

Washington, DC (December 19, 2011) – U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement today in response to a White House announcement that President Obama issued an executive order to establish a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security:

"I commend President Obama on the release of the first-ever *U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security*. I thank the President, Secretary Clinton, and other members of the Administration for their commitment to promoting international peace and security, as well as advancing the rights of women.

The National Action Plan is based on a simple but important premise: women have a critical but often underutilized role to play in all aspects of peace building and conflict prevention. In the Plan's *Statement of National Policy*, the Obama Administration recognizes that the full inclusion and empowerment of women is "critical to our national and global security."

Critically, the National Action Plan emphasizes the need for coordination across government departments, inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders, and accountability for the implementation. Perhaps most importantly, however, the Plan states that the engagement and protection of women will be "**central** to the United States' efforts to promote security, prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict, and rebuild societies."

With the end of the war in Iraq and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, this is a critical moment for the international community. Women must be part of the post-war reconciliation and peace-building in these countries, as well in the political transitions in Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere.

The release of the National Action Plan emphasizes that the engagement of women and protection of their rights is not just a "women's issue" – it is a fundamental component of our national security and the security of the entire world.

I look forward to working with the Obama Administration to implement the National Action Plan."

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