

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

November 9, 2010

President Obama Supports Permanent U.N. Security Council Seat for India.....	1
Secretary Clinton on November 7 Elections in Burma	1
United States Condemns Burma's Elections	2
Secretary Clinton Affirms Strong Australian Relations	3
Indonesian-U.S. Partnerships Combat Dengue Fever	3

President Obama Supports Permanent U.N. Security Council Seat for India

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama expressed U.S. support for India to gain a permanent seat on a reformed United Nations Security Council in the years ahead as part of a “just and sustainable international order” that the United States is working to build.

Speaking November 8 to a joint session of the Indian parliament in New Delhi, Obama said the United States “not only welcomes India as a rising global power, we fervently support it, and we have worked to help make it a reality.”

India will begin serving a two-year term as one of 10 nonpermanent members of the Security Council on January 1, and President Obama said that as part of seeking an “efficient, effective, credible and legitimate” United Nations, “in the years ahead, I look forward to a reformed United Nations Security Council that includes India as a permanent member.”

But the president also told Indian lawmakers that “with increased power comes increased responsibility,” and he urged India and other aspiring Security Council members to ensure that the U.N. body is effective, its resolutions are implemented and enforced, and that “we strengthen the international norms which recognize the rights and responsibilities of all nations and all individuals.”

He said global leadership requires countries to promote shared prosperity, preserve peace and security, and strengthen democratic governance and human rights.

India and the United States can work together to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and secure the world’s most vulnerable nuclear materials, he said. “We can make it clear that even as every nation has the right to peaceful nuclear energy, every nation must also meet its international obligations — and that includes the Islamic Republic of Iran. And together, we can pursue a vision that Indian leaders have espoused since independence: a world without nuclear weapons.”

With its 700 million voters, thousands of political parties and millions of candidates and poll workers, India can also lead by sharing its political expertise with countries that are transitioning to democracy, Obama said.

“As the world’s two largest democracies, we must never forget that the price of our own freedom is standing up for the freedom of others,” Obama said. Citing Burma’s

sham November 7 elections as an example, the president urged India to speak out on the world stage on behalf of human rights.

“Speaking up for those who cannot do so for themselves is not interfering in the affairs of other countries. It’s not violating the rights of sovereign nations. It is staying true to our democratic principles. It is giving meaning to the human rights that we say are universal. And it sustains the progress that in Asia and around the world has helped turn dictatorships into democracies and ultimately increased our security in the world,” he said.

India has succeeded “not in spite of democracy,” but “because of democracy,” Obama said, and it has “surmounted overwhelming odds and became a model to the world” by building a strong, free and entrepreneurial society on the foundation of its ancient civilization.

“Instead of slipping into starvation, you launched a Green Revolution that fed millions. Instead of becoming dependent on commodities and exports, you invested in science and technology and in your greatest resource — the Indian people. And the world sees the results, from the supercomputers you build to the Indian flag that you put on the moon,” the president said.

The United States and India now stand together as “two great republics dedicated to the liberty and justice and equality of all people,” and that support free-market economies that allow their citizens the freedom to pursue ideas and innovations.

“And that’s why I believe that India and America are indispensable partners in meeting the challenges of our time,” the president said.

Secretary Clinton on November 7 Elections in Burma

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
November 7, 2010

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Burma’s Elections

The United States is deeply disappointed by today’s elections in Burma. The generals who have ruled the country for the past 22 years missed an opportunity to begin genuine transition toward democratic governance and national reconciliation.

The electoral process was severely flawed, precluded an inclusive, level playing field, and repressed fundamental freedoms. As a result, the elections were neither free nor fair. We were concerned by the regime’s refusal to allow

international journalists and election observers to monitor or cover the voting. Reports of intentional Internet slowdowns, voter intimidation, and fraudulent “advance voting” schemes were also very troubling.

The United States stands steadfastly with the Burmese people who aspire for a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Burma that respects human rights and the rule of law. To that end, we will continue to pursue parallel strategies of pressure and principled engagement. The United States remains open to future possibilities of dialogue with Burma's leaders. We will continue our call for respect for human rights, immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and dialogue toward national reconciliation. Absent progress on these core concerns, we will maintain rigorous sanctions against members of the regime and their supporters. We will continue to work closely with the international community, including at the United Nations and in other international forums such as ASEAN, to pursue accountability and bring an end to human rights abuses.

The United States is committed to helping the Burmese people through increased humanitarian assistance that targets those in desperate need and builds local capacity. Burma's leaders must come to realize – after five decades of sustained internal conflict, economic mismanagement, and international pariah status – that Burma needs a better way forward, a way that does not rely on suppression but rather strives to create a truly democratic and prosperous future for the Burmese people.

United States Condemns Burma's Elections

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington – President Obama says Burma's parliamentary elections on November 7 were neither free nor fair and failed to meet any internationally accepted standards.

