

American

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Statement on Elections in Thailand

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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STATEMENT BY VICTORIA NULAND,
SPOKESPERSON

Elections in Thailand

We congratulate the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, our long-time friend and ally, for their robust participation in the July 3rd parliamentary elections. The choice of who will lead Thailand now rests with those representatives elected by the Thai people.

We look forward to working with the next Thai government to broaden and strengthen our alliance, which is based on shared values and mutual respect. The United States also looks forward to working with the opposition and non-partisan civil society, as we have always done.

Secretary Clinton Urges World Democracies to Support Mideast, North Africa

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is calling on democratic countries around the world to support countries in transition to democracy across the Middle East and North Africa.

“This is an hour of need, and every democracy should stand up and be counted,” Clinton told the Community of Democracies July 1 in Vilnius, Lithuania, during the group’s sixth ministerial meeting. She said citizens across the Middle East and North Africa are demanding the same universal rights, dignity and opportunity Eastern and Central Europeans claimed two decades ago.

She said that while the political outcome in those countries in the Middle East and North Africa “will be determined by the people themselves,” Community of Democracies members “have a stake in that outcome and a responsibility to help.”

“We see our own stories in theirs. And we know that, just as any one democracy depends on people working together, a community of democracy depends on all nations, not only working together, but renewing our commitment,” Clinton said. “We believe that established democracies have a special duty to help those that are emerging.”

The secretary said that while every transition is unique, there are shared lessons for people in the Middle East and North Africa to draw on.

“From Europe to Latin America to Africa to Asia, people have learned the fundamentals of successful democratic transitions: accountable institutions rooted in the rule of law; equal protection and participation for all citizens, especially women; a vibrant civil society; a free press; an independent judiciary and economic opportunity; integration into the international community and its norms and institutions; and leaders who understand that legitimacy flows from consent, not coercion,” Clinton said.

The secretary added that democracies flourish through connections to, and support from, other democracies. She called on the Community of Democracies to be “vibrant and responsive to what lies ahead,” and applauded reforms adopted under the current Lithuanian chairmanship. The group next will be chaired by Mongolia. The organization, founded in 2000, is a “global intergovernmental coalition of democratic countries, with the goal of promoting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world,” according to its website.

Clinton’s participation in the June 30-July 1 ministerial comes after a stop in Budapest, Hungary, where she took part in the inauguration of the Lantos Institute. The new institute is named after Hungarian-born Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor to serve as a member of the U.S. Congress.

While in Lithuania, Clinton also held consultations with President Dalia Grybauskaitė at the presidential palace in Vilnius. The two discussed military security, energy independence, women’s issues and democratization around the world.

Independent South Sudan Faces Challenges, but Will Have U.S. Help

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — After South Sudan celebrates its independence July 9, its government and people will face significant challenges, President Obama’s top envoy to Sudan says, and the United States will be working closely with the new nation and providing it with assistance to meet its needs.

In an exclusive interview June 30, U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Princeton Lyman said the birth of Africa’s 54th country represents “a major milestone” after decades of war that claimed millions of lives. It also comes after a long peace process between northern and southern Sudan that mandated the January 9–15 referendum where

southerners overwhelming voted for independence.

“It’s important that this peace process produce not just independence for South Sudan, but the emergence of two viable states in Sudan, the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan,” Lyman said.

The two states are enormously interdependent, as the result of shared trade, borders, oil resources and personal relationships, he said.

“A key element in this new era is going to be the ability of both countries to manage that relationship, deal with whatever differences arise and make it productive for all the people,” he said.

Along with being a milestone, South Sudan’s independence will present great challenges. Once the celebrations are done, its people will be asking, “How do we build our country now that it’s ours?” Lyman said. Leaders, he added, will be in charge of a nation that long has been underdeveloped, with many of its people lacking training or literacy skills.

There will be other challenges for South Sudan in managing a complicated national budget and creating a new constitution that allows for greater participation, the continued presence of armed militias, a large influx of citizens who had been living in the North and the need to create state and local governments that will be responsive to South Sudan’s people, he said.

The people will be looking for results, and “that will be a challenge because things don’t come quickly and easily,” Lyman said.

But he said the United States and the rest of the international community will be helping and standing by South Sudan.

South Sudan receives more than \$300 million in U.S. assistance each year, and Lyman said that much of that aid will be directed toward capacity building and the agricultural sector.

“That reaches the most people and it’s where there is considerable opportunity with new technology, the availability of water and the support of the government of South Sudan,” he said.

The Obama administration is also supporting a United Nations mission that will be arriving to help with training and capacity building, as well as to assist the government with its many challenges.

Lyman said the United States played a major role in the negotiations that led to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (CPA) between the North and the South.

“Since then, we have been working constantly to help see the agreement implemented” through high-level special envoys, assistance, cooperation with the African Union and encouraging both sides through difficult and tense periods, he said.

The United States has also spent \$10 billion since 2005 in Sudan for humanitarian relief and in support of the peace process and U.N. peacekeeping operations.

“It’s been both a strategic and a moral commitment for the United States,” Lyman said.

