

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman**

**For Immediate Release
May 19, 2009
2009/478**

REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
At the Global Press Conference**

**May 19, 2009
Foreign Press Center
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, good afternoon, everyone. It's a real pleasure to be here with you today. We believe that a free press is an integral part of our democracy. And as I said earlier this month on World Press Freedom Day, President Obama and I are determined to continue the United States' commitment to media freedom worldwide. And I'm very proud of the State Department's long tradition of assisting foreign journalists reporting about the United States, and we will continue to support you in your work.

I've just come from the White House, where I announced a new United States initiative to support the Pakistani people, their government and military as they respond to the humanitarian challenges that have resulted from their efforts to combat and defeat the extremists who are threatening their country. I am confident that Pakistan's institutions and citizens will succeed in confronting this challenge if the international community steps up and helps.

So today, I announce that the people of the United States are responding to a request for assistance from the Government of Pakistan with more than \$100 million in humanitarian support, and we are prepared to do more as the situation demands. Our assistance is already arriving. But as I said earlier, one of our guiding principles is that this should be more than just the delivery of supplies; it should be an investment in the people of Pakistan. So we will buy locally from the bumper crop of wheat, and we'll work to help create quick impact job programs that will put Pakistanis to work making goods for their fellow citizens.

As we support Pakistan's democratically elected government, we're coordinating closely with United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and we are deploying new tools. We're working to support the Pakistani Government in launching a text messaging system that will alert local communities to assistance efforts and help keep family members in touch. We believe we face a common threat, a common challenge, and a common task. But the Pakistani people and their government have shown resolve, and it is up to us now to show our support.

Before I take your questions, let me give you just a very brief overview of some of our efforts during these first few months of the Obama Administration – how we are trying to exercise what we call smart power in pursuit of our foreign policy goals. I don't need to tell any of you that today's world is interconnected. Whatever country we are from, we share urgent

challenges that transcend borders – climate change, food security, diseases, energy, terrorism, piracy, and, of course, the global economic crisis.

The State Department is committed to a new diplomacy powered by partnerships, pragmatism, and principle. We are elevating development to its rightful place alongside diplomacy as a key component of our international efforts. And we are working to promote good governance, human rights, and social inclusion so that more people around the world can claim their rightful share in global progress and prosperity.

Now we are using new tools and seeking new partners to broaden the reach of our diplomacy because we understand that 21st century statecraft cannot just be government-to-government; it must be government-to-people and people-to-people. So we want to engage civil society, women, youth, political activists, and others as we pursue our agenda.

Speaking about some of the specific issues that we have been concentrating on, we have been working hard to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As you know, we've been holding these trilateral meetings among our three countries, and our engagement in that region will continue.

We are seeking constructive solutions in the Middle East, where we have made a major commitment to assist the Palestinian people, and in Iraq, where we are working toward a responsible deployment of American combat forces. And we are taking a new approach to Iran that relies on all the tools of American power, led by diplomacy.

We are reinforcing our relationship with key allies and historic partners in Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and we have engaged vigorously with a number of emerging regional actors. And we're serious about establishing more candid, constructive relationships with both Russia and China.

In addition to our bilateral and multilateral relationships, the President and I are focused on food security so that developing nations can improve food production, affordability, accessibility, education and technology. Issues related to food, including high food prices, pose a threat to the prosperity and security of many countries. And so we are going to rebalance our programs in favor of agricultural development aid, rather than excessive reliance on emergency assistance.

Well, there's a lot to talk about. This has been a very busy couple of months. And I appreciate the work that all of you do to report on the policies of our government and to help bring information to millions of people around the world. I hope we've kept you busy. But again, I am delighted to be here, and I look forward to your questions.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Madame Secretary, we're going to take the first question from Rome on the monitor. It's coming in from there. Hello, go ahead.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Hello, Rome on the monitor.

MODERATOR: This is Rai TV.

