

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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<b>President Obama: All U.S. Forces to Leave Iraq by End of 2011 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Secretary Clinton: U.S. Committed to Helping Pakistan Boost Development .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Panetta to Highlight Regional Cooperation in Asia.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sharing Ideas Invigorates Overseas Professionals on U.S. Visit .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>USAID, Swiss Re Partnership Targets Hunger, Natural Disasters.....</b>	<b>3</b>

**President Obama: All U.S. Forces to Leave Iraq by End of 2011**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama announced October 21 that by the end of 2011 all U.S. military forces will be withdrawn from Iraq.

Obama made the announcement at the White House shortly after conferring with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in a secure video conference between Washington and Baghdad.

"I reaffirmed that the United States keeps its commitments," Obama said. "He spoke of the determination of the Iraqi people to forge their own future. We are in full agreement about how to move forward."

"As of January 1st, and in keeping with our Strategic Framework Agreement with Iraq, it will be a normal relationship between sovereign nations, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect," Obama said.

In the 2008 Strategic Framework Agreement reached between the Iraqi government and then President George W. Bush, all U.S. military forces were to be withdrawn from the nation by the end of 2011.

Obama said that over the next two months the remaining 40,000 military members will pack up and return to the United States.

"In today's conversation, Prime Minister Maliki and I agreed that a meeting of the higher coordinating committee of the Strategic Framework Agreement will convene in the coming weeks," Obama said. "And I invited the prime minister to come to the White House in December, as we plan for all the important work that we have to do together."

Obama said the way ahead for the United States is to help the Iraqi people strengthen the institutions of government, build new ties of trade and commerce and expand culture and education.

"As I told Prime Minister Maliki, we will continue discussions on how we might help Iraq train and equip its forces ... just as we offer training and assistance to countries around the world," Obama said. "There will be some difficult days ahead for Iraq, and the United States will continue to have an interest in an Iraq that is stable, secure and self-reliant."

Obama also said that efforts have been refocused on

Afghanistan to eventually bring military operations there to a successful conclusion. "When I took office, roughly 180,000 troops were deployed in both of these wars," Obama said. "And by the end of this year that number will be cut in half."

**Secretary Clinton: U.S. Committed to Helping Pakistan Boost Development**

By Merle Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said during a two-day visit in Islamabad that the United States is committed to helping Pakistan meet the economic and social development needs of the Pakistani people and to achieving mutual security goals.

"We are not doing this out of some definition of charity, and we are not trying to purchase friendship," Clinton said during a meeting with Pakistani civil society and an interview with Moeed Pirzada of Pakistan Television October 21 at Islamabad's Serena Hotel. "We actually believe that a prosperous, peaceful Pakistan is more likely to be a stable, secure Pakistan, and we think that is good for everyone, first and foremost Pakistanis, the region and the world, including Americans."

Clinton, in her fourth visit to Pakistan as secretary of state, met October 21 with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar following a longer meeting on October 20 with Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and senior Pakistani military and intelligence officials for high-level consultations. Joining Clinton were CIA Director David Petraeus and General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Clinton's visit to Pakistan is part of an extended visit to the region that has included stops in Malta, Libya, Oman and Afghanistan. Clinton visited Dushanbe, Tajikistan's capital, October 22 for talks before traveling to Uzbekistan on October 23.

"We share a vision of a sovereign, self-sufficient and democratic Pakistan; a Pakistan at peace and trading with its neighbors and full of opportunities for both men and women," Clinton said during her interview with Pirzada. In the last year, the United States has provided \$2 billion in civilian assistance to Pakistan.

The next element in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship is to move from aid to trade, Clinton said. The Obama administration is working with Congress to create an enterprise fund designed to jump-start Pakistani businesses and a two-way investment treaty designed to attract trade, investment and create jobs, Clinton added.

