

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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U.S. Condemns “Cowardly” Bomb Attacks in Uganda

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and other Obama administration officials strongly condemned terror attacks in Uganda July 11 that targeted spectators who had gathered in Kampala at a restaurant and a rugby sports center to watch the final game of the World Cup, hosted by South Africa.

In a July 12 statement, Clinton offered condolences to family and friends of the victims and expressed support for Ugandan authorities.

“At this tragic moment, the United States stands with Uganda. We have a long-standing, close friendship with the people and government of Uganda and will work with them to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice,” Clinton said.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said July 12 that the United States has no reason to doubt the Somali terror group al-Shabab’s claim of responsibility for the attacks.

“Unfortunately, we see this contrast between the vision and the hope that South Africa inspired ... through this past weeks and how that contrasts with the cowardice and destruction espoused by al-Shabab, which used the celebration of the World Cup in Kampala to commit cold-blooded murder of innocent civilians,” Crowley said.

According to press reports, the three bombs killed at least 74 people. Crowley said that one American was killed and five others were hospitalized.

In March 2008, the State Department designated al-Shabab, a Somalia-based extremist group with known ties to al-Qaida, as a foreign terrorist organization. Crowley said the group had threatened Uganda because of its participation in the African Union’s peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

Uganda’s president, Yoweri Museveni, visited the rugby center and said through reporters July 12 in Kampala: “If you want to fight, why don’t you attack soldiers or military installations instead of fighting innocent people watching football?”

President Obama and other U.S. officials have spoken with Museveni in the aftermath of the attacks. Crowley said the Ugandan leader remains committed to his country’s participation in the Somali peacekeeping mission. “If this was somehow aimed at punishing or weakening Uganda’s resolve, we think that this has

backfired,” Crowley said.

Crowley said “the strongest retort to al-Shabab” is that “we are going to continue to support those who want to responsibly govern in Somalia, and we’ll resist those who have a narrow, brutal ... violent vision of the future in that country.”

The United States “stands shoulder to shoulder with Uganda in the fight against terrorism,” Crowley said, both in Somalia and in Uganda’s efforts against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

He said President Obama has sent a three-person team from the FBI to Kampala to help authorities collect evidence, and they are being joined July 12 by two members of the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

“We have an additional FBI team standing by in the United States, ready to assist if needed. But we will continue to do everything in our power to assist Uganda in bringing the perpetrators of these attacks to justice,” Crowley said.

The American who was killed was identified by his employer, the charity Invisible Children, as Nate Henn, a native of Raleigh, North Carolina. Invisible Children works with Ugandan children who have been abducted by rebel groups like the LRA and forced to become child soldiers or into sex slavery.

The organization’s website paid tribute to Henn’s dedication to Uganda’s children in a July 11 blog post.

“From traveling the United States without pay advocating for the freedom of abducted child soldiers in Joseph Kony’s war, to raising thousands of dollars to put war-affected Ugandan students in school, Nate lived a life that demanded explanation,” Invisible Children said.

“He was not serving some idea of downtrodden Africa. He was serving Innocent, Tony, Boni, Ronald, Papito, Sunday and Lilian. These are some of our Ugandan students who fell in love with Nate’s wit, strength, character and steadfast friendship. They gave him the Acholi name Oteka, which means ‘The Strong One.’ Some of them were with him at the time of the attack,” the blog post says.

U.S. Humanitarian Aid Continues to Flow to Kyrgyzstan

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. humanitarian assistance continues to flow to the Kyrgyz Republic as the United States supports

Kyrgyz and international efforts to restore peace and maintain ethnic harmony in the south between the ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations.

According to a July 9 State Department fact sheet, the United States intends to provide approximately \$36 million to fund programs for humanitarian relief, reconstruction and community stabilization to aid those affected by the crisis. The programs are also aimed at helping those who had taken refuge in neighboring Uzbekistan and have returned to the Kyrgyz Republic.

The fact sheet said U.S. assistance is being closely coordinated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations, and its ongoing assistance "will be directed to meeting immediate humanitarian needs, providing assistance to displaced and returning families, and addressing the roots of the conflict through community development and conflict mitigation programs in the southern regions of the Kyrgyz Republic." It added that the funding is in addition to ongoing U.S. annual assistance programs targeting the country.

Proposed funding includes \$1.5 million for projects supporting democratic institutions and processes, the protection of human rights and Kyrgyz civil society. Another \$1 million will supplement the country's supply of fertilizer, fuel and other materials needed to safeguard its fall harvest.

As of July 9, \$15.1 million in U.S. aid has been mobilized to provide immediate assistance in southern Kyrgyzstan, where the ethnic violence erupted the week of June 13. The funds have also been used for rapid community improvement and stabilization projects throughout the country, the fact sheet said.

So far, the United States has also provided \$5.85 million for community improvement and stabilization projects, including the construction of small-scale infrastructure, improving Kyrgyz government operations, and promoting employment opportunities and skills training for disenfranchised Kyrgyz citizens.