QUESTION: Hi. Hello, Madame Secretary. Thank you. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you. So in a few weeks, Italy will host the G-8 summit in L'Aquila, the city that has been devastated by the earthquake.

First question is: What do you think of the decision to move the venue there? And the second: What the – Italy could do on international issues for helping and to be more helpful? I make two examples – first of all, would you like Italy to contribute more on troops for Afghanistan or ask to accept prisoners from Guantanamo?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, thank you. With respect to the first question, I thought it was a very important decision to move the G-8 summit meeting. Clearly, it serves to highlight the devastation caused by the earthquake, and it also provides an opportunity for the G-8 to inject some very needed economic assistance into the region. The United States is working with the Government of Italy to assist with respect to the reconstruction following the earthquake. We are partnering with the – a group of concerned Italian Americans, and we expect to raise money that will go toward helping the university that was devastated in the earthquake. So we see this as a way of people-to-people diplomacy and development, and playing our part in helping Italy recover from the devastation of the earthquake.

I am very grateful for the leadership and support that Italy has provided on a number of the important priorities of the Obama Administration. Italy's assistance in Afghanistan, its renewed commitment to work with other nations on a national police force, is incredibly important and welcome. I have met a number of times with your foreign minister and with the prime minister, and we've discussed the full range of issues, from not only the Middle East and Iran, but to climate change, energy security, and everything you can imagine.

So Italy is playing an important role, and its hosting of the G-8, which of course will be expanded this year and will include discussions of a number of issues with nations that are not formally members of the G-8, is going to be a very important step toward bringing the world together around the resolution of these challenges. And we are grateful for the Italian leadership.

MODERATOR: We'll go here to Constance from Nigeria. Here's the microphone.

QUESTION: President Obama is planning to visit Africa and he will be stopping in Ghana. Is that a snub to countries like Nigeria? Why isn't he covering more countries on this trip? And secondly, what kind of partnership and engagement do you hope to forge with the Nigerian Government and the African Union?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, certainly President Obama is very focused on Africa, as I am. And I hope to travel to Africa later in the year on behalf of the President and our Administration. The President's recently announced trip to Ghana is an effort to make sure that in the very beginning of his Administration he has the opportunity to travel to not only Egypt but also another country in Africa for a visit to demonstrate our commitment to Africa. It is not meant in any other way than what I just said. It is intended to tee up what will be a continuing intensive engagement with Africa.

I view our relationship with Nigeria as an important anchor, and I believe that there is a lot of work we can do together. I have spoken on several occasions with your foreign minister, and I look forward to more consultations, because we think that Nigeria has a critical role to play

in not only its own ongoing democratization and development, but also as a key actor regionally and even globally.

So I think that our commitment to Africa transcends any one country. Obviously, the President couldn't be gone long; he has to get back in order to work with the Congress on all of his priorities. But he really wanted to make a stop in Africa that would send a message in Sub-Saharan Africa of his commitment to all of the nations there. And we will follow up very specifically on our agenda with Nigeria and other nations as well.

MODERATOR: We'll go back for Australia, Geoff Elliott.

QUESTION: Thank you, Madame Secretary, for this opportunity. I'm just wondering, Australia recently released its defense white paper, and in sum, it basically charted the rise of China and the potential decline of the U.S. as the sole dominant force in the Asia-Pacific region in the years ahead. I'm just wondering how you see the U.S. partnering with Australia in the future. Is it sort of business as usual between old mates, to use the local vernacular, or is there a case where the Australia-U.S. partnership needs to evolve over time, given that our economic interests seems to be increasingly allied with China?

And one quick one, if I may. The Bush Administration also made a specific request of Australia to accept Uighur detainees from Guantanamo, and I'm wondering if you've made a similar request. Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first let me say that our relationship with Australia is strong and enduring. We have both had recent changes of government. The underlying partnership remains very solid. But obviously, we are going to engage in a somewhat different way than our predecessor did, and I think it's fair to say Prime Minister Rudd and his government are as well. We had an exceptionally successful visit from the prime minister. My counterpart, Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, and I had a really constructive, productive meeting with your foreign minister and defense minister.

