

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama on 50th Anniversary of U.S.-Japan Alliance

Obama marks anniversary of U.S.-Japan Treaty on Cooperation and Security

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
January 19, 2010

Statement by the President on the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the U.S.-Japan Treaty on Cooperation and Mutual Security

The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States of America and Japan was signed here in Washington fifty years ago today. On that day, President Dwight Eisenhower pledged to establish an indestructible partnership based on equality and mutual understanding. The enduring partnership between the United States of America and Japan has helped bring unprecedented prosperity and peace in freedom to our nations. Our alliance has secured extraordinary benefits for the entire Asia Pacific region and made possible the unparalleled progress of the past five decades.

Today, we commemorate the first half-century of this important alliance, which was founded on our shared values and our common interest in peace and security, and reflects the abiding ties between our citizens and institutions. America's commitment to Japan's security is unshakable, and our cooperation to meet common challenges is a critical part of our engagement with the world. And just as we honor the countless Americans and Japanese who have built the ties that bind our nations, we also look to the future with a determination to build upon the foundation of their progress.

As we celebrate the anniversary of the treaty, we pay tribute to its role in supporting regional security and prosperity, and strengthening our two democracies. Let us now undertake to renew our alliance for the 21st century and enhance the bonds of friendship and common purpose that unite our nations.

Haitian Orphans in Adoption Process Allowed to Enter U.S.

Humanitarian action affects hundreds of children already awaiting adoption

By Jeffrey Thomas
Staff Writer

Washington — Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced January 18 that Haitian orphans who were in the process of being adopted by Americans before the recent earthquake and who met certain criteria would be allowed to enter the

United States temporarily to be united with their adoptive parents.

"We are committed to doing everything we can to help reunite families in Haiti during this very difficult time," said Napolitano, who said she was speaking in coordination with the U.S. Department of State. "While we remain focused on family reunification in Haiti, authorizing the use of humanitarian parole for orphans who are eligible for adoption in the United States will allow them to receive the care they need here."

Humanitarian parole enables orphans who are in the process of being adopted to come to the United States without a visa.

One group of 53 Haitian orphans was escorted January 19 on a flight from Haiti by Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell and other officials. The orphans and their caretakers reportedly spent days after the earthquake in need of food and water. After receiving medical care at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, they will be placed in group homes until their adoptions are finalized, according to news reports.

While there is no definite figure for those affected by this "humanitarian parole policy," the figure is almost certainly no more than 1,000.

In a news briefing January 18, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs and Overseas Citizens Services Michele Bond spoke of "several hundred Americans in the United States who were in various stages in the process of adopting Haitian children."

She said the U.S. Embassy in Haiti has processed immigrant visas for 24 orphan children whose cases were ready for visa processing.

"It's extremely important to remember that the best interests of the child are at the heart of all of this, and so we do want them to be where they're safe, clearly, and we want them to be well cared for," Bond said.

The number of U.S. international adoptions from Haiti in fiscal year 2009 (from October 1, 2008, through September 30, 2009) was 330, according to the State Department. The number fluctuates from year to year but has averaged 226 over the last 12 years. Since international adoption is a lengthy, multi-year process in Haiti, the number of adoptions in the pipeline is likely to be a multiple of the average annual number.

Napolitano's action affects two groups:

- Children who have been legally confirmed as orphans eligible for intercountry adoption by the government of

Haiti and are being adopted by U.S. citizens.

- Children who have been previously identified by an adoption service provider or facilitator as eligible for intercountry adoption (evidence of the child's availability for adoption could include Haitian Adoption Authority approval, documentation of legal relinquishment or award of custody to the Haitian orphanage, or other evidence) and have been matched to U.S.-citizen prospective adoptive parents before January 12, 2010.

Children adopted from Haiti range from infants and young children to teens, special-needs children and sibling groups.

About 800 to 900 U.S. families are in the process of adopting children from Haiti, according to Tom DiFilipo, president of the Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS), an advocacy group for children in need of families.

On its Web site, the JCICS cites the many new offers from ordinary Americans to adopt orphaned Haitians, but says no credible child welfare organization considers such an approach viable. "Bringing children into the U.S. either by airlift or new adoption during a time of national emergency can open the door for fraud, abuse and trafficking. Every effort must be made in a timely fashion to locate living parents and extended family members."

