

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

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Proclamation by President Obama on 50th Anniversary of USAID

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary
November 21, 2011

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

This year, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commemorates 50 years of progress dedicated to saving lives, building partnerships, and promoting peace and prosperity for the developing world and the American people.

Since President John F. Kennedy founded USAID in 1961, the men and women of USAID have worked on the front lines of poverty and conflict to support communities and countries as they build a better future. By promoting sustainable growth in the developing world, we spur new markets abroad and energize our economy here at home. By encouraging good governance, we empower transparency, accountability, and strong institutions that are responsive to citizens' needs. By driving innovations in agriculture, education, and global health, we strengthen global stability and advance our national security. And by delivering aid in the wake of natural disasters and humanitarian crises, we express the generosity and goodwill that unite us as a people.

The impact of these efforts is remarkable. In the past five decades, USAID has helped developing countries across the globe transform into stable and prosperous nations, vibrant trading partners, and foreign assistance donors themselves. These countries stand as beacons of hope for people striving toward democracy, free economies, and respect for human rights. The critical work of USAID enables these transitions forward, helping prevent and end conflict around the world.

Even after these successes, we know there is more to do. To advance America's interests and promote global development, USAID has instituted a series of ambitious reforms that will bring new partnerships, a greater emphasis on innovation, and a relentless focus on real

results. These actions will help ensure we invest every development dollar in the most effective, efficient, and transparent way possible. And they will ensure that those with the greatest needs in this world are extended a helping hand from the American people.

On this anniversary, we honor the men and women of USAID whose dedication to public service has improved millions of lives around the world, and we honor the vision of those whose spirit of innovation has opened new frontiers in the global fight against hunger, poverty, and disease. As USAID continues to shape a brighter future for generations to come, its mission will remain of vital importance to our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the 50th Anniversary of the United States Agency for International Development. I call upon all Americans to observe this anniversary with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor USAID and its workers, past and present, for their enduring commitment to a safer, more peaceful world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

White House Briefing on President Obama's Trip to Asia-Pacific

FOREIGN PRESS CENTER WITH BEN RHODES,

WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY
ADVISER FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

THE WASHINGTON FOREIGN PRESS CENTER,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TOPIC: PRESIDENT OBAMA'S RECENT TRIP TO ASIA

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011 AT 3:00 P.M. EST

MODERATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the Foreign Press Center. Thank you all very much for joining us. I ask that if you have any electronic devices that you please switch them to either the silent or the vibrating

position at this time.

Without further ado, I'm going to turn the briefing over to Mr. Ben Rhodes.

MR. RHODES: Thanks, guys. I'm glad to be here. I'm glad to have the opportunity to discuss the President's recent trip to Asia and the Pacific region, as well as take your questions on that and other issues.

I'll start by just a bit of a summary of how we saw the trip. As you heard us say throughout the run-up to the trip and then throughout the President's time in the Asia Pacific region, we saw this as a critical pivot, in many respects, for American foreign policy and national security policy, understanding that over the course of the last decade, the United States has been overwhelmingly focused particularly on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We felt that we were underweighted in other parts of the world, most principally, the Asia Pacific region, given its emerging importance economically and politically.

So as we end the war in Iraq definitively by the end of this year and begin to wind down in Afghanistan, we are looking to expand our efforts, particularly in the Asia Pacific region going forward. That was the context for the trip.

We've done so in really three different lines of effort that we've identified. The first was to put alliances and partnerships in the Asia Pacific region on a firmer footing, and this is something that we've been working on since the time that we came into office. And I think, whether it's the U.S.-Japan alliance, the extraordinary progress we've made with the Republic of Korea on trade and other security issues, or our ability to strengthen our relationships with our other treaty allies in the region, each of whom we saw on this stop - Australia, the Philippines, and Taiwan - Thailand - we believe that this is an incredibly important foundation for our engagement in the region. So number one, allies and partners.

Secondly, our relationship with emerging powers, which we see as critical to recognizing the way in which the Asia Pacific region is changing. And to that end, we've had very, very comprehensive engagement with China and India from the beginning of the Administration, many different high-level visits and exchanges, a deepening of the context between the U.S. Government and the Chinese and Indian Government.

But we've also reached out and sought to deepen our partnerships with other emerging powers in the region as well. Prominently, Indonesia is an example of a country that we have welcomed to play a greater role at the G-20, and that we have built our own comprehensive partnership with that the President was able to mark during his stop there.

And then the third component of our approach has been to shape - to engage and shape the regional architecture of the Asia Pacific. And it was our assessment that when we came into office, the U.S. was essentially absent in many respects from the discussions that were taking place in the region about economic, political, and security architecture. We were not as forward-leaning at APEC as we'd been in the past. We were not even in the discussion as it related to the East Asia Summit. We had not used ASEAN as a type of tool for multilateral engagement that it could be.

So over the course of the last three years, you've seen the U.S. dramatically step up its efforts to engage and shape the emerging architecture of the Asia Pacific. And this trip, of course, was an actualization of that, with the President both hosting APEC, meeting with ASEAN, and then being the first President to attend the East Asia Summit.

So again, those three key lines of effort - strengthening alliances and partnerships, deepening relationships of the emerging powers, and engaging the regional architecture, very much framed both our approach to the Asia Pacific and our approach to this trip.

I'll just highlight I think what we see as the key takeaways from the trip. First, in Hawaii at APEC, we were able to reach the broad outlines of an agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership with the goal of finalizing that agreement next year, which we think we can certainly do. The TPP we see as a type of high-quality trade agreement that can be emblematic of not just the potential for trade in the Asia Pacific, but the type of free trade agreements that we want to be pursuing going forward in the 21st century.

We were also very pleased that the TPP drew the interest of other nations. There are obviously nine economies in the current arrangement, but Japan, Mexico, and Canada indicated, of course, an interest in coming into the TPP. So going forward, we'll be moving on parallel tracks to finalize the agreement and also to consult with these

countries that have indicated an interest in joining.

There are also, I think, several other noteworthy developments at APEC – again, whether it was moving towards more regional economic integration, the lowering of tariffs in some areas, focus on environmental goods and green jobs. So APEC, we felt, was – advanced, really, the President’s goal of seeking to deepen trade and investment in the region, and trying to foster a more integrated regional economy.

In Australia, obviously, the key take-away from that trip was the announcement that we would have a new Marine air and ground task force that would be located in Darwin. This is going to begin to ramp up now, and it’s going to ramp up to 2,500 U.S. Marines in Darwin. We see this as indicative of both the strength of the alliance with Australia, but also the role that the U.S. is going to play in the region and the commitment the United States has to the region.

