

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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**President Obama on U.S. Rescue Efforts in Haiti**

*Obama promises "swift, coordinated and aggressive" effort by administration*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
Diplomatic Reception Room  
January 13, 2010

**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON RESCUE EFFORTS IN HAITI**

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody. This morning I want to extend to the people of Haiti the deep condolences and unwavering support of the American people following yesterday's terrible earthquake.

We are just now beginning to learn the extent of the devastation, but the reports and images that we've seen of collapsed hospitals, crumbled homes, and men and women carrying their injured neighbors through the streets are truly heart-wrenching. Indeed, for a country and a people who are no strangers to hardship and suffering, this tragedy seems especially cruel and incomprehensible. Our thoughts and prayers are also with the many Haitian Americans around our country who do not yet know the fate of their families and loved ones back home.

I have directed my administration to respond with a swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort to save lives. The people of Haiti will have the full support of the United States in the urgent effort to rescue those trapped beneath the rubble, and to deliver the humanitarian relief -- the food, water and medicine -- that Haitians will need in the coming days. In that effort, our government, especially USAID and the Departments of State and Defense are working closely together and with our partners in Haiti, the region, and around the world.

Right now our efforts are focused on several urgent priorities. First, we're working quickly to account for U.S. embassy personnel and their families in Port-au-Prince, as well as the many American citizens who live and work in Haiti. Americans trying to locate family members in Haiti are encouraged to contact the State Department at 888/407-4747. I'm going to repeat that -- 888/407-4747.

Second, we've mobilized resources to help rescue efforts. Military overflights have assessed the damage, and by early afternoon our civilian disaster assistance team are beginning to arrive. Search and rescue teams from Florida, Virginia and California will arrive throughout today and tomorrow, and more rescue and medical equipment and emergency personnel are being prepared.

Because in disasters such as this the first hours and days are absolutely critical to saving lives and avoiding even greater tragedy, I have directed my teams to be as forward-leaning as possible in getting the help on the ground and coordinating with our international partners as well.

Third, given the many different resources that are needed, we are taking steps to ensure that our government acts in a unified way. My national security team has led an interagency effort overnight. And to ensure that we coordinate our effort, going forward, I've designated the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Dr. Rajiv Shah, to be our government's unified disaster coordinator.

Now, this rescue and recovery effort will be complex and challenging. As we move resources into Haiti, we will be working closely with partners on the ground, including the many NGOs from Haiti and across Haiti, the United Nations Stabilization Mission, which appears to have suffered its own losses, and our partners in the region and around the world. This must truly be an international effort.

Finally, let me just say that this is a time when we are reminded of the common humanity that we all share. With just a few hundred miles of ocean between us and a long history that binds us together, Haitians are neighbors of the Americas and here at home. So we have to be there for them in their hour of need.

Despite the fact that we are experiencing tough times here at home, I would encourage those Americans who want to support the urgent humanitarian efforts to go to [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov) where you can learn how to contribute. We must be prepared for difficult hours and days ahead as we learn about the scope of the tragedy. We will keep the victims and their families in our prayers. We will be resolute in our response, and I pledge to the people of Haiti that you will have a friend and partner in the United States of America today and going forward.

May God bless the people of Haiti and those working on their behalf.

Thank you very much.

**Secretary Clinton Says U.S., Partners Moving Rapidly to Help Haiti**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — With Port-au-Prince's airport facilities crippled plus a breakdown in direct communication with local officials, recovery efforts are difficult in earthquake-stricken Haiti, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

says.

"The situation is horrific and, unfortunately, we do not have the kind of information yet that gives us a road map as to how we're going to be able to respond effectively, although we are moving a lot of our assets to position them to be able to do so," Clinton said at an early briefing from Honolulu on January 13.

Clinton was to begin a 10-day trip to the Asia-Pacific region with stops in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia after two days in Honolulu for meetings with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and officials at the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). She told reporters she was returning to PACOM headquarters to conduct further communications with international partners as well as with President Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and State Department officials.

"There are a number of nations who are in the same position we find ourselves, trying to figure out how to get safely into Port-au-Prince," she said. "The airport, as you've heard, is not yet fully evaluated. We should have a team on the ground momentarily, if they're not there right now."

The U.S. Southern Command announced earlier in the day that it was sending a 30-person team to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts. They will work with U.S. Embassy personnel as well as Haitian, United Nations and international officials to assess the situation and determine the level of U.S. military support needed.

The U.S. Air Force sent a critical air traffic control team from its 1st Special Operations Wing to provide air traffic control operations at the Port-au-Prince airport so relief flights can begin safely arriving.

"Obviously we can't, or other nations can't, bring in the kind of heavy-lift planes that are needed" until air traffic control is restored, Clinton said. "We are working as actively as we possibly can under extremely challenging circumstances."

