

Statements by Madeleine Albright on the International Criminal Court
Samuel Dash Conference on Human Rights: The Future of Human Rights
Georgetown University Law Center
April 8, 2008

“It was also a mistake for the United States, under this administration, to withdraw its signature from the International Criminal Court. No country has a greater stake than America in a global legal system that protects rights and enforces responsibilities.”

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/04/pdf/albright_remarks.pdf (as prepared)
<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/webcast/eventDetail.cfm?eventID=530> (as delivered,
00:28:03-00:28:18)

Question: You talked about the restoration of U.S. reputation, their allies and their strategic allies and of course their traditional allies in Europe. My question is, do you think that the next president, if he signs the, or she – also a possibility – signs the treaty of the International Criminal Court, will that restore or will that be a step in the face of restoring U.S. reputation and, if so, how should the next president convince Congress and the American public about what the mere value is of signing and ratifying the treaty of the International Criminal Court?

“On the issue of the International Criminal Court, I do think it would be very useful if the United States re-signed, but also we had a very hard time with this. It’s not a simple issue for the United States. I think that the reason we should not have left is because I thought that we could in fact be a part of being a friend of the Court and try to work in terms of looking at what the new laws on terrorism were going to be, definitions of aggression, and we made a mistake by pulling out. Now the thing that I think most people don’t understand, which this audience clearly does, is that you don’t have to submit to the International Criminal Court if you have a legitimate legal national system of your own. Now, having just said some of the earlier issues about habeas corpus and what’s happening in Guantanamo, there may be some questions about that, frankly, which make it more complicated, but the bottom line is, the ICC is beginning to develop a body of law. I think it would be useful, but I think realistically, and I think John [Podesta, president of the Center for American Progress] you would probably agree to this, it is not going to be simple for the U.S., given our sense of sovereignty and where our legal system really is.”

<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/webcast/eventDetail.cfm?eventID=530>
(question, 1:02:33-1:03:24; response, 1:08:44-1:10:04)