

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Committed to Ratifying Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration will urge the U.S. Senate to ratify the 1996 treaty that bans all nuclear testing, and U.S. officials say they are in a position to make a strong case to overcome the objections lawmakers had when it came up for consideration in 1999.

In remarks to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna June 14, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Rose Gottemoeller said President Obama has an “unshakable commitment” to see the treaty ratified and entered into force.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty’s ratification is an essential step of Obama’s vision of a world without nuclear weapons, which he articulated in an April 2009 speech in Prague, she said.

The president’s vision has led the United States to redefine its use of nuclear weapons in its national defense strategy; convene a 47-nation Nuclear Security Summit to lock down vulnerable nuclear materials over a four-year period; ratify the U.S.-Russia arms cut treaty (New START) to reduce nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels since the 1950s; and join with other members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to strengthen one of the world’s oldest nonproliferation initiatives.

Gottemoeller said the December 2010 debate over New START has helped to prepare the Obama administration for “an equally thorough and robust debate” with U.S. lawmakers over the CTBT. “We do not expect it will be easy or happen quickly, but we will work hard to make it happen,” she said.

When the Senate failed to ratify the CTBT by the required two-thirds majority in 1999, senators expressed concerns over whether the agreement could be effectively verified to prevent other countries from violating it, Gottemoeller said.

Despite the Senate’s action, the United States has not conducted a nuclear test since 1992, and it is bearing the full costs of operating and maintaining the 31 stations of the International Monitoring System (IMS) that the treaty has assigned to the United States for verification purposes.

“These actions tangibly demonstrate the commitment of the United States to prepare for the entry into force of this treaty,” Gottemoeller said.

She called for the completion of the IMS, which is currently at 85 percent, and said a fully functioning verification system will serve “as a strong deterrent for any state party contemplating a nuclear test” and will support arguments for its ratification.

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher told the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington May 10 that the Obama administration has three main arguments in favor of CTBT ratification.

“One, the United States no longer needs to conduct nuclear explosive tests, plain and simple. Two, a CTBT that has entered into force will obligate other states not to test and provide a disincentive for states to conduct such tests. And three, we now have a greater ability to catch those who cheat,” Tauscher said in her prepared remarks.

The United States is in “a curious position” when it comes to the CTBT, she said.

“We abide by the core prohibition of the treaty because we don’t need to test nuclear weapons. And we have contributed to the development of the International Monitoring System. But the principal benefit of ratifying the treaty, constraining other states from testing, still eludes us. That doesn’t make any sense to me and it shouldn’t make any sense to the members of the Senate,” Tauscher said.

If the treaty enters into force, it will be difficult for other countries to advance their nuclear weapons capabilities, since they would “risk either deploying weapons that might not work or incur international condemnation and sanctions for testing,” she said.

## U.S. Official Wants Stronger Action Against Human Trafficking

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — Ten years ago, U.S. law enforcement gained new powers to stop human slavery under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. With the law came new understanding of this exploitive crime and new mechanisms to protect its victims, but now U.S. officials discuss how the campaign against this global crime must progress.

More than 130 nations have joined the United States in updating their laws to protect victims of trafficking and prosecute those who enslave others in the sex trade, sweat shops or domestic labor. In the next decade, Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, director of the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, says nations must work to make sure their anti-trafficking laws are being enforced and truly helping the victims, who often

cannot come forward on their own.

“That’s why it is incumbent upon such governments not only to aggressively prosecute traffickers,” CdeBaca said June 13, “but to couple effective law enforcement with robust victim identification and protection efforts and proactive attempts to prevent this crime.”

CdeBaca testified to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights. Up to now, law enforcement and prosecution efforts have been applied largely in countries where victims are enslaved. But victims first travel to foreign lands because of false promises of jobs and prosperity made by traffickers. Governments need to find ways to prevent such fraudulent recruitment, he said.

“The future of this struggle must be informed by our evolving knowledge of this crime and the different ways to fight it,” he said.

Corporate accountability is the new frontier for the prevention of human trafficking, CdeBaca said, as companies face mounting pressure to be aware of abusive labor practices at every step of the supply chain in their production process.

Many companies in the tourism industry have acknowledged the existence of trafficking in their businesses, and addressed the problem with adoption of a code of conduct. Deborah Cundy, a vice president of travel company Carlson, explained the code to the subcommittee.

“The code of conduct basically asks that the signatory train its employees in what to look for and how to report it so that the employee base becomes a virtual army of eyes and ears,” Cundy said.

The influence of the code passed a milestone recently, Cundy said, when two tourism giants, Delta Airlines and Hilton Hotels, adopted it. Cundy said her company looks forward to the time when the participation of tourism companies in anti-trafficking measures is not considered a “corporate social responsibility” but a normal business practice.

The 2000 law required the U.S. State Department to compile an annual report surveying human trafficking worldwide. The 2010 report cited a total of more than 12 million people trafficked each year for labor and sex. An updated version of the report is expected by the end of June.

## Steinberg Praises Colombian Partnership, Progress

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington – Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg praised the partnership between the United States and Colombia and commended the South American nation for the progress in tackling national and regional problems that has made possible its recent emergence as an international leader.

“It’s important to remember how far we have come,” Steinberg, the second-highest-ranking U.S. diplomat, said June 13 in remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ Colombia 2020 conference in Washington.

He said that just 15 years ago, some regional experts were discussing Colombia’s status as a potentially failed state.

“Yet today, Colombia is the fourth-largest recipient of foreign direct investment in Latin America,” Steinberg said. “And, along with tremendous economic growth and achievements on the security front, we have now seen a movement to an even more broad-based strategy – the democratic prosperity agenda” that ensures all Colombians will share in the country’s achievements.

He said security gains since 2002 include a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks by 77 percent, a drop in homicide rates by 56 percent and a plunge in the number of kidnappings, which have fallen by 92 percent.

“Colombia has gone from being a consumer of security to a provider of security and support for others who face even greater challenges,” Steinberg said. He added that the country now sits on the United Nations Security Council and trains police to help other nations meet their security needs.

“Over the last two years, Colombia has trained more than 9,000 police from 18 Latin American and three West African states. It’s trained hundreds of Mexican investigators and dozens of Mexican helicopter pilots. It’s offered similar assistance to its Central American neighbors, who are deeply affected by transnational crime and drug trafficking,” Steinberg said.

He said the United States is “honored to partner with Colombia” across a full range of issues through the U.S.-Colombia High-Level Partnership Dialogue, which has established working groups to tackle issues related to science and technology, energy, environmental protection and climate change, culture and education, social and economic opportunities, and democracy, human rights and good governance. At the last meeting, held earlier in 2011, more than 60 Colombian officials joined with more than 120 U.S. representatives to discuss how best to

cooperate in each topic.

Steinberg said U.S. and Colombian officials are focused on concrete results “to demonstrate to our people in both countries that this is a partnership that delivers the goods.”

He praised the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement as a chance to open new markets and create new jobs and opportunities for people of both countries, and said U.S. leaders are “confident and optimistic” that the process to pass the agreement will move forward in 2011.

Steinberg commended Colombians’ “palpable sense of a future.” He said that while the country’s work is not over, the “sense of optimism, the sense that Colombia can not only survive, but thrive, is critical.”

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