

## NEWSBRIEFS

## AFRICA

***Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict Flares Up, Threatening Progress Towards Peace***

State Department Press  
Statement, May 5, 2000 <sup>1</sup>

The United States is disappointed that proximity talks called by the OAU Current Chairman, Algeria, with the support of the U.S. and European Union, failed to produce substantive progress towards resolving the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The talks were aimed at resolving remaining differences in order to produce a detailed peace implementation plan, or "Consolidated Technical Arrangements," based on the views and interests of both parties.

Eritrea maintained that it would not engage in any substantive discussions unless and until Ethiopia first signed the OAU Framework Agreement, Modalities for Implementation as well as a cessation of hostilities. Ethiopia has previously accepted the Framework and Modalities but has long held that it will not formally sign these documents and a cessation of hostilities until there is a known and agreed peace implementation plan. Despite vigorous efforts by the OAU Chairman, with the strong support of its U.S. and European Union partners, it was not possible to break this impasse.

The United States urges both parties to affirm their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict by participating immediately and unconditionally in substantive discussions under OAU auspices to finalize a detailed peace implementation plan. At the same time, we again call upon both parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from further hostilities. The U.S. remains fully committed to making every effort to assist the two parties to achieve a peaceful resolution to this tragic and extremely costly conflict.

State Department Press  
Statement, May 12, 2000 <sup>2</sup>

The governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea

both indicate that heavy fighting has resumed along the Ethiopia/Eritrea border today. We deplore this unjustified resumption of hostilities. The United States urgently calls on both Ethiopia and Eritrea to end the fighting and immediately resume talks without preconditions under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU peace plan offers a fair, just, and durable solution to the conflict, and remaining differences regarding implementation arrangements can be resolved through continued OAU mediation.

The United States has actively worked for a peaceful resolution of this dispute since it began nearly two years ago. We, the United Nations Security Council, the European Union, and the rest of the international community will work with and in support of the OAU to help end this tragic and unnecessary conflict and reach a durable peaceful settlement of the conflict.

State Department Press  
Statement, May 24, 2000 <sup>3</sup>

The United States once again calls upon the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia to return to their positions as of May 6, 1998; to end the fighting; and to negotiate the implementation of the Organization of African Unity's Framework Agreement and Modalities in order finally to end their dispute.

The Eritrean and Ethiopian governments had the power to start this conflict and have the power to end it. American officials are working hard to encourage and assist them to do so as quickly as possible. The United States remains strongly supportive of the OAU and its current Chair, Algerian President Bouteflika.

State Department Press  
Statement, May 30, 2000 <sup>4</sup>

Over recent days the United States has received assurances from the Ethiopian Government that it has no territorial designs on Eritrea and that it would carry out its own withdrawals once Eritrean forces had left all the territories occupied forcibly by Eritrea since May 6, 1998. We have confirmed that Eritrea has done so.

We are encouraged by Ethiopian with-

drawals which reportedly have begun in the western areas of Eritrea. The United States calls on the Ethiopian government to desist from all further offensive actions, including air attacks of the kind carried out against a power plant near Massawa and against the Asmara airport. Among other reasons, we are concerned by any interruption of the flow of relief and humanitarian supplies to the civilian victims of this conflict. The airport is an important transshipment point for such supplies.

The U.S. delegation at the peace talks in Algiers is working closely with the Algerian government, which currently chairs the Organization of African Unity, to achieve the earliest possible resolution of this conflict.

State Department Press  
Statement, June 10, 2000 <sup>5</sup>

The United States welcomes the acceptance by the Government of Eritrea of the Cessation of Hostilities proposal put forth by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) developed with our support. The United States also welcomes the initial positive reaction of the Ethiopian Government and hopes for a final acceptance as soon as possible. We applaud the leadership of the Government of Algeria as current Chairman of the OAU and believe this proposal lays the foundation for negotiation of a lasting peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The proposal provides for an immediate halt to fighting, security and other arrangements to deter potential violations of the agreement, and a peacekeeping mission to be deployed by the United Nations under the auspices of the OAU.

For every day that the war continues, more Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers—mostly young men and women—are killed or wounded in battle. Every day, more civilians are displaced, creating an immediate humanitarian emergency and a food security crisis for at least the next year. Every day, the national resources of both countries—human and financial—are squandered on this war.

The United States appeals to the Government and people of Ethiopia to seize this opportunity for peace, a peace that

will bolster the efforts of the Ethiopian people to prevent famine and to develop their country.

The U.S. also calls for an immediate end to the fighting on the Assab-Bure front. On May 31, the Ethiopian Government declared that, for it, the war was over, and it would cease all offensive operations. Eritrean officials have informed us that they have no intention of conducting offensive operations. Given the progress achieved at the Algiers talks and these commitments by the two parties, there is no justification for further fighting.

