

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Presidential Proclamation on German-American Day, 2010

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
October 6, 2010

GERMAN-AMERICAN DAY, 2010 BY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The American story has been written by those who have come to our shores in search of freedom, opportunity, and the chance at a better life. The German men and women who braved numerous perils to cross the Atlantic long ago left a legacy of millions of Americans of German ancestry who have been an integral part of our national life. On German-American Day, we pay tribute to the role this community has played in shaping America and contributing to our progress and prosperity.

On October 6, 1683, 13 courageous German families arrived in Pennsylvania to start a new life. They began a chapter in the American narrative that has influenced our country in all walks of life, and their resolve lives on in the men, women, and families of German descent who enhance civic engagement, steer our industries, and fortify our Nation's character. With their dedication and determination, the United States has been a leader in ingenuity and entrepreneurship, and has delivered a message of hope and opportunity that resonates around the world. Today, German Americans innovate and excel as leaders in all sectors of our society.

On this occasion, we honor not only the countless achievements and rich heritage of German Americans, but also the strong ties between Germany and the United States. Our two nations share unbreakable bonds as allies with solemn obligations to one another's security; values that inspired those brave settlers four centuries ago; and a vision for a safer, freer, more peaceful, more prosperous world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 6, 2010, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history of German Americans and reflect on the many contributions they have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand ten, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

U.S. Looking for New Course in Africa, Secretary Clinton Says

By Susan Domowitz
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. ambassadors in Africa must help the United States chart a new course for sustainable American engagement on the continent, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says. Clinton addressed the ambassadors at the annual African Chiefs of Mission Conference at the State Department in Washington October 5.

"What happens in Africa has a very direct and growing impact on what happens in Europe and what happens in the United States," Clinton told the ambassadors.

The secretary said the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa include poverty, corruption, conflicts and terrorism.

"We are continuing to try to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law" in Africa, she said. "We know that the challenges of staying on a course of open, transparent government, with moving away from the sort of big-man theory of governance, to move away from our relationship, as President Obama said in Ghana, from one of patronage to partnership, takes time. ... There are no quick fixes here at all."

The department's Bureau of African Affairs is rebuilding bilateral and multilateral collaboration and engagement in Africa, Clinton said. "It's very important that we do more to build up the African Union and other regional entities like the East African Community, which has a real potential for being an engine of economic prosperity."

The secretary praised African participation in peacekeeping efforts in the region and noted that the United States has helped train more than 120,000 peacekeeping soldiers.

"Africans have been extraordinarily willing, from Senegal to Ghana to Burundi, to engage in peacekeeping. But it is important that we continue our training and our oversight," she said. "We also have to do a better job of working with the U.N. so that their peacekeeping presence of non-African forces, such as in eastern Congo, are more responsive and better able to meet the needs of the civilian population for protection and security."

Clinton pointed to U.S. commitments — \$6.3 billion — to public health projects in Africa aimed at ending deaths from malaria and tuberculosis and eradicating polio from

the continent. The great need, she said, is to “make sure ... that we use this money to help build the capacity of African institutions themselves, to treat these diseased, to have more of a systematic approach to health care, to address the brain drain that deprives the continent of medical professionals.”

“I really believe not only in Africa’s potential, but in the potential of the State Department and USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] and our entire government to have a more productive, constructive, sustainable engagement with Africa into the 21st century,” Clinton said.

Economic Recovery Should Remain in Focus, Treasury Secretary Says

By Andrzej Zwanecki
Staff Writer

Washington— U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said October 6 the U.S. economy is recovering despite weaknesses in real estate and construction sectors, and urged other countries to focus on accelerating the pace of recovery before shifting attention to long-term fiscal challenges.

“It’s healing more quickly than any of us thought,” Geithner said of the U.S. economy at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Still, Geithner said, output and employment in the United States and other major advanced economies are significantly below pre-crisis levels and the rate of growth is not sufficient to repair quickly the damages caused by the financial crisis and recession. Therefore, he said, it is critical not to withdraw too quickly measures stimulating growth and job creation. Otherwise, countries run the risk of derailing the recovery, he added.

“We need to continue providing well-targeted support for the recovery in the near term even as we put in place plans to help ensure fiscal sustainability over the longer term,” he said, speaking at the research organization in advance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank’s October 9–10 sessions.

Germany, the United Kingdom and some other countries concerned about rising budget deficits have emphasized policies designed to encourage fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets. The debt crisis in Greece and some other European nations has only added urgency to what many European policymakers see as a priority. But Geithner played down “concern about the near-term limits to more growth-oriented economic policies.”

“Most of us still have the capacity to take additional actions that would improve both short-run and long-run

growth prospects,” he said. He acknowledged that different economies face different challenges and different policy constraints. But he said that the global economy will be better off “if we make policy in a cooperative framework.”

For economic growth to be sustainable in the long term, Geithner said, the pattern of global growth must change. The current pattern has produced huge trade deficits in the United States, where growth was driven by debt-based consumption, and produced trade surpluses in China, Germany and some other countries where growth was driven by exports and savings.

