

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 29, 2010 7:52 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Op-ed on Huffington Post TO DO

FYI

----- Original Message -----

From: Wendy Sherman [redacted]
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Fri Dec 24 13:58:53 2010
Subject: Op-ed on Huffington Post

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Cheryl,

Hope you and your family are having a much deserved and blessed holiday. Thought you might find an oped I wrote, posted today on Huffington Post of interest. It is pasted below. Please pass it along to the Secretary if helpful. All the best and hope to see you in the New Year.

Wendy

December 24, 2010

Amb. Wendy Sherman

Vice Chair, Albright Stonebridge Group; Former Counselor, State Department

Posted: December 24, 2010 01:16 PM

S.O.S. -- Showing Our Strength

The United States Congress did more these past few weeks than simply pass a tax cut and rid the military of don't ask, don't tell. It showed the rest of the world that the United States can act decisively. In uncertain times, with multiple countries seemingly intent on testing Washington's resolve, that may prove to be the lame-duck Congress' most important contribution to America's future.

China is one case in point. In several recent meetings with Chinese officials and opinion leaders in Beijing and Washington, it has been apparent that many see China as on the rise and America in decline. The economic crisis, our recent raucous election culminating with the Democrats' loss of the House of Representatives, the emergence of the Tea Party and the American public's loss of faith in institutions, have convinced many Chinese that both our economic and political model have failed.

But passage of the tax bill; the reaffirmation of America's commitment to human rights with repeal of don't ask don't tell; and approval of the START Treaty, a crucial national security objective, resoundingly demonstrate that our political process works and that we are getting our own house in order.

The challenge for the incoming Congress in 2011 is to ensure that we stay on this 'can do' path, demonstrating that the U.S. political and economic system is alive and well. Combined with our enduring military strength, China and others will take notice, improving our ability to manage a range of international issues, from North Korea to Iran to climate change.

To ensure the world gets the message, President Obama and the Congress need to take swift action on:

Tax reform, deficit reduction and American competitiveness: The president is reviewing tax reform proposals and the work of the several deficit commissions and study groups. Early in the next Congress, he should send to Capitol Hill a comprehensive tax and deficit reduction package. Such reform is needed in its own right. But politically the president must also demonstrate leadership by placing a set of proposals on the table and letting the new Republican-led House grapple with it and take responsibility for walking their talk. This package should be part of a broader effort to promote American competitiveness in the global economy through a fair exchange rate, a cut in the corporate tax rate, and support for American manufacturing. A comprehensive initiative will also signal to those who doubt America's resolve that we are serious about deficit reduction and modernizing our economy.

Energy and innovation initiatives: With Cancún having taken but a small step toward a global climate agreement, the Congress should be challenged to do better. Even if 'cap and trade' has no immediate future, there are a host of incentives and programmatic ideas that will increase energy research and development, spur innovation and move us into a green, technologically sophisticated future. Our economic future depends on high-tech jobs, energy sufficiency and nanotechnology.

Trade agreements: Passage of key trade agreements, beginning with the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement and strengthened Colombia and Panama agreements, will signal that the U.S. is a robust import and export market and reassert our presence in the march of globalization. No other country is idly waiting while the U.S. sorts through our own politics. The European Union has finalized an agreement with Korea and is negotiating agreements with India and Canada. We should, of course, only affirm free trade agreements that are in our interest, but Americans understandable anxiety about loss of jobs cannot stall our progress when, in fact, some of the best jobs will be created by opening new markets for our products.

Arms Control and Non-Proliferation: President Obama has laid out a vision for a nuclear free world that sets a framework for American leadership. But dealing with Iran, North Korea and other would be nuclear weapons powers requires all members of the U.N. Security Council. Indeed, the president should consider an arms control and non-proliferation dialogue on a bilateral basis with all appropriate and key players, including China.

Immigration reform: Immigration reform, beginning with passage of the Dream Act, is critical for reaffirming America's global leadership. A steady influx of immigrants has always been a source of wealth creation in the United States. Although Americans understandably want to ensure security of our borders and a managed influx of immigrants, our immigration policies hobble rather than enhance our economic future.

Young people brought to the U.S. by their parents deserve a pathway to good citizenship if they are willing to serve in our military or get a college education that will serve America's objectives. How we treat immigrants says much about our values, our openness, and our commitment to doing what is right, a set of values that we should emphasize and celebrate.

Only by being all that America can be can we demonstrate to the rest of the world that America is not only not in decline, but rather resilient and strong. Of course we should keep pressing others on the issues of key concern to us including modernizing economies, resetting currencies, enforcing sanctions on Iran and North Korea, and doing their part on climate change among other high priority issues. But America has always led by example on the global stage. The Congress and the president took a lame duck session and showed that we weren't so lame after all. Now it's time for the incoming Congress to do the same and show the world America's strength.