### Statement by President Clinton, June 18, 2000 <sup>6</sup>

Today in Algiers, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an agreement to cease hostilities. This is a breakthrough which can, and should end the tragic conflict in the Horn of Africa. It can, and should permit these two countries to realize their potential in peace, instead of squandering it in war.

I commend the Organization of African Unity, and especially its chair Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, for leading the negotiation of this agreement. I am grateful to my envoy, former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, to Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice and to my senior advisor on African Affairs Gayle Smith for their tireless pursuit of a peaceful resolution to this conflict. The United States has supported the OAU in this effort and we will continue to do so. I have asked Tony Lake to return to Algiers to work with the OAU as we enter the next round of negotiations.

I hope this commitment by Ethiopia and Eritrea to stop the fighting also signals their commitment to build the peace. I urge them to use the next round of talks to produce a final, comprehensive, lasting agreement, so they can get on with the work of pursuing democracy and development for their people. Ethiopia and Eritrea are America's friends. If they are ready to take the next step, we and our partners in the international community will walk with them.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

### Death of Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi

#### Statement by President Clinton, May 14, 2000 <sup>7</sup>

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. I want to extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Chizuko, his family, and his nation.

Japan has lost a strong and vibrant leader. The United States has lost one of our closest friends.

I had the honor of meeting with Prime Minister Obuchi several times after he became Prime Minister in 1998. I visited him in Tokyo that fall, and he came to Washington for a memorable visit in May 1999. In all our meetings, I was impressed by his effective statesmanship and his personal warmth. He believed ardently, as I do, in a U.S.-Japanese partnership built upon shared values and mutual respect. The personal friendship he and I forged helped us act on that belief, and strengthened our desire to address all the issues affecting our two countries in a spirit of true friendship. The bonsai tree he gave me, and which he tended himself, is a living symbol of our alliance.

The job of Prime Minister is never easy, but Keizo Obuchi met every challenge with courage and confidence. He embodied before the world the famous Japanese virtues of honor, loyalty, and determination. He became known for imitating the art and skill of an orchestra conductor in finding harmony among people of different views. From his first days in office, he took swift steps to meet the economic challenges facing Japan, and he also gave strong support to the cause of peace—from Kosovo to East Timor. Prime Minister Obuchi worked hard in countless ways to strengthen our alliance, and to place it on a new foundation for the 21st century. The friendship between our peoples remains the cornerstone of stability in East Asia, and was greatly strengthened by his lifetime of building bridges between us.

Prime Minister Obuchi touched the hearts of Americans in simple, human ways: when he threw out what he called

“an unhittable pitch” to Sammy Sosa; when he reminded us of the honor he felt meeting Robert Kennedy as young man, when he told us how he drew from that meeting new inspiration for the noble privilege of serving a great people.

On behalf of all Americans, I am grateful for Prime Minister Obuchi's dedicated, principled public service, and for all he did to build for us a brighter future. I will work closely with Prime Minister Mori to continue our close cooperation with Japan.

#### Statement by Secretary of State Albright, May 14, 2000 <sup>8</sup>

I was deeply saddened by the death of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on Sunday, May 14. Mr. Obuchi was committed both as prime minister and, earlier, as foreign minister to strengthening the U.S.-Japan relationship, and thanks largely to his efforts our ties have never been better. He also strengthened Japan's relations with the Republic of Korea, China and Russia and reopened a dialogue with North Korea. He worked tirelessly to restore health to the Japanese economy and joined with the U.S. and others to resolve the Asian financial crisis. Mr. Obuchi achieved an impressive foreign policy and domestic record in a short period.

I would like to note especially his strong personal interest in the G-8 Summit to be held in July in Okinawa. President Clinton and other world leaders will, I know, seek to make the Okinawa Summit a great success, in fond memory and admiration for a fine leader and good friend.

His passing is a great loss, not only for the people of Japan and the United States, but for the people of the world. Most of all, I offer my heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Chizuko Obuchi and their family.

#### Remarks by President Clinton, June 8, 2000 <sup>9</sup>

*President Clinton delivered his remarks following the memorial service for Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi at the Ambassador's Residence in Tokyo, Japan.*

I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador and Mrs. Foley for welcoming me back to the American Embassy and the Ambassador's Residence, along with our

American party.

I came here today to pay my respects to a friend; and on behalf of the American people, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the Prime Minister's family—especially to his wife and his three children, as well as to the people of Japan.

Two years ago, Prime Minister Obuchi took office in a difficult time for Japan and the world. There were many who wondered if any person could meet the tremendous challenges brought on by the global economic crisis we faced. I think history will record that Keizo Obuchi rose to the challenge with courage and confidence.

