



November 27, 2006

This week, our organization, PARSA hosted a lunch for the Afghan women parliamentarians to meet US congressmen from the House Democracy Assistance Commission. Rep. David Dreier (R-CA), Rep. David Price (D-NC), Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA), Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) attended an informal affair in my home which is furnished Afghan style with floor pillows. Sitting on the floor eating lunch made the meeting unexpectedly intimate. The ensuing discussion

was affirming to both sides. We expected 12 women to attend and 27 came. The Afghan MP's spoke to the US representatives about the challenges facing the Afghan's as they see it. Security is their number one concern. As they expressed it to Rep. Lois Capps, development money spent is going to be of no use if we cannot secure Afghanistan.

They had a short hour with the US representatives, who are in country for only 48 hours but MP Rahila Alumshahe closed the meeting by saying "Please tell the American people that the Afghan people cannot express enough gratitude for the sacrifice of America's sons and daughters in our poor country as we attempt to make peace." I was deeply moved by her sentiment, as I know Americans never hear this in the media. And after being immersed in the Afghan political scene for almost two years, I was struck by the graciousness and compassion expressed by our four US representatives-I find myself proud of both of our peoples.

*Marnie*



Najila Dekhen, Heart with Marnie

Dawn with Rep. Lois Capps CA