



M U M B A I

# American Center Bulletin

## THE U.S. AND THE UN: AN HISTORICAL PARTNERSHIP BY MARGARET RAMSAY

The United States and the United Nations have had a powerful and sometimes controversial relationship. As one of the UN's founders, the U.S. has been a strong leader of the organization since its inception. The U.S. has contributed troops to the UN's peacekeeping missions, as well as made significant financial contributions to its humanitarian operations in conflict zones. The two entities, however, have not always agreed on foreign policy: most recently, they butted heads during the run-up to the Iraq war. While not perfect, the UN and the U.S. have an historical and important relationship, and they will continue to work together to solve global issues as we move further into the 21st century.



considerable influence on the institution over the years. The U.S. is one of five permanent members on the Security Council, along with China, France, Russia and the U.K. These countries have veto power: that is, a UN decision will not be made if all five permanent members are not in favor of it.

### Achievements and Challenges

The UN can be credited with many achievements throughout the decades. It maintains 15 peacekeeping forces in some of the most historically troubled spots around the world, among them Haiti, Liberia and Kosovo. The UN is also active in promoting democracy and development,



### The Early Years of the UN

The UN was created in 1945 as the globe emerged from a devastating World War II. Following that conflict, the Allied nations, led by the U.S., the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, realized the need for an international organization with peacekeeping and collective security as its top goals.

The name "United Nations" was coined by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, during World War II. The Allies laid the framework for a formal international organization during the conflict's final years: representatives from the U.S., U.K., Soviet Union and China met at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, where they discussed plans for the postwar geopolitical landscape. The United Nations officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, when the UN Charter was ratified by member states.

as well as providing humanitarian aid to people affected by regional conflicts, such as in Darfur. The U.S. has provided leadership, as well as financial aid, for the UN's global efforts.

However, the UN and the U.S. have had an uneasy relationship at times. In 2003, the U.S. was criticized by the international community when former President Bush's administration decided to begin the war in Iraq without multilateral support from the UN. This led to a public discussion about whether or not the UN was as powerful as it had been in the past. The UN has also had its share of controversy: critics contend its bureaucracy and failure to modernize its management structure have left it weak and ill-suited for meeting today's challenges.

Despite these obstacles, the U.S. and the UN maintain an important relationship. American foreign policy goals, such as protecting human rights and preventing nuclear proliferation,

As a founding member and significant financial contributor to the UN, the U.S. has wielded

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The American Center  
4 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020  
Tel: 2262-4590; Fax: 2262-4595  
E-mail: [mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov](mailto:mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov)  
Website: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>  
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(Monday through Friday)

### H O L I D A Y S

May 1: Maharashtra Day  
May 25: Memorial Day

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## A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Dear Friends,

"End poverty by 2015," promised 189 member countries of the United Nations in their Millennium Declaration. How many times have we heard the refrain "Global problems need global solutions?" Yes, climate change and militant extremism cross borders and threaten us all, but what can the United Nations really do to solve the world's problems? That is a central question of our time, and in this bulletin.

Critics question the UN's effectiveness, especially in resolving internal conflicts. After failures of peacekeepers to protect innocents in Rwanda and Bosnia, can the UN stop impending genocide in Darfur? On the transnational level, can the UN lead efforts against a complex web of "non-state" terrorists and criminals? No, the UN cannot meet its goals without the full support of its members, in word and in deed. With the full support of its members, on the other hand, how can it fail?

President Obama has voiced commitment to strengthening international organizations and collective action. Ambassador to the U.S. Mission, Susan Rice, underlines that the Millennium Development Goals are America's goals as well. Healthy bodies, minds, environments, education, livelihoods, and human rights are all essential ingredients for peace. With peace in South Asia critical to world security, India and the United States have much to share in the world's charge towards success.

In closing, I salute the media for their contributions to our community – both local and global. International Press Freedom Day on May 3 honors the sacrifices journalists make to promote truth, so critical to democracy. You have been busy in April, covering the world's largest democratic elections! The revolution in new media may offer one more powerful tool to end poverty by 2015. Let's do it!