We have, of course, had a very significant presence in the North Pacific. Part of what this is about is increasing our presence in the South Pacific and that these Marines will be able to help respond to natural disasters, also help be able to better afford, deploy, to partner with regional allies and partners. So this is a very important platform for the United States, a signal of both our alliance with Australia and our commitment to be present in the South Pacific region.

On that stop in Australia, the President also gave a speech that really laid out comprehensively his approach to the Asia Pacific. In that speech, I just highlight his statement that, in the context of our defense budget review, he’s prioritized the Asia Pacific. So that as we look at areas to cut, which will be the case going forward, we’re going to make sure that we protect the capabilities that we need to maintain our presence in the Asia Pacific.

Then in Indonesia, I’ll just highlight a couple of things. First, for – from the United States perspective, we saw a realization of some of the promise of the type of export deals that the President has advocated for since he came into office, including, I think, Boeing’s largest ever commercial airline deal with Lion Air.

Secondly, I think the President made a very important announcement about, of course, his commitment to send Hillary Clinton to Burma. On the way to Bali, the President became – spoke to Aung San Suu Kyi – he’s the

first U.S. President to speak to Aung San Suu Kyi – and was able to review the progress that’s been made on the reform efforts in Burma. And she very much welcomed the President’s decision to send Hillary Clinton to Burma. That visit, of course, will be next month, and the goal of that visit is going to be to try to continue the momentum that there’s been towards greater respect for human rights, greater movement on political reform in Burma, and also, critically, greater respect for ethnic minorities in the context of national reconciliation as well.

And then the President was the first – became the first U.S. President to attend the East Asia Summit, in addition to his ASEAN meeting. There, I think we’d highlight the three areas that were at the forefront of the U.S. agenda, and those were disaster relief – and I think there have been important developments in strengthening the region’s capacity to respond to natural disasters; nonproliferation and nuclear security; and then of course, lastly, maritime security. And the – we were able to have, I think, a robust discussion about maritime security in general, in the South China Sea in particular, at the East Asia Summit leaders retreat, in which we were able to reaffirm, along with other nations, our commitment to not having any claim in the South China Sea, but rather, wanting to see claims resolved with respect for international rules of the road to include freedom of navigation, peaceful resolution of conflict, free flow of commerce. So it was an important opportunity to build some consensus around a very important regional issue.

With that, I’d be happy to take your questions, and I do again just leave you with the sense that we felt that this was a very productive and successful trip for the President – frankly, as successful a trip as we’ve had, I think, since the President’s been in office.

MODERATOR: Please state your name and news organization.

QUESTION: Thank you. This is Lalit Jha from Press Trust of India. Thanks for coming to the Foreign Press Center. My first question is on India. What role do you see India to play in that part of the world? And China’s apprehension is that you are building up relationship in Southeast Asia, is it – as it something to – its buildup against China.

And secondly, about trip to Burma, that historic trip, do you think it’s an appropriate time for the U.S. to lift some of the sanctions against Burma? And finally, on the

Memogate – and now you have been here for a couple of days now – are you – how are you seeing this Memogate happening in Pakistan, which is your key ally?

MR. RHODES: Yeah. Okay. Well, let me just take those in order, I think.

First, on the issue of India, the President very much welcomes India's Look East approach. We believe that on – just as the United States, as a Pacific Ocean power, is going to be deeply engaged in the future of East Asia, so should India as an Indian Ocean power and as an Asian nation. So one of the reasons, for instance, that we believe the East Asia Summit should be the principal strategic forum in the region is because it brings India into the equation as well as United States, as well as Russia, so that in addition to having the East Asian nations, ASEAN nations, that we believe it's very important to have both India, the United States, also Russia at the table for those discussions.

And in the bilateral meeting that the President had with Prime Minister Singh, they were able to discuss a range of bilateral issues, but they also discussed, again, their commitment to the region, some of the shared principles that we have on issues like maritime security and nonproliferation and disaster relief, which were our top agenda items. So we very much want India to play a significant role in the region, and frankly, that's part of the reason why we have been so focused on empowering the East Asia Summit as a venue for strategic-level discussions in addition to economic discussions.

With regard to China, I think the President was very clear throughout the trip that we do not see our engagement in the region as, in any way, coming at the expense of China. First of all, we have longstanding commitments in the region, longstanding relationships with allies and partners that we feel that we need to deepen so that they are on a stronger footing for the 21st century. We see extraordinary potential for the American economy in the region in terms of our ability to trade and export. We see incredible security interests at stake in the region, whether it is nonproliferation or maritime security. And all of these demand a robust U.S. presence. And frankly, that presence need not come at the expense of China. In fact, the stability that the U.S. has helped provide has in part enabled the successful, peaceful development of China so that in many respects, China similarly has a stake in that stability.

What we've also said, however, is that part of the U.S. role as a leader in the Asia Pacific is to empower a set of international norms. On the economic side, that means, again, a fair and level playing field for companies from different countries. It means respect for things like intellectual property that are going to be critical to the trade of the future. And so on the economic side, the President spoke, I think, frequently throughout the trip about the importance of nations adhering to international norms as it relates to building a regional economy. Similarly, on the security side, he spoke about the importance of international norms on issues, particularly like maritime security.

Now again, the best scenario is one in which China is fully invested in those international norms. So none of this is meant to be at the expense of any one nation. It's meant to lay out principles and to establish that the U.S. is going to be present in the region. That we're going to maintain our very close relationships with a set of partners in the region, and that we're going to use our presence to try to empower a set of principles and international norms that all nations can come into. And I think the discussion on the South China Sea, for instance, at the East Asia Summit, reflected the fact that that's not just a U.S. view. It's a view that's shared by a lot of the countries in the region.

Just quickly on the memo issue, we, as we have said, see this very much as an internal issue, relative to Pakistan. So in that respect, it's the Pakistani Government that we'll work through any questions associated with this. We obviously noted that Ambassador Haqqani announced that he is stepping down today. He's been a very close partner, of course, with the United States, and we've appreciated the work we've done with him. But at the same time, we're certain that we'll be able to work with whomever the next Pakistani ambassador is, as well. So that – beyond that, I'd just say that it's an issue for the Pakistani Government.

QUESTION: Burma, is (inaudible) lift sanctions?

MR. RHODES: Yeah, just real quick on that, I think it's premature to discuss lifting of sanctions. I think the Secretary's trip is in part to add momentum to what's taken place and to explore what's going forward, but there are no plans right now to lift sanctions.

QUESTION: Okay. Guangjin.

QUESTION: Hi, Guangjin, from People's Daily. During - President's trip in China is important topic. Recently, we heard quite a few criticism from both eyes. Some people say that the President's stance on China is harder than before, probably driven by domestic political calculations. Do you think that is the case? Thank you.