Among other projects, the Obama administration has also airlifted emergency relief supplies to hospitals in southern Kyrgyzstan, and provided emergency food, water, communications and other supplies to international organizations, including the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC).

UNITED STATES CALLS FOR OSCE TO SEND POLICE TASK FORCE

Carol Fuller, the U.S. chargé d'affaires at its mission to the

OSCE, spoke to the organization's permanent council in Vienna July 8 and urged it to send a police task force or advisory group to Kyrgyzstan. Fuller said the situation in southern Kyrgyz cities remains "calm, but tense," and that the United States is concerned that "time is passing and action is still needed."

"Sporadic shooting continues to be heard during the night. A curfew is not efficiently enforced and instances of ethnic unrest continue to flare," Fuller said. "Provocative rumors continue to swirl. Delays in the delivery of aid and relief supplies, occasioned by the fear of traveling into certain neighborhoods, also continue."

Fuller cited an OSCE report that noted a "breakdown of trust and confidence between the civil society and the police," continued deep anger between the communities and the possibility that even a small flashpoint could trigger renewed hostilities.

"An OSCE police task force could contribute to developing dialogue and trust between the police and the ethnic communities of Kyrgyzstan," Fuller said, and its mediators could work with the Kyrgyz police and local communities to help defuse tensions.

Along with helping to resolve the current situation, the OSCE police group would help prevent ethnic tensions from spilling beyond Kyrgyzstan and promote post-conflict rehabilitation.

"The deployment of an OSCE advisory group or task force would demonstrate implementation of OSCE commitments to strengthen regional stability and protect individual rights," Fuller said.

In Haiti, U.S. Works to Improve Lives, Livelihoods

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — For the United States, the recovery and reconstruction of Haiti is a long-term commitment in the aftermath of the January 12 earthquake that destroyed sizeable sections of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding countryside, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

"Over the last six months, the Haitian people have again shown their resilience and strength," Clinton said July 12. The United States remains committed to aligning its support with the needs of the people and their government, she said.

"We are committed to helping them realize the Haitian vision for a better nation," Clinton said.

Cheryl Mills, the secretary's counselor and chief of staff,

said Haiti and the international community have moved past the immediate crisis and are beginning to look toward the longer-term process of reconstruction and the challenges that this transition generates. She said that even at this early stage in the transition, there are successes: no major disease outbreak, the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) has met and will oversee the more than \$5.27 billion pledged by nearly 40 countries and international institutions over the next two years for reconstruction, construction has begun on temporary shelters for the homeless, and there has been little or no local inflation as aid assistance pours into the country.

World Bank economists have forecast that complete reconstruction of Port-au-Prince and the immediate surrounding area could take more than a decade with adequate international support and financial assistance.

Haitian authorities have said that approximately 230,000 people were killed in the magnitude 7.0 earthquake and many more were injured. More than 1.5 million people were displaced by the devastation. Authorities also have reported that approximately 30 percent of the country's civil servants were killed in the earthquake and 28 of 29 government ministries collapsed, making recovery and reconstruction even more challenging.

The United States spent more than a half billion dollars in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and sent more than 20,000 U.S. civilian and military personnel to Haiti to carry out activities including search-and-rescue operations, restoring air and sea ports, and providing lifesaving medical care, food, water and shelter.

Mills said that since March the United States has spent another \$178 million for Haitian assistance.

The U.S. Congress still has to act on legislation that would provide an additional \$1.15 billion for Haiti relief over two years.

Dr. Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), said the international community, working in partnership with the Haitian government, effectively met the food needs of more than 3.5 million vulnerable people. In addition, the international community has effectively vaccinated more than a million Haitians and has averted any large-scale epidemics that might have arisen.

The international community is in the process of providing emergency shelter to more than a million Haitians, and is also working on transition strategies to get people into transitional housing and to rehabilitate existing, but damaged, homes, Shah said.

Shah pointed out some unique successes, including the use of mobile telephones and mobile banking platforms when more than 90 percent of Haitians did not have access to formal banking services.

One of the challenges confronting Haitians is what to do with 25 million cubic meters of debris in an environment that is congested and where infrastructure was already challenging, Shah said.

Fulbright Program Celebrates 60 Years in Pakistan

Education exchange enhances scholarship and cultural relations
By Carrie Loewenthal Massey
Special Correspondent

Washington — For 60 years, Pakistani and American scholars have visited each other's educational institutions, shared knowledge and fostered cultural understanding through academic collaboration. The Fulbright Program has made many of these relationships possible.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international academic exchange designed to increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and people of other countries. It promotes leadership development through learning and international cooperation. The United States and Pakistan initiated their Fulbright partnership on September 23, 1950, and each country immediately began sending scholars abroad to the other country.

In 2010, the United States will send nearly 2,500 Pakistani students, teachers and other professionals to the United States for exchange programs while American scholars go to Pakistan to conduct research and teach at Pakistani universities, according to a June 30 statement from the White House's National Security Council (NSC). The U.S. is dramatically increasing academic and professional exchange programs with Pakistan as part of the growing U.S.-Pakistan partnership, NSC spokesman Mike Hammer said in the statement.

