

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Vice President Biden Says U.S. and China Working for Economic Growth, Security

Washington — Vice President Biden told Chinese university students that China and the United States are working together to promote greater economic growth that is sustainable and balanced and trade that is free and fair.

“Trade and investment between our countries are growing rapidly in both countries, in both directions, creating jobs and economic opportunities in both countries,” Biden said in an August 21 speech at the Sichuan University Huaxi Campus in Chengdu. Biden wrapped up a five-day visit to Beijing and Chengdu before leaving for Mongolia, the next stop on a three-nation visit to Northeast Asia that will conclude in Japan.

A March U.S. Congressional Research Service analysis of the U.S. and Chinese economies says that the two trading partners are the largest and second-largest economies in the world, though the U.S. economy is three times larger than that of China. China’s economy has become a significant driver of global economic growth and China has become an important economic hub for Asia.

The analysis also states that while China is the United States’ second-largest trading partner, Chinese imports into the United States make up 19 percent of all U.S. imports. The country is the third-largest market for U.S. exports, and it is the second-largest export market for U.S. agricultural products.

In 2010, bilateral trade in goods between the United States and China totaled \$457 billion, with U.S. imports from China totaling \$365 billion and U.S. exports to China totaling \$92 billion. By comparison, in 1979 — the year the United States and China normalized relations — total U.S.-China trade was \$2 billion.

In trade in services, the United States runs a surplus with China, with exports to China of \$16 billion in 2008 (the latest year for which statistics are available) and imports from China valued at \$10 billion, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

“The American people and the Chinese people are hopefully becoming aware that it’s in our mutual interest in each of our countries to promote that exchange,” Biden said in Chengdu. “To state it bluntly, we have a stake in one another’s success.”

Biden told the students that the United States is working to put its long-term fiscal policies on a sustainable path. And he said it is also important that the United States and China, along with partners in the Group of 20 (G20)

advanced economies, continue to sustain the global recovery and create continued economic security. The G20 has been working for the past three years to strengthen and enhance the global economy and recovery, and also to rebalance economies that have become too dependent on consumer spending or export trade.

In remarks to the university students, the vice president also sought to assure the Chinese people that the U.S. economy and Chinese investments in U.S. Treasury securities are safe despite the economic and budgetary debate in recent months in Washington. China holds about \$1.17 trillion in U.S. Treasury securities.

China and the United States both need global security stability, including preventing North Korea and Iran from developing and fielding nuclear weapons and the long-range ballistic missiles to deliver them within their regions and across the globe, Biden said. Biden and President Obama have repeatedly told Asian audiences that the United States long has been an active member and partner in the Asia-Pacific region and will remain so.

“I know that China shares our concerns, but some of you may wonder why our focus — the focus of the United States — is so intense,” Biden said. “The reason is clear — if armed with nuclear weapons on long-range missiles, North Korea and Iran would pose a direct and serious threat to the security of the United States of America and our allies.”

“That is why we’ve been working with China and our international partners to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and to achieve a complete denuclearization of North Korea,” Biden added.

Biden said that without vigilant implementation of political and economic sanctions on Iran, that nation will evade the consequences of actions and measures designed to end its nuclear weapons development program.

During his speech, Biden, who is visiting China as a guest of Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, said that the Obama administration has worked hard with the Chinese leadership to develop a cooperative partnership through more than 60 separate dialogues on issues of mutual concern. The premier forum that has been developed and has proven valuable is the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, which brings together policymakers from both governments in regular meetings in Beijing and Washington to discuss a range of issues from trade barriers to climate change, Biden added. In addition, he said, there is a new Strategic Security Dialogue that provides a new channel for civilian and military leaders to discuss sensitive topics, including cyber and maritime security, he said.

After his Sichuan University speech, Biden and Xi visited Qingchengshan High School in Dujiangyan. The school was rebuilt after the devastating May 2008 earthquake in the Wenchuan region. While visiting the high school, Biden and Xi both signed a new Spalding basketball for the students.

Qingchengshan High School is a recipient of U.S. educational technology, including electronic whiteboards and interactive learning modules. The equipment was provided under a public-private partnership between Cisco Systems and the Sichuan province government, with support from a program by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The U.S. National Basketball Association donated four outdoor basketball courts and an indoor court to the high school and invited 100 students from the school to a funding raising exhibition game in Chengdu in 2010, according to the White House.