“The elections were based on a fundamentally flawed process and demonstrated the regime's continued preference for repression and restriction over inclusion and transparency,” Obama said in a prepared statement November 7. He is on a four-nation Asia trip that began in India and continues to Indonesia, South Korea and Japan.

“No one nation has a monopoly on wisdom, and no nation should ever try to impose its values on another. But when peaceful democratic movements are suppressed – as they have been in Burma, for example – then the democracies of the world cannot remain silent,” Obama said in a November 8 address to the Indian Parliament.

No international observers or foreign journalists were permitted to observe the elections. By the terms of the elections, which were based on a 2008 constitution, political parties were required to comply with requirements that provided the military with a quarter of the seats in the lower house of parliament and one-third of the seats in the upper house regardless of the election's outcome.

Obama said one of the starkest flaws of the elections, the first in more than 20 years, was the military-led regime's continued detention of more than 2,100 political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, denying them any participation in the process. Obama said the “unfair electoral laws and overtly partisan Election Commission ensured that Burma's leading pro-democracy party, the National League for Democracy, was silenced and sidelined.”

According to international reports, the military junta that rules Burma denied the registration of certain ethnic parties, cancelled elections in numerous ethnic areas, and stage-managed the campaign process to ensure that pro-democracy and opposition candidates who did compete faced insurmountable obstacles.

“Ultimately, elections cannot be credible when the regime rejects dialogue with opponents and represses the most basic freedoms of expression, speech and assembly,” Obama said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was in Australia November 7, said the United States was disappointed in the parliamentary elections.

“The generals who have ruled the country for the past 22 years missed an opportunity to begin genuine transition toward democratic governance and national reconciliation,” she said.

Clinton said Burma's electoral process, which was supposed to represent the will of the people in a democratic process, “was severely flawed, precluded an inclusive, level playing field, and repressed fundamental freedoms.”

The United States continues to stand by the Burmese people, Clinton said, but also remains open to the possibility of talks with Burma's leaders.

“We continue our call for respect for human rights, immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and dialogue toward national reconciliation,” Clinton said. “Absent progress on these core concerns, we will maintain rigorous sanctions against members of the regime and their supporters.”

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said November 8 that Burma's election was insufficiently inclusive, participatory or transparent.

A military junta has dominated the country since a 1962 coup toppled the civilian government.

Secretary Clinton Affirms Strong Australian Relations

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — The defense and foreign ministers of Australia and the United States discussed a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, from women's empowerment to military cooperation, at the just-concluded, 25th annual Australia-U.S. Ministerial consultations in Melbourne, Australia.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates met with Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defense Minister Stephen Smith.

"This was a broad, far-reaching and extremely valuable set of consultations," Clinton said at a joint news conference November 8.

The officials earlier released a joint statement affirming a bilateral friendship based on common values, such as the "principles of democracy, a liberal economy and opportunity for all." This year marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Australia.

"Our relationship continues to be a strategic anchor of security and prosperity in this region and beyond, and our countries are working very closely together. The Melbourne Statement reflects that level of cooperation and it touches on the many areas where we are involved together," Clinton said.

One area the officials discussed was partnering to combat violence against women.

"When women are not protected, it undermines families, communities and even nations," Clinton said. Rudd said about 30 percent of women and girls around the world experience some sort of physical or sexual violence during their lives.

"We believe as democracies and as believers in fundamental human rights that we've got a responsibility not just to observe this, not just to be concerned about it, but to act on it," Rudd said.

Rudd and Clinton committed to work fully with U.N. Women, the newly created organization under the

leadership of former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet.

Another topic leading the agenda was stronger military cooperation. Australia has invited the United States to make greater use of its bases and ports, test-firing ranges, and a joint space-tracking facility used to monitor missiles, satellites and space debris.

"This alliance has never been more important, and the ties between our two nations and our two militaries, bonds of shared culture, interests and values, give me great confidence that we stand ready to confront the challenges of this new century, as we have in the past," Gates said.

The ministerial group discussed Iran's nuclear program, relations with Japan and the weekend parliamentary elections in Burma.

In a statement, the leaders criticized Burma's failure "to hold free, fair and genuinely inclusive elections."

Talks also covered China's role as a rising regional power.

"We are committed to developing a strong comprehensive relationship with the People's Republic of China," Rudd said.

Clinton said the United States welcomes China's economic success, adding that as it gains regional and global power, the United States expects "China will be a responsible player and will participate in the international framework of rules."

The leaders also discussed Afghanistan, where Clinton said progress is slowly being made. Canberra has deployed more than 1,500 military personnel to Afghanistan.

Australia was the final stop of Clinton's 13-day diplomatic mission that has included consultations with leaders and senior officials from at least eight Asian and Pacific nations. She returned to Washington November 8 after a brief visit to American Samoa.