I think that we are deepening and broadening our engagement. We don't think it's a zero-sum game. The fact that a country like China is becoming more successful or Indonesia is now a very successful democracy, we see that as to the good for the entire Pacific region. But we also are sending a clear message that the United States will be engaged. We are a transpacific power as well as a transatlantic power. My first visit as Secretary of State, as you know, was to Asia. We are going to have a very positive engagement on a range of issues with Australia, and we're going to look for ways of enhancing our cooperation when it comes to regional security.

But we want Australia as well as other nations to know that the United States is not ceding the Pacific to anyone. We have longstanding bilateral relationships with nations like Australia and others, and we have a very active multilateral agenda that we intend to reinvigorate, such as our membership in ASEAN and other fora within the Pacific region.

So I believe that the assessment that is made about the future of Asia should include a very active partnership between Australia and the United States on behalf of security and stability and economic growth and prosperity, and we intend to work together to achieve that.

With respect to your other question, we obviously are very hopeful that a number of nations will assist us in delivering on the President's commitment to close Guantanamo. And that will require the release and placement of a number of the detainees.

MODERATOR: We're going to go to our New York Foreign Press Center, and from Pakistan, Shafiq Saddiqui.

QUESTION: Thank you. My question is the weapons in possession and in use by the insurgents in Pakistan are modern and sophisticated. The level of resistance shows the continuation of their supply line. Can America not find, detect, and destroy the supply line of weapons to Taliban? Second part of my question is: Can America not find out who is supplying the weapons to Taliban?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. I think it is important to underscore our very strong support for the steps that the people, government, and military of Pakistan are taking against the extremist threat that is not only aimed at Pakistan, but clearly beyond the borders to other nations as well.

And yes, we know that the extremists are being supplied. We are working closely with the intelligence services of Pakistan and other countries to try to determine where those weapons are coming from. And we are certainly supporting the Pakistani Government in their efforts to disrupt the supply lines that are providing the weapons.

As you know better than I, this is a very difficult terrain to operate in. Many of the extremists are aided by local residents who know every trail and every possible route into the areas of conflict. So it's a challenge, but it's one that we are supporting the Pakistani military in addressing.

And with respect to the specifics of going after those who are supplying them, I'm sure that when information is available and credible, the Pakistani Government will do what it must. And we stand ready to offer assistance if they request.

MODERATOR: Come back here to Washington. And we have Mitch Potter from Canada.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Hello.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, there is a persistent myth, despite all evidence to the contrary, that Canada was a gateway for the 9/11 bombers. Canadian officials are vexed and frustrated by this. They say that it's been fed by many sources, including comments that were attributed to you when you were a senator.

So my question for you today is to ask for clarity. Are Americans right to worry about the Canadian border more than any other point of entry when it comes to security concerns? And if the answer is no, perhaps you can help us understand why these perceptions are so entrenched.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, let me say that Americans are worried about every port and point of entry. I don't think we have any lesser concern about any other route into our

country than any other one. Obviously, we're proud of the long, peaceful border that we share with Canada. But I think it is fair to say that since 9/11, we have been working with our friends in Canada to try to harden that border, to try to provide both more personnel and technology. The prior administration worked on that with the Canadian Government. Our Department of Homeland Security will continue to do so.

As you alluded, I represented New York for eight wonderful years, and our border was pretty porous, just to be blunt. And it had never been a problem before. We had both land and water points of entry that had been traditionally used without any questions being asked. And unfortunately, given the security environment that we have to deal with today, we have been focused on making sure that our northern border was as secure as possible without undermining either our relationship, or the trade in goods and services, the tourism, the natural flow of people who both work and go to school and recreate on both sides of the border.

