

Alan Frumin, for granted. We should not do that. They do outstanding work. If the Senate is in session, Elizabeth and Alan are on duty. These past couple of months have been trying times for many. These two outstanding individuals have risen to the occasion. Their tireless service to the Senate deserves our recognition and expressions of appreciation. Their job is not easy and often involves making the toughest of the calls. They are fair, balanced and wise and their invaluable contribution to the U.S. Senate merits our praise.

WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in America, for all the advances that have been made, women still have a little ways to go. They still earn only 74 cents for every \$1 a man makes doing the exact same work. Women pay 68 percent more in out-of-pocket costs for health care than men. Almost half of all large health plans do not cover any form of contraception. Although women make up over half of our population, Federal funding for specific illnesses that relate to women has not kept pace with health needs. That is an understatement.

While I cannot overstate the importance of achieving gender equality in the United States, these issues pale in comparison to the gender apartheid the Afghan women experience under the Taliban. The difference between the problems of American and Afghan women is the difference in height of Mount Everest and Death Valley. The separation is as large as it can be on this Earth, the difference between night and day.

Gender apartheid is not unlike racial apartheid in South Africa where the black majority suffered appalling human rights violations. In South Africa, people of color were deprived of legal and economic rights, mixed marriages were forbidden by law, residential areas were segregated, and many were forced to live in slums. One of the most far-reaching consequences of apartheid in South Africa was its impact on education. Children of color were educated at a very low level, if at all. Children were taught things such as dishwashing and weeding flower beds.

It is difficult to imagine a system worse than apartheid in South Africa. Sadly, this is the case for Afghan women suffering unthinkable violations of their most basic human rights. While I don't in any way diminish what went on in South Africa, what is going on in Afghanistan is every bit as bad as, if not worse than, what went on in South Africa.

Why do I say that? By virtue of decrees by the Government in power, the Taliban, every aspect of a woman's right in Afghanistan, from their behavior to their dress, is under edict, under rule. For example, women cannot work outside the home. Women are not al-

lowed to receive any education. They cannot even be home schooled; that is a violation of law. Women in Afghanistan today cannot leave their homes unless they are accompanied by a close male relative such as a father, a brother, or a husband. When they do leave their homes, women must be covered from head to toe in a burqa. When I say head to toe, I mean they cannot have a strand of hair showing. Their eyes do not show.

Every Senator will get in the next day or so a little package that shows this piece of cloth with holes in it. This is what the women wear over their eyes so that people cannot see their eyes. Think of how unsanitary, how humiliating it is to have every inch of their skin covered. But that is the way it is in Afghanistan. Every woman must have every part of her skin covered.

So when they do leave their homes, they are covered from head to toe. Women who disobey this rule will be subject to verbal abuse, beatings, whippings. There was a film put out by the Feminist Majority, and I watched Friday in my home this videotape of the treatment of women. It is hard to comprehend in this modern world that women are beaten with sticks; they are stoned, stoned to death on occasion, for doing things that are not within the rules.

Women cannot deal with male shopkeepers. If they go out, even with their husband or brother or father, they still cannot buy anything unless the transaction is made by somebody who is with them. They cannot be treated by male doctors. Women who let their ankles show for some reason—they stumble, they fall, they sit, and an ankle shows—are whipped, and they are not whipped privately; they are whipped in public. Women accused of having sex outside of marriage—accused of having sex outside of marriage—by their husband or someone else will be stoned. I saw this on the videotape. They are killed by being stoned.

No cosmetics. This includes deodorant, and certainly nothing on their face. Women who have their nails painted have had their fingers cut off. Women are banned from talking or shaking hands with men. Women are prohibited from laughing. No stranger should hear a woman's voice.

I wish I were making this up, but I am not. Women cannot wear high heels. But even to carry this to a further extreme, you cannot hear a woman when they walk. A man must not hear a woman's footsteps. They cannot ride in a taxi without a close male relative. A woman's presence in radio, television, or public outings of any kind is forbidden. Women certainly can't play in sports, enter a sports club. Women are banned from riding bicycles or motorcycles, even with a close relative. And remember, that is the only mode of transportation in some places.

