

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2009 4:04 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Freedom of Expression - UN Human Rights

Fyi.

From: Koh, Harold Hongju
To: Brimmer, Esther D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Tue Aug 25 14:33:09 2009
Subject: RE: Freedom of Expression - UN Human Rights

Jake: I echo Esther's words. This resolution resulted from yeoman work and sterling inter-bureau collaboration. This is the best text we can get and it is a necessary step toward moving meaningfully on the Defamation issue

From: Brimmer, Esther D
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2009 12:40 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Cc: Koh, Harold Hongju
Subject: Freedom of Expression - UN Human Rights

Jake,

I wanted to update you on two aspects of our work leading up to the September session at the UN Human Rights Council where the U.S. will be a full member for the first time: 1) freedom of expression (addressed in this email) and 2) human rights strategy at the UN (in a second email on high side).

First, I'd like to let you know about the successful next step in a strategy we are pursuing at the UN Human Rights Council to begin to change the dialogue on Freedom of Expression. We think we have developed a well-balanced text that we can move forward to adoption in the UN HRC's September session. This work contributes to our long-term effort to improve this UN body. **Progress on this issue would help us later as we address the even more difficult issue of the "defamation of religions" about which the Secretary expressed interest in a Monday senior staff meeting.**

An IO-DRL-L-NEA group has been working together to implement the strategy that involves reaching agreement with the Egyptians on a text that we will roll out late next week with countries in the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) and the WEOG (Western European and Other Group, our regional group at the UN).

Experts in L, DRL, IO, and NEA agree that the text protects all USG red lines and offers us a workable compromise that can secure genuine cross-regional consensus when presented in the Human Rights Council in September, hopefully avoiding a divisive vote on this issue. US and Egyptian teams also agreed to the possibility of further cooperation in the UNGA to come to a soft landing on defamation of religions if Cairo and Washington first succeed in passing the FoE resolution by OIC/WEOG consensus.

Esther