Thirty-seven years ago, he was the youngest person ever elected to the Japanese Parliament. Over time, it's clear that he learned a profoundly important lesson—how to reach out to all sides and bring people together. As Prime Minister, he became known for imitating the art and skill of an orchestra conductor, in finding harmony among people of different views.

From his first days in office he took swift steps to put Japan on firmer economic ground, and he gave strong support to the cause of peace, from East Timor to Kosovo. He worked to strengthen our alliance and to place it on a solid foundation for the 21st century. He believed in a U.S.-Japanese partnership built upon mutual respect and shared values of democracy and human rights, economic freedom and security; and that this partnership must remain the cornerstone of stability in East Asia.

Prime Minister Obuchi touched hearts around the world in simple, human ways. His telephone calls are legendary. I remember his human touch when he came to America last spring, when he threw out an unhittable pitch to the Chicago slugger, Sammy Sosa; when he told us the honor he felt in meeting Robert Kennedy as a young man, and how much he appreciated the dinner we hosted in his honor when he shared a table with Mrs. Robert Kennedy.

Early in his career, Prime Minister Obuchi competed for votes in the same district as two former Prime Ministers. He used to describe himself as a “noodle shop sandwiched between two skyscrapers.” As usual, he was being modest. Prime Minister Obuchi represented to the whole world the Japanese virtues of honor and loyalty, vision and determination, love for and

commitment to ordinary people. Our world is a better place thanks to the life that he lived and the work that he did.

On his last day in Washington, Prime Minister Obuchi gave me a beautiful painting of Mount Fuji. I will cherish it always. And whenever I look at it, it will always remind me of him. I hope very much that, in his memory, Japan and the United States can work together as partners and friends to lift humanity to a new mountaintop in the 21st century.

### ***Fiji Parliament Takeover***

#### **State Department Press Statement, May 19, 2000** <sup>10</sup>

The Government of the United States condemns in the strongest terms the illegal armed takeover of the Fiji parliament building yesterday evening.

We urge the gunmen inside who are holding the democratically elected leaders of Fiji hostage to release them unharmed immediately.

The consequences of any unconstitutional seizure of power on U.S.-Fiji relations would be very substantial, and very detrimental to Fiji's standing in the international community.

#### **State Department Press Statement, May 25, 2000** <sup>11</sup>

The U.S. remains very concerned about the governmental crisis in Fiji. The situation is complex and appears still in flux. Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs has adopted a resolution calling for the formation of an interim government under the leadership of President Mara and other changes that appear to be inconsistent with Fiji's constitutional processes. The leader of the hostage takers, George Speight, has rejected the plan, intends to offer counterproposals, and continues to hold Prime Minister Chaudhry and other cabinet members hostage in Fiji's parliament building.

We believe the hostages should be released immediately and unconditionally.

The U.S. position remains that any actions to resolve this matter should be in accordance with Fiji's constitution.

As we have previously stated, the consequences of any unconstitutional seizure of power on U.S.-Fiji relations would be

very substantial and very detrimental to Fiji's standing in the international community.

We continue to recognize the democratically elected Government of Fiji.

#### **State Department Press Statement, May 29, 2000** <sup>12</sup>

The United States remains very concerned about the ongoing crisis in Fiji. We strongly condemn the repugnant, criminal action of George Speight and his band of gunmen who continue to hold hostages in the Fiji parliamentary complex. We reiterate our call in conjunction with the international community and all government and civil authority in Fiji that the hostages be released immediately and unconditionally.

The United States opposes any non-constitutional change of government in the Republic of Fiji Islands and has repeatedly stated that the consequences of any such action would be substantial and detrimental to Fiji's standing in the international community. We are studying President Mara's statement of May 27 closely and continue to urge a resolution of this crisis within constitutional bounds.

The United States strongly supports democracy and international standards of human rights such as those embodied in Fiji's 1997 constitution. The upholding of these principles will be an important benchmark for the United States in any resolution of this crisis. Entrenching discrimination or unequal political rights based on grounds of race or ethnicity would fly in the face of these important global norms. The effects on Fiji's international contacts and on its economy would be severe.

#### **State Department Press Statement, June 1, 2000** <sup>13</sup>

The United States continues to be very concerned about developments in the ongoing crisis in Fiji.

We condemn the repugnant, criminal actions of George Speight and his band of gunmen who are still holding hostages in Fiji's parliamentary complex. The hostages should be released immediately and unconditionally.

The United States opposes any unconstitutional change of government in the

Republic of the Fiji Islands. The consequences of any such action would be substantial and detrimental to Fiji's standing in the international community.