"Our countries are strengthened by the people-to-people ties built by this program and the alumni of other U.S. sponsored academic and professional exchanges," Hammer said. "As the President has said, 'both America and Pakistan care deeply about the education of our young people for the jobs and economies of the future.'"

The United States-Pakistan Fulbright agreement was one of the first of its kind, and 155 more partnerships with other countries have followed. Though the Fulbright Program has expanded worldwide, its program in Pakistan remains the largest.

"Over the arc of 60 years, nearly 4,000 Pakistanis and Americans have participated in Fulbright exchanges,"

said U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson in celebration of the program's anniversary at the 7th Annual Fulbright and Humphrey Alumni Conference in Islamabad April 23.

As Patterson highlighted in her remarks, in just the last five years, 947 Pakistani scholars traveled to the United States on Fulbright grants. Of these individuals, 42 percent were women. The scholars represent 74 different Pakistani cities and an array of academic disciplines, Patterson said. Additionally, 96 Pakistanis received Humphrey Fellowships, which provide for one to two years of professional enrichment in graduate-level study in the United States. These grants are available to mid-level professionals.

Fulbright recipients contribute invaluable to the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, Patterson said. She especially highlighted the contributions Pakistani scholars have made to American institutions.

"Nothing can substitute for the people-to-people contacts achieved by inviting some of the world's best scholars to enrich America's campuses by teaching, studying and conducting research alongside their American counterparts," Patterson said.

"Foreign scholars contribute to our universities not only in their scholarly pursuits, but also by weaving strands of their home culture into the American fabric," she added.

DUAL EXCHANGES

The exchanges work in the opposite direction as well. Americans go to Pakistan for education opportunities under such programs as the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program and the Fulbright U.S. Specialist Program.

Through the Scholar and Specialist programs, American scholars and professionals will visit Pakistan to lecture, conduct research and participate in seminars and collaborate with Pakistanis throughout 2010.

Administered by the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan, the Pakistan Fulbright program has plans to expand in 2010 and beyond. In fall 2010, 94 Pakistani students will begin master's degree programs in the United States, while 60 scholars will begin American doctoral courses. Efforts to send more Americans to Pakistani institutions are also under way.

"We believe that seeing Americans on your campuses will help connect Pakistani young people to the world, much as having Pakistanis on our campuses helps us," Patterson said.

Funding for Fulbright exchanges comes from the U.S.

Department of State's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs and the government of Pakistan. Additional support from the Pakistani Higher Education Commission and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) helps to sustain the program.

FULBRIGHT'S LONG HISTORY, ACTIVE FUTURE

The Fulbright Program began as the brainchild of the late Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright.

"Having studied at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar from 1925 to 28, he well understood the powerful impact on young imaginations of a combined international exchange and scholarship experience," Patterson said. "He wanted Americans and young people from around the world to benefit from a similar experience."

In addition to master's and doctoral degree exchanges and the Humphrey Fellowships, the Pakistan Fulbright Program offers several other opportunities for study in the United States in 2010.

The Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program will send seven Pakistani teachers of English to American universities. These teachers will work to improve their English instructional skills while teaching Urdu, Pashto or Punjabi to their American counterparts. Through the Fulbright Scholar Program, 10 Pakistanis will participate in lectureships and/or post-doctoral research for 10 months at a U.S. college. Finally, one Pakistani student received the International Fulbright Science and Technology Award, which supports coursework and/or research toward a doctoral degree in science, technology or engineering.

Fulbright recipients are determined through a merit-based, transparent selection process.

BEYOND FULBRIGHT: OTHER EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

The success of the Fulbright Program serves as a model for several other educational exchange programs between the United States and Pakistan.

For students, these programs include a summer institute that brings Pakistani youth to the United States to study international relations, as well as two programs for Pakistani undergraduates to study at American institutions and participate in leadership training and other opportunities. The program aims for students from diverse backgrounds without previous international experience.

Two programs provide Pakistani teachers with training at United States universities. One leadership institute trains

science teachers, while another provides enrichment for English teachers.

The Community College Initiative Program enables students from Pakistan to study for one year at a community college in the United States, earning a vocational certificate on completion of their studies. Sixty individuals are participating in 2010. The program could help provide a blueprint for vocational training in Pakistan, according to Patterson.

“The experiences of the 102 participants who have taken part in this new program to date, a large proportion of whom are from previously underserved areas, may be instructive as the [Pakistani] government begins to build its own program,” Patterson said.

Looking to the future, the United States plans to invest more in Pakistan’s higher education initiatives to help Pakistan build capacity “to research and propose policy solutions for its socio-economic challenges,” Patterson said.

These investments in education projects also help to strengthen the United States-Pakistan relationship.

“I hope and believe that the next 60 years will bring us even closer as a result of our sustained efforts to promote educational and cultural exchanges between our two countries,” Patterson said.

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