Sudan has played host to one of Africa’s most disruptive conflicts, which has had repercussions throughout the Horn of Africa region and has also led to humanitarian disasters and genocide in the Darfur region.

Lyman said fulfillment of the CPA and the end of the conflict will be extremely important for the continent and finally allow “the kind of economic cooperation one would hope to get between East Africa and all of Sudan, north and south.”

“The opportunities here are tremendous, and ending this long-standing conflict will be a benefit to the whole region,” Lyman said.

Former Soviet Bloc States Have Lessons for Nations in Transition

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington – Nations that have built democracies after escaping domination by the Soviet Union may offer guidance to those Mideast and North African nations where protesters struggle against authoritarian governments this year, suggested Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton June 30.

“If we are looking for examples of individual leadership, of results, we have many we can share from Europe,” Clinton said in an address to an audience in Vilnius, Lithuania. “Today it is North Africa and the Middle East experiencing its own season of change, and we especially have to work together to ensure that all people – women, as well as men – are part of that change.”

Clinton was in Lithuania attending a conference of the Community of Democracies, a 10-year-old organization of governments dedicated to strengthening democratic norms and institutions. Clinton addressed a special session concerned with women’s rights.

In the midst of transition that governments are beginning in 2011, Clinton said, “We have to be sure that democratic

change doesn't leave women behind." She said women were an important presence in the street demonstrations that led to the downfall of former President Hosni Mubarak, "yet Egypt's constitutional committee does not have a single female member."

Lithuania, said Clinton, is an excellent example to the rest of the world, where President Dalia Grybauskaitė, a woman economist, is leading the nation "on the path to prosperity."

During this period of change among Arab nations, Clinton has been arranging opportunities for female leaders in the region to discuss their roles in a period of change.

"So our work is to help empower and enable, to convene and then to support," Clinton said. "It's about all the choices that should be available to women today – to study, to take out a loan, to inherit money, to win custody of children, to start a business, to drive."

In a second address to another event of the Community of Democracies, Clinton spoke to civil society leaders and praised their work to bring positive change in their countries "at great personal risk."

As with the cause of women's rights, Clinton said gains have been made in the rights accorded to civil society groups, but more must be done.

The United States, in partnership with a consortium of nongovernmental organizations, is establishing a fund called Lifeline, Clinton said. "This fund will provide legal representation, cover medical bills arising from abuse, facilitate visits to activists in jail, and help replace equipment that is damaged or confiscated as a result of harassment."

The secretary of state also said the United States has trained more than 5,000 activists in the use of information technology to spread their message and resist government muzzling.

Tracking the Progress Against Malaria

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington – Somewhere in the world today, 485 children who might have died from malaria will survive. Tomorrow, another 485 will live because they received treatment or because they used bed nets as protection from mosquitoes carrying the disease-causing parasite.

In fact, an estimated 150,000 lives are saved each year because of increased commitments to combat the disease made by the United States, through the President's Malaria Initiative; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;

the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Roll Back Malaria Partnership; and other international donors.

These partners met in São Paulo, Brazil, June 28–30 for an assessment of their progress and a discussion of new approaches for their campaign against a disease that threatens half the world's population, about 3.3 billion people.

Believing that malaria prevention and treatment are an investment in global health, the United States is the world's largest single donor in efforts to reduce malaria, which takes about 800,000 lives each year, most of them in Africa.

The Global Fund prepared a midyear assessment of anti-malarial efforts in advance of the meeting, reporting distribution of 190 million bed nets, since 2003, to families living in vulnerable countries.

Indoor pesticide treatment in infested regions is another prevention campaign that has been stepped up in recent years. The Global Fund reports that 36 million indoor spraying services were provided in 2011, a 31 percent increase from a year ago. The World Health Organization estimates that three-quarters of the population of sub-Saharan Africa now has access to malaria prevention methods.

Zambia offered a detailed report of its progress earlier in June. The nation's minister of health said malaria intervention has saved the lives of an estimated 33,000 children and resulted in an almost 30 percent decrease in child mortality.

Minister Kapembwa Simbao said the improvements are not merely statistical. "Zambians are healthier, school attendance has improved, and a more productive workforce free from malaria now reports for work uninterrupted, thus contributing to the economic development of our nation," he said.

It has been documented that the hours of schooling, work, vitality and productivity lost to malaria had direct economic consequences for sub-Saharan nations struggling to advance economically. Despite recent progress against the disease, estimates by the Global Fund say that malaria still costs the continent an estimated \$12 billion annually.

Compiled by the Zambian Ministry of Health and produced by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, Zambia's report also provides evidence about the fragile nature of progress and the need for constant vigilance. Three Zambian districts cut back on malaria prevention and monitoring between 2008 and 2010 because of budget

constraints, according to the report. The move resulted in a measurable resurgence in cases of the disease.

Roll Back Malaria Partnership Director Awa Coll-Seck said, "Zambia's experience is proof of the significant progress that can be made against malaria in a relatively short period of time, but it also illustrates the fragility of those gains."

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