

RELEASE IN FULL

## Successfully Engaging Global Media About the U.S. Role and International Cooperation in Haiti Examples of Post Efforts to Date

### EUROPE

- Reinforcing the Secretary's message, U.S. Ambassador to **France** Rivkin engage directly with over 100 journalists in an event streamed live on-line by CNN, where he highlighted U.S. assistance to Haiti and the cooperation of the US with France, the UN and the international community. Embassy Paris also reached out to senior officials in the Elysee, MFA, French media and civil society at all levels to underscore the message of positive coordination with our French partners and to set the record straight on the work of the USG in Haiti. As a result, leading French officials dismissed rumors of rising diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Leading officials consistently praised the work of the Obama administration in Haiti and the need for a strong US role in the emergency response.
- Embassy **London**'s media blitz featured Ambassador Susman, who underlined the U.S. commitment to Haiti at an Embassy Martin Luther King Jr. holiday event with actor James Earl Jones; the event was covered by BBC World News (audience 270 million worldwide) and various U.K. papers. The Ambassador and the IO also spoke about Haiti on January 20-22 on BBC TV 2's "Daily Politics Show," BBC Radio, the BBC TV Evening News, and other media and helped embed an ITV journalist on the USNS Comfort to help balance ITV's previously negative reporting and reached out personally to BBC producers to call attention to inaccurate reporting alleging that the U.S. military prevented Medecins Sans Frontiers from delivering aid and supplies to the airport in Port Au Prince.
- With media coverage growing more critical, U.S. Ambassador to **Greece** Speckhard gave an interview to *Ta Nea* newspaper and DCM Deborah McCarthy, who previously served in Haiti, was interviewed by *Real Sunday* newspaper, resulting in positive stories about U.S. assistance to Haiti. Meanwhile, the PAO spoke with the Director of *Eleftherotypia*, whose paper has run some of the most misdirected coverage of Haiti, and received a commitment to run an Embassy-produced story to counteract the misinformation.

## AFRICA

- Four African posts – **Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania** – organized highly successful outreach programs based on the diversion of the USS Gunston Hall to Haiti. The ship, with African officers aboard, was headed to western Africa under AFRICOM's African Partnership Station maritime security training program when it was diverted to provide relief to Haiti. With African officers working alongside U.S. military officers to deliver assistance to Haitians, PAOs at those posts connected local reporters with the ship to conduct live interviews of the Africans for their home media, resulting in excellent media placement in all four countries.
- On January 20 U.S. Ambassador to **South Africa** Gips gave a 10-minute live interview on Haiti with 5FM, a leading youth station with listenership of approx 800,000. The Ambassador highlighted the depth and breadth of US support and congratulated South Africa for sending emergency teams. The radio hosts told the Embassy afterward that e-mails and SMS messages were pouring into the station in support of U.S. efforts. Ambassador Gips reached out to additional audiences via broadcast media on January 21 and recorded a program via the **Africa Regional Media Hub** with SABC-International TV's "Rendezvous Africa" program (broadcast across the continent) and live interviews with drive-time radio programs on two national stations.
- As a result of a press conference hosted by the Embassy on January 22, all major **Angolan** media gave positive coverage to U.S. efforts in Haiti, including Radio Nacional de Angola and the *Jornal de Angola* newspaper, which ran an editorial January 23 that stated: "We need to believe and let those on the ground do their work because the old tactics of criticizing who is doing something for the Haitian People just for the sake of criticizing at a moment like this is not acceptable. . . Just see the numbers of daily flights that arrive in Haiti to have an idea and quickly come to the conclusion that the possible failures and omissions do not supersede the positive and timely work done by the entities undertaking the relief efforts in Haiti."

## EAST ASIA-PACIFIC

- The U.S. Ambassador to **Indonesia**'s January 21 byliner on Haiti ran as the lead item on the editorial page of *Seputar Indonesia* daily, and it was subsequently picked up by *Antara*, the Indonesian national news agency, and subsequently appeared in most Indonesian media.

