these discussions are still in doubt, however, and, movement at the peace talks has been accompanied by reports of new fighting in the fields, with both sides reportedly acquiring new weapons.

I believe we must give our full support to these peace talks. But I also believe that we must be prepared for continued violence in Afghanistan, and for the situation faced by Afghanistan's women to get worse before it gets better. As we await the outcome of these peace talks—and there is no quick or apparent solution in sight—we must continue to work to alleviate the plight of Afghanistan's women.

The resolution I submit today calls on the administration to create an Afghan Women's Initiative, along the lines of the successful Bosnian and Rwandan Women's Initiatives which the administration has created in the past two years. Those initiatives have assisted the victims of those wars by promoting the reintegration of women into the economy with an emphasis on capacity-building, training programs, legal assistance, and support for micro-enterprise projects, as well as refugee reintegration and protection.

I believe that the successes of those two programs can serve as a model for a similar initiative for the women of Afghanistan, as well as the numerous Afghan women in refugee camps in Pakistan. The women of Afghanistan could greatly benefit from such a women's initiative, and I look forward to working with the administration to design and implement such a program.

Second, this resolution calls for the international community to investigate charges of rape and abuse as instruments of the now almost decade-long civil war which has torn Afghanistan apart, and, if credible evidence exists, to convene a war crimes tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators.

Credible charges have been made about the systematic use of rape by several of the factions and parties involved in this struggle, and I believe that these charges must be investigated and, if true, must lead to indictments and trials.

Finally, I believe that the United States must be clear in stating that we will not recognize any government in Afghanistan unless it is broad-based, respective of all Afghans, and respects international norms of behavior in human rights, including the rights of women and girls. As we continue to work for peace in Afghanistan, this resolution calls for an unequivocal statement of administration policy on this point.

The United States, with our history of commitment to women's rights and equality, must redouble its efforts to place respect for women's rights at the top of the international community's agenda in Afghanistan, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

This resolution, essentially, asks the President and the Secretary of State to work with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees to guarantee the safety of and provide development assistance for Afghan women in Pakistan, as well as Afghanistan, and to increase support for various refugee programs, to explore options for resettle-

ment, and to establish in Afghanistan a women's initiative which is based on the successful model of the Bosnian women's initiative and the Rwandan women's initiative that are targeted toward Afghani women's groups.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 231—MAKING A TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO SENATE RESOLUTION 208

Mr. BENNETT submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 231

*Resolved*, That Senate Resolution 208, agreed to April 2, 1998 (105th Congress), is amended—

(1) in section 3(a)(8), by inserting "reimbursable or" before "non-reimbursable"; and

(2) striking section 5 and inserting the following:

#### "SEC. 5. FUNDING.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—There shall be made available from the contingent fund of the Senate out of the Account for Expenses for Inquiries and Investigations, for use by the special committee to carry out this resolution—

"(1) not to exceed \$575,000 for the period beginning on April 2, 1998, through February 28, 1999, and \$575,000 for the period beginning on March 1, 1999, through February 29, 2000, of which not to exceed \$200,000 shall be available for each period for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof, as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; and

"(2) such additional sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the special committee.

"(b) EXPENSES.—Payment of expenses of the special committee shall be disbursed upon vouchers approved by the chairman, except that vouchers shall not be required for the disbursement of salaries paid at an annual rate."

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED

#### AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS ACT

#### WARNER (AND ROBB) AMENDMENT NO. 2412

Mr. ABRAHAM (for Mr. WARNER, for himself and Mr. ROBB) proposed an amendment to the bill (S. 1723) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to assist the United States to remain competitive by increasing the access of the United States firms and institutions of higher education to skilled personnel and by expanding educational and training opportunities for American students and workers; as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following new section:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS FOR CERTAIN NATO CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)) is amended—

(1) by striking "or" at the end of subparagraph (J),

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (K) and inserting "; or", and