Women cannot wear brightly colored clothes, even though the burqa covers

every part of their body, because in Taliban terms these are considered sexually attracting clothes—bright colors. Women are prohibited from gathering for festive occasions or for any recreational purpose. Women cannot wash clothes in rivers or in public places. Women are banned from appearing even on balconies of their apartments or houses. And to carry it even further, in homes where the women live, you have to paint the windows so that people cannot see in, for fear you could see a woman inside the home. Male tailors cannot take women's measurements or sew women's clothes.

One of the few things women could participate in was to take baths. They don't have private baths but they have public baths. No more. Since 1995 that is all through. No more public baths. Males and females cannot travel on the same bus. Public buses are designated "males only" or "females only." Flared or wide-legged pant legs even under their burqas are not allowed. Women cannot be photographed or filmed. Women's pictures cannot appear in newspapers or books or even be hung on walls in houses or shops.

The only thing worse than these restrictions that the Taliban Government has placed against women is the punishments of those who dare to disobey. Penalties include public beatings, torture, stoning, as I have already talked about, and of course executions.

Let's be very clear. This is not a question of cultural differences. The Taliban's inhumane treatment of women has nothing to do with religion and everything to do with power. Nowhere does the Islamic religion say women cannot be educated or employed. In fact, the President of the world's largest Islamic nation, Indonesia, is a woman.

The toll the Taliban's rule has taken on Afghan women is profound. The rate of illiteracy among girls now is over 90 percent. Women have no access to health care. As a result, an estimated 45 women die every day from pregnancy-related causes.

Afghanistan—there may be other countries—is the only country I know where the life expectancy for a woman is shorter than for a man. To show what that country has gone through and is going through, the average life expectancy for a man is 48 years. For a woman it is lower.

Ninety percent of Afghan women suffer from severe depression, and the suicide rate among the Afghan women is too large to count. Sadly, many women resort to killing themselves, and what they have found is, they use caustic soda that burns away the throat; it takes 3 torturous days for a woman to die. The only surgeon who can do anything about this in Afghanistan is in a hospital that is closed to women.

In Kabul there are over 40,000 widows as a result of the war. Because the Taliban forbids women from working, they are forced into begging, and under penalty of death some of these women

resort to prostitution; it is the only way they can support themselves and their children. That does not last very long because they normally are caught and killed.

The tragedy is intensified by the fact that prior to the Taliban takeover of the country, Afghan women were 70 percent of the Nation's schoolteachers, 40 percent of the Nation's doctors, 50 percent of the civilian government workers, and 50 percent of the college students in Kabul were women.

Just a few years ago, Afghan women were scientists, professors, members of Parliament, and university professors. They led corporations and nonprofit organizations. Today, these same women cannot show their faces in public or leave their homes alone.

In spite of the Taliban's harsh edicts, some Afghan women are risking their lives and some have lost their lives trying to run home schools and health clinics.

Let me read a few accounts of Afghan women. This is a woman who escaped a Taliban death decree. She said:

"The Taliban's take over of Afghanistan affected women more than any other sector of Afghan society. Women suffer in Afghanistan because they are forced to abandon their social lives and live as prisoners in their own homes. Women suffer in Afghanistan because they no longer have their freedom of movement, freedom to work, freedom to be educated and the right to live free from violence. Widows, often times are the sole providers for their families and suffer even more because of the Taliban's edicts that outlaw women's employment. Women watch their children suffer from malnutrition, disease, and even death. Women in Afghanistan suffer from war crimes because they are raped, murdered, trafficked, kidnapped, and forced to marry against their will.

A lot of them are 10-year-old girls. This is an account of a teenager when the Taliban took control of her village.

The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan has been the most terrifying experience in my life. I remember with fear that day in 1995 when the Taliban took over my city, and life for women forever changed. I remember the day that I was forced to wear the burqa, the day schools were closed to women, the day learning and work became forbidden to women; and darkness engulfed the lives of all women living in Afghanistan. I remember that I was beaten by the Taliban for going to the public bath and the day women in my city demonstrated against the closing of public baths and schools. The Taliban retaliated by murdering ten of those women and arresting forty others, who since that day have not been seen nor located.

This is by an Afghan woman who was beaten by the Taliban.

