

American

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Attorney General Says Cooperation Crucial to Counterterrorism

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — International collaboration has been essential in identifying and combating global terrorist threats, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder says.

Holder addressed a U.N. symposium on international counterterrorism cooperation September 19 in New York and told other justice officials that “our security interests are intertwined — and ... our counterterrorism efforts must be as well.”

“Today, we know that our ability to ensure the safety of our people — and to seek justice on their behalf — depends on our willingness to work as partners, and to ensure that our different perspectives and approaches never distract us from our shared objectives, or become obstacles to fulfilling our collective responsibilities,” Holder added.

Holder told delegates that over the past decade nations have stood together to confront, to prevent and to combat global terrorism and counter violent extremism. The United Nations has led the way in developing an international legal and policy framework to foster collaboration and information sharing, to promote the rule of law, to protect civil liberties and to enhance nations’ capacity to identify and combat terror threats, he added.

“The United States is firmly committed to the rule-of-law approach enshrined in this framework and to strengthening the capacity of civilian courts around the world, which have time and again shown their effectiveness at bringing terrorists to justice,” Holder said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the counterterrorism symposium during the opening week of U.N. General Assembly debate with a call for strengthening the resolve of the 193 member nations to defeat terrorism, which threatens all nations.

“What I see here today is the start of a new era in counterterrorism cooperation. States recognize that they cannot go it alone,” he told the symposium at U.N. headquarters. “Let us chart a course that reflects our determination to defeat terrorism and build a safer, more just and peaceful world for all.”

Ban announced the creation of a U.N. Center for Counterterrorism (UNCCT) and said that Saudi Arabia is contributing \$10 million over the next three years to help set up the center at the New York headquarters.

Ban also said the resolve shown five years ago with the adoption of the U.N. Global Counterterrorism Strategy by the General Assembly was a major milestone in the international response to the threats posed by terrorism. But he also called for renewed efforts to conclude the Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism.

“Effective counterterrorism requires a combination of social, educational, economic and political tools that target those factors that make the terrorist option appear attractive,” Ban said.

“The strategy also recognizes that human rights are an intrinsic part of the fight against terror, not an acceptable casualty of war,” he added.

U.S., Australia Tackle 21st-Century Challenges

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By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 16, 2011 – Australia and the United States are determined to broaden their security cooperation efforts to counter threats and challenges of the future, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said yesterday.

“The depth and breadth of discussions we’ve had here today really do confirm for me that the United States has no closer ally than Australia,” Panetta said in San Francisco following meetings there with senior Australian officials.

Panetta and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defense Minister Stephen Smith at the Presidio for the annual Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations, called AUSMIN.

The meeting was held on the 60th anniversary of the signing of the treaty at the Presidio by Australia, New Zealand and the United States in 1951.

After the meeting, the leaders released a 2011 Joint Communiqué and a separate joint statement on cyberspace, and then held a press conference in a room whose windows looked out through pine trees and Monterey cypress on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Australia and the United States are strengthening and broadening their 60-year-old alliance, the leaders said, to address together emerging 21st-century challenges such as global terrorism and cyber defense.

"With that goal in mind," Panetta said, "we discussed today the efforts of the bilateral force posture working group ... which has been making steady progress in developing options for our two militaries to train and operate together more closely, including more combined defense activities and shared use of facilities."

The work to strengthen the alliance's presence and posture in the Pacific "reflects a reality we all recognize," he added, "that the security and prosperity of our two great nations depends on the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region."

The joint statement on cyber security sends a strong signal about the two nations' commitment to work together to counter and respond to cyber attacks, Panetta said.

"This is the battlefield of the future," the secretary said, "and our ability to work together is extremely important to the challenge of being able to counter this very significant emerging threat."

Australia's military contribution to the International Security Assistance Force is about 1,550 defense force members deployed within Afghanistan, according to the Australian government's Defense Department. About 800 Australian military personnel deployed in the broader Middle East region provide support functions, including maritime, for Afghanistan operations. About 50 Australian civilians are working in Afghanistan, as well as 10 Australian defense civilians.

Panetta expressed the deep appreciation of the U.S. government and the American people for Australia's very strong partnership in Afghanistan and "for the considerable sacrifices Australian troops and their families have made during this time of war."

For 60 years, the secretary said, the United States and Australia "have gone into battle together and we have bled together because of the shared values and the deep bonds between our people. We are both immigrant nations and that creates a very strong bond between the United States and Australia, particularly for this son of immigrants."

Clinton said each new global challenge has brought a new cause for cooperation with Australia.

"That is exactly what happened 10 years ago when America was attacked on Sept. 11, just days after the 60th anniversary of our alliance," she said. "Australia invoked the treaty to come to our defense."

As Pacific powers, Australia, the United States and their alliance have provided a context for the region's dynamic economic growth, Clinton added, underwriting peace and

security and promoting trade and prosperity.

"The detailed joint communiqué we're releasing today reflects the full range of our interests, values and vision," the secretary said, "from maritime cooperation to joint development projects to building stronger ties with India to promoting democracy and prosperity in the Pacific islands."

And, Clinton joked, "although Australians have taken over the Oscars, the Tour de France and now the U.S. Open, our affection for your country remains undiminished."

The attacks on 9/11, Rudd said, are "a salient reminder of our common challenge based on our common values to deal robustly, comprehensively and globally with the challenge of terrorism."

Looking westward from the California coast, Rudd said the Asia-Pacific region is destined to flourish and thrive as a powerful economic engine with global reach.

"The waters of the Pacific we see out there off the coast of San Francisco will be the center of gravity for global economic growth, for global security for the half-century to come," Rudd said. "And it is in our combined interest to ensure that this Pacific century is indeed a Pacific century."