Earlier in the day, a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter was sent to Port-au-Prince to evacuate four critically injured U.S. Embassy staff members to the hospital at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba. A Navy P-3 Orion reconnaissance aircraft was sent over Haiti to help identify areas affected by the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that struck the island nation about 4:53 p.m. EST (18:53 GMT) January 12.

"Our military is fully committed," Clinton said. "Our search-and-rescue teams are on the way, or are about to be on the way. And we're going to do everything we can to try to save as many lives and to help bring about an

orderly environment in which aid and reconstruction can take place."

Clinton said all of the medical supplies at the U.S. Embassy have been exhausted while helping Americans in Haiti and Haitian citizens.

Clinton said she has spoken with President Obama about the remainder of her planned trip in the region and will most likely continue with it, but efforts are being made to compress the schedule.

### **United States Seeks Deeper Ties with Asia-Pacific**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States will continue to deepen its strong economic and strategic partnership with the Asia-Pacific region, while Asia has a strong interest in the United States remaining a dynamic partner and stabilizing influence, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

"The Asia-Pacific region is a fulcrum of global politics and economics. It is central to solving many challenges we face," Clinton said in a speech January 12 at the East-West Center in Honolulu. "Asian nations are helping to prevent nuclear proliferation in Iran, build schools and clinics in Afghanistan, keep peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and combat piracy off the Horn of Africa."

The new landscape in Asia requires the United States to build an institutional architecture that maximizes the prospects for effective cooperation, builds trust and reduces the friction of competition, she said. That includes active participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other regional and sub-regional groups, she said.

Clinton is on a 10-day trip that will take her to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, after her stop in Hawaii for the speech and a one-on-one meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada. The trip is intended to illustrate the emphasis President Obama places on strong ties to key allies such as Japan and Australia, and that the United States is not a visiting partner to the region, but a resident partner in the region.

Clinton outlined five principles that will guide the United States' continued multilateral engagement and leadership in the region. The first is that the "United States' alliance relationships are the cornerstone of our regional involvement." She said the security and stability provided through these relationships have been critical to the region's success and development.

The second principle is that regional institutions should work to advance clear and increasingly shared objectives, she said. These shared objectives include economic opportunity and growth, and fostering democracy and human rights, she added.

“To promote regional security, we must address nuclear proliferation, territorial disputes and military competition – persistent threats of the 21st century,” Clinton said.

Advancing economic opportunity, she said, means focusing on lowering trade and investment barriers, improving market openness, and promoting balanced, inclusive and sustainable patterns of economic growth. These are among the goals outlined by the United States and its partners in the Group of 20 advanced and emerging economies in two summits last year, and were featured in the recent meeting of APEC.

The third principle requires the institutions of the region to be focused on delivering results. “The formation and operation of regional groups should be motivated by concrete, pragmatic considerations,” she said. “It’s more important to have organizations that produce results, rather than simply producing new organizations.”

And fourth, Clinton said, the United States and its Asia-Pacific partners must enhance their flexibility in pursuing results, which may mean informal arrangements targeted to specific challenges, such as efforts by the Six-Party Talks that seek to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. The Six-Party Talks include China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Finally, she said that as Asia-Pacific nations, “we need to decide ... which will be the defining regional institutions to best protect and promote our collective future.” While each organization has its purpose, each also has varying degrees of importance in the regional architecture. The most likely mix is of well-established and new organizations, Clinton said.

### **Free Trade Focus Shifts to Asia and the Pacific**

By Christopher Connell  
Special Correspondent

Washington — At first glance, an Asia-Pacific trading zone that excludes Japan, South Korea and China might not seem that important. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) started small with Singapore, New Zealand, Brunei and Chile in 2006, and now the United States, Australia, Peru and Vietnam all want to join it.

Those seven countries are far from being the United States’ biggest trading partners. Indeed, they account for only 5 percent of U.S. exports.

But it is the TPP’s potential for growth that explains why some U.S. lawmakers and economists are enthusiastic about President Obama’s decision to take the first step toward joining the trade compact.

The official announcement of U.S. intentions in December stirred excitement in business circles of the seven countries, which will be represented when trade ministers gather in Australia in March to talk about expanding the TPP.

### **COULD TPP BE “LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD”?**

With the global economy still sputtering from the financial crisis, and after the letdown caused by the collapse of the Doha round of trade-liberalization talks, a TPP expansion could prove a successful tonic. It might even call to mind *The Little Engine That Could*, a classic, illustrated children’s story about an undersized locomotive that succeeds in pulling a trainload of toys over a steep mountain after larger engines failed.

Obama, in announcing that the United States was moving ahead on talks with the TPP countries, said the aim was to forge a regional agreement with “the high standards worthy of a 21st century trade agreement.”

U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk said these “like-minded” countries were intent on “expanding this group to include additional Asia-Pacific economies in what will become the largest, most dynamic trade collaboration of our time.” He also promised to work with Congress “to enhance the agreement’s focus” on protecting the environment and workers’ rights.