U.S. assistance programs in Pakistan have been focused on developing a more reliable electric grid, building crucial roads, irrigating hundreds of thousands of

hectares of farmland and funding educational scholarships. "And when the flood waters rose, America rushed in to save lives, help communities recover, at the cost of about \$900 million," the secretary said.

Clinton acknowledged that it is the Pakistani people who hold the key to their nation's prosperity.

Clinton said that Pakistan's economic and political success also depends on closer links with its neighbors. "We believe that, over time, Pakistan could and should become a hub that connects South and Central Asia on what we are calling a New Silk Road that binds together a region held back by rivalry and war," she said.

And Clinton said Pakistan has the opportunity "to show regional leadership by helping to end the insurgency on both sides of the border, and help bring about peace and reconciliation."

### **Panetta to Highlight Regional Cooperation in Asia**

By Karen Parrish | American Forces Press Service

*This article was originally posted October 20 to the U.S. Department of Defense website.*

Washington — Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta is scheduled to depart October 21 for Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, his first visit to Asia as head of the department, senior defense officials said.

During the first leg of his trip, Panetta is scheduled to meet Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro. Those discussions will focus on the Indonesian armed forces' continuing transformation, as well as U.S.-Indonesian military-to-military cooperation in areas including maritime security, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, a senior official said.

While in Indonesia, the secretary also will visit a gathering of defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the official added. ASEAN member nations are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The ASEAN ministerial offers Panetta a "wonderful" opportunity for high-end engagement with the assembled ministers and a chance to emphasize the United States' commitment to the Southeast Asia region, the official said.

After leaving Indonesia, Panetta will travel to Japan to meet with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and other senior Japanese leaders, including new Defense Minister Yasuo Ichikawa, a second senior official said.

The secretary's meetings in Japan include a "rich agenda of issues," such as the enduring U.S. commitment to its alliance with Japan, regional security, arms sales, export controls, ballistic missile defense, and the planned realignment of U.S. forces there, the official said.

Panetta also is scheduled to visit U.S. and Japanese troops during his stop there.

Panetta's final scheduled stop is South Korea where he will take part with Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin in the 43rd Security Consultative Meeting, and also meet with President Lee Myung-bak and senior South Korean officials.

The secretary is scheduled to visit U.S. and South Korean troops during the final leg of his trip.

"The secretary will reinforce our commitment to the U.S.-[Republic of Korea] alliance, as well as our commitment to deter North Korea and, if deterrence fails, to prevail in any conflict," the official said.

### **Sharing Ideas Invigorates Overseas Professionals on U.S. Visit**

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer

Washington — Two hundred professionals from 28 countries met in Washington recently to share ideas on meeting challenges posed by climate change and other global issues.

The professional "fellows" were at various stages of several-week visits to cities across the United States, where they have been collaborating with their counterparts in business, academia and government.

Gilberto Myles of Colombia found kindred souls during his stint with the Georgetown Emergency Management Office in Georgetown, South Carolina. Preserving Georgetown's beaches is essential to maintaining South Carolina's tourism industry. The goal is similar for Myles, who is a technician for the Corporation for the Sustainable Development of the Archipelago of San Andrés Island. San Andrés, the largest of Colombia's islands in the Caribbean Sea, depends on tourism, he said.

Myles gained experience using mathematical models for beach reclamation and island ecosystems. He credits Daniel Hitchcock, a scientist with the Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science in Georgetown, with helping him develop programs to control beach erosion on San Andrés.

"That is the key: partnership," Myles said. The contacts he developed in the United States, he said, will help him get the economic support he needs in his homeland.

The U.S. State Department sponsors the Professional Fellows Program, which brought Myles and others to the United States to work on climate change, food security, education and employment, global health and legislative development. The professionals worked with U.S. nonprofit groups, local governments and businesses.

"It opened up my eyes," said Daniel Ninsiima of Uganda. A researcher at the Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute, Ninsiima recently concluded a month at Oklahoma State University's Department of Educational Technology. There, he learned how the university, along with the Agricultural Extension Service, uses social media.