Geithner said the United States has started changing its growth model as private savings increase considerably, and that the government plans to bring down the fiscal deficit to a sustainable level. Other countries have yet to significantly change their policies to de-emphasize exports and encourage domestic consumption, he said. Without naming any country, he said major emerging economies need to move faster toward more flexible, more market-oriented exchange rate systems.

Private sector U.S. economists and manufacturers say that the Chinese yuan is considerably undervalued, which gives Chinese companies a competitive advantage and helps boost their exports. When major economies keep their currencies undervalued, Geithner said, it encourages other countries to follow suit, which can cause broader economic problems and market distortions. Geithner cast the exchange-rate issue as a multilateral — rather than U.S. — problem that requires “a cooperative role,” including the greater role for the IMF.

He said the IMF will play a major role in a new global economic and financial framework. The progress that the Group of 20 major economies has made so far on replacing the old pattern with a new one, however, is at risk of being undermined by only limited progress on consumption-inducing policies in the surplus countries and by the unresolved exchange-rate issue, Geithner said.

A senior Treasury official who briefed reporters a day earlier said that the United States expects “a robust agreement” among IMF members on the “critical importance of allowing adjustments to take place in the global economy.” The official said countries together can face complex economic challenges just as U.S. and European Union policymakers have done in taking similar approaches to financial reform. The official said that legislative measures European and other countries have been working on “are highly consistent for the most part” with the financial reform bill enacted in July.

Nations Must Cooperate More to Combat International Crime

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Nations must work cooperatively to combat transnational crime, which generates trillions of dollars annually from money laundering, human and illicit drug trafficking, counterfeiting, environmental crimes and financial fraud, says presidential adviser James Jones.

“Today, right now, we have an opportunity for cooperation not just between the United States and Russia, but among all nations,” Jones said. “It’s up to us to seize the moment.”

Jones, who is President Obama’s national security adviser, spoke October 5 at the Sochi Security Conference at the Black Sea resort city. Among the participants from more than 40 countries in the October 5–6 conference are secretaries of national security councils, presidential security advisers and security ministers.

While at the conference, Jones also met with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev to continue the U.S.-Russian Security Council Dialogue, which focuses on how the two governments can cooperate to reduce shared threats, National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said.

Jones told the security conference that there was a time as late as 1990 during which organized crime syndicates operated as rigid structures that remained largely domestic or regional in scope. They rarely, if ever, made connections with drug cartels or terrorist groups.

“Today, many of these criminal syndicates operate globally; they are comprised of loose networks that cooperate intermittently but maintain their independence; and they employ sophisticated technology and financial savvy,” Jones told conference delegates.

“They are raising the specter of significant damage to the global economy by increasing their penetration of legitimate markets — blending illicit and ordinary business practices — and by conducting ever-more sophisticated cybercrimes that undermine trust in the security of our financial system,” he added.

Jones, a retired U.S. Marine general, told the conference of the increasing cooperation between the United States and Russia on arms control, the global economy, counterterrorism and the Afghanistan conflict. But he called for greater cooperation against the sharply increasing threat posed by transnational criminal organizations.

One of the more disturbing trends in transnational crime, Jones said, is the rising collaboration between criminal organizations and terrorist groups, which often turn to criminals to acquire advanced weapons and even weapons of mass destruction.

“This lethal nexus of organized crime, narco-trafficking, and terrorism is a threat that the United States, Russia and all of us share and should be working together to combat,” Jones told the conference. “As criminal enterprises grow increasingly global, complex and sophisticated, only a multidimensional, multilateral strategy can combat them — one that takes advantage of the full range of our capabilities.”

Jones said that the global drug trade is expanding to criminal groups in countries like Russia, China, Italy and in the Balkans — countries that had not previously been victimized by narcotics trafficking. Citing the drug trade, Jones said that opium and heroin trafficked from Afghanistan funds the Taliban insurgency as well as insurgents and criminal groups in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia.

The consequences of transnational crime are no longer a purely domestic problem, Jones said, but now have become a national security issue affecting major regions and across many continents.

The national security adviser said that nations must organize around a set of fundamental principles that include:

- Protecting citizens from the violence and exploitation of criminal networks.
- Helping vulnerable countries fight corruption and foster good governance, and sever powerful state-crime relationships.
- Breaking the financial infrastructures of transnational criminal networks.
- Building international consensus and cooperation.

In addition, Jones said nations must strengthen traditional law enforcement functions such as interdiction, investigations and prosecutions, while sharing information and intelligence among national law enforcement agencies. He said that nations must provide better protection for their national economies by denying criminals access to the international financial system.

“We should seek new ways to disrupt drug trafficking, which facilitates so many other illicit enterprises,” Jones told delegates.

An additional step is border protection, he added, which makes it more difficult for smugglers and traffickers to carry out their activities.

Jones said that countries like the United States must also help improve the capabilities of emerging and developing partner states, which may have involuntarily provided a safe haven for criminal networks.