"During the first week of the Taliban's capture of Kabul, friends and neighbors helped my family with shopping because I only had sisters and no brothers and my father was dead. One day I decided to go for shopping alone because my neighbors could no longer help out with shopping. I wore a long dress and covered my face and head with the chadori. I went shopping for food at a market near my home. When I arrived at the market I was approached by a man with a long beard, a black turban, a gun on his shoulder, and a long stick in his hand. This man was Taliban. He asked me why I was out

alone and who else was with me. When he saw that there was no man with me, I immediately tried to explain that I had no man in my house and that my family was without food to eat. The Talib would not listen to my explanations. He began to beat me with his stick as he shouted at me to go home and leave here. My entire body ached from the bruises and slashes of the stick.

In Afghanistan, women have been stripped of their most basic human rights. The Taliban has prohibited women and girls from working, attending school and leaving their home without a close male relative. Women's punishment for violation of Taliban decrees include brutal beatings, imprisonment and even death.

As we continue life after the terrible day of September 11 and try to bring our life to some degree of normalcy, we cannot forget that the women of Afghanistan are the first victims of the Taliban. Every day, we are doing things to free that country and to restore its government. Our Government has no desire to have any degree of governmental control over Afghanistan. Our war is not against the people of Afghanistan, but it is against the Taliban. They are cruel and unusual in their dealings with people. But they are worse than that in their dealings with women. Every day that we do something to bring about the restoration of the Afghan Government which doesn't involve the Taliban, we are doing society a favor. The women are the first victims of the Taliban.

We must demonstrate our support through humanitarian relief for the women of Afghanistan and the scores of Afghan refugees in the surrounding regions. As we look toward the future of Afghanistan, we have to recognize that women must play a role in rebuilding of the post-Taliban Afghanistan.

There are people who were educated, and they are still educated. They are not being educated, but they are educated. They are women who were teachers, doctors, nurses, and scientists. They should play a part in that new government. And there will be a new government.

We simply can't forget that women are being brutalized by the Taliban, and we must redouble our efforts to help restore human rights to the people of Afghanistan, and especially the women of Afghanistan.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I certainly appreciate the comments of my friend from Nevada. I agree with what he has to say. He certainly describes one of the reasons that we are involved in seeking to find out where those terrorists are, and those countries that harbor them, and doing something about terrorism around this world.

THE SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to comment on where I think we are today and where I think we need to go.

Certainly I am very proud of Americans since September 11. I think it has been amazing how everyone in this country has come together with a commitment. I am proud of their work and their dedication to find where we are with these terrorists and to do something about it and to get rid of terrorism around the world.

As I go home to Wyoming, I am very pleased that even though Wyoming is quite a ways from here, those folks are just as committed, just as involved, and just as interested as the rest of us. I am very pleased about that.

When we are challenged and attacked by terrorists, this country demonstrates its commitment to freedom and its commitment to doing away with the things around the world that cause terrorism.

I am very proud of this Congress after September 11. Everyone in both parties in the House and the Senate came together to do the things that were necessary, to do the things the President asked of us regardless of party lines, to do the things for defense, and to do the things for New York and Virginia in terms of the need because of what happened, and then to continue to do that. I am very pleased about that.

Obviously, in the Senate and the Congress, everyone has different ideas about how we should go forward. Once we get past the emergency kinds of things, we, of course, go back to not having universal agreement on everything that we talked about doing. That is the way it is. That is the way it should be. We are here to represent different views as we have different views on things that should be undertaken.

I believe we have a number of things that we ought to accomplish before we leave, and indeed it seems to me that we should. One of the reasons we have done the things we have done is so that we can continue to live a relatively normal life as well as meet our emergencies. I think one of the things that calls for normalcy is for us to leave and go home after Thanksgiving and during Christmastime. I suspect that rather than sine die, we will be leaving at the call of the Chair. I will support that. If it is necessary for us to return, we could do that.

But we have a number of things we must do. One of them is certainly appropriations, on which the Presiding Officer has given leadership. Obviously, appropriations are a very important and vital part of what we do in Government. I think we completed 5 of the 13 appropriations bills. We are moving forward. We need to continue to do that.

We need to have an economic stimulus package. Our economy, of course, about a year ago began to weaken. Then, of course, with the September 11 tragedy, it took a rather sharp decline. We have to do something about that decline, and we can.

I think it is necessary for us to complete the airport safety bill that we