SECRETARY RICE MEETS WITH QUARTET MEMBERS

Secretary Rice in remarks with Quartet Members at the UN, New York, Dec. 15: "I believe that if you look at the language of Annapolis, it says that the parties will make the best efforts that they can – they could to come to an agreement by the end of the year. I think they have made best efforts and they continue to make best efforts. And so what this resolution does is to urge, as the parties did with us and the Quartet when we were in Sharm el-Sheikh, the continuation of this process to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement, and also within the context of a broader Israeli-Arab peace.”

REMINDERS AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Secretary Rice addresses the UN Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, New York, Dec. 16: “The negotiations born at Annapolis and described in this resolution give me confidence that the goal of two independent and democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, is not just a vision, but it is a commitment of the parties and of the international community. There can be no turning back the clock. We should only go forward from here.”

SOMALIA: COMBATING THE SURGE OF PIRACY

Secretary Rice voting in favor of a draft resolution against piracy in the UN Security Council, New York, Dec. 16: "With our meeting today and the resolution, we have sent a strong signal of commitment to combat the scourge of piracy. This current response is a good start, but we must do much more. ...We need to support regional states in building capacity to prosecute pirates effectively. And we need to work to build security and stability in Somalia so that the Somali people can finally enjoy the blessings of peace…."
**ROUNDTABLE WITH THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Secretary Rice in comments during a roundtable with the Associated Press, Washington, D.C., Dec. 15: “...[B]ut sooner or later the region, in the form of the SADC organization, and the regional states will need to bring more pressure to bear to resolve the situation in Zimbabwe. This simply can’t go on. And the countries of the region are at risk as well when you have something like a cholera epidemic. But of course, it wasn’t just cholera. It was, before that, the problem of migration, of refugees across the border. ...The United States is doing everything we can to help.”

Full Text | View Video | Zimbabwe: Dec. 19 Press Briefing

**STAYING TRUE TO THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY**

Comments by Secretary Rice during an interview with Robert McMahon of the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., Dec. 18: "On any given day, on any day in policy, one has to balance the fact that, yes, sometimes you have to deal with authoritarian regimes. Sometimes you have to deal with friendly regimes that have not made as much progress as you want them to. But unless the United States keeps the lodestar out there of the end of tyranny and that every man, woman, and child deserves to live in a democratic society, it will fall off the international agenda.”

Full Text

**WHITE POWDER INCIDENTS AT U.S. EMBASSIES**

Remarks by Spokesman Sean McCormack during the Dec. 18 daily press briefing, Washington, D.C., Dec. 18: "Eighteen U.S. embassies have received envelopes containing white powder. Thus far, the test results that we have received back from all the affected embassies have come back negative.... I’d refer you to the FBI for any questions about any criminal investigations." Full Text | View Video

**PAKISTAN AND THE INVESTIGATION OF ATTACKS IN MUMBAI**

Deputy Spokesman Robert Wood in remarks during the daily press briefing, Washington, D.C., Dec. 17: "[The Pakistani Government has] given us a very solemn commitment. They’ve told the Indians that they’re going to do everything they can to help with the investigation in terms of trying to find out who did this and to prevent future attacks from happening. So we don’t have any doubt that Pakistan is committed to trying to get to the bottom of this.” Full Text | View Video

**ICT-Rwanda Judgment**

The United States welcomes [the] conviction by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) of three senior Rwandan army officials for their role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide that killed over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.... This ruling was an important step in providing justice and accountability for the Rwandan people and the international community. Full Text

**Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative**

Deadline Approaches
SECRETARY’S PUBLIC STATEMENTS

• Secretary Rice on NBC’s Meet the Press
• Interview with Zain Verjee of CNN
• Remarks at the UN Following Meeting Concerning Iran

"There have been a lot of great moments: seeing the Afghans liberate themselves from the Taliban; seeing the Iraqis vote for the first time; going for the first time to the West Bank...the thing I never expected was to actually be in Libya face-to-face with Colonel Qadhafi. So that probably stands out as one of the extraordinary moments."

