

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## **President Obama: U.S. Commitment to South Korea “Will Never Waver”**

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama reaffirmed the strong alliance between the United States and South Korea and said both countries are “entirely united” in their efforts to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Speaking with South Korea’s President Lee Myung-bak at the White House October 13, Obama said that, along with expanded bilateral economic cooperation from the recently approved free-trade agreement, the United States and South Korea are also deepening their security cooperation and their ability to deter threats.

“The commitment of the United States to the defense and security of the Republic of Korea will never waver. And as we have for decades, the United States will maintain our strong presence in the Asia-Pacific, which is a foundation for security and prosperity in Asia in the 21st century,” Obama said.

The president said North Korea “continues to pose a direct threat to the security of both our nations,” and that its leadership faces a clear choice.

“If Pyongyang continues to ignore its international obligations, it will invite even more pressure and isolation. If the North abandons its quest for nuclear weapons and moves toward denuclearization, it will enjoy greater security and opportunity for its people. That’s the choice that North Korea faces,” Obama said.

President Lee said his country wants to see North Korea become “a responsible member of the international community” and abandon its nuclear ambitions, which he said is “the only way to ensure happiness for its people and to embark on that path to development.”

“North Korea’s continued pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a serious threat to peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the world. We will continue to work towards denuclearization of the peninsula,” he said.

Through peaceful and diplomatic efforts, “Korea and the United States will continue to consistently apply a principled approach so that we can achieve our strategic objective,” Lee said.

“When it comes to cooperation between our two governments, we speak with one voice and we will continue to speak with one voice,” he said.

In remarks with Reuters News Service in Washington

October 11, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States and South Korea have been closely consulting and cooperating “to an unprecedented degree” on their approach to Pyongyang.

“We have been willing to remain engaged with the North Koreans on a range of issues that they are following up on,” she said.

The secretary noted that South Korea is a treaty ally of the United States and that it is therefore important for both countries to “stay closely allied” and continue working together on a common approach.

## **U.S., India Enhance Ties at Education Summit**

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has announced several initiatives to enhance U.S. academic ties with India, which she says will significantly benefit both countries.

Clinton spoke at the U.S.-India Higher Education Summit in Washington, which brought together more than 300 leaders in education, government and the private sector to discuss strengthening educational ties through academic, research and work exchanges. Clinton co-chaired the summit along with Indian Minister of Human Resources Development Kapil Sibal at Georgetown University October 13.

The secretary called educational collaboration “a driving force in our strategic dialogue” with India, and said the summit was the result of talks between President Obama and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The United States and India have a strong history of academic exchanges, Clinton said, with more than 100,000 students from India pursuing undergraduate or graduate study in the United States in 2010. But the opportunities for collaboration are even greater, she said.

The secretary said the United States government is fully committed to enhancing this cooperation. She highlighted the \$10 million Obama-Singh initiative to increase university partnership and junior faculty development.

She said the Fulbright Nehru program has tripled in size during the past three years, and that the United States now conducts more faculty exchanges with India than with any other country in the Fulbright program.

Clinton said through the new Passport to India program, the U.S. government is working with the private sector to help American students experience India through internships and service projects. Additionally, she said, the U.S. government has expanded its EducationUSA

advising services for Indian students and their families to provide information about opportunities to study in the United States.

“We’re also encouraging state and local officials in our country to engage with their counterparts in India to support educational cooperation and connection at every level,” Clinton said. While the federal government will continue to facilitate dialogue, she added, it is up to citizens of both countries to develop direct connections.

“Professors and teachers, researchers, business leaders – you will ultimately determine the success of these efforts,” Clinton said.

She said the United States and India share values rooted in democracy and that democracy depends on an educated citizenry. Clinton commended India, the largest democracy in the world, for working to provide greater benefits for its citizens through education.

The secretary’s opening remarks were followed by Sibal, who addressed the summit ahead of a round-table discussion with high-level U.S. and Indian officials, a seminar on sustainable educational partnerships and remarks by top government and private-sector leaders from both countries.

### **U.S. Efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan Are Succeeding, Panetta Says**

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer

Washington – Ten years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, U.S. efforts to weaken al-Qaida are succeeding, says U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

At an October 13 hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Panetta said, “Make no mistake: We are succeeding. Ten years after 9/11 we have significantly rolled back al-Qaida and al-Qaida’s militant allies. We have undermined their ability to exercise command and control and to do the kind of planning that was involved in the attack on 9/11.”