MR. RHODES: Again, I think - what we've announced what U.S. interests are, and how we think the international system should work, and how we think it should work in the context of the Asia Pacific. So with regard to China, the President has exactly the same view of the type of region we're seeking to foster today that he had in 2009 when he traveled to the region, which is that the U.S. is going to be building at our presence, and that the U.S. believes there need to be rules of the road that all nations abide by.

A couple things have changed in that context. Frankly, we've put meat on the bones of the message that the President's had that are manifested in this trip. In other words, we've been talking and signaling, I think, for some time, that we're going to be increasing our presence in the Asia Pacific. In some respects, this trip - with the progress on the TPP, with the announcement of the marines in Darwin, with the presence of the East Asia Summit more clearly manifested that than in the past, when we were speaking about plans that we had into the future.

Secondly, I think with regard to China, I wouldn't say it's related to domestic politics. I would say that the point the President made is the lack of progress on a set of issues with China, particularly on the economic side - on currency, on respect for intellectual property, on indigenous innovation - has led to a fraying, somewhat, of the consensus for and support for the U.S.-China relationship in the United States. In that you see that - not just in the political context, where you have people on both sides of the political spectrum expressing concern - but you see it in the concern expressed by the American business community. And that, in particular, I think, was the message that the President highlighted as an emerging development. Whereas traditionally, the American business community, of course, has been a great advocate for the relationship, we are hearing concerns on issues, again, like IPR, indigenous innovation, currency that come from non-traditional quarters.

But that said, these are issues that we believe we can work out, and we very much want to work through these issues

in the context of a very comprehensive relationship between the United States and China. So it's - our policy in that respect towards China is very much the same, in that we want to, on the one hand, have a very comprehensive and ongoing set of consultations with the Chinese Government about how to move forward on these issues. On the other hand, we're going to be expressing our commitment to the broader region as well, and that those two things need not be mutually exclusive.

MODERATOR: We're going to go to New York. New York, go ahead, please.

QUESTION: I am Mauro Lucentini of the Italian magazine *Affari Esteri* - Foreign Affairs. In your overview of the situation in the Far East, you haven't even mentioned one important country - North Korea. Is there a reason for that? Could you comment on that? And could you tell me that in any evolution in the attitude of the United States towards North Korea in the last year or so?

MR. RHODES: Sure. Well, the question is about North Korea. And I think we've had a very clear policy as it relates to North Korea throughout the Administration, and it's ongoing. In the first instance, I'd say it starts from the very strong U.S. commitment to our alliance with South Korea. And that's an alliance that we've taken many steps to strengthen since we came into office, whether it's on our security cooperation or it's on the trade agreement that was reached and I'd note was ratified by the Koreans today in a step that we very much welcome.

But as it relates to North Korea, what we've said is that we are committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, that we - in that context, we're willing to go into discussions with the North Koreans and move back into Six-Party Talks. But what North Korea has to do is take concrete steps to demonstrate its commitment to live up to its obligations, and that those steps are going to be necessary in order for Six-Party Talks to succeed, and in order for the U.S. to have a different kind of relationship with North Korea. So that's been our consistent position, and we're still exploring whether the North Koreans are going to be willing to take those types of concrete actions that will be necessary for Six-Party Talks to succeed.

The only thing I'd say about the trip is that one other context that came up is the discussion of North Korea's proliferation activities, in both on a bilateral basis and at the East Asia Summit. For instance, the President was able

to speak to other nations about the steps that can be taken to ensure that North Korea cannot proliferate nuclear materials to other nations. And we have some very robust measures in place in the region, like the PSI, Proliferation Security Initiative, and some of our other partnerships. So part of the nuclear security nonproliferation agenda that we've pursued at EAS and in bilateral meetings was not just the focus on how do you achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula but how do you make sure that we have measures in place so that North Korea's not able to ship materials abroad and not able to proliferate weapons of mass destruction.

MODERATOR: Okay. We've got Christoph in the back.

QUESTION: Thank you. Christoph Marschall from the German daily Der Tagesspiegel. Thank you for coming here and thank you for underlining the new strategies in Asia. But to understand what it means, it's also to - important to understand what it does not mean. In Europe, there are a lot of questions at the moment. Does it mean the - America has been an Atlantic power, now it's changing 180 degrees and in the future it will be a Pacific power? I - from my point of view, I think that's exaggerated, given the enormous, intensive transatlantic partnership, which is not only trade and services, investment, values, and NATO, which we can't see on the other side yet. So please, could you a little bit comment what it means, but also what it does not mean?

MR. RHODES: Yeah. Absolutely. First of all, I agree with the premise of your question in that I think it would be a mistake to say that our increased focus on Asia Pacific is in some way at the expense of the transatlantic alliance. In fact, insofar as we've identified areas where we thought there were resource commitments that are going to be diminishing, it was very much on the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, ongoing efforts against terrorism that overwhelmingly dominated the attention of U.S. policymakers, senior decision-makers, military budgeting. So in that respect, it's not as if the overwhelming focus was Europe for the last 10 years and it's shifting to Asia. I think our point is that as we end the wars, which opens up bandwidth, frankly, for U.S. policymakers, for the President, for other senior officials, as well as presenting questions about how we want to focus our military posture going forward, we see the Asia Pacific as a region of focus.

That - frankly, it even means that we're going to be able to maintain a very strong commitment to the Middle East

and North Africa as well, but that's not necessarily going to mean the type of expenditures you saw in the Iraq war, where we had over \$100 billion a year dominating focus of U.S. foreign policy. So we very much keyed a lot of the shift in resource and focus from the extra bandwidth and resources that will come from the winding down of the wars rather than other alliances and partnerships. And frankly, I think under this Administration, you've seen a renewed effort to put the transatlantic alliance at the center of a lot of what we do, whether it's the ongoing very close consultations on the global economy that the President undertakes - I mean, I think he speaks more regularly with Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy these days than any other leaders in that context - or whether it's the Libya operation, which we believe stood as a testament to what NATO can do in the 21st century and what alliances that are based on security and values can accomplish in the 21st century.

So we continue to see the transatlantic alliance as central to many things the U.S. does in the world, central to, frankly, all of our critical interests. Insofar as we're making a pivot, it's really a pivot from a decade of wars being the focus of American foreign policy, to one in which we can better distribute our posture in the world. And that as we look at where we're going to ramp up, it's the Asia Pacific that we see as a place that can take more attention from the United States, where we can pursue a more aggressive economic engagement, and where we want to be making sure our security presence is sufficient to continue to provide for the stability of the region going forward.

MODERATOR: Well, we're going to go to New York. And New York, go ahead, please.

