

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama, Secretary Clinton Condemn Mumbai Bomb Attacks

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton condemned bombings in the Indian city of Mumbai, and said the United States will support India's efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice.

According to press reports, at least 21 people were killed in separate bomb attacks that targeted the Opera House, Zaveri Bazaar and Dadar areas of the city July 13.

In a July 13 statement, President Obama condemned the bombings as "deplorable terrorist attacks" and offered condolences to the victims and their families.

"India is a close friend and partner of the United States," he said. "The American people will stand with the Indian people in times of trial, and we will offer support to India's efforts to bring the perpetrators of these terrible crimes to justice."

The president also praised "the strength and resilience of the Indian people," and said he was certain they would be able to overcome the attacks.

Secretary Clinton, at a signing ceremony with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Washington July 13, said the bombings had been intended to provoke "fear and division," but the perpetrators "must know they cannot succeed."

She said she will travel to New Delhi July 19 as planned for the second India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue.

"The Indian people have suffered from acts of terrorism before, and we have seen them respond with courage and resilience," Clinton said.

"I believe it is more important than ever that we stand with India, deepen our partnership and reaffirm our commitment to the shared struggle against terrorism," she said.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said July 13 that the Obama administration has offered its "full support and assistance to the government of India in their response to and investigation of the attack."

Under Secretary of State William Burns telephoned Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao earlier in the day to convey U.S. condolences and offer support, Toner said.

Toner said it is "far too early to speculate" on who carried out the attacks.

"The Indian government will no doubt begin an investigation of this incident, and we'll wait for their results. And as I said, we stand ready to cooperate with them," he said.

## U.S. Economy Sees Boost in GDP, Continues Modest Recovery

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. economy has continued to recover at a modest pace, with the country's gross domestic product (GDP) rising at an annual rate of about 2 percent during the first three months of this year.

Although the GDP has increased, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said, the unemployment rate, which appeared to be moving steadily downward earlier in 2011, has climbed back up above 9 percent. Bernanke delivered his semiannual monetary policy report to the House of Representatives Financial Services Committee July 13. His testimony follows recent economic reports that unemployment hit 9.2 percent in June, while the trade deficit increased to \$50.2 billion in May.

"The recent weaker-than-expected economic performance appears to have been the result of several factors that are likely to be temporary," Bernanke said, citing increases in the price of energy, especially gasoline, and food. He also said in prepared remarks that the earthquake in Japan had caused supply chain disruptions that have affected U.S. automakers.

"Looking forward, however, the apparent stabilization in the prices of oil and other commodities should ease the pressure on household budgets, and vehicle manufacturers report that they are making significant progress in overcoming the parts shortages and expect to increase production substantially this summer," he said.

Due to these developments, Bernanke said, economists predict the GDP will continue to increase at a rate of 2.7 to 2.9 percent in 2011, and between 3.3 percent and 3.7 percent in 2012. The GDP, as the measure of a country's output of goods and services, is a primary indicator of economic health. The predictions were made by members of the Federal Reserve Board and presidents of Federal Reserve banks, prepared in conjunction with the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting in June.

The FOMC is the policymaking arm of the Federal Reserve, and its members meet throughout the year to assess market conditions and make decisions intended to keep the economy running smoothly. Bernanke said the committee expects that "the pace of the economic recovery over coming quarters will likely remain moderate, that the unemployment rate will consequently decline only gradually, and that inflation will subside."

Therefore, he said, the committee has decided to maintain a “highly accommodative monetary policy.”

The policy consists of two parts. The first is to maintain an exceptionally low level for the federal funds rate, which the committee expects will continue for an extended period. The second is to increase the Federal Reserve’s holdings of longer-term securities. Both actions are meant to result in lower borrowing costs and easier financial conditions throughout the economy, in turn promoting more rapid economic growth.

Bernanke said the Federal Reserve Board will continue to monitor economic conditions and will carefully adjust its policies accordingly.

### **NASA Plans New Future for Space Program as Shuttle Era Ends**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — The 30-year era of the space shuttle will end in about a week, but NASA, the Congress and the Obama administration are having some difficulty coming to terms on what’s ahead for the United States in space exploration.

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden forecasts an ambitious future for the agency, based on the president’s agenda for 2017, “with an incredible potential for discovery, increasing our knowledge of our solar system, developing technologies to improve life, expanding our presence in space, increasing space commerce and engaging the public.” Bolden testified July 12 before the House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

But some members of the Science Committee are frustrated with NASA and its delay in presenting the lawmakers with designs, goals and cost estimates on two hardware components that will carry U.S. astronauts farther than they have ever been: a Space Launch System (SLS) and the Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle (MPCV).

“We have waited for answers that have not come,” said Science Committee Chairman Robert Hall, a representative from Texas. “We have pleaded for answers that have not come.”

Bolden, a retired Marine Corps general who went into space on four shuttle missions, said NASA is working to adapt space vehicle systems begun several years ago to serve the latest goals for human space travel. Technicians are taking many needs into consideration, and that takes time.

“We are striving to design an evolvable and interoperable human spaceflight transportation system that will serve

us for decades to come as we explore multiple compelling mission destinations,” Bolden said.

