



USAID provides relief supplies and medicine for earthquake victims in Peru.



Secretary Condoleezza Rice visits with Bagunçao Cultural Youth Group in Brazil.



Military personnel from USS Kearsarge unload hurricane relief supplies in Haiti.

# 2008

## COMMON VALUES, SHARED INTERESTS: THE UNITED STATES AND ITS PROMISE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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*“Our two continents are becoming more than neighbors united by the accident of geography. We’re becoming a community linked by common values and shared interests in the close bonds of family and friendship. These growing ties have helped advance peace and prosperity on both continents.”*  
– President George W. Bush, March 5, 2007

*“The United States has a broad policy in Latin America where we stand for social justice based on economic growth and economic development, where we stand for equality for women and for people of different racial backgrounds.”*  
– Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, March 13, 2008

**I**t is a great fortune of the United States to share a hemisphere with so many nations that have adopted a common vision for their peoples, a vision which allows citizens the freedom to shape their political destiny and pursue unbounded economic opportunity. The United States shares more than geography and values with these nations; it shares challenges that cross borders and the responsibility to address those challenges with its partners in the hemisphere. The United States has demonstrated its commitment to strengthen the ability of democracies and market economies to deliver what citizens want: economic and social development, reduction of poverty and inequality, and secure homes and communities. In 2008, U.S. official assistance to the region totaled over \$1.9 billion. U.S. engagement was built on the four pillars of its Americas policy: promoting prosperity, investing in people, protecting the security of the democratic state, and consolidating democracy. President Bush’s visit to Peru in November – his 13th to the Western Hemisphere – underscored the U.S. promise of sustained, enduring engagement.

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## PROMOTING PROSPERITY

Delivering the benefits of free markets, trade, and economic integration to all citizens is one of the biggest challenges facing democratic governments in the Americas. Access to economic opportunity and the social mobility that it creates is a fundamental component of social justice. The United States helps to create economic opportunity in the Americas through its support for free trade agreements, which the United States now has with countries encompassing two-thirds of the gross domestic product of the hemisphere. Additionally, through foreign assistance programs, particularly the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the United States fights corruption, promotes the rule of law, and creates the kind of democratic and just governance necessary to ensure economic opportunity is not limited to elites, but instead courses through society.

**Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas:** President Bush and leaders from 11 of the 12 countries with which the United States has signed free trade agreements in the hemisphere launched the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas initiative in New York in September. “Pathways” is intended to ensure that the benefits of trade are more broadly shared throughout societies. The leaders agreed to work jointly to increase opportunities for citizens, particularly small businesses and farmers, to take advantage of trade; link markets more closely; expand regional cooperation on competitiveness; and enhance cooperation on labor and environmental standards and enforcement. In December, a plan of action to move these objectives forward in practical ways was adopted, and the leaders committed to meeting in 2009 to assess progress on Pathways goals.

**Millennium Challenge Corporation:** Through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the United States continued disbursement of nearly \$1 billion in support to El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Guyana, and Peru. These programs support efforts to eliminate corruption, promote transparency, improve healthcare and education, and build roads that connect people and markets.

**Biofuels Partnership:** The United States and Brazil worked to develop global and regional markets for ethanol and biodiesel in nine countries, with the goal of giving countries in Central America, the Caribbean and Africa a promising new domestic fuel source that will reduce dependence on imported fuels and help governments develop local, sustainable biofuels industries. This followed a memorandum of understanding between the United States and Brazil in 2007 to advance biofuels cooperation.

**Chile-California Partnership for the 21st Century:** In early 2008, the United States and Chile launched an initiative that builds on natural geographic and climatic symmetries between Chile and the State of California in areas of energy,

agriculture, education, innovation and the environment. Chilean President Bachelet met with California Governor Schwarzenegger in June to provide further impetus to the initiative, which pairs prestigious California universities with Chilean counterparts and also promotes business and cultural ties.