QUESTION: Guangjin Cheng from China Daily. As the U.S. increases its presence in Asia Pacific, will the U.S. increase its trans-military exercises with countries in this region? And what will the U.S. say to China if China in future raises concerns about your military exercises here? Thank you.

MR. RHODES: I think we have pursued a program of military exercises with a number of countries in the region. In many respects, those are natural manifestations of our alliances. So we very regularly, of course, work with nations like Korea, like Australia, like Japan, as well as the Philippines and Thailand. And I think we do want to have the ability to increase our ability to conduct joint exercises, conduct training, conduct support for things

like disaster relief. And that's in part what the Marine contingent in Darwin is going to be able to do, is to provide a - for instance, a more forward deployed U.S. capability to partner with nations in the region on a range of endeavors from joint exercises to response to contingencies like natural disasters.

And similarly, I think what we see is an ongoing effort by the United States to make sure that we're building ties with a range of militaries, and that will manifest itself in different ways. With Indonesia, we had some recent foreign military sales and we have some military-to-military cooperation that obviously is not the same as it is with our allies but demonstrates, I think, a partnership between our two nations. Similarly with other nations, we have ship visits, port calls by the U.S. Navy that I think are a part of the ongoing presence of the United States in the region, which has helped provide for stability.

With regard to China, I'd actually emphasize the point that we'd like to see that type of relationship with China as well. And the U.S. has underscored our interest and commitment to expanding military-to-military ties between the United States and China, and we feel that that's an important thing to do, to make sure that we have good lines of communication, to make sure that we're avoiding inadvertent escalation, to make sure that we are working together to support the stability of the region.

So part of the context of the U.S. presence is a dialogue with China, and a dialogue with the PLA and the Chinese leadership about these issues. And that provides a forum not just to discuss what we're doing in other aspects of the region but it provides a forum for us to build trust and communication going forward.

MODERATOR: Right here.

QUESTION: Ezzat Yousef from Al Ahram newspaper in the - Egyptian newspaper. The situation now in Egypt is just - the chaos in Tahrir Square now, this - the military and police force gassing people in Tahrir Square right now. You moved a step forward today by condemning this - the attacking these civilians in Tahrir and in other big cities in Egypt. How the U.S. is going to react to this situation, especially this standoff between the military and the protesters in Tahrir Square? And why you came late to condemn such attacks? Thank you.

MR. RHODES: Well, in the first instance, we strongly condemn any violence against protesters in Egypt. We

strongly condemn any violation of the human rights of the people of Egypt, which should include the ability to protest peacefully, whether it's in Tahrir Square or anywhere else. So I think, as a matter of principle, we would strongly object to the use of violence, and we would strongly support the rights of people to protest.

Insofar as there are actions of violence, not only would we object to them but we would want to make sure there was accountability for them. So that the Egyptian Government needs to ensure that, where there's excessive force, not only does it stop, but that there's a process of accountability so that the Egyptian people have some assurance that that type of activity won't take place again in the future.

In terms of what else we'd like to see, I think beyond the baseline of our objection to violence, it's been our position that we support a transition to a civilian government that is responsive to the Egyptian people and that it's important for the Egyptian people to have a sense that that process is going forward, that that process is responsive to their aspirations for democracy, and that they can see a path towards a different future, and one in which they are governed by their elected leaders.

So that's the dialogue that we - that's the position that's been the U.S. position throughout. It's not our place to dictate events or to be able to shape events on the ground. But insofar as we'd speak publically or privately about this, we're going to continue to support a clear path to a transition to a civilian government that includes elections, that includes, again, a movement towards a system that is responsive to the Egyptian people. So I know that there were further steps enunciated by the Egyptian Government today, and I think going forward we'll continue to work to see that we are supporting, again, that type of clear path.

MODERATOR: Eric.

QUESTION: Thanks Ben. Thanks for being here. Eric Weiner, Tokyo Broadcasting System. A question on Japan and TPP. There seems to be quite a bit of U.S. Congressional opposition to Japan joining TPP. Sandy Levin and others have sent letters indicating that they have concerns about auto and beef sectors. So how do you foresee overcoming U.S. opposition?

MR. RHODES: Well, in the first instance I think we have tried to demonstrate a growing commitment to trade in

this administration and to do so in a way that these can be win-win agreements. We believe that the Korea Free Trade Agreement was a win-win agreement where U.S. business and workers will benefit, as will Korean businesses and workers. I think in the context any trade agreement, there are going to be sectors that arouse domestic concern, and that's only natural. So that in the United States there are going to be sectors of our economy that raise concerns in the context of negotiations, just as we have already seen that there are sectors of the Japanese economy that have raised concerns about Japan's consultations to join the TPP.

But the bottom line is we believe those can be worked out. We believe that if you establish the type of high-threshold agreement that we're working towards that has not just the traditional components of a trade agreement, but that addresses issues like labor, labor rights, and environmental protections, and also the technological issues associated with trade in the 21st century, that we can craft agreements that benefit all of the nations involved.

So we're at the beginning of a process in terms of Japan coming into the TPP, and that's why there are consultations and that's why there're negotiations, so that we can provide assurances on both sides that these agreements will ultimately be to the benefit of the U.S. economy and the Japanese economy.

So it's not at all surprising and it's only natural that in the context of two of the world's largest economies potentially entering into a multilateral trade framework that you'd have concerns raised on both sides. We'll take them very seriously on the U.S. side, and our negotiators will certainly take them into account, just as I know the Japanese Government will be very sensitive to the concerns within Japan. But that's why this is a process; and, as we consult, we'll be able to address those issues going forward.

MODERATOR: Okay. We're going to New York. New York, go ahead, please.

QUESTION: Paolo Mastrolilli for the Italian daily newspaper, La Stampa. Thank you for doing this. There is a new prime minister in Italy and the United States has expressed a confidence that he can recover economically. (Inaudible) a possible timetable for a meeting between the President and the new prime minister?

MR. RHODES: The President was pleased to speak to Prime Minister Monti yesterday and expressed his confidence in the steps that had been taken within Italy, both to put in place a new government and provide some sense of assurance that Italy was committed to a reform program, and also to project his confidence in Italy's ability to deal with the challenges that it faces.

It's always been the President's view that, as a general matter, Europe and the Eurozone has the capabilities and the resources necessary to deal with the crisis that it confronts. Within the context of Italy, I think the President has confidence that Italy has the dynamism, the resources, the ability to tackle a very serious reform agenda and that the establishment of a new government under the prime minister creates an opportunity for that to go forward, and it's an important opportunity. And the President said that the U.S. will continue to be a close ally and friend of Italy, and in that respect, will support Italy's efforts. We stand ready to consult about the next steps forward to provide whatever types of advice may be useful to the Italian Government.