Bolden says NASA is working toward 2017 to roll out the new SLS and crew vehicle for their first trials, with the longer goal of landing a manned mission on an asteroid by 2025. In the meantime, with resources devoted to those goals, NASA is retiring the shuttle, and losing its capability to put humans in low Earth orbit. Chairman Hall is displeased with that lost capability.

“We had every expectation that NASA would have announced its Space Launch System architecture well before today,” Hall said, “with the goal that committee members would have the opportunity to ask questions regarding cost, schedule, capabilities and the like. ... Sadly, that is not the case.”

Bolden said developing new spaceflight systems with a constrained budget is a challenge that NASA will view as “the opportunity to become more efficient, innovative and agile in our programs.”

At about the same time that Bolden was testifying at the U.S. Capitol, astronauts Ron Garan and Mike Fossum were conducting a six-hour spacewalk, performing upgrades and maintenance on the exterior of the space station. It is the only spacewalk scheduled during this shuttle flight, the last before this class of spacecraft is retired.

Another major task for the astronauts has been unpacking about 3,600 kilograms of supplies, gear, and spare parts that came up from Earth onboard Atlantis to sustain the space station. When that’s done, they’ll load the same container module with 2,300 kilograms of stuff that’s no longer needed on the station and carry it back to Earth.

While the astronauts have a great view of the stars up there, NASA is piping in the sound to go with it. On Day Five of the mission, astronauts woke to the 1972 classic “Rocket Man” by British rocker Elton John. The superstar had a message for the astronauts as well. “Good morning, Atlantis, this is Elton John. We wish you much success on your mission. A huge thank you to all the men and women at NASA who worked on the shuttle for the last three decades.”

### **U.S., Russia Sign Agreements on Adoption, Plutonium Disposal**

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praised the advancement of U.S.-Russian relations under the Obama administration and said both countries need to “continue and maintain the momentum” for the good of their people.

Clinton met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov July 13 in Washington, where they signed agreements to increase cooperation in nuclear-weapons-grade plutonium disposal, air navigation, visa services between the two countries, research on the effects of radiation exposure safeguarding adoption procedures.

Speaking with Lavrov, Clinton said the past two and a half years have been "a time of great strides in the relationship between our countries," citing new arms control agreements and new security and diplomatic cooperation.

"Our challenge now is to continue and maintain the momentum in order to deliver more results for both of our people," she said.

Lavrov said there is now a "new quality" to Russian-U.S. cooperation. "We do not only think about strategic things. We also care about our citizens, and I think that this is a lesson ... for our cooperation for many years ahead."

The new agreement on the intercountry adoption of children provides important safeguards to protect the safety and security of Russians who are adopted by American parents and increases the transparency of the adoption process, Clinton said.

"We both want the same outcomes. We want all children, whether they be Russian children or American children, to be able to have loving homes with families that will take good care of them," she said, and the United States "wants to be sure that we meet all of the concerns that the Russian side raised."

Lavrov said the agreement offers guarantees and safeguards for both parents and children and ensures that "an adoptive parent is psychologically stable, that the family has come through a special filter of authorized bodies authorized by the United States government, and that the adoptive parents provide access of Russian diplomats to the children living in the United States."

The United States and Russia also agreed to begin disposing of excess weapons-grade plutonium in 2018 as part of their efforts to "eliminate nuclear-weapon-grade materials and to reduce nuclear dangers," according to a July 13 State Department fact sheet.

The fact sheet said the agreement marks an "essential step" in the nuclear disarmament process "by making these reductions in plutonium stocks irreversible."

In her remarks, Clinton said the agreement "commits both of our countries to dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of weapons-grade uranium on each side, the equivalent of

some 17,000 nuclear weapons."

Clinton and Lavrov also signed an agreement to renew cooperation on researching the effects of radiation in order to try to minimize the consequences of radioactive contamination on health and the environment.

Under the agreement, 30 U.S. and 200 Russian scientists and technical personnel will undertake studies on radiation doses and epidemiology and collaborate on a repository of tissue samples from workers at the Mayak nuclear facility in Russia, where workers and the surrounding communities have been exposed to radiation, according to a July 12 State Department fact sheet.

"Studying the health of Russian nuclear workers and people resident in nearby communities who have been exposed to radiation improves our understanding of the risks of employment in the nuclear industry and reinforces the importance of U.S. and global radiation protection standards and practices," the fact sheet said.

Russia and the United States also concluded an agreement on nonimmigrant visas that will facilitate the travel of businesspeople and tourists, allowing multiple-entry visas and reducing the level of documentation.

Clinton said the agreement is of special importance to business people in both countries.

"Businessmen and women can travel multiple times between our two countries over 36 months on a single visa. This is a big deal for those who are doing business, and we are laying the groundwork for even more trade and travel," she said.

The two countries also agreed to increase their air traffic control and navigation cooperation, allowing the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the State Air Traffic Management Corporation of the Russian Federation to cooperate more closely on communication, navigation, surveillance, air navigation facilities and air traffic management.

Clinton said the agreement will "enhance information sharing and ultimately make even more air traffic between our countries even safer."

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