**U.S.-Brazil Economic Partnership Dialogue:** The United States and Brazil held the second and third sessions of the Economic Partnership Dialogue to further strengthen and expand economic cooperation and to address the challenges of globalization. Topics included investment, infrastructure, telecommunications, innovation, agriculture, civil aviation and import safety. Both countries also agreed to continue to promote social inclusion and social justice as key goals of economic development.

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## INVESTING IN PEOPLE

All citizens should benefit from the opportunities of democracy. The United States seeks to unlock the vast potential of the Americas by working with its partners to invest in people through improved education and training, health care, access to capital, economic infrastructure, and security for families and their property.



**Alexander String Quartet conducts master class for musicians at Mother Teresa of Virreyes School in Argentina.**

**Continuing Promise Deployments to Latin America:** Under "Continuing Promise," two U.S. Navy amphibious ships took health care and other relief services to nine Latin American and Caribbean nations during a humanitarian and civic assistance mission. Medical and engineering crews aboard the USS Boxer worked alongside partner nation officials to provide services in El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. During its four-month mission, the USS Kearsarge visited Haiti, Nicaragua, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, delivering 3.3 million pounds of food, water and other aid to communities that were devastated by a succession of storms (Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike).

**Hurricane Recovery Assistance:** The United States led the donor community's response to four successive tropical storms that disrupted the lives of 850,000 people in **Haiti**, providing \$31.6 million in food and emergency commodities in addition to logistical coordination and transportation assistance from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Centers for Disease Control. The U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID) proposes to spend \$96.5 million in Haiti over the next three years on restoring public services, rebuilding infrastructure, and strengthening disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Widespread destruction from Tropical Storm Gustav in **Jamaica** damaged roads, bridges, houses, livelihoods, agriculture crops and led to loss of livestock across the island. In immediate response, USAID provided \$308,000 in emergency relief supplies, and an additional \$5 million in U.S. emergency foreign assistance is slated for Jamaica's agriculture, infrastructure and education sectors.

The United States also made unprecedented offers of hurricane relief assistance to **Cuba** to help in the recovery from the severe damage caused by these hurricanes. The Cuban government declined more than \$5 million in assistance offered on an unconditional basis, but U.S. aid was provided through international organizations. The United States also facilitated humanitarian donations by individuals and NGOs, authorizing \$104 million in such assistance in the first two months following the hurricanes.

## The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

**(PEPFAR):** From fiscal year 2004-2008, the American people through PEPFAR have provided more than \$636 million to Latin America and the Caribbean in support of HIV prevention, treatment and care programs, including more than \$169 million in fiscal year 2008. With PEPFAR support, as of September 30, 2008, approximately 20,000 men, women and children are receiving life-saving antiretroviral treatment. In addition, since 2002, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria committed a maximum of \$1 billion for HIV/AIDS programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The U.S. government is the largest contributor to the Global Fund, having provided approximately 30 percent of all resources to date.

## Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research

**of the Americas:** As announced by First Lady Laura Bush in Panama in November, Panama joined the Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness, which unites experts from the United States, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama in the fight against breast cancer. The initiative brings together the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the Institute of International Education, and the strong commitment of the U.S. government. These partners work to give women the knowledge and confidence to take charge of their own health.

## Partnership for Latin American Youth (PLAY)

**(PLAY):** The United States expanded its multi-year education initiative PLAY to provide micro-scholarships to learn English, to participate in high school exchanges in the United States and throughout the region, and to attend community colleges in the United States. PLAY brought together thousands of U.S. and regional youth over the course of the year to learn and share experiences.