So I think there'll be an ongoing process and consultation, just as the President talks very regularly with Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy, that he'll be able to discuss these issues with Italian leaders, with EU leaders, in the coming weeks. And we believe, however, that there is an opportunity now with this new government and that opportunity must be seized, because what markets are looking for, what people are looking for, is confidence. And insofar as Italy is moving forward with its reform efforts, it will provide that confidence.

MODERATOR: Okay. We go to Andrei.

QUESTION: Thank you, Ben, for doing this. Andrei Sitov from Tass, from Russia. Thank you for doing this, and thanks to our friends at the FPC for arranging this. I hope you do this again, by the way, before the end of the year, to sort of wrap up for us the year-end results.

I was preparing to ask you about the (inaudible), but then there was this breaking news of the day for us about the U.S. suspending its obligation under the CFE Treaty towards Russia. And my question will be, have you given the Russians advance warning about that, probably in the meeting in Hawaii? And since everything aside from substances is treated as a signal, what sort of signal is that, how should we read it in Russia? Thank you.

MR. RHODES: Well, I think this grows out of an ongoing set of consultations and concerns we've had with the CFE and our belief that Russia had not fully been in compliance with the treaty with some of the notifications that it is supposed to provide and some of the inspections it is supposed to adhere to.

So at a working level, we've been raising these issues for some time now and took the decision today to suspend our engagement in that portion of the CFE. I think it's something we'll want to continue to work through with Russia and other European countries. We are committed to, obviously, regional security and regional stability, and it's always been the view of the United States that those goals are best advanced through the U.S. and Russia, and NATO and Russia, and our European allies and Russia, working through those issues on a kind of cooperative basis.

So, again, I think it's born out of long-standing concerns. I don't believe it was an issue of discussion at the bilateral meeting between the presidents in Honolulu, but I think it's been raised at a variety of levels for some time now. But going forward, I think it's our preference to resolve these issues through dialogue with the Russians, and so we'll be continuing to try to do that going forward. But, given our concerns about Russia's not living up to some of its obligations under the treaty, we felt like this was the appropriate step to take today.

QUESTION: Thank you. Yes. Hi, Joyce Karam with Al Hayat Newspaper. Actually, I also want to ask you about Egypt. It doesn't look like the military council is listening to you guys. Have you considered at all reviewing the military aid to Egypt? And it's strange a little bit to hear some authoritarian voices in the Arab world pointing to New York, Oakland, when they talk about police brutality, to justify their own. How do you respond to that?

MR. RHODES: Well, in the first instance, I think the most important thing for the Egyptian military council to do is to listen to the Egyptian people. And the Egyptian people are ultimately going to provide the basis for how Egypt moves forward. They're going to be the ones who determine the outcome of this transition. So in our discussions with the Egyptian military, what we express very much is that there needs to be a process and a transition to democracy that's responsive to the Egyptian people. And frankly, as we've seen throughout the region, violence is not an effective means of addressing

grievances. There needs to be a process of transition. So that will continue to be our message to the Egyptian Government, the Egyptian military.

I think - of course, we've had a very deep and long-standing relationship with the Egyptian military, and we believe that that is, frankly, a positive thing, because it allows us to have communications, it allows us to have a dialogue with the Egyptian Government, and it allows us to maintain a basis for consultation going forward. But what we want to see happen right now is we want to see a respect for the rights of the Egyptian people and we want to see, again, a sense of how the transition to a civilian government will move forward that, again, is responsive to the Egyptian people, not one that's going to come from the United States, it's not going to be dictated by the United States, but there has to be, again, that sense that this can move forward to a process of elections and transition to civilian rule. The military has expressed that same desire, but, of course, the importance will be in the follow-through.

With respect to the Occupy movements in the United States, of course, written into our founding documents is respect for the right of peaceful protest, the right of freedom of expression. So, in fact, I think the President had some Occupy protesters at his event today, and he made clear that they were certainly entitled to their views. In fact, there were a number of viewpoints expressed by the movement that he's very sympathetic to. Different municipalities around the United States, of course, have had - within the context of their jurisdiction, have taken their own decisions about how to manage the ongoing protests. It's not an issue for the Federal Government in our system to dictate or determine how a protest is dealt with in a different city, other than to say that, as a general matter and as a general principle, we support the freedom of expression in this country and we, of course, oppose any use of excessive and unnecessary force in that context.

But just as a general matter, it's not the President who determines what may happen in any given municipality. And frankly, you see those debates now taking place in different cities and different college campuses, and that too is a part of our democracy and that there's going to be very robust debate and dialogue about the best way forward. But again, as a general matter, we are supportive of protests, of course, of freedom of expression, and frankly, the President himself has made clear that there are aspects of the agenda that the Occupy movement has

advanced that are quite similar to the agenda that he's sympathetic to.

MODERATOR: Okay. All the way in the back.

QUESTION: Thank you. My name is Chin Hon Chua, I'm a reporter with Strait Times Singapore newspaper. Could you talk a little about how the Administration plans to maintain the momentum of its engagement in Asia Pacific next year and beyond, given that the President is going to be fairly engaged at home with the reelection? Are things going to fall off a cliff after the big push we've seen in the last couple weeks? Thanks.

MR. RHODES: Well, I think what Presidential trips often can do is lay out some - in addition to trying to have some concrete achievements along the context of the trip - lay out some markers for our government to fill in, and to basically provide some momentum that can then be carried forward by the rest of the Administration. And I think, in terms of this trip, there are some very clear areas for follow-up. The TPP is now an agreement that has to be fully* negotiated, so that the President is able to come together at a leaders level after a year of negotiations and establish the broad outlines of a trade agreement, but with the understanding that the finalization of a legal document would have to come next year. And frankly, that's a goal that we want to meet next year. So on the economic side, there's going to be a very intensive period of follow-on negotiations to finalize the TPP agreement. And then there's going to be in parallel the beginning of these consultations with nations like Japan about their potential entry into the TPP.

On the security side, we'll of course be ramping up our presence in Darwin. But from that, we want to be determining ways to deepen our cooperation with other partners in the region, whether it's the types of joint exercises we discussed earlier, ship visits, training, and then response and contingency. So there's follow-through that's going to be needed on that area as we ramp up our presence in the South Pacific. Burma, I think there's very critical follow-through that remains to be done. The President's, of course, sending Secretary Clinton to Burma at the beginning of next month, and what she'll be doing there is assessing the progress that's been made. There have been some positive responses from the Burmese Government to the President's announcement, as there have been positive responses from Aung San Suu Kyi, for instance, whose parties come into the system. But we believe that there's very intensive follow-through on this

Burma track that it's going to be an important focus of the United States to see if we can continue moving the ball forward on the types of reforms that we've seen in Burma. So that's an area identified by the President for follow-through.