American Forces Help Expand Aid Efforts Beyond Port-au-Prince

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — American military personnel are reaching beyond the vicinity of Haitian capital Port-au-Prince and are opening new ports of entry into the country to increase the flow and distribution of relief assistance. In addition, the U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort will be off the coast of Haiti January 20 and will begin to ease the pressure on international field hospitals by taking over the care of some of the more severely wounded patients.

Speaking to reporters from Haiti January 19, Army Major General Daniel Allyn, deputy commander of Joint Task Force Unified Response, expressed appreciation for the "incredible teamwork and support with and for all contributing parties and the people of Haiti," adding that since the earthquake, the capacity to deliver more relief assistance to those most in need has been increasing on a daily basis, including beyond the capital.

About 800 U.S. Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are now beginning to deploy into a hard-hit zone west of Port-au-Prince, close to the epicenter, and Allyn said they "will reach areas we've

been unable to get to yet."

He said the Marines are coordinating with Sri Lankan troops in the area who are serving with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

In addition, nearly 1,000 U.S. troops from the 82nd Airborne Division continue to support efforts to distribute aid in the vicinity of the capital.

Allyn said the U.S. forces are giving their full support to the government of Haiti "for as long as they say that we can assist them," adding that their presence in the country is "at the invitation of the government."

The U.S. troops are supporting the distribution of water and humanitarian assistance, but are not providing security, which Allyn said continues to be the responsibility of MINUSTAH under the command of Brazilian Major General Floriano Peixoto.

General Peixoto "is aggressively employing his forces to maintain the secure environment that enables us to continue our primary focus on humanitarian assistance distribution," Allyn said. He praised MINUSTAH's "great agility and responsiveness" to changing security requirements in the country.

In addition, Allyn said, the Haitian police are increasing their capability to respond to security incidents and taking the lead within the local communities around Port-au-Prince.

"The day after the earthquake, there were only 500 Haitian national police available to address the needs based on the destruction and the tragedy that hit," he said. But as of January 18, "there were 2,000 Haitian national police on the job, courageously working within their communities to ensure a secure and stable environment for the ongoing recovery efforts."

To provide medical relief, Argentina, Israel, Portugal, Russia and Turkey are operating portable hospitals, and other international surgical teams are on the ground. Allyn said the 1,000-bed U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort will be arriving offshore January 20, and a Colombian hospital ship will follow soon afterward. Both vessels will greatly increase the international medical relief capacity and can take care of some of the more serious cases.

"By midday tomorrow, we expect to be able to transfer high-priority patients identified by the [Haitian] minister of health and the medical professionals on the ground here in Haiti to ensure that those most in need of trauma care and advanced medical procedures will be able to receive those on the Comfort," Allyn said.

To ease the strain on Toussaint Louverture International Airport, which has been serving as the main entry point for international aid, two additional aerial ports of entry have been identified and will be put in use within the next 24 to 48 hours, Allyn said. The airport, which handled an average of 13 commercial flights per day before the earthquake, is now coping with 100 daily arrivals.

The first additional runway is expected to be in operation by January 20 in the vicinity of Jacmel, in the southern part of Haiti. American C-130 aircraft loaded with relief supplies will land to support Canadian humanitarian-assistance efforts as well as other international distribution operations in Haiti's southern provinces.

The second is the San Isidro military air base located in neighboring Dominican Republic, which will enable more overland delivery of relief supplies into Haiti.

U.S. military personnel are working to reopen Haiti's closed seaports, which were damaged in the quake. Lieutenant General Ken Keen, who commands the U.S. Joint Task Force in Haiti, told a teleconference January 18 that the ports are critical to the overall relief operation.

"We've got to have other means to get cargo in here and take pressure off the airport. And the faster we do that, the better," he said.

American divers have arrived in Haiti and were able to do an initial assessment of the container port on January 18. "What we found is we do have some separation between the pilings and the pier. So we've got some challenges there," Keen said. He hopes to have some cargo capability at the container port, even if only with U.S. military landing craft, by January 22.

