

American

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Statement on Clinton's Trip to United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
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STATEMENT BY PHILIP J. CROWLEY,
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AFFAIRS

Secretary Clinton's Travel to the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will travel to the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar from January 8-13. At each stop, Secretary Clinton will consult with government officials on a full range of regional and bilateral issues, and emphasize the importance of government-civil society engagement. In addition to these meetings, the Secretary will engage with civil society and community leaders in each country working to help citizens realize shared aspirations for progress. This engagement underscores the U.S. commitment to support civil society and promote partnerships that lead to prosperity for the people of the region.

In Qatar, the Secretary will participate in the Seventh Forum for the Future, a joint initiative of the countries of the Broader Middle East and North Africa region (BMENA) and the industrialized countries of the Group of Eight (G-8). The ministerial event brings together civil society representatives and government officials to discuss and exchange ideas on how to best work together to foster progress and expand opportunities for the people of the region.

Sudan Referendum Will Be Historic, Carson Says

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — The January 9 referendum in which the people of southern Sudan will vote on whether to make their region an independent nation will be a "historic occasion," most importantly for the people of Sudan, but for all Africans as well. If the election is transparent, fair and successful, it will reflect the will of the people no matter which path they choose, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson told reporters.

Briefing the press at the State Department January 5, Carson said the occasion will be historic because "for the first time in their lives" the people of southern Sudan will "make a decision on whether they will secede from Sudan and become an independent state or become a part of a

united Sudan."

Carson termed the referendum vote "the beginning of the end of a culmination of five-and-a-half-years of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement that was negotiated and signed in Naivasha, Kenya, in January 2005. Although the effort was led by Intergovernmental Authority on Development states under the leadership of Kenya," Carson told reporters, "the United States, Great Britain and Norway were participants and partners in the effort leading to where we are today."

"We believe that this event beginning on January 9 will in fact go off successfully, that the organization and the diplomatic efforts that have been put into this will lead to a successful referendum. We think that it will reflect the will of the people and that it will occur on time, peacefully and in a well organized manner," Carson said.

Carson said both the United States and the international community were "extraordinarily pleased" by the January 4 visit to the southern Sudan city of Juba by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who stated publicly that the North is prepared to accept the outcome of the referendum and will seek to have a peaceful and beneficial relationship with the people of the South regardless of how they vote.

"We hope the North and the [ruling] National Congress Party will live up to those very promising statements that have been made by the leadership of the North, and that we are about to see the end of what has been a really enormously successful diplomatic effort to end what has been 20 years of violence and conflict between the North and the South."

Carson told reporters the United States government has worked "extraordinarily hard and tirelessly to get us where we are today" and "invested a great deal of diplomacy to ensure that the outcome of this referendum is peaceful and successful. We have engaged both North and South Sudanese leaders. We have engaged the European community and the international community and have worked hard at the Security Council to make this happen."

Certainly over the past nine months, he said, the United States has "substantially augmented" its presence and diplomatic activities in southern Sudan and quadrupled the staff of American diplomats in Juba and across the South to help the referendum succeed.

Carson said it is the desire of the United States to see the referendum move forward. If the people of southern Sudan vote for independence, he said, "we will also as a country help that new nation to succeed, to get on its feet and to move forward successfully, economically and

politically. But it is an historic decision for the people of south Sudan. It is their decision to make.”

Carson was joined at the briefing by Tim Shortley, the senior representative for Sudan at the U.S. State Department, who serves as the deputy to U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Scott Gration, and by Larry Garber, the deputy assistant administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Shortley told reporters the current environment in Sudan is “very conducive to a positive outcome of the referendum.” He credited the creation of that environment, in part, to President al-Bashir’s January 4 visit to southern Sudan and the discussions he had with Sudan First Vice President Salva Kiir and others on the outcome of the peoples’ vote. Shortley reiterated Carson’s point that it has been an “extraordinary effort” to get to the point where both parties have agreed to hold the referendum and respect the outcome of the vote.

Following the weeklong referendum vote, which concludes January 15, Shortley said Carson will lead a U.S. delegation to the African Union summit where the outcome of the referendum will be discussed.

The U.S. team on the ground during the referendum vote, Shortley said, will include Special Envoy Gration; U.S. Senator John Kerry; Ambassador Dane Smith, the newly appointed senior adviser on Darfur; and Ambassador Princeton Lyman, who is the lead negotiator for North-South issues, “so we are very well positioned to monitor the vote and to see a successful outcome.”

Larry Garber of USAID told reporters that the smooth logistical preparations for the referendum stand as a significant achievement for both the Sudanese and for U.S. development and diplomatic efforts. Garber stressed that the referendum process is a Sudanese process and is managed by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) based in Khartoum, which has received substantial assistance from the United States and the international donor community.