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Kauffman

Director

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are common ones shared by other nations. Twenty-first century challenges such as terrorism cross borders and defy national solutions. Therefore, the work done by the UN and the U.S. is more important than ever. Today's global challenges require both strong leadership and an efficient, modern international organization through which to carry out resolutions.

Addressing 21st Century Challenges

President Barack Obama nominated Ambassador Susan E. Rice,

a veteran diplomat, for the position of U.S. Ambassador to the UN. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on January 22, 2009. Ambassador Rice's primary goals will be to help strengthen the

UN as an international peacekeeping force; prevent nuclear proliferation; address climate change; and combat poverty worldwide.

Since her confirmation, Ambassador Rice has spoken out on many issues, most recently the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur. In a March address to UN delegates, she urged the Government of Sudan to reverse their decision to expel international aid organizations, which have been assisting Sudanese people displaced by the conflict. The United States has provided nearly \$4 billion for humanitarian aid and programs in Sudan and eastern Chad since 2004, and continues to work closely with the UN to support people displaced by this crisis. The conflict in this region is one example of the U.S. collaborating with the UN. Though not a perfect relationship, the UN and the U.S. have an important and historical partnership, and they will continue to work together to resolve international conflicts.

*Margaret Ramsay works at the American Consulate General, Mumbai*

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Ambassador Susan E. Rice  
Permanent U.S. Representative to the  
United Nations



Ambassador Susan E. Rice serves as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She was unanimously confirmed to this position by the U.S. Senate on January 22, 2009.

Ambassador Rice believes that the United Nations has a vital role in advancing international peace and security and is committed to working to make the United Nations a more perfect forum to address the most pressing global challenges: to promote peace, to support development and democracy, and to strengthen respect for human rights. She has outlined four primary areas of focus: strengthening the capacity of the UN to undertake complex peace operations effectively; addressing climate change; preventing the spread or use of nuclear weapons and working to meet the goals of the Nonproliferation Treaty; and combating poverty, disease, violence and genocide.

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## NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

### eJournals on Humanitarian Assistance and Social Change

#### About eJournal USA

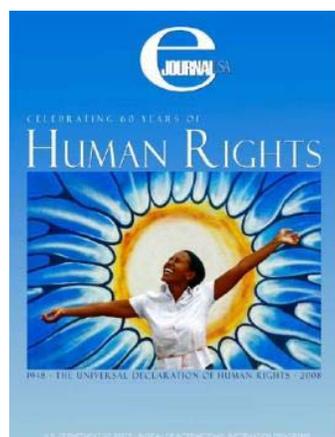


The Bureau of International Information Programs of the Department of State publishes electronic journals that are monthly collections of articles by U.S. and international experts. These eJournal USA publications focus on U.S. foreign policy, economics, democracy, global issues, and society and values.

This month, we have highlighted the following eJournals related to the overall theme of the bulletin.

#### Nonviolent Paths to Social Change

The past 30 years have witnessed nonviolent, “people power” movements around the world advancing human rights and toppling repressive rulers. The March 2009 edition of eJournal USA, demonstrates that nonviolent action can be more powerful than armed insurrections in bringing about social change.

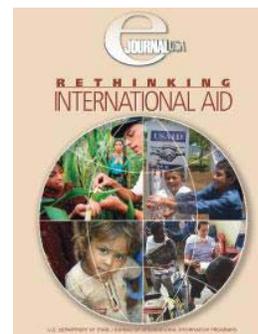


#### Celebrating 60 years of Human Rights

Published in November 2008, this issue of the eJournal celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It explores the document’s origins, situates it within humanity’s common intellectual heritage, and explains how it has bettered the lives of individuals in every corner of the globe. This issue also features short profiles of the declaration’s principal drafters.

#### Rethinking International Aid

The November 2007 edition of eJournal USA, describes how U.S. foreign aid – directed through government and faith-based organizations, through individuals, businesses, and a multiplicity of partnerships – has developed, how it fits into foreign affairs, and how it is related to advancing altruistic objectives.