Upholding basic principles of democracy and international standards of human rights, as embodied in Fiji's 1997 constitution, will be a benchmark for determining our reaction to the crisis in Fiji.

An unconstitutional change of government is taking place in Fiji. Commander Frank Bainimarama has declared he is in power and the 1997 constitution has been revoked. Amnesty has been offered to George Speight and some of his followers, and it is uncertain when democracy will return to Fiji.

Such actions fly in the face of international norms and standards of democracy. We are therefore considering a range of steps in consultation with other nations that could have serious impact on Fiji's international contacts and on outside assistance.

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### MIDDLE EAST

#### ***Congressman Hall Reports on Visit to Iraq***

Statement by Representative Hall (D-OH), April 24, 2000<sup>14</sup>

*Congressman Tony P. Hall (D-OH) delivered his statement following his visit to Iraq on April 16-20, 2000.*

Iraq's people are suffering terribly, and it was heartbreaking to see their pain firsthand. I left Iraq convinced that a great deal more could be done to address its people's humanitarian needs, and I am determined to do all I can to persuade the U.S. Government to take these steps.

But, like the majority of American citizens, I remain concerned about the military threat Iraq continues to pose to its neighbors and the world—and convinced that until progress is made on eliminating weapons of mass destruction, lifting sanctions would be irresponsible.

I wish that I could support lifting sanctions: many religious leaders, aid workers, and other people I respect oppose them. I am troubled, though, that some opponents of sanctions don't focus as much attention on Iraq's government as I believe they

should.

While sanctions clearly have played a role in Iraqis' suffering, though, lifting them would not provide much comfort to citizens there. If Iraq's government would show it is serious about easing its people's suffering—instead of using their problems to support its bid to end sanctions—it would be easier for me to see sanctions as the primary culprit. Or, if Iraq would show good faith in keeping the promises it made at the end of the Gulf War, perhaps that would prompt good faith measures by the United Nations—such as adding a sunset provision to some of the economic sanctions.

I am hopeful that Iraq is realizing the long-term human cost of its strategies, and I will look for signs that it will set more humane priorities in the near future. For example, trying to mask dual-use or other prohibited items by inserting them into contracts for humanitarian goods is counterproductive. Iraq's government knows those efforts only result in the delay of needed food, medicine and other humanitarian items. I was also troubled by Iraq's recent attempt to reject Canada's offer of a significant contribution to Unicef's operations there.

That said, I also believe the U.N.'s Sanctions Committee, and particularly its U.S. representatives, ought to use much better judgment. For example, American officials tell me that only a small percentage of items raise security concerns—but those concerns hold up entire shipments of humanitarian goods. Surely, the U.N. could employ a line-item veto approach—allowing what is permitted under the sanctions, barring what is not, and paying only for what is sent to Iraq. If the U.N. Sanctions Committee's top priority were humanitarian, as I believe it should be, this would be a way to quickly resolve many of the causes of Iraqis' difficulties.

I appreciate the high priority my country puts on security considerations. But there are humanitarian standards that are equally central to America's character. There also are political realities that should make us think twice about the wisdom of a crippled nation in this dangerous Middle East neighborhood. I hope that U.S. policymakers can better balance these competing concerns and redouble efforts to heal this festering sore.

There are some confidence-building

measures the United States could take, to demonstrate its concern for Iraqis' suffering. For example, I hope our government will support a scientific study by the World Health Organization of the effects of depleted uranium (DU) and other potential pollutants on Iraqi civilians—who are suffering very high rates of leukemia. Not only could work like this engage representatives of the international community and Iraqis in constructive work together; it also could yield health benefits for American veterans of the Gulf War as well as Iraqi civilians.

I fear that no matter how quickly sanctions are lifted, the future of most of the people I met in Iraq will be bleak. That is because its children are in bad shape, with a quarter of them underweight and one in 10 wasting away because of hunger and disease. The leading cause of childhood death, diarrhea, is 11 times more prevalent in Iraq than elsewhere—and while polio has been wiped out throughout the Mideast, it has returned to plague Iraq's people. Schools and water systems—the infrastructure any nation's future depends upon—are decrepit and hospitals lack basic medicine and equipment. Ordinary civilians have exhausted their resources and their health trying to survive on \$2-6 per month.

The country's isolation has made it easy for some to demonize its people, and for Iraq's government to denounce Westerners. Blocking Iraqis' access to outside information contributes nothing to positive change, and this policy's result is innocent people who seem angry and past hoping for a different life. A Christian minister working in Iraq summed up the situation this way: "The children in Iraq no longer know how to dream," he said.

It will take Iraqi people a generation to recover from their present situation. Sanctions imposed by the United Nations are partly to blame, but it is the stalemate—and not the sanctions—that causes Iraqis to suffer. I want to see all concerned look harder for ways to rebuild the confidence needed to end this stalemate.