"We are also assessing the port that takes the fuel, which is a critical port, obviously, because it's the only source of fuel for the country," he said.

General Keen said once the container port and the fuel port are reopened, U.S. military personnel will move on to reopen other ports near Port-au-Prince.

Yemen-based Group's Designation as Foreign Terrorist Organization

AQAP Yemen-based terrorist organization responsible for terrorist acts

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 19, 2010

STATEMENT BY PHILIP J. CROWLEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Designations of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Senior Leaders

The Secretary of State has designated al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended (INA). The Secretary also designated AQAP and its two top leaders Nasir al-Wahishi and Said al-Shihri under E.O. 13224. Secretary Clinton took these actions in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury. These actions prohibit provision of material support and arms to AQAP and also include immigration related restrictions that will help stem the flow of finances to AQAP and give the Department of Justice the tools it needs to prosecute AQAP members.

AQAP is a Yemen-based terrorist organization that has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist acts against Saudi, Korean, Yemeni, and U.S. targets since its inception in January 2009. Such instances include a March 2009 suicide bombing against South Korean tourists in Yemen, the August 2009 attempt to assassinate Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Nayif, and the December 25, 2009 failed attack on a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, Michigan.

Nasir Al-Wahishi proclaimed himself as the leader of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in January 2009. The press release in which al-Wahishi announced AQAP's re-emergence also noted that the group's Saudi militants had pledged allegiance to al-Wahishi as their new leader. Since then, Al-Wahishi has provided significant support for AQAP terrorist operations and has worked with AQAP operatives to facilitate attacks. As AQAP's leader, al-Wahishi is responsible for approving targets, recruiting new members, allocating resources to training and attack planning, and tasking others to carry out attacks.

Said Ali al-Shihri was publicly identified in January 2009 as the deputy leader of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). As deputy of AQAP, al-Shihri helps carry out terrorist acts by generating targets, recruiting new members, assisting with training and attack planning, and tasking others in the preparation of attacks.

These designations represent just one phase of the United States Government's response to the threat posed by AQAP and its senior leaders. In addition, the U.S. has requested that similar actions be taken against AQAP, al-Shihri, and al-Wahishi at the United Nations 1267 Committee. If successful, this will require all UN member states to implement an asset freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo against these entities. These designations will occur less than one month after the Security Council adopted resolution 1904, which renewed and strengthened the 1267 regime, and which created major

new improvements to the way the UN imposes sanctions on al-Qa'ida and Taliban terrorists. The actions taken today against AQAP support the U.S. effort to degrade the capabilities of this group. We are determined to eliminate AQAP's ability to execute violent attacks and to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat their networks.

Designations of foreign terrorist organizations play a critical role in our fight against terrorism and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities and pressuring groups to get out of the terrorism business. The consequences of these designations include a prohibition against the provision of material support or resources to FTOs; the freezing of all property and interests in property of the organization that are in the United States, or come within the United States or the control of U.S. persons; and provide special immigration related options to law enforcement.

American Christians, Jews, Muslims Join to Promote Peace

Interfaith organization builds bridges, calls for strong U.S. leadership

By Carrie Loewenthal Massey
Special Correspondent

Washington — When President Obama spoke at Cairo University in June 2009, he repeated the United States' goal of fostering a fair, two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"If we see this conflict only from one side or the other, then we will be blind to the truth: The only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security," he said.

The National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI) works to make President Obama's words a reality.

Founded in 2003, NILI is an organization of American Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders dedicated to garnering widespread support for strong U.S. leadership in pursuit of peace among Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians. Since its inception, the group has collectively called upon Israel to dismantle settlements, the Palestinian Authority to put an end to violence that originates in its territories, and the United States to closely monitor and regulate the peace process.

NILI regards the United States as a powerful leader of the peace process because of the country's own history of hard-fought battles for civil rights that have led to a successful pluralistic society.

"America was a Puritan country. It took a long time for

Catholics to be recognized and later when the Jewish community came they suffered too," said Sayyid M. Syeed, a national director of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and a founding member of NILI.

"We have in America a long tradition of an interfaith movement where different faiths have worked together and fought for justice and rights. To our credit we have great achievements of religious leaders involved in the civil rights movement," Syeed said.

