



The day before the shippers came (12/2/05). This is the photo Edith took when she came over to interview me for the newsrelease on my Afghanistan gig. I figure that the books, and computer chair and table for my apartment are necessities, all the other stuff I don't know...



Yes, I will miss Isabella and Roxanne (photo compliments of Edith, 12/2/05)).



Howard and I being sworn in at the State Department (12/7/05). Howard is the Senior Advisor for Energy. I suspect I'll be seeing a lot of him in the days and months to come.



National Mall from the top of the Washington Monument at sunset (12/7/05)



Jefferson Memorial from the Washington Memorial (12/7/05)



View from the Washington Monument (12/7/05)



The Reachback Family at the Metropolitan Club (12/7/05). Front and center is Secretary Hoffman (Marty) whose vision and people skills (particularly recruitment) are making the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group (ARG) happen and successful. Others include current staff of the DOD Reachback Office, former advisors back after their tours, and spouses.



National Archives on Friday (12/9/05), my last and only free day before deploying that evening. About 4 inches of snow fell during the night.



Aboard the United National Humanitarian Charter Flight from Dubai. Mountains and the rugged terrain of Afghanistan, about 1 hour from Kabul, view from airplane window, looking northeast (12/1105)



Mountains around Kabul, photo taken about 15 minutes from landing (12/11/05). Below notice a town in the river valley. Afghanistan has 5 major river basins and about 85% of the population are farmers who depend upon irrigation. In about 90% of the irrigated cropland, Afghans still use traditional irrigation systems that date back centuries.



Kabul, Afghanistan on a dusty afternoon (12/11/05) taken from my window on the UN flight from Dubai.



Kabul through glare, dust and a dirty airplane window. A surprising number of mud houses and unpaved roads.



Posing for a photo for Edith's story the ARG (Afghanistan Reconstruction Group) office cubicles. I'm wearing a flak jacket, body armoire (it's really heavy) which we're required to wear when traveling outside of the city of Kabul.



Morning view from my balcony (left) and view on a relatively clear day, but the haze and dust still obscure the distant mountains.

Unusual weather has caused air stagnation and a temperature inversion trapping smoke and smog, but it began to lift on Dec 23.



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View from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the apartment building looking towards the new Embassy Building. In between and in the distance are the trailers and shipping containers that serve as offices and housing.