Finally, I want to commend the superb work that UNICEF, Care, and other organizations are doing under difficult circumstances. I particularly appreciated the efforts of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society in helping to make my trip a success.

## Death of Syrian President Assad

Remarks by President Clinton,  
June 10, 2000 <sup>15</sup>

As all of you know, I received word not very long ago on President Assad's death in Syria today. I was very saddened by it, and I want to offer my condolences to his son, his family, and to the people of Syria.

You know, over the last seven years, I had the occasion to meet with President Assad many times, and I believe I got to know him well. And while we had our disagreements, I always respected him because I felt that he was open and straightforward with me, and because I felt he meant it when he said he had made a strategic choice for peace. I regret that that peace was not achieved in his lifetime, and I hope that it can still be achieved, in no small measure because of the commitment he made.

I think today, rather than speculating about the future, it would be best for all of us just to send our condolences and our best thoughts to his family and to the people of Syria. Thank you.

**Q. Mr. President since he was such an integral link in the process, is this going to delay the future of the process? How is it going to affect the expediency of the process that you've been trying to jump-start recently?**

**President Clinton.** Peter, I think it's premature to say. There will be a period of mourning in Syria, there will be a period of sorting out, and the Syrian people will make some decisions, and then we'll see what happens. But, you know, we've been at this now for years because of the decision that he made to go back to negotiations and try to move away from conflict, and it's certainly a path I hope the country will stay on.

Statement by Secretary of State  
Albright, June 10, 2000 <sup>16</sup>

I was saddened to hear today of the death of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. I want to extend my condolences to the president's family and the Syrian people on their loss.

President Asad ruled Syria for over 30 years and stood out as a major figure in the region. He made a strategic choice for peace at Madrid in 1991. In all of our talks, he remained committed to that choice. We strongly believe that was the right choice and expect that Syria will continue on the path of peace. We look forward to working with Syria to bring about the goal of a comprehensive Middle East peace.

Remarks by Secretary of State  
Albright, June 13, 2000 <sup>17</sup>

*Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright made her remarks during her visit to Damascus, Syria.*

**Secretary Albright.** I have just come from my condolence visit to the palace. I have, obviously, been to the palace before but the [inaudible] was quite different. As we walked in there were many delegations. We were taken for a while to a hold room, and I was very pleased to have the opportunity to meet with my former colleague Yevgeny Primakov, who was also here to pay his respects.

I then had a meeting with the delegation and Dr. Bashar. In the course of that I obviously paid condolences on behalf of President Clinton and the American people to him and to the people of Syria and I also said that his father had taken a strategic decision for peace, and Dr. Bashar said that he would continue on that same road. We then had a very brief, one-on-one meeting in which we discussed the fact that at an appropriate time we would have the opportunity to continue discussions about the peace process.

**Q. Madame Secretary, this was the first time that you had any time with Dr. Bashar. What were your impressions of him?**

**Secretary Albright.** Well I think obviously he is in a somber mood because of the death of his father. But he is someone who, to me, seems very poised and somebody who is ready to assume his duties.

**Q. Do you have the expectation that Dr. Bashar is going to be the next President of Syria?**

**Secretary Albright.** I'm not, again,

going to comment on that. They have a process here that seems to be operating in a peaceful and orderly way.

**Q. Is he someone the U.S. can do business with?**

**Secretary Albright.** Again I want to wait to see what the Syrian people and the process decides, but I was very encouraged by his desire to follow in his father's footsteps.

**Q. Did you talk about Lebanon or any other topics?**

**Secretary Albright.** We did not. It was a brief meeting and we spoke generally about the importance of the region. Thank you.

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## TRADE

### Passage of the Trade and Development Act of 2000

Statement by President Clinton,  
May 11, 2000 <sup>18</sup>

I am pleased that Congress has completed action on historic legislation that will boost investment, growth, and opportunity in Africa and the Caribbean Basin, while improving the global competitive position of our own industries. This step reaffirms America's commitment to open trade and strengthens the partnership between the United States and our friends in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. It will encourage these nations to continue building open economies, bolster their efforts to alleviate poverty, and improve long-term prospects for democracy and stability around the world. I look forward to signing this measure into law and congratulate Members of Congress from both parties who have worked so hard to enact the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement legislation.

Remarks by President Clinton,  
May 18, 2000<sup>19</sup>

*President Clinton delivered his remarks at the signing ceremony for the Trade and Development Act of 2000.*

[Introductory remarks omitted.]

The votes in the House and the Senate for the Trade and Development Act of 2000, what is commonly known as Africa-CBI, were bipartisan and overwhelming, because they reflect the judgment that the results of this legislation will be good for the United States, good for Africa, good for Central America, and the Caribbean.