"Back in Uganda social media is like a 'social evil,'" Ninsiima said. "People will spend time on Facebook and YouTube, and they don't produce much work. But here, they are actually using social media constructively." Working with Craig Edwards, a professor who has won awards for his work in agricultural education, Ninsiima developed a proposal to use cellphones to reach Ugandan potato farmers with useful information in their local languages.

Michele Bashan-Haouzi of Israel spent a week with educators, social workers and health care professionals at the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana. With a population of more than 10,000 Assiniboine and Sioux tribal members, it is the ninth-largest Indian reservation in the United States.

Bashan-Haouzi is the head nurse coordinator for the AIDS clinic on the Ein Kerem campus of the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. She said she felt an affinity with the Native Americans she met who are struggling with problems such as alcoholism or drug addiction. "The Indian people suffer, and Jewish people can understand," Bashan-Haouzi said. "We also have a poor population in Israel." She plans to arrange a trip to Israel for some of the health care workers she met at Fort Peck.

Yaqin Shaheen, head of the computer department at the Palestine Technical College, visited companies in the Michigan cities of Detroit and Dearborn to learn how they connect with students. He hopes to build partnerships with the professionals he meets to help his students. "Here we meet so many nationalities, and they are from different cultures, different universities, different organizations," Shaheen said. The variety of views, he said, is helping him to build initiatives that should help his students find work in the Palestinian Territories.

The networking is important, according to Asel Momoshova of Kyrgyzstan, a lawyer with Kalikova & Associates, one of the leading law firms in Kyrgyzstan. She spent time working with the city government of

Charlotte, North Carolina. Summing up the sentiments of many of the fellows, she said, "Exchange of ideas and opinions is a great thing."

### **USAID, Swiss Re Partnership Targets Hunger, Natural Disasters**

Washington — USAID and Swiss Re have announced a three-year partnership to help vulnerable communities in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

The new partnership will help fight hunger, build resilience to climate change, and reduce the costs of natural disasters, USAID said in an October 20 press release. The partnership combines the expertise of Swiss Re, a global reinsurance provider, with two initiatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

One USAID element is the Global Climate Change Initiative, which works to make communities more resilient to extreme climate events and accelerate the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy around the world. The other USAID element is the Feed the Future initiative, which tackles the root causes of hunger and malnutrition by helping countries develop more productive agricultural sectors.

The USAID-Swiss Re partnership will provide access to customized, market-based insurance for poor farmers. With better insurance, these farmers and their families will be more able to cope with the effects of droughts, floods and other severe weather events that may become increasingly common as the climate changes, according to USAID.

When farmers have better instruments to manage their risk, they can more easily get loans to buy new technologies that increase their yields and productivity, and they will have greater incentive to make such investments, knowing that they are buffered from extreme weather events.

"Private-sector involvement is crucial to USAID's efforts to reduce poverty and foster long-term economic development in the countries where we work," said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah.

"Swiss Re has been an industry leader in the development of innovative new products to address weather-related risks," Shah added. "We welcome this opportunity to join forces to develop affordable, market-based tools to reduce climate vulnerability in poor communities."

This partnership follows USAID and Swiss Re's recent announcement about joining Oxfam America and the World Food Programme to expand the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative from Ethiopia to Senegal.

It also builds on the two organizations' previous collaborations under USAID's Index Insurance Innovation Initiative, which invests in research and tests innovations that are improving USAID's understanding of how the poor and vulnerable can best use insurance to manage risk.

"Building insurance capacity in developing countries is a critical step to limiting the vulnerability to extreme weather events that impact so many livelihoods," said Walter Bell, chairman of Swiss Re America Holding Corporation.

"Swiss Re's innovative solutions, combined with USAID's technical expertise and extensive development experience, will bring advanced risk management solutions to the communities who need them most," Bell said.

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