

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador - Designate Kenneth Merten by
Senator Richard G. Lugar (#1)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 8, 2009**

Question:

Please explain the priorities of immediate relief efforts as well as long-term development plans to improve Haiti's living conditions and food security.

Answer:

At the April 2009 Donors Conference hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank, the United States announced a \$302 million assistance package for Haiti that consisted of \$287 million in non-emergency assistance and \$15 million in emergency in-kind food aid. The package included \$20 million for external debt relief, \$20 million for job creation, and \$2.5 million for counter-narcotics assistance under the Merida Initiative. We have requested \$292 million for Haiti in FY2010. The United States aligns its foreign assistance efforts in Haiti with priorities set out by the Haitian government in concert with the international community. The government's immediate priorities are improvement of basic services, job creation, economic recovery, and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters.

Our future assistance efforts will seek to address these and other priorities, such as strengthening infrastructure.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Designate Kenneth Merten by
Senator Richard G. Lugar (#2)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 8, 2009**

Question:

Please explain how Haiti will be included in any drug interdiction cooperation in the Caribbean.

Answer:

As a point of clarification, we already cooperate on a bilateral basis with Haiti on drug interdiction. The Drug Enforcement Agency conducts joint operations with their vetted Haitian counterparts based on shared intelligence, while the Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section oversees the provision of material assistance and training to the Haitian National Police.

The Administration recognizes the need for effective regional mechanisms to more effectively combat narcotics trafficking. This longer-term strategy is reflected in the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), for which President Obama announced at the 2009 Summit of the Americas a new \$30 million dollar investment in a multi-year, multi-faceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean founded on the tenets of shared responsibility and mutual respect.

The Administration views CBSI as a way to engage directly with Caribbean countries, including Haiti, and other international partners in addressing effectively the region's shared concerns and challenges. CBSI will augment our bilateral security assistance for Haiti, and provide the necessary support for Haiti to establish operational partnerships with other regional countries and institutions.

Our efforts will eventually create a seamless security architecture throughout the entire Caribbean basin, effectively linking programs like the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia with the governments of the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and Colombia.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Designate Kenneth Merten by
Senator Richard G. Lugar (#3)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 8, 2009**

Question:

The mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) expires in October 2009. Does the Obama Administration intend to support extension of its mandate? Does it intend to lobby other countries in favor of remaining part of the Mission?

Answer:

The Administration intends to support extension of MINUSTAH's mandate; and, as may be necessary, will lobby other countries to continue their participation in the Mission.

Since its deployment in 2004, MINUSTAH has played a significant role in improving Haiti's security climate, and it continues to assist in providing a stable platform for economic development and the consolidation of democracy. MINUSTAH's assistance in providing security for the just-completed senate elections, which proceeded without major incidents of violence or intimidation, is only the most recent example of its continuing effectiveness.

I mentioned in my testimony, and it is worth saying again, that Haiti remains uniquely vulnerable to external shocks such as hurricanes and increases in world prices for basic commodities. Widespread civil

disturbances in April 2008 that followed steep increases in food and fuel prices, and the subsequent dismissal of Prime Minister Alexis, constituted a stark reminder of the ever-present potential for instability in Haiti.

Observers credit MINUSTAH with professionalism and restraint in limiting the scope of these riots.

Maintaining MINUSTAH in Haiti at least through the presidential election in 2010 and transfer of power following it, offers an assurance that the Haitian government and its international partners will be able to meet similar challenges as they arise. To reach this goal, we must continue to engage our international partners, especially those Latin American countries that contribute the bulk of MINUSTAH's troops, on the critical importance both of extending its mandate and of continuing participation in the Mission. In the longer term, we will encourage those Latin American countries contributing troops, and others as well, to expand their activities in Haiti on a bilateral basis.

If confirmed, I look forward to coordinating with MINUSTAH's leadership in maintaining the security and stability that Haiti needs to make further progress. We will welcome discussions with the UN Security Council, troop contributing countries, and our international partners on the

renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate this coming October and on the need for continuing participation.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador Designate Kenneth Merten by
Senator Richard G. Lugar (#4)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 8, 2009**

Question:

While visiting Haiti in April 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the Obama Administration was considering granting Temporary Protected States to Haitians living in the United States. Has the Administration made a decision in this regard?

Answer:

At this time, the Administration has not granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians in the United States. The Department of State will continue to monitor closely country conditions in Haiti as they relate to the statutory requirements of TPS, and provide recommendations as appropriate to the Department of Homeland Security, which has statutory authority to grant TPS, based upon those country conditions.