

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Secretary Clinton to Present Human Rights Award December 10

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
December 8, 2010

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

Secretary Clinton Presents Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Awards on December 10

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will commemorate Human Rights Day by presenting the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award on December 10 at approximately 2:30 p.m. at the Department of State. Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner will introduce Secretary Clinton at the ceremony.

The awards will be presented to three American human rights defenders for their contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights both in the United States and abroad. This year's winners are: Sarah Cleto Rial, the program director for My Sister's Keeper, an NGO that works to advance political, social and economic justice for women and girls in Sudan; Wade Henderson, president/CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; and a posthumous award to Professor Louis Henkin, Chairman of the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University and widely considered to be the father of modern human rights law.

Human Rights Day is observed every December 10 and celebrates the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. The Declaration outlines the inalienable rights of all people and has since served as the benchmark for the extension and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The event will be open to credentialed members of the media for editorial coverage. The event will be live-streamed on www.state.gov. Video camera coverage will be pooled due to space limitations in the treaty room.

Secretary Clinton on International Anti-Corruption Day

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

International Anti-Corruption Day
On behalf of President Obama and the people of the

United States, I join with our partners around the world to recognize December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day. As we continue our common fight against corruption and recommit ourselves to the work ahead, we also recognize the significant achievements of the past year.

Last month, G20 Leaders adopted a landmark Anti-Corruption Action Plan to promote an open, rules-based environment worldwide. Implementing this plan will require cooperative efforts among our G20 partners, the private sector, and civil society organizations. The participation of emerging G20 economies is particularly important as they lay the foundation for generations of sustainable growth and prosperity.

The United States has made unprecedented strides over the past year to enforce our anticorruption laws and ensure our companies do not practice bribery or unfair practices in countries where they operate. This year, the States Parties of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) also launched a process to review implementation of the treaty. The United States is proud to be among the first nations to undergo a peer review, and we look forward to working with our partners in the UNCAC process to translate this global commitment to root out corruption from promise to practice.

Corruption stunts economic growth, damages confidence in democracy, and fosters a culture of graft and impunity that undermines the ability to operate in our interconnected world. Every country has a role to play as we work to advance our collective anticorruption agenda and institutionalize the highest standards of transparency. Together, we can ensure the integrity of our markets, improve our government institutions, and increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.

Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo "Deserves Our Admiration," U.S. Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The State Department says the U.S. ambassador to Norway will attend the December 10 Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo for Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo.

In Washington, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a resolution honoring Liu for promoting democratic reform in China and calling for his immediate release from prison.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said December 9 that Ambassador Barry White's attendance at the ceremony reaffirms "the importance that the United

States places on the Nobel award.”

The Chinese government has been critical of the Nobel Committee’s decision to recognize Liu, describing him as a criminal. Liu was sentenced in December 2009 to 11 years in prison for subversion of state power after he led the writing of Charter 08, a manifesto on human rights and political reform in China.

“Mr. Liu’s courageous advocacy for political reform and fundamental freedoms, including his role in the drafting of Charter 08, deserve our admiration,” Crowley said.

“We urge China to uphold its ... human rights obligations and to respect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all Chinese citizens. And we continue to call for Mr. Liu’s immediate release,” he said.

On December 8, Crowley said that by honoring Liu, the Nobel Committee has made “a strong statement” urging all countries to work toward extending full human rights to all of their citizens, including “the ability to express their views, participate in the political process, and enjoy freedom of expression, freedom of association and the opportunity to play a role in the future of any country.”

The U.S. House of Representatives honored Liu by passing House Resolution 1717 on December 8. The measure congratulates Liu for winning the Nobel Peace Prize and says his award also honors other Chinese dissidents who have promoted democratic reform, including those who participated in the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations.

The resolution calls on the Chinese government to release Liu from prison and his wife, Liu Xia, from house arrest, and to free “all signers of Charter 08 from detention, house arrest and harassment.”