Indonesian-U.S. Partnerships Combat Dengue Fever

By Nancy L. Pontius
Special Correspondent

Lakewood, Colorado — Indonesian and U.S. universities, government agencies and nonprofit organizations are working together to control dengue fever, a painful disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be fatal. Two research projects are under way in central Java — one outside Surakarta and the second in Yogyakarta, a city of about 400,000 people.

Dengue affects 50 million people annually worldwide,

and drug treatment and vaccinations are currently not available. Research organizations – such as the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) – continue studying the dengue virus to look for a cure.

In Yogyakarta, an expert team drawn from Indonesia, the United States and Singapore is investigating ways to reduce dengue. Their nongovernmental partners are the Jean and Julius Tahija Family Foundation, an Indonesian philanthropic organization that employs more than 250 workers for the project; Gadjah Mada University, which provides technical expertise and laboratory analysis; the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, a U.S. nonprofit that assists donors and charitable organizations; and the emerging Infectious Diseases Program, a joint effort of the University of Singapore and Duke University that contributes advice on dengue control and validates laboratory techniques.

Public partners include municipal and regional Indonesian government agencies in Yogyakarta that have considerable experience with dengue control and surveillance; the Indonesian Ministry of Health, which observes the project and is considering the possibility of using the strategy elsewhere in Indonesia; and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which supplies technical assistance regarding mosquitoes, population surveys and educational strategies.

The project is seeking a strategy to reduce dengue that is “affordable, doable and scientifically valid,” Emily Zielinski-Gutierrez, a CDC behavioral scientist, told *America.gov*. “The team’s long-term goal is to have this method used as part of the national Indonesian strategy to control dengue,” she said.

The project targets mosquito breeding. Throughout Yogyakarta, households are receiving a small chemical packet that inhibits insect growth to place in common household containers storing water. The chemical is safe for humans, but prevents mosquitoes from maturing.

A key strategy is for the Tahija Foundation to hire “trained, local community-health workers who are already known in their neighborhoods and who explain to their colleagues in their communities the benefits” of the project in a manner that is socially and culturally relevant, Kevin Brady, associate vice president for programs with the CDC Foundation, told *America.gov*. The project has shown that the method “is doable and very effective,” Brady said.

Another strength is the increasing recognition of the benefits of involving private industry to make the insecticide commercially available, Zielinski-Gutierrez said. The chemical is “not extremely expensive and could be manufactured and advertised for this purpose.”

To determine the effectiveness of the project, blood samples will be taken in November from people in households where the insecticide was used and compared with samples from similar households without the chemical. Research results will be released in January 2011.

ROTARY CLUBS INVESTIGATE DENGUE CONTROL

In Kadipiro – a community of 49,000 factory workers – Indonesian and U.S. Rotary clubs are working together to examine new nonchemical techniques to reduce breeding of mosquitoes that transmit the dengue virus.

The Rotary club (RC) Solo Kartini in Surakarta is coordinating the project. The club’s 45 all-female members include a pharmacist, a physician, a dentist, a midwife, a lawyer, a dressmaker, a social worker, a wedding organizer and a general contractor.

The project team also includes these members:

- Surakarta Departemen Kesehatan Kota (Municipal Health Department), which selected the communities included in the project.
- Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Community Assistance for Family Welfare), which selects the participating 1,300 households and 45 household monitors.
- Petugas Pemantau Jentik-Jentik (persons in charge of monitoring mosquito larvae); these 45 people will each assist about 30 households.
- Indonesian homeowners, who implement the new procedures.
- The U.S. Rotary club in Westport, Connecticut, which provides technical expertise and funding.
- The Rotary Foundation, which is a nongovernmental organization supplying project funding.

Members of RC Solo Kartini told *America.gov* that they have established good relationships with their international partner (Dr. Paul Spiekermann and his Westport Rotary club) and with the municipal government of Surakarta and the Kadipiro target community. This tripartite collaboration of Rotary with public-health and community groups allows close control of progress, they said.

According to Danarsih Santosa, president of RC Solo Kartini, “This project is expected to become a model to reduce and possibly eradicate dengue in similar target areas around Surakarta and in Indonesia where dengue fever is endemic. After the project is completed in 2011, Solo Kartini will hand over the program to the mayor of Surakarta City.”

The project targets a significant breeding site for dengue

mosquitoes: household bathtubs used for water storage. Spiekermann, a physician specializing in tropical diseases, listed the primary strategies:

- Applying white ceramic tiling inside bathtubs so that dark-colored larvae in the water can be easily detected.
- Checking tubs for larvae twice weekly to disrupt the short mosquito breeding cycle.
- Cleaning tubs infested with larvae, covering tubs and preventing puddles of water around homes.

After a meeting of 300 community members, public health staff members and Rotarians, bathtub re-tiling began in September 2010 and will be completed by December 2010. From January through June 2011, all the strategies will be implemented and data will be collected.

(Preceding items distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://america.gov>)