“We are closer than ever to achieving our strategic objectives in Afghanistan and Iraq,” the secretary of defense said.

According to Panetta, the United States is at a turning point – not only in its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but for its own military as well.

“As the current mission in Iraq comes to an end, as we continue to transition security responsibility in Afghanistan and as we near the goal of disrupting, dismantling and ultimately defeating al-Qaida, the Department [of Defense] is also facing a new fiscal reality

here at home. As part of the debt ceiling agreement reached in August, the department must find more than \$450 billion in savings over the next decade.”

Even with the resolution of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military will face continuing threats from terrorism around the world, including in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and North Africa, Panetta said. In addition, nuclear proliferation and cyber-attacks will continue to be dangerous challenges, he said.

Panetta emphasized the need for a military that can remain “agile and deployable” at a smaller size. But he warned: “We absolutely have to avoid a hollow force” – that is, a military that falls short in training and equipment. While announcing changes in the way the U.S. military manages its budget, Panetta cautioned against further cuts to defense funding that hamper the military’s ability “to align resources with strategy.”

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey told the committee that the U.S. military finds itself in “an increasingly competitive security environment.”

“Capabilities that previously were the monopoly of nation-states are now proliferated across the security landscape,” he said. “As a consequence, we must learn faster, understand more deeply and adapt more quickly than our adversaries.”

Dempsey said coalitions and partnerships are more important than ever for sharing security responsibilities and reducing budget pressures. He cited as an example that the U.S. presence on the African continent is part of the U.S. network for building partners and gaining intelligence.

### **Feed the Future Makes Progress on Food Security**

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer

Washington – The Feed the Future program to increase agricultural production, raise rural incomes and improve nutrition in developing countries continues to make progress, two top U.S. agricultural development experts say.

Jonathan Shrier of the State Department and Greg Gottlieb of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) discussed the three-year-old program during a State Department webcast October 11. With funding from the U.S. government, the program invests in countries that have made plans to produce more food, improve the nutrition of their citizens, raise rural incomes and create strong markets.

Food security – or having a steady and accessible supply

of food — is a challenge for countries needing assistance as well as for international donors, they said. One-sixth of the world's population suffers from chronic hunger, and malnutrition is responsible for millions of child deaths every year, they said. Currently, across the Horn of Africa, 13.3 million people need emergency assistance due to severe changes in weather. "But people in the region are showing strong leadership in addressing the problem," said Shrier, who is acting special representative for global food security. He said the Kenyan government recently hosted a meeting of leaders in the region to discuss medium- and long-term solutions to its food shortages over recent years. "There is change in the works."

The webcast was in advance of a gathering of more than 1,000 global government and private sector leaders, and agricultural experts for the Borlaug International Symposium October 12-14 in Des Moines, Iowa. The meeting to address future needs in feeding people around the globe coincides with the award of the 25th World Food Prize. The webcast also was in honor of World Food Day, October 16.

A key feature of the \$3.5 billion Feed the Future program is working with all sectors of society in its targeted 20 countries to draw up multiyear strategies for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and increased nutritional levels, especially for mothers and their young children, Shrier said. Additionally, donors work in partnership with private sector investors.

"We are going to work with fertilizer companies and seed companies to make sure that if they invest, we can invest with them to produce the long-term, sustainable results needed to supply farmers with the inputs they need," Gottlieb said.

He cited the example of a three-way partnership announced in September among USAID, the PepsiCo Foundation and the United Nations World Food Programme to increase chickpea production and improve long-term nutritional gains and food security in Ethiopia, Africa's largest chickpea producer.

Another feature of Feed the Future is support for more research to develop better seeds for crops that can resist drought, excessive heat, flooding and diseases such as the wheat stem rust Ug99 that has spread from eastern Africa to the Middle East, said Gottlieb, who works with USAID's food security program.

Biotechnology, or genetic modification, is one technique for developing improved seeds in a much shorter period than if seeds are cross-bred conventionally, Shrier said. He added that transportation links also need to be upgraded so farmers and livestock herders can get their

output to markets.

Feed the Future also aims to bring modern agricultural skills to farmers, especially women producers, through stronger extension services. "Women produce so much in the world," Gottlieb said.

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