Garber said the registration process began in mid-November 2010, with more than 3.7 million Sudanese registering in south Sudan, about 150,000 eligible voters registered in north Sudan and about 60,000 eligible Sudanese registered to vote from overseas. “The country is huge; the logistics are difficult,” he said.

The balloting will begin January 9 and run through January 15, at which time ballots will be counted at the various regional sites. The SSRC has issued a timeline, Garber said, indicating the official results will be reported in mid-February but speculating that unofficial results might be available “quite a bit sooner.”

The vote will be “yes” or “no,” will be a seven-day process, and must clear a threshold that 60 percent of registered voters cast their vote for the referendum to be deemed valid, he said.

U.S.–Latin American Relations Headed in Constructive Direction

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington – The United States believes it has been successful in shifting the balance in the U.S.–Latin American relationship in a positive and constructive direction and the approach is achieving results, says Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela.

During remarks January 6, Valenzuela said U.S. priorities are based on the premise that the United States has a critical interest in contributing to a stable, prosperous and democratic hemisphere capable of playing a vital role in the international system.

“Achieving that objective has required an important shift in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy,” Valenzuela said in prepared remarks at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based public policy research center.

“The United States must be a more effective and determined partner in helping countries throughout the Americas achieve their own chosen paths as determined by their own people,” he said.

Valenzuela, who is the assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, said two powerful, converging trends in Latin America account for the dramatic changes taking place. The first is the consolidation of successful market democracies making big gains in meeting their peoples’ needs.

The second trend is the growing global integration of Latin America. The effect of these trends is fundamentally reordering the U.S. interaction with each nation in Latin America, he said.

The great challenges previously facing the region of inequality, the impunity of political power, lack of rights, ineffective institutions, and lack of opportunity are receding, Valenzuela said. Now hemispheric nations are realizing their stake in new global challenges such as food security, climate change, cross-border crime and vital economic competitiveness.

President Obama has focused U.S. efforts on four overarching priorities critical to people in every society, Valenzuela said. The four include promoting social and economic opportunity for everyone; securing a clean-

energy future; ensuring public safety and security; and building effective democratic governments.

The United States seeks these priorities while strengthening multilateral and regional institutions such as the Organization of American States, he said.

Coupled with those objectives, Valenzuela said, is a period of economic and political health across the Western Hemisphere very different from the distant past. For example, economic growth in the region is projected to exceed 5 percent in 2011. What helped that projection is that the region avoided the worst effects of the most recent economic crisis.

In 2009 merchandise trade between the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean reached \$524 billion, and more than 40 percent of the region's exports flowed to the United States. That made the United States the region's single largest export destination, and it is the largest source of foreign direct investment in the region.

Too, Valenzuela said, the Western Hemisphere, including Canada, absorbs 42 percent of U.S. exports. He added that half of U.S. energy imports come from the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. Commits \$190 Million for Pakistan's Flood-Affected Families

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington – The United States is providing an additional \$190 million to Pakistan for flood recovery efforts, a contribution that “demonstrates the commitment of the United States to a comprehensive, long-term partnership with the people and government of Pakistan.”

Frank Ruggiero, acting special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, said the money will go to the Pakistani government's Citizen's Damage Compensation Fund (CDCF), which “is directly benefiting flood-affected families in their time of greatest need.”

Ruggiero announced the new commitment January 6 after meeting with Pakistani Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh in Islamabad. The money is part of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman legislation, under which the U.S. Congress authorized \$7.5 billion in assistance projects for Pakistan.

Ruggiero called the \$190 million “further proof that the United States will continue to provide assistance and reconstruction to help Pakistanis rebuild their lives.”

According to a press release from the U.S. Embassy in

Islamabad, the CDCF was established to provide cash grants of about \$235 (20,000 rupees) to approximately 1.6 million eligible families. Nearly 1.3 million families have received the initial grant, and further installments are being planned.

The U.S. government has committed nearly \$600 million in disaster assistance to date, “directly helping millions of Pakistanis with shelter, food, clean water, agricultural assistance and health care,” the embassy release said. U.S. contributions include humanitarian airlifts and support from the U.S. military that was requested by the Pakistani government.

The devastating floods began in late July, causing 1,800 deaths, affecting 21 million people and destroying thousands of hectares of crops. At the height of the disaster, one-fifth of the country's land was underwater.

In addition to direct assistance to Pakistan, the United States is a major contributor to the flood recovery and relief efforts led by the World Food Programme and local and regional nongovernmental organizations.

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