**Sports Diplomacy Envoys:** U.S. public diplomacy and sports envoys shared their time and talents with youth and coaches across the region. The lineup included Baseball Hall of Famers Rod Carew and Cal Ripken, Jr. in Nicaragua;

world champion figure skater Michelle Kwan in Argentina; two-time Olympic soccer gold medalist and World Cup champion Cindy Parlow Cone and Women's National Soccer Team staff coach Jeff Pill in El Salvador; former Major League Baseball player Elias Sosa and the Southern Command all-star baseball team to Panama and Nicaragua; former baseball all-star Barry Larkin to Colombia; Armed Forces baseball players to the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Nicaragua; and collegiate volleyball coaches Erikka Gulbranson and Ashley Dean to Brazil.

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## PROTECTING THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

In recent years, the United States and its regional partners have fundamentally transformed the security agenda for the Americas and forged a consensus on the vital link between security and prosperity. Today's challenge is to confront both traditional and nontraditional threats, including organized crime, terrorism, gangs, natural disasters and pandemics. Protecting the people of the Americas from these regional threats strengthens democracy, promotes social justice, advances human rights, and creates a secure space for citizens and states to pursue economic prosperity.

**The Merida Initiative:** In mid-2008, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$465 million to support the President's multi-year security cooperation initiative with Mexico, Central America, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to combat the threats of drug trafficking, transnational crime and terrorism to these countries and the United States. This new strategic partnership has already paid dividends in the form of increased arrests of major traffickers, record seizures of weapons, and reduced flows of drugs, guns and cash across borders.

**U.S.-SICA (Central American Integration System) Security Dialogue:** The United States hosted the Second U.S.-SICA Dialogue in December. The discussion focused on pressing regional security threats, such as criminal gangs, drug trafficking and illicit trafficking in arms. Both Mexico and Colombia participated in the Dialogue as observers. Other topics addressed included implementation of the Merida Initiative and actions taken by Central American countries to combat security threats in the region.

**Continuing Progress in Colombia:** With strong bipartisan support since 2000, the United States has helped Colombia turn a corner in bringing security, prosperity, and justice to its citizens. U.S. support to Colombia, both bilaterally and through the Organization of American States' Mission to Support the Peace Process (OAS/MAPP), is designed to help the country consolidate this success by accelerating economic growth and ensuring that the government provides social services to all its citizens. The Colombian government recognizes the need to expand programs in remote rural areas and to increase the emphasis placed on security, social services, and assistance for especially vulnerable groups, such as the Afro-Colombian population on Colombia's Pacific coast, indigenous communities and displaced persons. Over the last decade, U.S. support has helped Colombia advance in its protection and promotion of human rights, but much more remains to be done. The United States is committed to supporting and encouraging Colombia in this endeavor.

**Security and Prosperity Partnership:** The United States updated its bilateral agreements with Canada and Mexico on cross-border emergency management and undertook negotiations to improve North American capacity to recall unsafe food and products. Canada and the United States also signed an agreement to harmonize trusted shipper programs, allowing shippers to comply with a unified set of security requirements. The United States worked closely with businesses in the North American Competitiveness Council to create new initiatives to improve competitiveness in the region. U.S. cooperation with Mexico and Canada now reaches beyond North America; at the New Orleans Summit in April, President Bush and his counterparts from Canada and Mexico agreed to provide funding to the Red Cross to stockpile emergency supplies in Panama to respond to emergencies throughout the region.

**North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD):** In 2008, the United States and Canada celebrated the 50th anniversary of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a joint U.S.-Canada command dedicated to the common defense of North American air space.



U.S. military officers teach flying dynamics to students at Colegio Esperanza in Chile.

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## CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY

The United States is committed to fostering democratic governance and protecting human rights and fundamental liberties in the Americas. The United States engages bilaterally and multilaterally to help its partners in the Americas strengthen democratic institutions and attack corruption, poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. The United States stands up to tyranny, especially in Cuba, and works to ensure that all the peoples of the Americas have the right and the opportunity to enjoy and express their citizenship in all its dimensions: political, economic and social.

