

September 17, 2010

Friends and Colleagues:

The 64th session of the UN General Assembly has come and gone, and the [65th](#) is already gathering momentum heading into high-level activities anticipated for the next two weeks. As we prepare for the new Assembly, I thought I would take just a moment to share with you some thoughts about the last year, and in that context describe our priorities for the upcoming General Assembly and beyond.

This week I returned to my former professional home, John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, to speak on just these issues. In my [remarks](#), I noted that the past 18 months have seen a dramatic repositioning of the United States internationally – one that has both strengthened our security through concrete actions, and in many ways has provided new vitality to the multilateral system.

That fact notwithstanding, I regret that people are not always entirely aware of the scope and scale of the UN's role in the promotion of global peace and security, development, health, and a host of other issues – a point I highlighted during a [Blair House](#) event this week with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.



With former Secretary Albright at Blair House

At the end of the day, we engage because multilateral diplomacy can unlock progress on a host of transnational and global issues. We engage because international organizations, including the United Nations and regional organizations like the Organization of American States and the African Union, offer unique opportunities to advance U.S. interests and, concurrently, global aspirations.

Making that case becomes easier in the context of the remarkable actions taken by the President in multilateral fora.

- He has put **nonproliferation** back at the top of global agenda, and has pledged American leadership in support of a world free of nuclear weapons;
- He has reasserted U.S. leadership in support of **universal human rights**, including by seeking and winning election to the UN Human Rights Council;
- He has energized U.S. leadership on **environmental issues including climate change**; and,
- He has called the **Millennium Development Goals** “America’s Goals,” and has committed expanded U.S. development support toward the full realization of the Goals by 2015.

These actions and many others represent a fundamental shift in the U.S. approach to our many shared challenges, at the root of which is the understanding that as people, as states, as regions, we grow more interconnected and inseparable with each passing day.

So as we prepare for the new General Assembly, we do so in the context of actions already taken and in anticipation of extending and deepening our engagement, particularly in the following areas:

- making progress on the Millennium Development Goals and on other development priorities;
- improving the UN's tools related to peace and security, including peacekeeping operations and sanctions;
- promoting human rights; and
- tackling environmental challenges including climate change.

The MDGs will be a recurring theme next week, keyed to the High-Level MDG Plenary Meeting. This will be an important opportunity for the United States to elaborate the President's development agenda, as well as the U.S. MDG strategy, which centers on the core principles of leveraging innovation, investing in sustainability, tracking development outcomes, and enhancing mutual accountability. In fact, the President himself will address the MDG Plenary Meeting on Wednesday, September 22nd.



President Obama at the 64th General Assembly

Next week will feature several other important events and gatherings, a few of which I will mention here. On September 19th, the Secretary will participate in a senior-level gathering to discuss the ongoing international flood relief efforts in Pakistan. This is a follow-up meeting to a similar gathering held in August to encourage and coordinate the international response to this devastating natural disaster.

On Monday September 20th, the Secretary will participate in the Special Session of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which will be co-

chaired by Prime Minister Bellerive and former President Clinton and focus on ensuring continued global engagement in Haiti's reconstruction.

Other headline events during these next few days include a special side-event to the MDG meeting co-hosted by Irish Foreign Minister Micheál Martin and featuring leaders from governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. This event, entitled *1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future*, will highlight action to reduce child undernutrition, focusing on the 1,000 day window of opportunity beginning with a woman's pregnancy and continuing until a child is two years old.

Obviously, a focal point during the week will be President Obama's address to the General Assembly, slated for the morning of September 23.

Finally, I wanted to make a special point of welcoming the Secretary-General's announcement of Michele Bachelet, former president of Chile, as the new Under-Secretary-General to head UN Women. I join Secretary Clinton and the Administration in congratulating her on her appointment. She is an extraordinary choice to lead this new organization, and we are confident that she will work tirelessly to elevate the status of women and girls across the globe.

Once again, my sincerest appreciation to all for your interest in and commitment to multilateral engagement and foreign affairs. If you have yet to [register for](#) our IO updates, I invite you to do so, and as always, I welcome your [comments and feedback](#).

With Highest Regards,

Esther Brimmer