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NEW YORK, N.Y.10017-3505

UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by Stephen Townley, Counselor for Legal Affairs

69th Session of the UN General Assembly Sixth Committee
Consideration of Effective Measures to Enhance the Protection, Security
and Safety of Diplomatic and Consular Missions and Representatives

Agenda Item 80

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The rules protecting the sanctity of ambassadors, other diplomats, and consular officials enable them to carry out their vital functions. Respect for these rules is a basic prerequisite for the normal conduct of relations among States.

Rules providing protections for diplomats have a long and deep history. Going as far
back as to the activities of the College of Fetials in Rome, diplomatic envoys were considered
inviolable. While at times the protections extended to such envoys were grounded in religious
law, ultimately, they came to be part of the law of nations. These protections not only shielded
diplomats from hostile actions by states but also imposed a duty on states to afford special
protection to diplomats from harmful acts by non-state actors. Indeed, concern about t1.6 480.94 3ii5 0 11.Tc 11

Stevens and three other Americans in September 2012. Nor is the United States alone in this regard.