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REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and
Haitian Prime Minister Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis
After Their Meeting**

**April 15, 2009
Treaty Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good afternoon. I am so delighted to extend a warm welcome to the prime minister of Haiti and to her distinguished delegation. She and I were together at the donors conference on behalf of Haiti yesterday. And as you know, I will be traveling to Haiti tomorrow.

But before I turn to the important issues that we discussed today about Haiti, I'd like to take a moment to discuss an issue that affects us all, and that is the scourge of piracy. The attempted capture of the *Maersk Alabama* and the attack yesterday on the *Liberty Sun* off the coast of Somalia are just the most recent reminders that we have to act swiftly and decisively to combat this threat. These pirates are criminals. They are armed gangs on the sea. And those plotting attacks must be stopped, and those who have carried them out must be brought to justice.

Last weekend, we were all inspired by the courage and heroism of Captain Phillips and his crew, and by the bravery and skill of the U.S. Navy. These men are examples of the best that America has to offer. And I salute and thank them. But now it falls to us to ensure that others are not put into a similar situation. As I said last week, we may be dealing with a 17th century crime, but we need to bring 21st century solutions to bear.

I want to commend the work that this Department's anti-piracy task force has already done, along with their counterparts throughout our government. In the past several months, we have seen the passage of a robust United Nations Security Council resolution, a multinational naval deployment, improved judicial cooperation with maritime states and an American-led creation of a 30-plus member International Contact Group to coordinate our efforts.

But we all know more must be done. The State Department is actively engaged with the White House and other agencies in pursuing counter-piracy efforts, both unilaterally and in concert with the international community. This Friday, a steering group that includes

State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the intelligence community, will meet to consider recent events and potential responses.

This week, the State Department is taking four immediate steps as we move forward with a broader counter-piracy strategy. But let me underscore this point: The United States does not make concessions or ransom payments to pirates. What we will do is first send an envoy to attend the international Somali peacekeeping and development meeting scheduled in Brussels. The solution to Somali piracy includes improved Somali capacity to police their own territory. Our envoy will work with other partners to help the Somalis assist us in cracking down on pirate bases and in decreasing incentives for young Somali men to engage in piracy.

Second, I'm calling for immediate meetings with our partners in the International Contact Group on Piracy to develop an expanded multinational response. The response that came to our original request through the Contact Group for nations to contribute naval vessels has turned out to be very successful. But now we need better coordination. This is a huge expanse of ocean, four times the size of Texas, so we have to be able to work together to avoid the pirates. We also need to secure the release of ships currently being held and their crews, and explore tracking and freezing pirate assets.

Third, I've tasked a diplomatic team to engage with Somali Government officials from the Transitional Federal Government as well as regional leaders in Puntland. We will press these leaders to take action against pirates operating from bases within their territories.

And fourth, because it is clear that defending against piracy must be the joint responsibility of governments and the shipping industry, I have directed our team to work with shippers and the insurance industry to address gaps in their self-defense measures. So we will be working on these actions as well as continuing to develop a long-term strategy to restore maritime security to the Horn of Africa.