- **South Korea:** Looking to help Korean audiences connect with the situation in Haiti, PA Seoul arranged a Digital Video Conference with the U.S. Consul in Nagoya, Japan, who had previously served as Information Officer in Port-au-Prince and was a fluent Korean speaker. CG Kwak underlined the long tradition of US humanitarian assistance to Haiti as well as the massive US response to the current crisis and noted Korea's own active involvement in the relief work. The U.S. Ambassador's blog on January 22, dedicated to the earthquake and those affected by it, received more than 1,500 hits in three days, with almost all comments supporting U.S. concerns.

The **EAP Regional Media Hub** in Tokyo hosted a journalists' roundtable with Gordon Duguid in Haiti on January 25 that included journalists from Hong Kong's *Ming Pao* newspaper, Malaysia's *New Straits Times* newspaper, *BERNAMA* (Malaysian National News Agency), and Australia's *Canberra Times* newspaper and Radio 6PR (Perth), and resulted in favorable stories appearing over the next few days in all participating media.

## NEAR EAST

- **Lebanon:** Television station *Al-Jadid* is not Hezbollah-affiliated, with most of its funding coming from the Gulf and Libya. Their coverage is also routinely sensationalistic and mirrored *Al-Manar's* coverage. PAS Beirut clarified aspects of USG assistance in Haiti to *Al-Jadid* on January 20. On Saturday January 23, *Al-Jadid* hosted the PAO for 30 minutes on morning news talk-show *al-Hadath* to discuss American relief efforts in Haiti. The PAO was able to address many of the accusations carried in the *Al-Manar* report, including the myriad "weapons testing" myths being propagated by Russian and Venezuelan media outlets. [*Post cannot engage directly with Hezbollah television station Al-Manar as it was designated as a Special Designated Global Terrorist organization in 2006 under E.O. 13224*]
- **Morocco:** On 1/28/10 the nationalist French-language daily *L'Opinion* published an op-ed entitled, "Haiti: After terror, the dread..." The paper is generally considered to be fairly hostile to the USG, however, on 1/29/10, PAO Rabat and an FSN went to *L'Opinion* to discuss the op-ed. Post was amazed to find the staff, including the writer himself, accommodating and even apologetic during the meeting. The editor-in-chief immediately agreed that the piece had been unfair, and the writer somewhat sheepishly explained himself by saying

that public opinion had not quite recovered from “the Bush years,” but readily acknowledged as well that the article was not balanced. PAO gave the writer a dossier of Washington File articles and some information from Infocentral’s regular updates, which he promised to use in writing a counterpoint article. On 2/1/10, *L’Opinion* published an article entitled, “The massive humanitarian action of the United States,” based on the articles provided by Post. The excellent article underscored the scope of American assistance, both government and private sector, to aide Haiti’s earthquake victims.

- **Syria:** Syrian state-run media coverage of the USG role in Haiti relief efforts has been largely negative and inaccurate, portraying the U.S. military as occupying Haiti. Examples include the Ba’ath party’s *Al-Baath* newspaper publishing three critical articles (1/21/01) under the headlines: “US Crimes in Haiti,” “US Military Forces Tighten Grip on Haiti,” and “US Forces Stop Humanitarian Planes from Landing.” On 1/25/10, government-owned *Tishreen* published an op-ed claiming that the superpowers were rushing towards a military conquest of Haiti in order to profit from reconstruction operations, which is the new method of colonialism. On 1/28/10, DAS Maura Connelly met with Syrian Ambassador Mustafa, who promised to work to halt the negative coverage coming from some Syrian outlets. To encourage more balanced coverage, Embassy Damascus will host a roundtable 2/3/10 with journalists from government-owned and independent Syrian media. Post also extended a personal invitation to an advisor of the Minister of Information.