

Friends and Colleagues:

It's been a very busy two months in the multilateral world since my last letter, and I am pleased to once again share with you some recent highlights.

To begin, I want to make note of the President's recently-released [National Security Strategy](#), and encourage you to give it a close look in the context of the Administration's multilateral objectives. Doing so, you will see how central our engagement with the UN and the international system is to the foreign policy of the United States under the Obama Administration. The NSS lists as one of four enduring U.S. national interests "an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges." It reinforces again and again the impossibility of divorcing our national security priorities from the sort of robust, sustained multilateral engagement envisioned by the President. Of course, the commitment by President Obama and Secretary Clinton to a strong international order makes now an especially exciting time to lead the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, as on a daily basis we undertake the very ongoing and comprehensive engagement that is envisioned by the National Security Strategy.

Consider for a moment some of the key focal points in the strategy - nonproliferation, peace and security, economic cooperation, human rights, food security. Addressing any *one* of these issues will require energized engagement with international organizations, as clearly expressed in the Strategy:

*"...we have an interest in a just and sustainable international order that can foster collective action to confront common challenges. This international order will support our efforts to advance security, prosperity, and universal values, but it is also an end that we seek in its own right. Because without such an international order, the forces of instability and disorder will undermine global security. And without effective mechanisms to forge international cooperation, challenges that recognize no borders – such as climate change, pandemic disease, and transnational crime – will persist and potentially spread. "*

The necessity of such investment is at times all too apparent. In the case of Haiti, the crucial role of international organizations in the emergency response is significant. You will recall that much of my last message focused on the crisis in Haiti and the mounting international response effort. That effort has been a continuing priority for me and the Bureau, and I took a recent opportunity to visit Port-au-Prince to assess first-hand the ongoing response and recovery efforts of the UN and larger international community.

Prior to arriving in Haiti, I stopped in Miami to call on the leadership of the [U.S. Southern Command](#) (SOUTHCOM). Of course you know of the crucial role played by SOUTHCOM in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and the weeks that followed. Its Joint Task Force Haiti was a critical player in the emergency response, and an essential partner to the State Department, the UN, and the many other responding agencies and organizations. The Joint Task Force concluded its operations in Haiti as of June 1, and I join innumerable voices in expressing my sincerest appreciation for its extraordinary efforts.



Meeting with some of the U.S. personnel serving with MINUSTAH in Haiti

During my consultations with SOUTHCOM leaders, I was repeatedly struck by their firm resolution to build upon this experience by strengthening their coordination mechanisms with the United Nations – coordination that could further improve future crisis response efforts. It was clear to me that the SOUTHCOM Commander, General Fraser, and his leadership team understood the need for close cooperation and coordination with the wide range of UN and other international actors involved in the earthquake response, and how well SOUTHCOM's core missions fit within the President's vision for U.S. foreign policy in the 21st century.

I then traveled to Port-au-Prince for a brief visit that left me deeply affected. The scale of the devastation, of the human suffering, is difficult to absorb. As I noted, I viewed this trip as an opportunity to take stock of the many and varied efforts being undertaken by the United Nations and other international organizations, to explore the coordinating role being played by the [United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti](#) (MINUSTAH), and to meet with key UN, U.S., and Government of Haiti officials.

I enjoyed a series of very productive meetings while on the ground, including with Edmond Mulet, the head of MINUSTAH (with whom I had met on several occasions in New York and Washington as part of our regular contact with UN leadership), and his top civilian, military, and police deputies. In these and other meetings, I gained additional perspective on the challenges facing the Haitian people and the agencies and individuals working hard to address the many urgent needs. Among the many issues discussed, I explored the progress being made to rebuild the Government of Haiti's capacity, the continuing shelter and basic services emergency, and the evolving role of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission, co-chaired by Bill Clinton and Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive.

I returned from Haiti with renewed motivation and bolstered conviction that despite the daunting challenges and the continuing obstacles, the combined energy and determination of the Haitian people and the international community is having a real impact, and I am committed to monitoring that impact in the context of U.S. support for the UN and other

international organizations.



Speaking with AOC Forum participants Neil Sumilas of the German-Marshall Fund of the United States, and Francisco (Tachi) Cazal and Melissa Liles of the American Field Service.

In other important news, in May the United States announced its decision to join the [UN Alliance of Civilizations](#) Group of Friends. This important, voluntary initiative aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples, and across the world's many cultures. The U.S. decision to join the Alliance's Group of Friends complements President Obama's vision of vigorous U.S. engagement with other nations, other cultures, and international organizations to advance American security interests and meet the global challenges of the 21st century.

In late May I led the first-ever official [U.S. delegation](#) to an Alliance of Civilizations Forum – this one in Rio de Janeiro. Several heads of state, foreign ministers, and other dignitaries, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the Alliance's High Representative Jorge Sampaio, spoke at the opening session about the Alliance's laudable goals. Over the three-day gathering, our delegation took every opportunity to engage, listen, and converse on the scope and scale of the Alliance's activities, which encompass educational and cultural exchange programs, youth outreach, media development, and much more. I also enjoyed meeting with U.S.-based organizations participating in the Forum. In the coming weeks and months, the United States will be exploring potential paths of interaction with the Alliance, and your [thoughts and comments](#) in that regard are most welcome.

Of course, much work has gone into the UN Security Council's recent decision to impose [tough new sanctions](#) on the Iranian government. The Council's action underscores the profound concern of the international community regarding Iran's nuclear program, its determination to hold Iran to its obligations and responsibilities, and its shared commitment to a diplomatic solution. As President Obama stated after the Security Council's action, we recognize Iran's rights to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but those rights come with responsibilities. For multilateral diplomacy to be truly and enduringly effective, all parties must take seriously just such responsibilities.

Finally, the fourteenth session of the Human Rights Council concluded earlier this month, and during the session the United States again exercised leadership to increase the world's attention on very real and serious human rights situations and demonstrate that the Council can contribute to effective protection of human rights. Among the key achievements during the session was a statement, co-sponsored by the United States and endorsed by 56 countries, expressing concern at the lack of progress on human rights in Iran. We also secured the passage of a resolution on the urgent human rights situation in Kyrgyzstan, as well as a resolution co-sponsored with the government of Afghanistan that

condemned attacks targeting children. We supported the deepening of the Human Rights Council's engagement in addressing grave human rights concerns in Somalia, and worked toward the successful extension of the mandate of two rapporteurs focused on human rights in Sudan and on freedom of religion. Through this latest session, we continued our efforts to transform the Council into an effective entity, by bridging divides across traditional blocs and strengthening the Council's tools to address pressing human rights situations.

Once again, I extend my sincere thanks for your feedback, your suggestions, and your support. I look forward to using this format from time to time to share thoughts and discuss key initiatives, and I always welcome and appreciate hearing your voices in response.

With warm regards,

Esther Brimmer