But I think that the Canadian Government and the United States Government are both focused on this and have worked very hard together over the last years.

MODERATOR: We're going to go back to New York. And we have from Poland, Tomasz.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, there was an independent study published today by East-West Institute that says that the missile shield in Europe would be ineffective. And also the Department of Defense has just cut spending on this project. So I wanted to ask you about a political aspect of this project. Do you still plan to build anything in Europe and in Czech Republic, or you want to abandon this project?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, let me say, first of all, I have not had a chance to read or review the study that you have just mentioned. I saw news reports, but that's all I've seen of it. The Obama Administration is engaged in our own strategic review with respect to missile defense. We are not yet finished with that review, but we are looking at it from all angles.

But let's remember what is really at stake here, especially when it comes to friends and allies like Poland and the Czech Republic. The United States takes very seriously our Article 5 responsibility under NATO to protect and defend the security and sovereignty of our fellow allies. Since I have been Secretary of State, I have pushed hard for NATO to be sure that we have all the contingency planning done that is necessary to make good on our Article 5 commitment.

The idea behind missile defense was to help both deter and defend against attacks from nations like Iran were they to obtain nuclear weapons with systems of delivery. So we will obviously take into account the technical aspects of this in our review, but we'll also be taking into account our preexisting and continuing responsibilities to our friends and allies. And I will assure you that the United States is fully committed to the defense of Poland and our other allies within NATO.

MODERATOR: And Joyce Karam from pan-Arab media.

QUESTION: Yes, hi, Madame Secretary. Thanks for doing this. I want to ask you about the peace process. President Obama has stated yesterday that he would like to see a

settlement freeze. Do you personally believe that this will actually happen, given that it has been requested so many times in the past and it never happened on the ground?

And if I could just – I feel I have to ask you about this. The Kuwaiti elections in the Arab world, we have seen four women break the glass ceiling, as you like to say, and made it to the parliament, if you can comment on that as well.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. I think the President was very clear yesterday in his statement that he wants to see a stop to the settlements. I hosted a dinner for Prime Minister Netanyahu later in the day at the State Department, and we reiterated that that is the position and policy of the United States Government.

We are committed to a two-state solution, and obviously, underlying that commitment is the conviction that the Palestinians deserve a viable state. And therefore, nothing should be done to undermine the potential resolution of the peace effort that could prevent such a two-state solution from taking hold. We are, as always, committed to the safety and security of Israel, but our goal is to see the people living together. We want to see Israelis and Palestinians having a chance to raise their children, to have a future free of conflict, and to give every child the opportunity to fulfill his or her God-given potential. That is our goal.

So we are at the beginning of what will be an intensive period. And you noticed that we started it right from the commencement of the Obama Administration. We appointed George Mitchell as our Special Envoy the second day of the President's term in office. We have worked very hard already to determine what is possible. And it's not only, as you know, what the Israelis and the Palestinians will do, but what will the Arab neighbors do, what will others do to help us bring about the conclusion we seek?

And let me just say with respect to the Kuwaiti elections how pleased I am. I started working with a group of courageous Kuwaiti women back in the 1990s, and encouraged their commitment to democracy and their desire to see women included in the growing democracy in their own country. And the election on Saturday is a watershed event. These four women were elected without the support of a political party and without any quota requiring that women be elected. I really congratulate the people of Kuwait, and particularly the Amir and the leadership.

Because you know how I feel: No country will be successful if half the population are denied their basic rights to participate and to lend their talents, their energy and their intelligence to the development of their countries. And so this is, for me, an incredibly important step along the path of seeing the full inclusion of women in their societies across the world.

MODERATOR: Madame Secretary, clearly, they'd like to keep you here a couple more hours, but we know your time is (inaudible) – so we would hope you would come back. She's going to have to go. She has a very busy schedule. But hopefully she'll be back.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Oh, I'm so sorry. I would love to stay.

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