Middle East Quartet Statement on Attacks in Southern Israel

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
August 20, 2011
2011/1354

MEDIA NOTE

Joint Statement by the Quartet on Attacks in Southern Israel

The following statement was issued by the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, Russian Federation, United States, and European Union):

The Quartet condemns the attacks in southern Israel on 18 August, 2011 and all acts of terrorism in the strongest terms. These are cowardly acts of premeditated terrorism. The Quartet hopes those involved in the planning and conduct of these gruesome attacks will quickly be brought to justice.

The Quartet remains concerned about the unsustainable situation in Gaza as well as the risk of escalation, and calls for restraint from all sides. The Quartet also expresses its concern about the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula. Recent commitments by the Egyptian government to address the security situation in the Sinai are important, and the Quartet encourages the Egyptian government to find a lasting resolution to the issue of Sinai security.

The Quartet extends its deepest condolences to the victims, their families and loved ones.

U.N.: Syria's Attacks May Be "Crimes Against Humanity"

UN News Centre
18 August 2011

Syrian crackdown on protesters may amount to crimes against humanity – UN report

The Syrian Government's "widespread and systematic" attacks against its own people may amount to crimes against humanity and warrant an investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC), the United Nations human rights office said in a report released today.

The Report of the Fact-finding Mission on Syria was produced by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in response to a request by the UN Human Rights Council.

The mission found "a pattern of human rights violations that constitutes widespread or systematic attacks against the civilian population, which may amount to crimes against humanity," states the report, which covers events from 15 March to 15 July. The violations include murder, enforced disappearances, torture, deprivation of liberty, and persecution.

As many as 2,000 Syrians have been killed in the past five months since the start of the pro-democracy protests, which are part of a broader uprising across North Africa and the Middle East that has led to the toppling of long-standing regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and conflict in Libya.

"The daily toll of killing and human rights abuses must halt immediately, and the perpetrators of serious human rights violations must be held accountable," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay told the Security Council when she presented the findings of the report.

"Every indication is that the pattern of widespread or systematic violations of human rights uncovered by the fact-finding mission is continuing today," she added. "Indeed, witnesses on the ground have told my office that the scale of military and security operations has in fact escalated in the past two weeks."

As Syria did not provide OHCHR access to the country, the findings in the report are based primarily on the mission's analysis of first-hand information obtained through interviews conducted with victims and witnesses.

The 13-member mission, headed by Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kyung-wha Kang,

gathered corroborative eyewitness statements with respect to numerous summary executions, including 353 named victims, and describes the disproportionate use of force by Syrian military and security forces.

The report states that, while demonstrations have been largely peaceful, the military and security forces have resorted to excessive force. Accounts from defecting security officers, corroborated by the location of bullet wounds on the dead, indicate an apparent "shoot-to-kill" policy, noted Ms. Pillay.

The report adds that "children have not only been targeted by security forces, but they have been repeatedly subject to the same human rights and criminal violations as adults, including torture, with no consideration for their vulnerable status.

"The fact that Syrian forces have tortured or killed children on several occasions, in what are clearly not isolated incidents, causes grave concern," it states.

Ms. Pillay recalled the principle agreed in 2005 by all UN Member States, by which each State has the responsibility to protect its populations from crimes against humanity and other international crimes.

"By failing to heed calls by the international community to cease all military and paramilitary operations against population centres, the Government of Syria is manifestly failing to fulfil its responsibility to protect the Syrian population from such crimes," she stated.

Under such circumstances, she said, the Security Council may wish to consider referring the situation in Syria to the ICC.

"It is vital that the Security Council conveys to the people of Syria the message that their protection is of utmost concern for the international community and that the United Nations supports their struggle for fundamental rights and freedoms," she added.

In an interview with UN TV, Ms. Pillay said that "what is most outrageous is that the people targeted are civilians who are exercising their legitimate rights, which are taken for granted in most democracies. It is shocking then that the President and his security forces could fire and kill those people."

"We are all hoping that the [Syrian] President [Bashar al-Assad] will carry out his intentions of stopping killings immediately, carrying out urgently needed reforms, and my office is there to assist in enabling the country to conduct serious reforms," she said.