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi noted that Liu’s award is the first Nobel Peace Prize given to a Chinese citizen and said the prize “is a testament not only to Liu Xiaobo, but ... [to] many Chinese dissidents who have sacrificed so much in pursuit of freedom and democracy in China.”

Speaking on the House floor December 7, Pelosi said U.S. lawmakers fully recognize the importance of the relationship between the United States and China and the “many issues where we have common ground or where we should seek common ground.”

“But all of that is better served by candor in our friendship and not ignoring sore spots,” she said.

In Charter 08, Liu wrote that “the most fundamental principles of democracy are that people are sovereign,

and that the people select their own government,” Pelosi said. The document now has more than 10,000 signatures, and many of the signers have been harassed and intimidated by Chinese authorities.

“The courageous efforts by the signatories of Charter 08 to express themselves in the face of arrest and detention are truly an inspiration around the world,” Pelosi said.

She said many who are spending time in prison for exercising the freedom to express their views are often told by their captors that they have been forgotten.

“One of the things that we have done in the past decade is to make sure that those who have been arrested for expressing their views, whether they be religious or political, is that they are not forgotten,” Pelosi said.

“And of course, with the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize, what greater spotlight could there be placed on freedom of expression in China?” she said.

United States Expanded Engagement at Five European Summits

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington – The United States participated in five summits over the past few weeks that provided an unprecedented opportunity for engagement with nations that span the globe from Europe and Central Asia to North America, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

“We think that this set of events significantly helped us advance our agenda in Europe,” Philip Gordon, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, said during a recent press briefing.

In the span of three weeks, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton participated in the 2010 NATO Summit, a summit of nations participating in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the NATO-Russia Council Summit, the U.S.-European Union Summit – all held in Lisbon, Portugal – and in the 2010 Astana Summit of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Gordon said during a December 7 teleconference that it was an “extraordinary period of summits ... which is maybe an unprecedented opportunity for engagement with our partners in Europe and Eurasia.” But summits also provide the nations that participate an opportunity to build trust in one another, and that expands peace and strengthens shared goals, he added.

At the OSCE Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, the first for the 56-nation regional security alliance since the 1999 Istanbul Summit, the nations reaffirmed their support for the 1975 Helsinki Accords that ushered in an era of greater trust and stability between the former Communist bloc nations and the West, Gordon said. Most of those nations are now allied in the OSCE, sharing the same hopes for regional security and relations, he said.

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

"It underscored our commitment to those principles and our commitment to what is called the human dimension of security in Europe," Gordon added. But the United States did not agree on a proposed action plan at the Astana summit because it did not "adequately reflect our longstanding position on unresolved conflicts," such as in Georgia and its two breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Moldova's Transdniestria region and Nagorno-Karabakh, Gordon said.

"We took a principled stand on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity and host nation consent," Gordon added. "We weren't able to reach satisfactory agreement on how to address the unresolved conflicts, and therefore regret the United States wasn't able to sign onto an action plan."

Some OSCE members objected to an effort to include language in the summit action plan that would have renounced support for Georgia's territorial integrity, including its two breakaway regions – South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia and Russia fought a brief conflict in August 2008 over the two breakaway regions, which Russia recognizes as independent countries but which are not recognized as independent states by the United States and members of the OSCE.

The OSCE – like many international alliances – operates by consensus, and an objection by a single member can block any action. Action plans are used by security alliances like blueprints in construction to build trust, resolve differences and move nations to the next level in expanding peace and security.

Nevertheless, Gordon said meetings held with Russia, NATO and European leaders held out hope of warmer relations based on mutual trust and respect.

"We hope that the relationship between Russia and the United States and between Russia and NATO and Russia and Europe will continue to improve," Gordon told reporters. "I think everyone would agree that these

relationships are in a much better place than they were several years ago."

Gordon said the United States and Russia will continue to have differences, but both are quite clear on them, and that makes diplomacy easier.

"We're not shy about expressing those, but we are expressing them frankly, and we believe that in the long run the United States and Russia, and Russia and Europe, have so many common interests that we are and should be partners," he added.

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