This day has been a long time coming. But it is here. It is clear that by breaking down barriers to trade, building new opportunities and raising prosperity, we can lift lives in every country and on every continent. Nowhere is that more apparent than here in the United States, where our exports and our open markets have given us the longest expansion in our history, with low inflation.

This bill reaffirms that position. And I hope it will be reaffirmed next week, when Congress votes on permanent normal trade relations with China. Congress will have another opportunity in considering the Trade Preference Act for the Balkans, another poor region of the world that is important to our future.

Today, I want to focus, though, on the areas that are affected by this legislation—on the Caribbean Basin and Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than 700 million people, one of our biggest potential trade partners. I say “potential” because American exports now account for only six percent of the African market. This bill will surely change that as it expands Africa’s access to our markets and improves the ability of African nations to ease poverty, increase growth and heal the problems of their people. It promotes the kinds of economic reform that will make sub-Saharan nations, on the long run, better allies, better trade partners and stronger nations.

Closer to home, in the Caribbean Basin, we already have strong trade relations. Last year, our exports to the region exceeded \$19 billion, making it the sixth largest market for our goods—larger than France or Brazil. That is remarkable, but not as remarkable as the transformation of

Central America and the Caribbean as a whole.

Despite the aftermath of war, the devastation of natural disasters, the region has made great strides toward recovery, democracy, peace and prosperity. On all my visits to the region, I have marveled at these changes.

Trade is one of the most powerful engines driving development in the region, and the Caribbean Basin Initiative has played a part. It’s a key building block to a free trade area of the Americas, which I hope we will have in the next few years.

What we see in the Caribbean Basin and in Africa is that trade can broaden the benefits of the global economy and lift the lives of people everywhere. But it is not enough, and our agenda for the developing world must be multifaceted, recognizing that trade must work for all people, and that spirited competition should lift all nations. I am pleased, for example, that this bill contains important child labor protections, authored by Senator Harkin.

I’d also like to say that there’s another big issue I hope we’ll take up, as the Congress had been willing to do last year, and again in a bipartisan fashion—too many nations, developing nations, are still forced to choose between paying interest on their debts and meeting basic human needs for clean water, shelter, health and education. Last year, the wealthiest nations pledged faster and deeper debt relief to developing nations that make needed reforms—countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, many in sub-Saharan Africa. In September, I pledged to go even further and make it possible to forgive all the debt of the poorest countries—that the poorest countries owe to the United States. And I am pleased that since then—since then, every other wealthy nation has made the same commitment.

Now, we’re here today because so many members of Congress and those who talk to them dedicated themselves to trade, to development, to the future of the Caribbean Basin and Africa. Today, I ask that we apply that same energy to our debt relief efforts.

I would also just like to take a few moments to remind you of what we all know, which is that there are enormous health challenges in the developing nations, which threaten their prosperity, their future, and could threaten their

democracy. We know the massive human and economic costs the AIDS epidemic exacts in Africa, where every day 5,500 people die.

Last week, I took executive action, building on the work of Senator Feinstein, to make AIDS-related drugs more affordable there. I’ve asked the Congress to enact tax incentives to speed the development and delivery of vaccines for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and to contribute to a global fund for the purchase of such vaccines so that they will go where they’re most needed. And I hope again we will have a strong bipartisan level of support for this.

Finally, let me say that the legislation I sign today is about more than development and trade. It’s about transforming our relationship with two regions full of good people trying to build good futures who are very important to our own future.

During the Cold War, to many Americans, Central America was a battleground and Africa was a backwater. All that has changed. We have worked hard the last few years to build genuine partnership with both regions—based on not what we can do for them, not what we can do about them, but on what we can do with them to build democracy together.

Let me finally say just a couple of words about Africa, because the good news this week comes against the backdrop of some tragic developments on the continent. Two of Africa’s poorest, but most promising nations—Ethiopia and Eritrea—resumed their senseless war. For over two years we’ve worked with the OAU to resolve that dispute. We won’t abandon the effort. But Ethiopia and Eritrea must first see that backing away from self-destruction is not the same thing as backing down. Giving your people a future is not cowardice, it’s common sense and courage.

We are also working with our African partners to support the people of Sierra Leone and the U.N. forces there, and we will do what is necessary to provide military transport and other support so the U.N. will get the reenforcement it needs.

We need to see the problems of Africa plainly and do our best to meet them. But that must not obscure the promise of Africa, which is also profoundly clear. It is the home to three of the world’s fastest economies—three of the four fastest

growing economies in the world are African economies. The progress of democracy, from Nigeria to South Africa; the proof offered by countries like Uganda that AIDS and other diseases can be arrested and the rates can be reduced, where the governments care to try and work with people to do the hard things. Even in Sierra Leone, we see signs of hope, and we have been working with other nations in Africa to increase the capacity to meet the challenge there.