And then of course, part of the reason that you engage in regional summits like EAS and like ASEAN is - and like APEC - is that they're also working-level organizations that have an agenda that is pursued, but from a summit onto the next one. So I think we'll be working the issues that came up at these summits at the working level going forward. And with China, I think some of the types of issues that the President discussed with President Hu on the economic side - we'll be continuing that dialogue with the Chinese.

So in other words, a lot of this is an agenda that will have to be carried forward. And even as we have a political year in front of us, I think the President was able to lay out markers that can now be filled in by his Administration. And frankly, one of the only trips that we know is on the schedule for the President next year is our attendance at the Nuclear Security Summit that will be in Seoul. So we'll, of course, have an ability to have another presidential trip to East Asia to one of our most important allies and on one of our most important issues, nuclear security.

MODERATOR: In the back.

QUESTION: Thank you. Jose Lopez, Notimex news agency. Ambassador Kirk welcomed Mexico's and Canada announcement about the re-interest to join the TPP process. I'm wondering, since you already have a partnership with them under the NAFTA umbrella, what is it that they can bring to the table to the TPP that cannot be contributed through the NAFTA? And how soon do you expect a decision where these countries can actually join the TPP talks?

MR. RHODES: Well, first of all, on the first part of your question, the TPP identifies a range of issues that I think go beyond the issues that are addressed by NAFTA. And that's part of the importance of the agreement, in that it addresses traditional agreements covered in FTAs as well as increased labor and environmental standards. But it also takes into account some of the industries of the future and the questions raised by those industries.

So whether it's the ability of small and medium-sized

businesses to access markets or whether it's issues related to information technology, intellectual property rights, it seeks to take some 21st century issues for our businesses and sectors and elevate them in the discussion of a trade agreement. So in that respect, it addresses a broader agenda than what's covered under NAFTA, and would establish, I think, additional points of agreement between our nations than those that are embedded within NAFTA.

It's also the - for instance, the case that the U.S. has an FTA with Australia, but they're - we've been - we have brought additional issues into the agenda in the TPP discussions. In terms of timing, the next step is for Mexican and Canadian negotiators, essentially, to have consultations with each of the TPP countries. So the process going forward is each individual country that wants to come into the TPP consults with each of the economies that are a part of the existing agreement, and then they essentially enter into the negotiating process.

What we've said is we're not going to put a pause button on the finalization of the TPP agreement while those discussions take place, so we want to finalize the TPP, and then on a parallel track, explore the additional countries who want to come into it. We very much welcome their interest. So I think that's the next step, is just as we finalize the TPP, consulting with Mexico, consulting with Japan, consulting with Canada on an individual country-by-country basis with the goal of bringing them into the TPP.

QUESTION: Guohua Zang with CTV-TV of Taiwan. Thank you, Ben, for doing this. In a major foreign policy speech in Hawaii, Secretary Clinton described Taiwan as a security and economic partner. Economic partner we all know, but in - what kind of a security partner do you want Taiwan to be, and in what context do you expect Taiwan to play its security partner role? Thank you very much.

MR. RHODES: Well, we have, of course, a security relationship with Taiwan that has been longstanding that involves, obviously, communication between our militaries and sales from the United States to the Taiwanese military. And so there's been a longstanding relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan that's been important to, I think, our commitment to fostering a stable region.

I think the context is very much one, of course, of the U.S. support for a one China policy and for there to be a

reduction in any tensions in cross-strait ties, and we've welcomed steps that have been taken to build cross-strait ties. So we've always viewed this as a situation where there's a concurrent responsibility for the United States - one, to maintain our relationship with Taiwan as it relates to a military-to-military relationship, but also an economic partnership that has benefitted both the United States and Taiwan. But also, the broader context is the U.S. support for a one China policy and for a reduction in any cross-strait tensions.

So I think it's totally - it's in - fully in line with what has been the U.S. approach to this issue going back to the Carter Administration, and that's a policy that we'll continue to pursue going forward.

MODERATOR: Okay. We have time for just one more question, and we'll go here.

QUESTION: Thank you. Ercan Demir from Turkish Radio and Television. Thank you for doing this. Quick follow-up to Egypt question: So it should be our understanding that the U.S. Government is not reconsidering its aid to Egyptian military who has been basically cracking down on the peaceful protestors in Tahrir? According to reports, there are 250 people got killed and hundreds of injured. Doesn't this trigger any kind of reconsideration?

My main question is on Turkey. We know that the U.S. and Turkey has been closely working on set of issues on - regarding Arab Spring. Particularly on Iran, going forward, you just released new set of sanctions. I asked this question yesterday too, but I am hoping get in more detail. How are you planning to work with Turkey, given past disagreements, especially on 1929, even though Turkey imposes, but Turkey said no. Are you expecting from Turkey to go forward the other sanctions that EU and U.S. did?

And also Syria, things are getting harsher in Syria. What is your expectation in next one to two weeks in terms of Arab League or Turkey? They still have not taken any steps on the economic sanctions side. Thank you.

MR. RHODES: Well, first as a general matter, we've been in very close contact with the Turkish Government about each of the issues that you discussed. The President and Prime Minister Erdogan have developed, I think, a very close partnership and friendship, really, and it has allowed them to have very frequent and candid discussions about these issues. We, frankly, see Turkey as

playing a very important role in support for democratic aspirations in the region, as well as a security ally in the region.

On each of these countries, just to take them one by one – on Syria, I think we have – we were able to consult with Prime Minister Erdogan in advance of the President making the decision to call for Bashar Asad to leave power, and in advance of the very robust sanctions that we put on the Syrian regime. And we felt that was important, given Turkey's role as a neighbor and given Turkey's relationship with Syria, that we be very transparent about the steps that we're going to take.

We believe that it's very important for Turkey to play a strong role in applying pressure on the Asad regime. To that end, what we see happening is a mounting tide of opinion in the region and in the world against Bashar Asad. And frankly, we see time running out for him, that there's no way that he's going to be able to take the types of actions he has against his people and remain in power. And I think the Arab League showed real leadership in reducing its relations with Syria, and it's important for the Arab League to continue to follow through in that respect.

Similarly, Turkey has made very strong statements in recent days about the need for there to be change in Syria, and has indicated a willingness to move towards sanctions. And again, we believe that that's going to be critical, because the U.S. and our European allies have essentially thrown the book at the Asad regime. And that's had an impact. That's cut them off from sources of revenue. That's cut their petroleum sector off from sources of revenue. That's isolated their banking sector, and that, we believe, is being felt very much in Damascus. But insofar as regional partners like Turkey and the Arab League are increasing their own pressure, that can hasten the democratic transition that needs to take place within Syria. So as a general matter, we believe Turkey is playing a very constructive role, and continue to do so going forward.