Syeed sees the Middle East as "a new frontier" for American religious leaders, a place where they can continue the interfaith efforts that have led to increased tolerance in the United States.

"We have to bring interfaith groups together and push for building bridges and using commonalities to push for peace in the Middle East. We found there is a consensus between Muslims, Christians and Jews: All of us are praying and working for peace in the Middle East," he said.

The approximately 30 religious leaders who make up NILI have outlined their consensus on peace in their Principles of Cooperation. These seven principles are acknowledging that peace is fundamental to the teachings of each of their religions, emphasizing areas of agreement while remaining sensitive to conflicting viewpoints, condemning all acts of violence in favor of diplomacy and negotiation, supporting a two-state solution with security for both states, building on efforts made by Israelis and Palestinians already working together for peace, advocating for U.S. leadership backed by global support, and learning from each other through prayer and action for peace.

With these principles in place for its members, NILI strives to expand its base of support in the United States, the Middle East and around the world. The organization helps local religious groups start their own interfaith initiatives. Efforts on the national scale have included meetings with former Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice and, in 2005, NILI organized an international videoconference, reaching live audiences in Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Netherlands and the United States.

"Forces such as NILI, committed to equality and justice in the Mideast, can be a positive presence in helping to develop a healthy climate for understanding the dynamics of the conflict" between the Israelis and Palestinians, said William Shaw, pastor of White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia and immediate past president of the National Baptist Convention.

This effort to increase understanding of the possible

pathways for partnership among religious groups led Shaw and 14 other U.S. religious leaders to travel to the region in December. The NILI representatives met and prayed with Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians, an experience that allowed them to see that a certain level of understanding already exists among the area's residents.

"People on both sides know the difficult compromises that will be necessary for peace, and most people are prepared to accept them," Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, said in a NILI press release.

Rabbi Paul Menitoff, executive vice president emeritus of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, detailed some of the compromises the peace process entails.

"Even on the most emotional issues of refugees and Jerusalem, we believe most Palestinians understand that they will have to accept a negotiated solution regarding refugees that does not jeopardize the Jewish majority in Israel; and most Israelis understand that they will have to accept a negotiated solution regarding sharing Jerusalem that includes provision for both Israel and Palestine to have their capitals in Jerusalem," he said in the release.

Despite this existing understanding, NILI representatives still used their time in the region to try to dispel lingering doubts about the potential for peace. Syeed spoke with Arabs living inside the conflict area about his efforts to bring together Jewish and Muslim groups in the United States.

"I wanted to convey to them that in the U.S. we have been able to create an environment of trust and confidence, but it did not come easily," he said.

Syeed told his audience about a text produced jointly by ISNA and the Union for Reform Judaism. The book, *Children of Abraham: Jews and Muslims in Conversation*, provides a curriculum for dialogue between Jews and Muslims, covering topics including similarities and differences between the Torah and the Quran, comparisons of other basic religious principles, tolerance and ending prejudice against both groups. Syeed also discussed ongoing annual conferences for which North American mosques and synagogues come together to celebrate their commonalities and condemn anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

To follow their visit to the Middle East, NILI representatives plan to seek meetings with the Obama administration to pledge their support for U.S. leadership of the peace process, according to the NILI press release. Syeed holds onto the belief that through cooperation and strong leadership, NILI will achieve its mission of helping to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict. Interfaith

activities promoting tolerance and collaboration remain key to NILI's agenda.

"We believe that ultimately humanity will prevail and bringing understanding and reconciliation is possible," Syeed said.

Statement on Egyptian Arrests

U.S. calls on Egypt to uphold the rights of all individuals

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesman

January 16, 2010

Statement by Mark Toner, Acting Spokesman

Egyptian Arrests

The United States is deeply concerned by today's arrests of individuals traveling to the Egyptian town of Naga Hammadi to express support for those tragically killed and injured during Coptic Christmas celebrations on January 7. According to publicly available evidence, those arrested included bloggers, democracy and religious freedom advocates.

We call on the Government of Egypt to uphold the rights of all to peacefully express their political views and desires for universal freedoms and to ensure due process for those detained.

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