We must not avoid our neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean, or our friends half a world away in Africa. We must build a better future together with both. That's what this is all about. That's the ultimate message of this trade bill.

I could not be prouder that over 70 percent of both Houses votes for this legislation; that majorities in both parties supported this legislation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and Senator Lott for the role you played. I want to thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus and the others whom I have just mentioned, and everyone else who is here. This is a happy day for America. And five years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, as we grow closer and closer and closer to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America, and to our friends in Africa, we will look back on this day and say this was a big part of how it all began.

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## **WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

### **Haitian Elections**

State Department Press  
Statement, May 22, 2000 <sup>20</sup>

The United States congratulates the people of Haiti on the holding of legislative and local elections May 21 in a pervasive atmosphere of non-violence and high voter participation. We commend the Government of Haiti and the Provisional Electoral Council for their sustained efforts in carrying out these elections; the political parties and candidates for their dedication to the process; the Haitian National Police for effectively maintaining calm; the thou-

sands of civil society and political party poll watchers for their efforts in support of transparency; and the Haitian voters for their patience throughout the day and their strong expression of support for democracy by turning out to vote in large numbers.

We also commend the Organization of American States for their coordination of over 200 international observers throughout the country; and the U.S. Congressional delegation led by Representatives John Conyers (D-MI) and William Delahunt (D-MA) for its diligent efforts in assisting with monitoring.

Despite some irregularities—including the delayed opening of many voting sites—these elections were a reflection of the will of the Haitian people to choose their leaders through free and inclusive elections. It is essential that the process of tabulating and announcing results take place in an efficient and transparent manner. We urge Haitian authorities and observers to be vigilant with regard to any reports of irregularities. We urge all Haitians to ensure the current peaceful atmosphere continues for the duration of the electoral process.

### **Peruvian Elections**

State Department Press  
Statement, May 31, 2000 <sup>21</sup>

The United States congratulates the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Peru for the professionalism, courage, and clarity with which it has carried out its objectives. In careful accordance with OAS procedures, the Mission set out to verify that the election process fulfilled basic international standards and norms of legitimacy and transparency. It made a series of recommendations to enhance confidence in the process and ensure that the election would represent the authentic will of the people. Unfortunately, the Peruvian authorities decided to proceed with elections without addressing the well-documented concerns of the OAS Electoral Mission and other international missions, including from the European Union. As a result, the Mission found the conditions did not meet basic international standards of fairness and transparency and that it could not in good faith monitor the results.

In particular, we express our apprecia-

tion for the role played by ex-Foreign Minister Eduardo Stein. From the beginning, he confronted situations of extreme political tension. He maintained the credibility and independence of the Mission, patiently working to bring differing parties to terms for improving democratic processes. This experience has called world-wide attention to the critical role played by the OAS in promoting and upholding democratic standards.

Free, fair, and open elections are the foundation of a democratic society. The attacks on democracy today are more subtle than ever, and therefore, more dangerous. The thing that unites us is our common embrace of democratic values and our shared responsibility to defend them when they are threatened.

The issue we face now is, how will the OAS respond to the situation in Peru? Given the importance of the issue presented, the United States believes the matter should be addressed by the Foreign Ministers in Windsor during the upcoming session of the General Assembly. In Article 3 of the Charter, the American States proclaimed as a guiding principle of the OAS that “the solidarity of the American States and the high aims which are sought through it require the political organization of those States on the basis of the effective exercise of representative democracy.” We believe that the proper context in which to analyze the issue under consideration is Resolution 1080, which was established in 1991 by the Foreign Ministers precisely for the purpose of discussing and addressing threats to democracy.

Resolution 1080 is the existing mechanism within the OAS framework for addressing an interruption of the democratic political institutional process. Resolution 1080 calls for the Permanent Council to “decide on and convene an ad hoc meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or special session of General Assembly” to examine the events and adopt any decisions deemed appropriate. We believe the present situation involving the flawed electoral process in Peru warrants examination by the Foreign Ministers in Windsor in this context. Accordingly, the United States proposes the convening of an ad hoc meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Windsor for the purpose of appropriate debate on this subject.

## Statement by Under Secretary of State Pickering, June 5, 2000<sup>22</sup>

*Thomas Pickering delivered his remarks at the 30th Organization of American States General Assembly meeting in Windsor, Canada.*

Mr. President, Señor Secretario General, distinguished Ministers:

I would like to begin by saying I hope to be responsibly brief, responsible to all of those who have been sitting so patiently and listening to a very high-level debate, and responsible to my government which takes a serious and significant interest in this very important work that is now before us. This indeed is in our view the most critical issue the Organization has faced this year. However, it is not the only important issue the Organization has dealt with this year. So, for that reason, I will try to be brief.

