

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Congratulates Libya on Its Liberation

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama offered his congratulations to the people of Libya on the nation's declaration of liberation.

"After four decades of brutal dictatorship and eight months of deadly conflict, the Libyan people can now celebrate their freedom and the beginning of a new era of promise," Obama said in a prepared statement on October 23 in Washington.

"Now that the fighting in Libya has reached an end, the Transitional National Council (TNC) must turn its attention to the political transition ahead," the president added.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who visited Tripoli on October 18, said on October 23 that the Libyan revolution that ended the 42-year rule of Muammar Qadhafi "was the work of ordinary, brave Libyans who demanded their freedoms and dignity."

The United States is prepared to work with the TNC and a transitional government as it prepares for the country's first free elections, Obama said. Clinton said the process of forming a new representative government that is accountable to the Libyan people must reflect the same spirit of the revolution.

Clinton said the TNC should work to announce the new government as soon as possible.

"The transitional authorities can build on this movement by promoting reconciliation and respect for human rights across Libyan society, while helping to prevent reprisals and ensuring the justice and due process that the Libyan people expect and deserve," Clinton said.

"The path to democracy is a long-term process that requires the participation of all Libyans," Clinton added.

Obama said that throughout the transition the United States will continue its close cooperation with international partners and the U.N. Support Mission in Libya to help advance a stable and democratic transition process.

Separately, Ambassador Ivo Daalder, the U.S. permanent representative to NATO, told reporters October 21 that the operation in Libya run by NATO and its partners will end on October 31. "That's exactly seven months after the operation started," he said.

Daalder said the North Atlantic Council is expected to meet and make a formal decision about the end to NATO operations in Libya in a few days.

"We also decided to wind down our operations while continuing to monitor the situation inside Libya and be ready to act if necessary if civilians are threatened," Daalder said.

## President Obama, Secretary Clinton Offer Assistance to Quake-Stricken Turkey

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — Top U.S. officials expressed concern and condolences in the aftermath of the October 23 earthquake that struck eastern Turkey.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the brave men and women who are working to bring assistance to this stricken region," said a White House statement from President Obama. "We stand shoulder to shoulder with our Turkish ally in this difficult time, and are ready to assist the Turkish authorities."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton echoed the president's condolences. "The United States stands ready to assist in the effort to rescue survivors and we are committed to the people of Turkey as they recover and rebuild," she said.

Some 36 hours after the quake, the death toll approached 280 people dead and some 1,300 injured, although those numbers are difficult to tally accurately as walking wounded move in and out of treatment facilities.

The official Turkish news agency reports about 970 buildings destroyed by the temblor occurring near the city of Van. News reports indicate that Turkish officials have been grateful for offers of foreign assistance, but have not accepted them. The Turkish Red Crescent is on the scene, focusing on search and rescue efforts, and helping to support the immediate needs of those left homeless by the quake. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has reportedly distributed more than 6,000 tents and 11,000 blankets and stoves, as well as food and clean water.

The Turks have a long history of coping with the aftermath of earthquakes, located as they are in what scientists call one of the planet's most seismically active regions. Two of the tectonic plates that form the earth's crust collide beneath the Turkish landmass as the northward Arabian Plate pushes into the Eurasian Plate with a speed of approximately 2.5 centimeters per year. Many earthquakes are caused by the release of the pressure that builds between colliding tectonic plates.

A blog posting by experts at the Seismology Lab at the University of California–Berkeley describes the plate juncture in the region as “a complex tectonic jumble,” stretching “over several hundred square miles of high mountain ranges and dozens of separate faults.”

A significant quake of a magnitude greater than 7 occurred in this region of eastern Turkey in 1976, with an epicenter about 62 kilometers from the October 23 event, causing some 5,000 deaths.

But the most serious seismic events in Turkey have occurred further west on a different fault line. The North Anatolian fault zone runs under some large Turkish cities, including Istanbul. In 1999, an earthquake centered under the city of Izmit struck with a 7.6 magnitude, killing 17,000 people and injuring 50,000.

