

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

*A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy*

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## Secretary Clinton on Terrorist Attack in Marrakech, Morocco

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
April 28, 2011

### STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

#### Terrorist Attack in Marrakech, Morocco

The United States condemns in the strongest terms today's terrorist attack that killed and injured innocent people at a café in Marrakech, Morocco. We extend our deepest sympathies to the victims of this cowardly attack and stand with the people of Morocco at this difficult time. Acts of terrorism must not be tolerated wherever and whenever they occur.

U.S. Embassy personnel continue to work with Moroccan authorities to obtain additional information and the United States offers our full assistance to the Moroccan government as it works to investigate this attack and bring those accountable to justice.

#### U.N. Council Calls for Probe of Syria on Human Rights Abuses

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Syrian government's violent crackdown on its political opponents has led the U.N. Human Rights Council to condemn its actions and call for an investigation into human rights abuses. In addition, President Obama has signed an executive order imposing U.S. sanctions on three senior officials in Syria's security apparatus, as well as two entities connected with the violence.

The Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, adopted a resolution April 29 in which it "unequivocally" condemned the Syrian government's use of "lethal violence against peaceful protesters" and "hindrance of access to medical treatment."

The resolution calls on Syrian authorities to release all political prisoners and refrain from reprisals against demonstrators. It also urges authorities to "enlarge the scope of political participation aimed at ensuring civil liberties and enhancing social justice."

The resolution requests that the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights "urgently dispatch a mission" to Syria to investigate allegations of human rights abuses with the goal of ensuring full accountability for any crimes. The investigative mission has also been

asked to provide reports and updates on the human rights situation to the council.

In New York, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice welcomed the resolution, saying the human rights council had "stood against attempts to silence dissent with the use of gratuitous violence, which is not the act of a responsible government."

In an April 29 statement, Rice said the resolution marked "an important precedent" for the council, and that the United States strongly supports its decision to ask for an investigation into Syrian human rights abuses.

Rice also noted that Syria is seeking membership on the human rights council, and said the resolution condemning its actions "underscores the incongruity" of its candidacy.

"Meeting legitimate calls for reform with tanks and bullets is unacceptable behavior by any government, least of all an aspiring member of the council," she said.

Human rights groups have reported that about 500 people have been killed by Syrian security forces since demonstrations calling for greater political freedoms began in March. According to press reports, nearly 50 were killed April 29 as they were participating in demonstrations across the country.

President Obama signed an executive order April 29 that imposes sanctions on three Syrian security officials and two entities responsible for human rights abuses, including the use of violence against civilians.

The sanctions seize any property the individuals or entities have in the United States and prohibit Americans from engaging in transactions with them, according to an April 29 White House fact sheet.

The sanctions target Mahir al-Asad, who commands the Syrian army's 4th Armored Division and has "played a leading role in the Syrian regime's actions in Dar'a, where protesters have been killed by Syrian security forces," the fact sheet said.

Also sanctioned are Atif Najib, who was the head of the Political Security Directorate (PSD) for Dar'a province during March, and Ali Mamluk, the director of Syria's General Intelligence Directorate (GID).

According to the fact sheet, the GID, which is the "overarching civilian intelligence service" in the country, has been targeted by sanctions over its involvement in the regime's actions in Dar'a as well as its activities to repress internal dissent and monitor Syrian citizens. The Obama

administration has also sanctioned the Qods Force of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, saying it serves as the conduit for the Iranian government's material support for the Syrian regime's crackdown on civilians.

"Despite the Government of Iran's public rhetoric claiming revolutionary solidarity with people throughout the region, Iran's actions in support of the Syrian regime place it in stark opposition to the will of the Syrian people," the fact sheet said.

### **U.S.-South Korea Trade Deal Would Benefit Both Countries**

By MacKenzie C. Babb  
Staff Writer

Washington — A proposed free trade agreement between the United States and South Korea would benefit the businesses and people of both countries, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke says.

"I am absolutely confident that the U.S.-Korea trade deal is going to be good for the companies and workers of both countries," Locke said in prepared remarks April 28 to the American Chamber of Commerce in Seoul.

The pact, signed in 2007 but yet to be ratified by the two countries' legislatures, would eliminate about 95 percent of tariffs between the economies. Locke said the agreement would also make regulations and approval processes faster, more transparent and more predictable.