With respect to Iran, Turkey obviously differed on the vote on 1929. They have, however, not impeded but rather have abided by the multilateral sanctions framework that's been in place since then. Now, what we have also seen is additional steps have been taken by a range of nations that go above and beyond the basic framework established by 1929. The U.S., a number of European allies, Asian allies, have dramatically increased the sanctions that we've applied on the Iranian

Government. We announced a whole new set of sanctions yesterday that address the petroleum industry, the banking sector, the petro-chemical industry.

It's not our expectation that every single country is going to take the same steps that we do. We'd, of course, like there to be as broad a front against the Iranian Government as possible, so we welcome any nation that wants to take it – that joins us in taking additional punitive actions. But similarly, we wouldn't have an expectation that Turkey's going to do everything that we do. We do want Turkey to be aware of the – what we believe are the risks of doing business with the Iranian Government. Given its proliferation activities, its support for terrorism, and the IRGC's increasing role in the Iranian economy. So we believe that Turkey needs to be vigilant in understanding that business that is done with Iran could potentially be corrupted by those practices by the Iranian Government. So that's the type of dialogue we're going to have with Turkey and with many other nations.

With respect to Egypt, it's obviously a very fluid situation. I think our focus right now is on sending a very strong signal that we believe this violence is absolutely deplorable, that it has to come to an end, that that's something we're going to be saying in public and in private. I wouldn't get into any particular assistance questions at this point. It's, again, a very fluid situation. But we believe the most important thing that the Egyptian military council can do is stop violence against peaceful protesters, to respect the rights of peaceful protesters, and to, again, continue to lay out a clear path to a civilian government that is responsive to the people. So that's the message we're sending and will continue to do so going forward. And of course, we'll be closely monitoring events because they have taken a dramatic turn in recent days.

MODERATOR: Okay. So I'd like to thank Ben Rhodes for being here with us. I'd like to thank you all for attending as well. As always, the Foreign Press Center, we like to test the effectiveness of our briefings, so if you file a story, please do send it to me. I'll share it with the White House. And we do like to know.

So thank you very much. Goodbye.

State Dept. on Clinton's Upcoming Trip to South Korea and Burma

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

November 23, 2011

STATEMENT BY MARK TONER, ACTING
SPOKESPERSON

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's Travel to the Republic of Korea and Burma

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will travel to the Republic of Korea and Burma, November 30 - December 2, 2011.

Secretary Clinton will travel to Busan, Republic of Korea November 30 to attend the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Secretary Clinton's participation reflects the United States' strong political commitment to development as key pillar of global security, prosperity, and democratic progress. The Busan Meeting represents a landmark opportunity for world leaders to take stock of recent changes in the development landscape and chart a new course for global cooperation. Her visit also underscores the breadth and depth of the U.S.-ROK partnership.

Secretary Clinton will then travel to Nay Pyi Taw and Rangoon, Burma, from November 30 - December 2. This historic trip will mark the first visit to Burma by a U.S. Secretary of State in over a half a century. Secretary Clinton will underscore the U.S. commitment to a policy of principled engagement and direct dialogue as part of our dual-track approach. She will register support for reforms that we have witnessed in recent months and discuss further reforms in key areas, as well as steps the U.S. can take to reinforce progress. She will consult with a broad and diverse group of civil society and ethnic minority leaders to gain their perspectives on developments in the country. Counselor Cheryl Mills, Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell, Assistant Secretary Michael Posner, Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma Derek Mitchell, and Policy Planning Director Jake Sullivan will accompany her.

Clinton Signs \$600 Million Compact to Reduce Poverty in Indonesia

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Indonesian Finance Minister Agus Martowardojo have signed a five-year deal between the U.S. government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the government of Indonesia to alleviate poverty by supporting economic growth.

"The MCC and the government of Indonesia have worked for almost three years to develop this \$600 million compact, one of our largest ever, to reduce poverty and promote economic growth hand-in-hand with the Indonesian government and people," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said November 19 at the signing ceremony, which took place on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Bali.

Calling the agreement a significant milestone in the relationship between two of the world's largest democracies, Clinton said the compact reflects shared values and Indonesia's priorities.

According to a Millennium Challenge Corporation news release November 18, the new compact will focus on three projects to achieve economic growth.

The Green Prosperity Project is designed to support low-carbon economic growth by expanding renewable energy and improving the management of natural resources. Clinton said more than half of the compact's funds are devoted to this project, which seeks to end unsustainable land-use practices such as illegal logging and water pollution by fostering low-carbon development in local communities to allow rural people to raise their incomes in an environmentally sustainable way.

The Community-Based Nutrition to Prevent Stunting Project is designed to prevent low birth weight, childhood stunting and malnourishment. Clinton said this project marks the first MCC compact with a focus on early life nutrition. It is expected to help as many as 2.9 million children and their families across Indonesia.

The secretary said that ensuring adequate nutrition from the start of pregnancy through a child's first two years is critical for physical and cognitive development.

"If you want a healthier, better educated workforce, it starts in those very early months of life. And ultimately, an early focus on nutrition can reduce poverty, promote broader prosperity and improve the security and stability of communities and nations," Clinton said, adding that the new project complements the critical investments already made in this area by the Indonesian government.

The third area of focus in the MCC compact is the Procurement Modernization Project, designed to achieve significant savings in government procurement and improve the delivery of public services. Clinton said the project reflects Indonesia's commitment to being a leader in open and transparent government, and will support efforts to reform and improve the government system of making purchases on behalf of the people. She said the project has the potential to save as much as \$15 billion annually for the government and people of Indonesia.

"Open government practices save money, reduce corruption, improve efficiency and accountability, and produce results for citizens," Clinton said. As a co-founder of the Open Government Partnership, Indonesia "is positioned to really help demonstrate modernizing government practices to countries not only throughout the region but far beyond."

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is an independent U.S. foreign aid agency formed in 2004 that seeks to end global poverty by delivering foreign assistance to countries committed to democratic governance through loans that focus on country-led ownership for solutions, implementation and results. MCC grants complement other U.S. and international development programs. The secretary of state, treasury secretary, U.S. trade representative and the U.S. Agency for International Development administrator serve on the board along with four private sector representatives.

Deepening U.S. Ties to Asia-Pacific Region Not at China's Expense

Washington — The Obama administration is pushing for international trade norms and stability in the Asia-Pacific, and its deepening commitment to the region and its emerging institutions is not coming at the expense of China, says a White House official.

Speaking in Washington November 22, White House Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes said President Obama's

nine-day trip to Hawaii, Australia and Indonesia, where he attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS), was made in the context of expanding U.S. ties to both longtime allies and emerging powers in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We see extraordinary potential for the American economy in the region in terms of our ability to trade and export. We see incredible security interests at stake in the region, whether it is nonproliferation or maritime security. And all of these demand a robust U.S. presence," Rhodes said.