And, the AUSMIN cyber statement represents a new, critical area of operational engagement between Australia and the United States, he said, "which affects governments, business and citizens the world over, the region over and our countries individually."

Like confronting terrorism, Rudd added, the cyber security realm "is a battleground that is fought unconventionally often without a known enemy. That is why it is critical that this becomes a formal part of our alliance deliberations and committed cooperation in the event of such attack in the future."

The leaders also reviewed common engagement with China and the countries of Northeast Asia, including South Korea and Japan, and with countries in Southeast Asia, including Australia's neighbor, the Republic of Indonesia, Rudd said.

Additionally, the leaders discussed engagement across the Indian Ocean and South Asia and the important relationship with India, as well as regional challenges including North Korea's nuclear program, "which profoundly concerns our two countries," Rudd said.

"More broadly we also reviewed our common interests in the Middle East," he added, including the Mideast peace

process, recent changes under way in Egypt and Libya and, with great concern, the abuse of human rights and the killing of innocent people in Syria.

Smith reported progress on the bilateral working group that for a year has been developing options to align Australian and U.S. forces for improved national security.

"We are looking at increased joint exercises, increased joint training [and] increased joint operations," Smith said, adding, "As I've put it colloquially in Australia, more ships in, ships out; more planes in, planes out; more troops in, troops out."

The group has more to do, Smith said, noting the work is very important.

"Whilst we regard this very much potentially as an extension of the good work we already do," he said, "it will in an operational sense be the single largest potential change to the day-to-day working arrangement of the alliance since the establishment of ... joint facilities."

According to the communiqué, "Our discussions have acknowledged that our respective military forces must be postured to respond in a timely and effective way to the range of contingencies that may arise in our region, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and to enhance our ability to work with the armed forces of regional partners."

Such discussions continue, Panetta said.

"Our goal here" he said, "is to try to strengthen that relationship as best we can so we can send a clear signal to the Asia-Pacific region that the United States and Australia are going to continue to work together, to make very clear to those that would threaten us that we are going to stick together."

U.S.-WHO Agreement on Helping Countries Meet Health Regulations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
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MEDIA NOTE

U.S. Government and World Health Organization Sign Agreement to Help Developing Countries Strengthen Their Capabilities to Meet International Health Regulations

Following is the text of a joint statement by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at the conclusion of a memorandum

of understanding (MOU) between the United States and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Begin Text:

On September 19th, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, the Government of the United States of America and the WHO signed a MOU to help developing nations strengthen their capabilities to support the International Health Regulations (IHR).

The IHR (2005) is an international agreement that requires WHO Member States to prevent and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide.

The U.S. Government and the WHO share a commitment to strengthen cooperation in the area of global health security to ensure that the international community effectively manages public health risks. Improving the ability of all nations to detect, report, and respond to infectious diseases quickly and accurately lies at the heart of the global community's ability to address all infectious disease threats, as reflected in the IHR.

The MOU establishes a framework for collaboration in line with the provisions set forth in the IHR, which provides a construct for coordinating the management of actions in the event of a public health emergency of international concern.

The MOU was signed by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services, and Director-General Margaret Chan, World Health Organization, and subsequently by Ambassador Betty E. King, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva.

U.S. Climate Negotiator: "Real Progress Can Be Made"

By Karin Rives | Staff Writer

Washington — Seventy days remain until international leaders will gather in South Africa to discuss ways to tackle climate change. The road ahead is tough, U.S. lead climate negotiator Todd Stern told reporters September 19, "but I'm not pessimistic."

A meeting held between leaders from 17 major economies in Washington September 16-17 to discuss the road forward was productive, Stern said, adding that several outstanding issues, such as the future of the Kyoto Protocol, remain thorny. The Kyoto Protocol, the world's first legally binding agreement to reduce greenhouse gases, is linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the organization that

runs the annual climate talks.

Several of the 37 industrialized countries that signed the Kyoto agreement in 1997, including Japan, Canada and Russia, have said they won't support a second term. It looks now, Stern said, as if the European Union is the only party willing to sign up for a second period.

The United States did not sign the original agreement. U.S. negotiators maintain that they would agree to a binding agreement if all leading developing countries such as China, India and Brazil are also part of it.

"The world is a dramatically different place," Stern said, referring to the time that has passed since the United Nations-led discussions began nearly two decades ago. "Just look at China and the fast degree to which it's growing — six times the gross domestic product of 1992 already — and China is projected to be twice the size of the United States in [greenhouse gas] emissions in 2020. You just can't go forward with a new legal agreement that simply is based on the same precise [Kyoto] structure."

Stern also said that a future agreement must be based on a "genuine" will by all major polluters to reduce emissions. "So we don't have a situation where countries make a commitment to do x, y or z to mitigate their emissions, but then there's an asterisk that says, 'But we only want to do this if we get financing and technology support,'" he said. "There can be no escape hatches."

The Major Economic Forum on Energy and Climate held in Washington was the 12th meeting since 2009. The meeting also serves as a platform for partnerships and regional agreements on clean energy and climate projects that fall outside of the United Nations structure. The 17 forum members are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The forum invites other countries to attend such meetings. This time, representatives from Colombia, New Zealand, Singapore and Spain attended.

While in Washington, participants discussed funding for developing nations and other provisions that came out of last year's climate talks in Mexico. The United States and other developed nations have promised to mobilize \$100 billion annually by 2020 to help developing countries tackle emissions and adapt to climate change that is already happening. So far this year, some \$15 billion has been invested in such green investments, Stern said.

Much of the future discussion will center on how to use government funds as effectively as possible, while at the same time leveraging capital from the private sector. Even

in a strong world economy, governments will need some assurance that investment of public funds carries limited risk and a reasonable return, Stern said.

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