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RELEASE NEWS

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNITED STATES THANKS AZERBAIJAN FOR HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF ASSISTANCE

September 4, 2005

We would like to extend out sincerest thanks to the Government of Azerbaijan for its donation of \$500,000 to the Hurricane Katrina Relief efforts and to the government and people of Azerbaijan for their sympathy and support. The American people and the U.S. government are extremely grateful for this very generous assistance.

On September 2, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed heartfelt thanks on behalf of President Bush, the U.S. Government, and the American people to the leaders and citizens of the many nations and international organizations, including Azerbaijan, that have offered their generous support to the hurricane relief efforts.

Secretary Rice's statement

Good Afternoon. On behalf of the employees of the State Department, our hearts and prayers go out to every citizen who has been affected by Katrina. I want every American to know that their government is doing everything it can to help get relief to those in need as quickly as possible.

Recently, we have seen the American people respond generously to help others around the globe during their times of distress, such as during the recent tsunami. Today, we are seeing a similar urgent, warm and compassionate reaction from the international community in response to Katrina.

I want to express the heartfelt thanks of the President, the United States Government and all Americans, to the leaders and citizens of the many nations and international organizations that have already offered kind and generous support. Organization like the United National, NATO, the Organization of American States, the European Union, and others are showing their solidarity with us during this time.

You have the updated list of countries from every corner of the globe that are offering their help, countries like Canada and Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Israel, China, Azerbaijan, the Philippines, El Salvador, Australia, Turkey and many others. I want to note in particular that we received a generous offer of support from Sri Lanka, a country that, as we speak, is still recovering from its own massive natural disaster. Every contribution is important; and over the past few days, I have been in contact with a wide range of officials from other nations and international organizations to respond to these offers of support.

The State Department is coordinating closely with the Department of Homeland Security to match these offers of support with the needs on the ground. Some of the needs will be longer-term needs as those areas and citizens hit by Katrina recover and begin to rebuild their lives, their families and their futures. In my discussions with my counterparts I've been heartened at their offers of both short-term and long-term support.

Many private citizens across the globe also want to donate their personal funds to help. As I've talked with my counterparts around the world, I have encouraged them to urge their citizens to donate Katrina relief through the Red Cross. Here at the State Department, we have established a task force to manage our components of the response that are being coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security. This includes assistance from the United States Agency for International Development. USAID experts are already working at the Department of Homeland Security's Emergency Center, drawing on their experience in working disasters around the world. A wide range of USAID equipment is also being deployed, from their zodiac-like boats to large chain saws to help clear trees and other roadblocks.

We are doing everything we can to help those in need here at home in America, and we are also working closely with other governments to help them locate and assist their citizens.

On a personal note, as you know, my family is from Alabama. My father was born and raised in Louisiana. The pictures are pictures that I, in many cases, know well. And I just want to say to the people of the hard-hit Gulf region that our prayers and thoughts, and my personal prayers and thoughts, are with them. I am going to travel this Sunday to Alabama to tour the disaster area, to meet with senior officials and Americans in need, and to receive briefings on the latest situation there.

For those wishing to get further information, please see the Department of State website at www.state.gov. For more specific information about hurricane assistance efforts, please see the American Red Cross website at www.redcross.org.