

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Reines, Philippe I <reinesp@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Bill Frist re Somalia

CRISIS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA – Dr. Bill Frist, former Senate majority leader, telephoned Playbook after returning from a trip with Dr. Jill Biden to a famine refugee camp on the Kenya-Somalia border: “The Horn of Africa is undergoing the most acute food-security emergency in the last 25 years – 29,000 kids have died in the last 90 days. The response to the crisis is improving globally, but the magnitude is outstripped the supplies. ... Two issues that I’m stressing: Number one, lives can be saved by both individual Americans, and taxpayers through our government responding and investing. And, number two, our long-term investments over the last 10 years, through the USAID, in the Horn of Africa, have paid off. ...” Dr. Biden is very effective in listening, observing, listening, asking questions, and representing the United States in terms of concern and commitment of support. Because she’s not in the political hotbed, for me, who’s out of politics, she was a perfect leader for the delegation. ... I have visited refugee camps in Chad and Darfur ... The striking difference here is the lack of access in Somalia, because of a dysfunctional government. There’s no access to the millions of people in Somalia, where the famine is worst. Therefore, the refugees all have to go to Ethiopia and Kenya, where there is economic stress and environmental stress. ... The crowding in the refugee camps has resulted in pneumonia and a very rare skin disorder, ichthyosis. The kids are dying of pneumonia and diarrheal diseases. ... Individuals who do want to invest, the easiest place to go is USAID.gov, which has a list of nongovernment organizations.”