Cash for Coverage: The Unreported Dark Side of Journalism

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

This is the second article in a two-part series on journalism and corruption.

Washington — In sharp contrast to journalism's essential role to inform the public about corruption, there is a sad reality that some journalists and news outlets are willing to accept bribes or even extort money to determine what they choose to cover and how they will present it to their audiences.

Whether because of low salaries, greed or other motivations, these journalists work in the interests of governments, political figures, corporations or private individuals who want to control what is said about them and are willing to pay for it, according to the report *Cash for Coverage: Bribery of Journalists Around the World*, by Bill Ristow, which was prepared for the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) in Washington.

The concept of cash for coverage is "the dark part of journalism" that occurs every day somewhere in the world, Rosental Alves said in Ristow's report. Alves is the director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas.

"It's not an issue that's much covered," Alves said. "We have been so much engaged in defending journalists that we become shy sometimes in uncovering or exposing this side of our craft."

The report offers examples of South African reporters who were paid to provide positive reports on an African National Congress official while he battled party rivals, newspapers in Cambodia that uncover compromising information on prominent individuals to receive blackmail payments for agreeing not to run the stories, advertising material in Ukraine that is passed off as news, and examples from all over the world that appear to show that offering small amounts of cash or gifts to reporters can be a normal or even accepted practice.

Journalists who take money or gifts from their news sources usually find it difficult to write or broadcast anything against them. In some countries, including the United States, journalists can find themselves caught between doing objective reporting and maintaining access to valuable sources.

Correcting the problem of corruption within journalism can be problematic, especially in places where journalists are poorly paid and media owners are willing to use their platforms to advance political and economic agendas. But Ristow writes that public relations professionals who have grown tired of having to pay for publicity have been among the first to seek solutions.

He highlights the Russian firm Promaco, which decided in 2001 to write up a press release about a fictitious company and report on which news agencies decided to run it. Promaco found that while one outlet ran the release without payment and seven others either declined to run it or labeled it as advertising, 13 publications demanded fees ranging from around \$500 to \$2,000. Promaco exposed the firms that demanded payment and publicly embarrassed them. The firm also shared its methodology with public relations agencies around the world in hopes of encouraging more such operations.

For any news organization, the loss of credibility is devastating, and that risk provides avenues for solutions. "We need to understand that what makes journalism different is the ethics," Ristow quotes Alves as saying.

MEDIA BIAS?

Speakers who addressed the topic at a September 29 panel discussion at CIMA also highlighted the need to investigate the political ties and power relations of news media owners and the effect they have on their outlet's editorial stance.

"There has to be a huge amount of awareness," said Nathaniel Heller from Global Integrity, a Washington-based organization that tracks governance and corruption trends around the world.

Stefan Candea of the Romanian Center for Investigative Journalism emphasized the need for proper training, especially in places such as Eastern Europe where there is no tradition of investigative journalism and news has been "mainly a propaganda tool."

"I would rather go to train a very young student than to train a reporter who used to work in a newsroom for five years, let's say, because that reporter has already learned what he shouldn't do," he said. He urged local journalists to build a strong "brand" of investigative journalism that is known to be independent and a credible alternative to outlets that are owned or invested in by those who use them to promote their interests.

Where journalistic corruption is so widespread that reporters will get paid for merely attending an event, Heller suggested that event hosts can find ways to demand more from reporters. He said that in Uganda he

decided he would only pay the fee in exchange for blog posts that discussed “the state of journalism and low salaries.” He also urged that reporters’ salaries be published and compared.

In cases where favorable news coverage is needed to guarantee access to news sources, some CIMA panelists looked to journalists themselves to correct the problem. For example, they can make use of hundreds of access and disclosure laws that are available in countries around the world but seldom used, said Rosemary Armao, who teaches journalism and communication at the State University of New York at Albany.

Armao also said reporters should be willing to embarrass news sources who decline to be interviewed or who do not provide answers. When Armao was working for a news outlet in Bosnia, a Bosnian government agency had refused for months to disclose the names of companies that were not paying pension taxes.

Her news outlet “wrote this long, extended story on how it took them four months to find out the names of the people who weren’t paying their taxes,” she said. When news sources cannot provide answers that they should know, journalists should point that out and “make them look like a fool,” she said.

But Frank Vogl from Transparency International and the Partnership for Transparency Fund said much of investigative journalism does not need high-level sources to be effective.

Using discrepancies in hospital fees as an example, he suggested comparing several different institutions in different municipalities and discovering where fees for certain treatments are higher in some places than others. “You start to ask why and you start to find all sorts of corrupt practices going on at certain levels that directly affect the citizens,” he said.

Ultimately, it is in journalists’ own interests to reinforce their profession’s ethical guidelines. In Ristow’s report, the International Press Institute’s press freedom manager, Anthony Mills, said failure to do so not only hurts their jobs, but hurts the cause of press freedom as a whole. “A press that would take bribes ... is not free,” Mills said.

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