ACTIVITIES OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

• Farewell Ceremony Remarks for Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs David Welch: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; Washington, D.C.; Dec. 18
• President and Mrs. Bush Host Reception in Honor of the United States - Afghan Women’s Council: President Bush, First Lady Laura Bush; Washington, D.C.; Dec. 18
• Remarks from Daughters and Sons Meeting at the Council on Foreign Relations: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; Council on Foreign Relations; Washington, D.C.; Dec. 18
• Deputy Secretary Negroponte’s Statement in India: John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State; New Delhi, India; Dec. 12
• U.S. Relations with China, and Discussions about Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan: Richard A. Boucher, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs; Remarks to the Press; Beijing, China; Dec. 12

—More Activities—

RECENT RELEASES

• Closure of the OSCE Mission to Georgia
• U.S.-Ukraine Sign Charter on Strategic Partnership / Charter
• Joint Statement of the Merida Initiative High-Level Consultative Group
• Israel/Palestinians: Hamas Declares End to Ceasefire
• Disappearance of Robert Fowler in Niger
• Treasury Designation of Two Iranian Entities tied to Proliferation Activities
• Conclusion of the Sixth Round of the U.S.-China Senior Dialogue

—More Releases—
DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

MY CULTURE + YOUR CULTURE = ? ONLINE VIDEO CONTEST

Beginning December 1, people all over the world ages 14 and older will be invited to submit videos, no longer than three minutes in length, containing any form of artistic expression including, but not limited to, dance, spoken word, poetry, and song, that highlight the theme

“My Culture + Your Culture = ? Connecting Through Difference: Share your Story”

Visit http://connect.state.gov/ to join ExchangesConnect, an international social network.

Connect and Share Your Story!

Link to Media Note

STATE DEPARTMENT ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE
2009 SUMMER CLERICAL PROGRAM

Please click here to start the online application process.

Please note that the deadline to submit completed applications is January 5, 2009.

For additional information, please visit http://careers.state.gov.

Intercountry Adoptions: In recognition of National Adoption Month, the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs has launched Adoption.state.gov, a new website devoted exclusively to intercountry adoption, which provides a central resource for adopting parents, adoption agencies, and others involved in the intercountry adoption process.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

- State Department Telephone Directory and Country Desk Officers
- Bureau of Consular Affairs Congressional Website
- U.S. Embassy Websites and Key Officers at Posts Abroad
- Consular Information Sheets and Background Notes
- Iraq Weekly Status Report
- Foreign Embassies and Consulates throughout the U.S.
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
DEPARTMENT NOTICES

TRAVEL ALERT: INDIA

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens that there is a high threat of terrorism throughout India, and advises U.S. citizens traveling to or already in India to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness, especially during the end-of-year holidays until India's Republic Day, January 26. This Travel Alert expires on January 31, 2009 and replaces that issued on December 4 to provide updated information regarding the security situation. Full Text / More Information for Travelers

TRAVEL WARNING: ZIMBABWE

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Zimbabwe due to deteriorating safety and security conditions, and urges them to carefully consider their need to travel there. The political instability and economic crisis in Zimbabwe have resulted in small-scale civil demonstrations and riots by military personnel, and a general deterioration of government services and infrastructure, including the near collapse of the country's public health system. The Department of State therefore urges U.S. citizens visiting Zimbabwe to closely monitor the situation, keep travel documents up to date, and have contingency plans ready for their own personal health, safety and security. Full Text

TRAVEL ALERT: COTE D'IVOIRE

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Cote d'Ivoire and urges U.S. citizens to exercise extreme caution while traveling in Cote d'Ivoire. This replaces the Travel Warning for Cote d'Ivoire dated June 09, 2008, updates information on the security and political situation, and advises all U.S. citizens to maintain an adequate supply of water, food, and fuel. Full Text

TRAVEL ALERT: SOUTH PACIFIC CYCLONE SEASON

American citizens residing in or traveling to the South Pacific region are alerted that the South Pacific cyclone season runs from November 1, 2008, through April 30, 2009. Countries in the South Pacific region covered by this alert include Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua, New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, as well as the territories of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna islands. American citizens in this region during the cyclone season should monitor local weather reports and take other appropriate action as further discussed below. This travel alert expires on April 30, 2009. Full text

TRAVEL WARNING: GEORGIA

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Georgia. This travel warning replaces the one dated September 10, 2008 to note travel restrictions for official Americans in Georgia and the risk that unexploded ordnance poses in the areas where fighting took place in August 2008, including around the city of Gori in the direction of the administrative boundary with South Ossetia. Full Text
STATE DEPARTMENT BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

PLEASE VISIT US ON THE WEB: WWW.STATE.GOV/S/H

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Please pass this along to your friends and colleagues on the Hill. Feedback to 226-4640 or SchammingJ@state.gov is welcome and encouraged.

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