**Effective Multilateral Engagement:** The United States increased its contribution to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to an historic high of \$1,360,000 in 2008, with special budgetary support given to the Commission's rapporteurs on freedom of expression, the rights of women and Afro-descendants, as well as its unit for human rights defenders. In addition to contributing funds allowing for the reconstruction of civil registry information affected by Shining Path activities in Huancavelica, Peru, the United States supported OAS universal birth registration activities in the Caribbean through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. The United States also provided



**Assistant Secretary Thomas A. Shannon meets with Youth Ambassadors from Paraguay.**

critical support for the Third Meeting of the Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations.

**Summit of the Americas:** President Bush attended every Summit of the Americas during his administration, starting with the Third Summit in 2001 in Quebec City, the Special Summit in 2004 in Nuevo Leon, and the Fourth Summit in 2005 in Mar del Plata. It is the only forum in which every democratically-elected head of state in the Western Hemisphere meets to find ways to work together on common priorities for the people of the Americas. The Summits led to the signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, encompassing hemispheric commitments to improve education, fight HIV/AIDS, combat corruption, provide loans to small and medium-sized businesses, reduce the cost of remittances, and improve the region's infrastructure and competitiveness. The United States has been an important partner in pursuing these priorities through diplomatic engagement and development programs. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is actively engaged in ensuring that the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April of 2009 in Port of Spain will also lead to constructive partnerships that will continue to improve the lives of citizens.

**Electoral Observation Missions:** In 2008, the United States provided major funding for observation by the Organization of American States (OAS) of electoral processes in Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Honduras, Ecuador and Bolivia. Additionally, to help address democratic institutional weaknesses in Bolivia, the Secretary General of the OAS, with U.S. funding and support, deployed a team of democracy practitioners to assist the country in the areas of legal, judicial, electoral, and citizen participation reform. The United States also supported initial OAS efforts to undertake an audit of the voter registry of Bolivia, in response to an official request by the country's National Electoral Court.

**Commitment to the Cuban people:** President Bush joined in the international celebration of Cuba Solidarity Day in May to highlight the aspiration of the Cuban people for freedom and democracy in their country, as well as the need for the Cuban government to unconditionally release political prisoners as a first step in establishing a positive dialogue with its

own people. Solidarity Day included public events in Europe and Latin America and commemorations organized by U.S. Embassies throughout the world. The United States also continued the disbursement of \$80 million of economic support funds to promote democracy and advance civil society in Cuba and initiated a program for Cuban students to receive Partnership for Latin American Youth scholarships. As part of a broader effort to foster greater openness and communication in Cuba, the United States authorized American citizens to send mobile phones to their relatives in Cuba.

**Enhancing Inter-Regional Cooperation:** Building upon the success of the 2007 OAS-African Union Democracy Bridge endorsed by the Community of Democracies, the United States supported the joint training of OAS and African Union (AU) technical experts in Mozambique. The OAS, with strong U.S. support, sent a team to observe jointly with the African Union the first elections held in Angola since the end of the country's 27-year civil war. This marked the first OAS electoral observation deployment outside the Western Hemisphere. Parallel to these initiatives, the United States also supported IACHR efforts to strengthen collaboration with the African human rights system, particularly the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in response to mandates of the 2007 OAS General Assembly supporting increased inter-regional cooperation.

**Joint Action Plan for Racial Equality:** The United States and Brazil signed in March a Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality. The plan was officially launched in Brasilia with the first meeting of the Steering Committee, comprised of agencies from both governments, and the announcement of initial activities. These include an International Visitor Program for Brazilian leaders in the public, non-governmental and academic sectors to meet U.S. counterparts and observe U.S. models; student and professor exchanges between Xavier University, an historically Black university in New Orleans, and a counterpart university in Sao Paulo; and a Department of Labor-funded project to eliminate child labor in the state of Bahia. The inaugural Steering Committee meeting also brought in representatives from U.S. and Brazilian non-governmental organizations and academia for thematic discussions whose results were offered to the Steering Committee as guidance for future initiatives. ■



**Kensington Primary School students participate in an Earth Day project in Jamaica.**