Historical records show multiple earthquakes in Turkey in almost every decade since 1900. The most devastating event occurred in 1939 at Erzincan, killing close to 33,000 people.

### **Secretary Clinton Talks Economy, Human Rights in Tajikistan**

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with civil society leaders and top government officials in Tajikistan to discuss improving the country’s economy and working toward greater regional economic cooperation and development.

“We want to spur growth, create jobs, invigorate the private sector and fully integrate Tajikistan into the South and Central Asian economy,” Clinton said at a town hall discussion in Dushanbe October 22. To achieve these goals, the secretary said, the United States supports the New Silk Road initiative, a network of transit and trade connections designed to open up new markets for raw materials, energy and agricultural products to be traded throughout South and Central Asia.

The secretary said that to take full advantage of this regional economic opportunity, the Tajik government will need to reform laws to attract new investment, strengthen support for human rights and the rule of law, tackle corruption and establish an independent judiciary. She also called on Tajikistan to seek the full participation of women in these reforms, noting that they make up more than half of the country’s population, as a result of the heavy migration of men who leave the country seeking work.

“I want you to know that you can count on America’s support as you take on all of these challenges, and we will try to be a good partner and a good friend,” Clinton said.

She said that since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992, the United States has provided approximately \$1 billion in assistance to Tajikistan.

“But we know very well that it’s not what comes from the outside, but what comes from the inside – what comes from the hearts and minds and hard work of the people themselves” – that creates sustainable economic growth, Clinton said.

She said Tajikistan is at a “critical moment in its history,” and commended the country for strengthening land ownership laws, improving its health care system and leading an effective fight against human trafficking within its borders.

Clinton said the United States continues to support the rights of Tajik citizens to receive a good education, to own land, to participate equally in the political process “and to enjoy all of the universal rights that should be available to any man or woman,” including religious and press freedoms.

“The United States ... is convinced that an open and democratic, tolerant society provides a firm foundation for a secure, stable and prosperous nation,” Clinton said in a joint press conference with Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi October 22. “We encourage the Tajik government to take concrete steps toward that kind of a society.”

Clinton said her talks with Tajik leaders covered human rights, efforts to combat drug trafficking, regional security concerns and cooperation in Afghanistan.

The secretary’s stop in Tajikistan was part of a weeklong tour of the region, which also included visits to Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Clinton returned to Washington October 23.

### **State’s Campbell Visits Indonesia and the Philippines**

Washington – The State Department’s top official for Asia-Pacific policy is visiting Indonesia and the Philippines for meetings on key bilateral and regional issues.

Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell is scheduled to arrive in Jakarta, Indonesia, on October 25 and in Manila, the Philippines, on October 26, the State Department announced October 21.

Strengthening ties and partnerships with the Asia-Pacific region has been a priority for the Obama administration from its outset.

In an October 11 commentary in Foreign Policy magazine,

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote that the Asia-Pacific region "has become a key driver of global politics."

"At a time when the region is building a more mature security and economic architecture to promote stability and prosperity," Clinton wrote, "U.S. commitment there is essential."

In Thailand on October 10, Campbell said that over the next few years, the United States will be shifting "resources and capabilities more from the Middle East and South Asia towards Asia and East Asia as a whole. I think we understand quite deeply and profoundly that the majority of the history of the 21st century will be written in the Asia-Pacific region."

Campbell, before one of his frequent visits to the region in late June, said, "We recognize that the challenges affecting the Pacific, ranging from climate change to endemic poverty, are important to address, and the United States wants to be in the forefront of that effort, bringing together a range of international actors that care about developments there."

In Jakarta, Campbell, in addition to discussions of bilateral and regional issues, will discuss the agendas for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting, hosted by the United States in Hawaii November 12-13, the East Asia Summit, November 19 in Bali, Indonesia, and the U.S.-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Leaders Meeting, also hosted by Indonesia.

In a speech in New York October 14, Clinton said the United States will use the November meeting in Hawaii "to push the envelope on open, free, transparent and fair trade across the Pacific basin."

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