She said the report had identified 50 individuals who bear

the most responsibility for the atrocities. Their names will be kept in confidence until OHCHR received a request by either a national or an international investigations body, such as the ICC, to share the list.

"When asked we will share this information. The 50 individuals named are all high level. People in positions of authority," said Ms. Pillay.

In the report, Ms. Pillay also recommends that Syria immediately put an end to the gross human rights violations, as well as allow immediate access for humanitarian workers to assist those in need and for OHCHR to conduct investigations into all abuses.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made the same appeal in a telephone conversation yesterday with Mr. Assad, during which the UN chief expressed appreciation that the Government had agreed to receive a UN humanitarian assessment mission and was assured that it would have access to different sites in the country.

Also briefing the Council today was Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, who told reporters afterwards that there will be an initial humanitarian assessment mission to Syria at the weekend. "We have been guaranteed that we will have full access to anywhere that we wish to go," she said.

The assessment team will be led by Rashid Khalikov, the director of the Geneva office of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The Human Rights Council will hold a second special session on the situation of human rights in Syria on Monday in Geneva.

USAID Marks World Humanitarian Day with Appeal for Africa

On World Humanitarian Day, 100 Ways You Can Help Victims of the East Africa Drought

By Nancy Lindborg, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development

Today is World Humanitarian Day. Reaching out to those suffering from crisis and disaster is a fundamental human impulse and a deeply enshrined American value. It is a value we share with people around the globe. It is the silver lining of any crisis, when the best of who we are as people emerges just when things are the bleakest.

Today is an opportunity to honor the humanitarian impulse in all of us and to applaud all the ways in which people mobilize to help others, even when they have little

to spare. I saw it in Tunisia in March, when people, already reeling from an economic plunge, spontaneously organized to take in Libyan refugees who needed help. We are seeing it with the Kenyans for Kenya campaign, a growing movement in Kenya to raise funds through a text campaign to help their neighbors suffering from a brutal drought. And I saw it when I visited Somali-American communities in the Midwest [United States] who are washing cars, having bake sales and canvassing local businesses to raise funds for those struggling to survive famine in Somalia.

Today is an opportunity to salute those humanitarian workers who spend their lives providing service, often at great personal risk. World Humanitarian Day was established in 2003 in honor of the humanitarian workers who lost their lives in the tragic bombing at the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq. In 2010, 242 aid workers were killed, injured, or kidnapped, according to the United Nations. As of April of this year, 12 aid workers have been killed and 10 been kidnapped. So today is a reminder of the daily risks aid workers face, and an opportunity to honor those who continue to spend their careers and lives devoted to humanitarian work. Being a relief worker these days often means ever greater risk is required to reach those most in need.

As we reflect on the legacies and lives of the aid workers who paid the ultimate price in service to helping others – whether during the devastating earthquake in Haiti last year or in active conflict zones – let us also appreciate the tremendous service that aid workers worldwide continue to perform every day, despite the risks, and in pursuit of a more peaceful and prosperous planet.

World Humanitarian Day is above all a celebration of all the ways people help others around the world. And I cannot think of a better way to honor humanitarians than to encourage you to help those in eastern Africa who are struggling to survive in the wake of the worst drought in 60 years. [To help those in eastern Africa: <http://www.usaid.gov/hornofafrica/>]

So how can you help? The quickest, most efficient way is to make a cash donation to a relief organization that is already working in the drought and famine zone. Cash donations are the most effective form of assistance because they allow humanitarian organizations to purchase the exact type and quantity of items needed by those affected by the crisis. Donated goods require international transportation and handling, which is expensive, complex, and time-consuming; in addition, they are often not labeled in the appropriate language or packaged appropriately for storage and distribution.

USAID does not accept donations. This Web site -- <http://www.interaction.org/crisis-list/interaction->

[members-respond-drought-crisis-horn-africa](#) -- lists organizations currently providing humanitarian assistance in east Africa. Questions to consider when selecting an organization include whether the organization can provide a clear description of how they are assisting in the region, a solid history of experience delivering aid, and a transparent explanation of how funds will be used.

The USAID-supported Center for International Disaster Information has 100 ways that you can raise funds for international relief efforts. [<http://www.cidid.org/general/127-100-fundraising>]

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)