#### More on the Topic

##### eJournals

U.S. Food Aid: Reducing World Hunger, September 2007

Improving Lives: Military Humanitarian and Assistance Programs, November 2004

##### Books

*Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements*, Volumes 1-4

by Edmund Jan Osmiańczyk, Routledge, 2003

*Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law Into Local Justice*

by Sally Engle Merry, The University of Chicago Press, 2006

*The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq*

by James Dobbins et al, RAND Corporation, 2005

Note: To access eJournal USA, please visit <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>  
Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at [libref@state.gov](mailto:libref@state.gov) for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

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## MUMBAI MONDAYS

### Going to the Sun: Glacier National Park Discussion led by Sandra Jacobs

Monday, May 18  
American Center Auditorium 6:00 p.m.

Come and experience Glacier National Park's pristine forests, alpine meadows, rugged mountains, and spectacular lakes. With over 700 miles of trails, Glacier is a hiker's paradise for adventurous visitors seeking wilderness and solitude. Relive the days of old through historic chalets, lodges, transportation, and stories of Native Americans. Explore Glacier National Park and discover the unique flora, fauna and scenery of western Montana. Just beware of the grizzly bears!

Sandra Jacobs joined the Foreign Service in July 2008, and arrived for her first tour in Mumbai in November 2008. She started her career as a Leadership Development Associate in Operations and Technology at Citigroup, and later worked as an Assistant Vice President of Procurement there. Seeking adventure and service, she joined the Peace Corps with her husband in 2005. After two years as an Economic Development Volunteer in Ukraine, she worked at Peace Corps Washington as a Programming and Training Specialist supporting Small Enterprise Development (NGOs, business, community development) projects in the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia region. Sandy has a B.A. in International Studies and an M.B.A. from the University of South Florida. She speaks Russian and some Spanish. She joins her husband Eric as one of the many tandem couples currently serving in Mumbai. She is a native Floridian, and enjoys hiking and cooking.

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In nominating Ambassador Rice, President Barack Obama said, "Susan has been a close and trusted advisor. As in previous Administrations, the UN Ambassador will serve as a member of my cabinet and integral member of my team. Her background as a scholar, on the National Security Council, and Assistant Secretary of State will serve our nation well at the United Nations. Susan knows that the global challenges we face demand global institutions that work. She shares my belief that the UN is an indispensable – and imperfect – forum. She will carry the message that our commitment to multilateral action must be coupled with a commitment to reform. We need the UN to be more effective as a venue for collective action – against terror and proliferation; climate change and genocide; poverty and disease."

Ambassador Rice received her M.Phil. and Ph.D. in International Relations from New College, Oxford University, England, where she was a Rhodes Scholar. She was awarded the Chatham House-British International Studies Association Prize for the most distinguished doctoral dissertation in the United Kingdom in the field of International Relations. Ambassador Rice received her B.A. in History with honors from Stanford University where she graduated junior Phi Beta Kappa, and was a Truman Scholar. Ambassador Rice is married to Ian Cameron, and they have two children.

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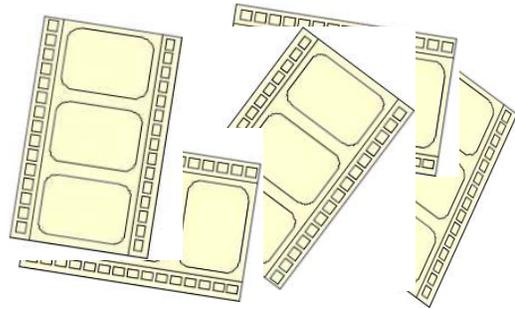
## FILMS THIS MONTH

Friday, May 15 *The Killing Fields* (1984, 142 mins)

Friday, May 22 *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006, 140 mins)

American Center Auditorium 3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

*The Killing Fields* is an engrossing true drama of courage and friendship between a journalist and his translator during the fall of Cambodia at the end of the Vietnam War. Sam Waterston plays American reporter Sydney Schanberg; Oscar-winner Haing S. Ngor portrays captured Cambodian native Dith Pran. Roland Joffe directs.



Clint Eastwood's powerful companion piece to *Flags of Our Fathers*, *Letters from Iwo Jima* tells the story of the battle of Iwo Jima from the perspective of a group of Japanese soldiers. Among the men sent to defend the island from the imminent American attack are a baker who longs to see his newborn daughter, an equestrian champion, an idealistic military policeman, and a controversial commanding general. Ken Watanabe, Kazunari Ninomiya, and Tsuyoshi Ihara star.

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Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.

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