"That's going to mean more goods and services being sold. And it's going to mean more jobs in America and here in Korea," Locke told the business leaders.

He said the deal is the United States' most significant trade agreement in 17 years, adding it is estimated to increase American economic output more than the last nine U.S. trade deals combined. Locke called South Korea "one of the most dynamic economies in the entire world," and said it is "critically important" for U.S. companies to be active there. He noted that South Korea has nearly doubled its gross domestic product (GDP) since 1998, and said the country "has arrived as a global economic power." Locke attributed the successes to smart government policies that "unlocked the ingenuity of the Korean people" through investments in education and innovation.

The secretary underscored the benefits of the trade deal as being "equally significant for the Korean people and business community." Under the agreement, Locke said, South Korea would secure increased investments in its \$580 billion service industries, preferential access to the world's largest consumer market and a tariff edge over

global competitors. He said the pact would enable South Korea to become more competitive and would move the country closer to its goal of becoming a financial center of northeast Asia. The secretary also said South Korean consumers would benefit immensely from the deal through lower prices for daily commodities and other purchases.

Locke said the agreement would allow more than 60 percent of U.S. agricultural export sales to South Korea to become duty-free immediately, and at least 95 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to South Korea to become duty-free within five years. He said most remaining tariffs would be eliminated within 10 years.

The secretary said the agreement includes environmental, labor and intellectual property standards and protections to benefit both countries.

Locke highlighted the importance of trade in creating better jobs and growth, speeding the delivery of transformative ideas and technology, and hastening democracy and the spread of freedom. He praised the last 60 years of "strong economic, strategic and cultural ties" between the United States and South Korea, highlighting specifically joint military efforts on the Korean Peninsula and in Afghanistan and Iraq, cooperation to combat climate change and recent partnerships by businesses from both countries to pursue unprecedented collaboration, innovation and trade. Locke expressed hope that relations would "continue to flourish" as both countries work toward ratifying the deal.

### **Space Shuttle Mission Stalls; Launch Postponed**

By Charlene Porter  
Staff Writer

Washington — The space shuttle Endeavour won't be working this weekend after all.

NASA stopped the countdown for the launch hours before it approached the 20:00 UTC liftoff April 29, citing a technical problem with the shuttle, often ranked among the most complicated pieces of machinery ever built by humankind.

The 134th shuttle mission was shut down when engineers detected a malfunction of a heating unit that protects some shuttle parts from freezing in the cold of outer space once in orbit. The cause of the malfunction is unknown and the task of finding it is a job in itself. The delay will set back the launch a minimum of 72 hours, pushing it to May 2 or later.

Shuttle launch director Mike Leinbach said the delay is "unfortunate" but "we will not fly before we're ready, and that's where we are today."

One possible cause of the malfunction is an electrical short in a switchbox leading to the heater. In a machine that runs with 370 kilometers of wiring and more than 2.5 million parts, according to a NASA fact sheet, there's a lot that can go wrong. This is the final mission for the spacecraft Endeavour, and it won't begin with the slightest suspicion of trouble because history is well remembered at the space agency.

Endeavour was built as a replacement for the shuttle Challenger, which burst into flames moments after liftoff in January 1986 and disintegrated into the ocean in a searing televised disaster. The nation was stunned with the knowledge that seven astronauts died as the television audience watched. The entire program froze for 32 months while investigators sought the cause, finally identified as the failure of a seal in the solid rocket booster.

But the commission that sought the answer found another cause, not of parts, but of process. NASA had developed an organizational culture where members of the support crew were reluctant to bring problems to the forefront. Engineers knew about the weakness of the seal that ultimately failed, but no one spoke up.

NASA created a new Office of Safety, Reliability and Quality Assurance in response to the commission's findings and slowed down a mission schedule that had contributed to staff reluctance to cause delays.

Even with the many successful launches that followed, the Challenger disaster scarred the national optimism about the space program, and kept Americans mindful of how tragically, how spectacularly it could fail.

The in-flight disintegration of the Shuttle Columbia in 2003 was the second epic disaster of the space program. It killed another seven astronauts as the spacecraft broke apart on re-entry into the atmosphere on its attempt to land.

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