I would like to associate my delegation with the consensus that appears to be emerging on this resolution. I would like to congratulate all those who worked so hard to bring the draft resolution together. In particular, I would like to recognize the work of our host, Canada, on this initiative.

At a recent special session of the Permanent Council we heard reports from the distinguished former Foreign Minister of Guatemala, Mr. Eduardo Stein, about the profound systemic weaknesses in Peru which lead and led to the deficiencies in the electoral processes. Most critically, these included such problems as a concentration of power in the executive branch to the detriment of the judicial and electoral systems. And the result has been destabilizing and polarizing in Peru's electoral process with ramifications for the entire hemisphere. Now, all of us know and are concerned about the fact that there are no perfect democracies. All of us are indeed engaged in a strong course to perfect our own, and my country must include itself very much in that consensus, and we hope that in fact this organization which has devoted so much time and attention to democracy will also be there to lend a hand when any of us need help and assistance and support.

President Fujimori recently gave an important speech in which he publicly acknowledged the need to focus on strengthening democracy. That indeed is

one of the central, focal pivots of the resolution before us. In fact, of course, we know he has stated in the past that this is a top priority. We welcomed his statement of just a week ago following the elections, and we stand prepared to respond and assist in that effort, but we have some sense of remorse and regret that unfortunately this same pledge has been made before—as others recalled here this evening—back in 1992 and subsequently, and the results have been less than promising.

President Fujimori in 1992 did commit himself to restoring authentic constitutional democracy to Peru. His promise, while not reflected in the conduct of the recently completed electoral process, nevertheless encourages us all to think that we do have a responsibility to help a friend, and that we are here with that idea and that focus very much in mind. The focus of our attention today must be on resolving this crisis of credibility in Peru. And we believe that this resolution of this particularly important body is the appropriate approach, and the mandate of providing two very distinguished representatives of this organization with the opportunity to assist Peru and to develop appropriate plans with the Government of Peru and the political opposition is something we all, we believe, should be behind and support.

The plan, we hope, will also specify not only actions, but time periods. And we hope that the work of the mission will help Peru fully meet its commitments to democracy. Our focus here, of course, is not only on the results of one particular election. We are faced with many more significant challenges of helping a member country strengthen its foundations, its institutions that make lively its commitment to democracy, particularly when they are under severe strain. And as others have pointed out, this goes to the heart of what our organization is all about. We are pledged to each other to offer our mutual support that we can all bring to strengthen democratic institutions all over the hemisphere—and this indeed is an organization which in my belief is notable for its continued significant commitment to democracy—and to support our member states who are having difficulties in dealing with their democratic future. This makes this organization in my view quite unique in

the world of international and regional organizations. As a result, of course, we must prove ourselves capable of responding to the profound challenges that now face Peru, because of conviction and because of the need for decisiveness.

We support this resolution not only because it is dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions, but because it also addresses the very heart of the long-term problem of democracy in Peru, by strengthening the rule of law. The Electoral Observation Mission and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights recently issued excellent reports comprehensively addressing the difficulties that have plagued the recent election in Peru. Now is the time to build on these findings, and to adopt a resolution that sends a high-level mission that will examine and address the underlying causes of the democracy problem in Peru. That's what this resolution aims to do. That's what it is all about. And that's why we will all do all that we can to support the consensus that I believe now exists in this body.

1. Department of State Press Release, May 5, 2000.
2. Department of State Press Release, May 12, 2000.
3. Department of State Press Release, May 24, 2000.
4. Department of State Press Release, May 30, 2000.
5. Department of State Press Release, June 10, 2000.
6. White House Press Release, June 18, 2000.
7. White House Press Release, May 14, 2000.
8. Department of State Press Release, May 14, 2000.
9. White House Press Release, June 8, 2000.
10. Department of State Press Release, May 19, 2000.
11. Department of State Press Release, May 25, 2000.
12. Department of State Press Release, May 29, 2000.
13. Department of State Press Release, June 1, 2000.
14. Text from Congressman Hall's website ([www.house.gov/tonyhall](http://www.house.gov/tonyhall)).
15. White House Press Release, June 10, 2000.
16. Department of State Press Release, June 10, 2000.
17. Department of State Press Release, June 13, 2000.
18. White House Press Release, May 11, 2000.
19. White House Press Release, May 18, 2000.
20. Department of State Press Release, May 22, 2000.
21. Department of State Press Release, May 31, 2000.
22. Department of State Press Release, June 5, 2000.