



**DIRECTOR'S FORUM WITH  
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, R. NICHOLAS BURNS**

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs *R. Nicholas Burns*, who traveled twice to Brazil and Latin America earlier this year, briefed the media and the policy community on current challenges and opportunities the United States faces in the Americas at an August 6, 2007, "Director's Forum" sponsored by the Brazil Institute and chaired by



From left to right: Anthony Harrington, Lee Hamilton,  
R. Nicholas Burns and Paulo Sotero

former U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Anthony Harrington. Ambassador Burns contextualized the discussion within the framework of the world's changing power structure: rising powers such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Nigeria are gaining in political and economic importance. The fact that these countries are playing greater roles in multilateral institutions and taking leading roles on multiple issues of

global significance is evidence that the international political order is changing. Similarly, Ambassador Burns noted that the United States has responded to such changes by building partnerships and seeking further engagement with these countries.

One such initiative—central to U.S. regional foreign policy efforts—has been the "strategic partnership" forged with Brazil. He remarked that the United States "can not negotiate a way forward or have an effective foreign policy [in the region] without Brazil." Burns said the "symbolic centerpiece" of U.S.-Brazil relations is the biofuels cooperation. Spurred by President Bush's visit to Brazil and President Lula's visit to the United States in March, the initiative has a three-fold purpose: 1) furthering research on and advancing biofuels production, 2) enhancing the distribution, production, and international market for biofuels by first encouraging regional production of such fuels, and 3) creating strong international biofuels standards in order to turn biofuels into a globally tradable commodity through the Brazil-led International Biofuels Forum, which is supported by the United States, the European Union, China, India and South Africa.

Ambassador Burns additionally highlighted the striking similarities between Brazil and the United States. Both countries are dedicated to principles of democratic governance, are models of peaceful, ethnically diverse societies, and struggle with poverty issues. For Burns, furthering this strategic partnership means not only championing both countries' successes, but addressing the challenges as well.

*Written by Program Assistant, Alan Wright*