Other major Asia-Pacific countries soon may be knocking on the TPP door if they become convinced that the United States and its partners actually are going to lower trade barriers. Canada and South Korea may be among the first, C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, has predicted.

Former U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab laid the groundwork in the final year of the Bush administration for a move toward an expanded TPP. One reason for doing so, said Timothy Keeler, her former chief of staff, was the growing number of trade agreements across Asia. “The U.S. has got to be careful it’s not shut out,” said Keeler, now with the law firm of Mayer Brown LLP.

Kirk acknowledged as much, telling congressional leaders in a December 14 letter, “We have seen a proliferation of trade agreements in the Asia-Pacific region to which the United States is not a part.” Although U.S. exports have grown, their share in key markets has dropped over the past decade, he said.

## MULTILATERAL SOUFFLÉ OR BILATERAL SPAGHETTI?

The United States already has bilateral free-trade agreements with 17 countries, including Australia, Chile, Peru and Singapore. But a spaghetti bowl of bilateral deals is not the same as the soufflé of a multilateral trade pact. Bilaterals often are narrower and more likely to carve out protections for certain industries. The 2005 U.S.-Australian treaty, for instance, kept limits on Australian sugar exports and retained some beef tariffs for 18 years. A principal hang-up on the U.S.-South Korea trade pact — one of the three deals negotiated by the Bush administration but not yet approved by Congress — is Seoul's restrictions on auto imports.

It will be a hard slog to sweep away all trade barriers across the Pacific. John Ravenhill, a professor of international relations at the Australian National University, said Australia and New Zealand could pose "a considerable threat to U.S. agricultural interests if trade was liberalized across the board."

Still, there is the hope that, as Australian Trade Minister Simon Crean expressed it, the TPP will become "a building block towards a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific." That has long been an aspirational goal of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which includes China, Russia and Indonesia as well as Canada and Mexico.

That, said Jeffrey Schott, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute on International Economics, would "be a big deal, because in APEC you're talking about 50 percent of world GDP [gross domestic product]."

After the APEC summit in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2010, the United States will host the leaders' 2011 gathering in Honolulu. Obama, who was born in Honolulu and has called himself "the first Pacific president," no doubt is looking for real progress by then on an expanded TPP and on dropping barriers among all of APEC's developed members.

But Keeler, the former USTR official, cautioned, "It will be a long negotiation and a long road to get it done — if it gets done."

### Why Was Haiti Earthquake So Devastating?

*Magnitude, location and depth help determine damage done by earthquakes*

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington — More than 3 million people in Haiti are estimated to have been affected by the earthquake that struck January 12. Registering at magnitude 7.0, it is the

most violent earthquake to hit that island nation in a century. Deaths, injuries and damage are yet to be tallied.

According to experts, magnitude 7 earthquakes — considered "severe" by seismologists — occur around the world 12 to 15 times each year. What made the Haiti earthquake especially devastating?

In addition to the magnitude (strength) of an earthquake, an earthquake's location relative to population centers and its depth under the earth are determining factors for the damage that may result, according to Michael Blanpied, associate coordinator of the Earthquake Hazards Program at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

In a recorded interview for USGS, Blanpied said the epicenter for the Haiti earthquake was just 10 miles (15 kilometers) from the capitol city of Port-au-Prince, where nearly 1 million people live. He also noted that Haiti, which suffers from widespread poverty, has not constructed many buildings resistant to earthquakes. Compounding the problem, he said, is that the earthquake has been followed by at least six aftershocks of moderate magnitude that have further damaged already weakened buildings and imperiled rescue efforts.

The initial earthquake is estimated to have occurred just 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) under the earth's surface. Shaking from relatively shallow earthquakes is more severe, Blanpied said. In addition, soft ground amplifies the shaking, which increases the threat of destruction to the buildings above it.

Landslides, which could bury buildings and claim more victims, remain a possibility, Blanpied said. "The only positive thing about this earthquake is that, because it did occur on land, it did not generate a tsunami," he said. Tsunamis are huge ocean waves capable of traveling miles inland on land masses. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, generated by an undersea earthquake, killed some 300,000 people.

Haiti is no stranger to earthquakes. The nation, which occupies the western part of the island of Hispaniola and is situated between Puerto Rico and Cuba, has experienced numerous slight to moderate earthquakes in the recent past.

"The island is caught between two tectonic plates," Blanpied explained. "The North America and the Caribbean tectonic plates are shearing the island, crushing it, grinding it. And as that occurs, earthquakes pop off. ... This is quite an earthquake-prone region."

According to the USGS, at least 1,783 deaths worldwide resulted from earthquake activity in 2009. The deadliest earthquake of that year was a magnitude 7.5 event that

killed approximately 1,117 people in southern Sumatra, Indonesia, on September 30. The most powerful earthquake for 2009 — registering at magnitude 8.1 — occurred September 29 in the Samoa Islands region. The tsunami it generated killed 192 people.

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