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NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

November 30, 2010

Secretary Clinton to Attend OSCE Summit, Tour Central Asia.....1

U.N. Sanctions Against North Korea Should Be Tightened.....1

Secretary Clinton to Attend OSCE Summit, Tour Central Asia

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will attend the 2010 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit December 1-2 in Kazakhstan, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

“We hope that this event will shine a light on positive developments in Central Asia and the role that the OSCE has played, and can play in the future, in promoting its principles throughout the OSCE region,” Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake said at a subcommittee hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives’ Foreign Affairs Committee.

According to the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, the organization is a forum for issues of peace, security and human rights in Europe and Central Asia and is committed to democracy, tolerance and media freedoms. The mission identifies the OSCE as unique among international organizations “in the acceptance by the participating states of the principle that open societies built on human rights and democracy are a necessary component of true security.”

The OSCE summit is the first to be held in Kazakhstan’s capital, Astana, and the first held by a former Soviet republic. Kazakhstan, which took OSCE leadership January 1, is also the first former Soviet republic to chair the trans-Atlantic security organization.

“We think that Kazakhstan has done a very credible job as OSCE chairman-in-office, especially in dealing with the situation in Kyrgyzstan, where the OSCE has been at the forefront of efforts to promote peace, democracy and reconciliation,” Blake testified November 17.

The last OSCE summit was held in Istanbul in 1999, and concluded with the adoption of a common declaration and charter for European security. The OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization. Its 56 participating nations span the globe from Central Asia to Europe to North America.

Blake said the United States has an important interest in promoting a stable, secure and prosperous Central Asia that is integrated into the global economy and respects internationally recognized human rights.

He added that the United States does not regard itself as in competition for influence with any other nation and it does not accept that the five Central Asian nations constitute an exclusive zone of interests for any one

country. Instead, the United States wants to cooperate with others such as Russia and China to address the critical challenges facing the region and to help produce more durable stability.

Clinton’s November 30-December 2 visit is meant to underscore the U.S. commitment to Central Asia.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said in a statement November 29 that prior to the OSCE summit, Clinton will host in Kazakhstan “an event for local and international nongovernmental organizations, underscoring the importance of a vibrant civil society.” He said the secretary will also discuss the U.S.-Kazakhstan strategic partnership with President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev.

Crowley said the secretary will also visit Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Bahrain.

He said Clinton will hold talks in Kyrgyzstan with President Roza Otunbayeva and other government officials “to review political developments following Kyrgyzstan’s historic election, and discuss a range of issues of mutual concern.” She will then meet with President Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan to discuss bilateral relations and regional affairs.

In Bahrain, Crowley said, the secretary will deliver the keynote address on the role of the United States in regional security at the Manama Dialogue 2010, an annual forum hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in cooperation with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

U.N. Sanctions Against North Korea Should Be Tightened

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington – The Obama administration called on the United Nations Security Council to tighten the enforcement of U.N. sanctions against North Korea following recent reports that Pyongyang has acquired centrifuges capable of enriching uranium to make nuclear weapons, and says North Korea’s November 23 attack against South Korea has heightened U.S. concerns over its nuclear activities.

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice said North Korea’s recently reported nuclear activities “are clear violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874, and of the commitments made by North Korea under the 2005 joint statement,” in which Pyongyang agreed to take verifiable and irreversible steps

to end its nuclear programs.

Speaking in New York November 29, Rice said the Security Council "will now need to study carefully the recent revelations and determine the appropriate way forward," and that all U.N. member states need to "redouble their commitment to implementing the strong sanctions" imposed by the Security Council.

The Obama administration also expects the Security Council's committee on North Korean sanctions and the U.N. panel of experts charged with monitoring North Korean compliance to "intensify their important, ongoing efforts to tighten sanctions enforcement," she said.

Rice said U.S. concerns about North Korea's nuclear activities "have only been heightened" by what she described as "North Korea's deadly, unprovoked attack" on November 23 against South Korean marines and civilians on the island of Yeonpyeong.

The United States has looked to China to "play a responsible leadership role in working to maintain peace and security" on the Korean Peninsula, she said.

"It's in China's interest. It's in the interest of the countries in the region, and we expect them to take steps that are consistent with their obligations and all of our obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions, and to work, as we all must, to uphold them and implement them," Rice said.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said November 29 that the resumption of the Six-Party Talks involving North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States would be "just a PR [public relations] activity" unless North Korea is willing to end its provocative behavior and "come to the table with a seriousness of purpose on the denuclearization issue."

"The United States and a host of others I don't think are interested in stabilizing the region through a series of PR activities," Gibbs said. The talks "cannot substitute for action by North Korea to comply with its obligations and to cease its destabilizing actions."

North Korea needs to "demonstrate a seriousness of purpose in ending their aggressive behavior," as well as "let the world know they're serious ... about coming to the table and living up to the obligations that they signed up for but then walked away from" after September 2005, he said.

At the State Department, spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters November 29 that the United States "will respond appropriately" to a cessation of North Korean provocations as well as seeing Pyongyang take other steps

to "ease tensions in the region."

Along with the shelling of Yeonpyeong, in which two South Korean marines and two civilians were killed, North Korea attacked the South Korean vessel Cheonan in March, leaving 46 sailors dead.

"Those are serious provocations for which North Korea has yet to take any responsibility for the deaths of South Korean sailors, marines and citizens," Crowley said.

"What we are looking for is fundamental changes in North Korea's behavior. If we see those changes, then we'll react accordingly, but we want to see North Korea live up to its international obligations, cease its provocative behavior ... [and] take on a more constructive posture," he said.

For the resumption of Six-Party Talks, "there has to be some prospect that discussions will be constructive, and to have constructive discussions, the broad environment has to be taken into account," Crowley said.

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