"Frankly, that presence need not come at the expense of China. In fact, the stability that the U.S. has helped provide has, in part, enabled the successful, peaceful development of China so that in many respects, China similarly has a stake in that stability," he said.

The trip included an agreement on the broad outlines of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which Rhodes described as "a type of high-quality trade agreement that can be emblematic of not just the potential for trade in the Asia-Pacific, but the type of free trade agreements that we want to be pursuing going forward in the 21st century."

It also saw the announcement that a U.S. Marine force will be deployed to Darwin, Australia, where troops will be better able to partner with regional allies on joint exercises and help respond to natural disasters. President Obama also traveled to Bali, Indonesia, where he became the first U.S. head of state to attend the EAS.

Obama's trip reasserted that the United States is a Pacific power, and it has longstanding relationships and interests in the region. Part of the U.S. role as an Asia-Pacific leader is also to "empower a set of international norms" on trade that will allow fair competition for companies from different countries, respect for international property rights and norms on maritime security, Rhodes said.

"The best scenario is one in which China is fully invested in those international norms," he said.

He also said the United States wants to expand its military-to-military ties with China, and to "make sure that we have good lines of communication, to make sure that we're avoiding inadvertent escalation, to make sure that we are working together to support the stability of the region."

Rhodes acknowledged that there has been a “lack of progress” between the United States and China in terms of the value of China’s currency, intellectual property rights protection and indigenous innovation that have caused concerns among the American business community, which “has been a great advocate” for the U.S.-China relationship.

“These are issues that we believe we can work out, and we very much want to work through these issues in the context of a very comprehensive relationship between the United States and China,” Rhodes said.

The Obama administration wants to have “a very comprehensive and ongoing set of consultations with the Chinese government about how to move forward on these issues.” At the same time, it will also be expressing its commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, and “those two things need not be mutually exclusive,” he said.

U.S.-China Trade Talks Make “Meaningful Progress”

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington – Senior U.S. officials say an annual two-day commerce and trade conference with Chinese officials made “meaningful progress” in crucial areas of the U.S.-China trade relationship, along with pledges for a level playing field for American and other foreign suppliers.

At a press briefing following the talks, Commerce Secretary John Bryson said that progress made during two days of trade talks with Chinese officials will help boost U.S. exports and jobs through the removal of important barriers related to the clean energy industry and rapidly emerging technologies. The Chinese also agreed to stricter enforcement of intellectual property rights, Bryson said.

Bryson, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack led a U.S. delegation that met November 20–21 with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan and a Chinese delegation at the 22nd Annual Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). The meetings were held in Chengdu, a leading Chinese economic center and the capital city of China’s Sichuan province.

Expanding trade ties with China will increase economic growth in the United States and advance President Obama’s goal of doubling U.S. exports by the end of 2014, they said. In early 2009, Obama announced the U.S.

National Export Initiative, which aimed to double U.S. exports by the end of 2014. It is part of a broader U.S. initiative to rebalance the national economy to one less dependent on consumer growth as the dominant influence in the U.S. economy, and also a component of expanding the economy following the 2007–2009 recession.

Worldwide U.S. trade exports in 2010 grew by 17 percent over the previous year, and exports to China grew by 32 percent, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

Joining the three senior officials was U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke, who is also a former secretary of commerce, U.S. Trade and Development Agency Director Leocadia Zak, and representatives from the State and Treasury departments. Senior Chinese officials from 23 ministries and agencies also participated.

Bryson said that U.S. and other financial firms can be competitive in China when the normal give-and-take in global investment can enjoy full and nondiscriminatory access.

“In today’s meeting, China committed to create a fair and level playing field for all companies in its strategic emerging industries, including clean energy, biotech and new-generation information technologies,” Bryson added.

Bryson noted in prepared remarks following the meetings that China plans to invest \$1.5 trillion over the next five years in its strategic emerging industries, which it defines as high-end equipment manufacturing, energy-saving and environmentally friendly technologies, biotechnologies, new-generation information technologies, alternative energy, advanced materials and new energy vehicles.

China’s Ministry of Agriculture and the U.S. Agriculture Department are working on a five-year strategic plan that focuses on food security, food safety and sustainable farming to build a foundation for agricultural cooperation, the senior U.S. officials said.

China is a significant agricultural trading partner for the United States, and the recent meetings have done two things necessary for future opportunities – strengthen partnerships and build export opportunities, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told reporters in Beijing.

“We intend to continue these discussions in the months ahead on beef and other agricultural products to break down additional trade barriers so Chinese consumers can

benefit from the high-quality products that are produced in America," Vilsack added.

U.S. Trade Representative Kirk said that China has confirmed it will not require foreign automakers to transfer technology to Chinese automakers, nor will it also require foreign automakers to create Chinese brands before they can invest and sell vehicles in the Chinese markets. There had been concern among U.S. automakers that they might be required to transfer electric vehicle technology to Chinese partners, but Kirk said the Chinese agreed not to require that.

Vice Premier Wang also "personally committed" to continue the software legalization program, the senior officials said. Specifically, he committed to ensure provincial legalization efforts would be concluded by the middle of 2012 and at the local and municipal levels by the end of 2013.

Before departing Beijing, U.S. companies signed commercial agreements that will result in nearly \$40 million in U.S. exports and support jobs for American workers, the senior officials said. The United States and China also signed agreements related to intellectual property, high-technology trade, statistics and tourism, and agreed to public-private partnerships in energy and U.S. export promotion.

China was the largest supplier of U.S. goods imports in 2010, and the third-largest market for U.S. exports last year after Canada and Mexico. Bilateral trade in goods between the United States and China totaled \$457 billion in 2010, with U.S. imports from China totaling \$365 billion and U.S. exports to China totaling \$92 billion, which is up 468 percent since 2000. The total U.S.-China trade in services came to \$31 billion in 2010. U.S. service exports were \$21 billion and services imports were \$10 billion.

However, the Commerce Department reports that the U.S. trade deficit with China hit a monthly high of \$29 billion in August, and may surpass last year's \$273 billion deficit, which was the highest recorded with a single country.

Established in 1983, the JCCT is the main forum for addressing bilateral trade issues and promoting commercial opportunities between the United States and China. Last year's session was held in Washington in December.

U.S. Diplomat Discusses Africa with Asian Counterparts

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson says that China, Japan and South Korea are equally concerned about events occurring in Somalia, a nation that has been at war with itself for nearly 22 years.

In recent travel to China, Japan and South Korea, Carson, who is the assistant secretary for African affairs, met with his counterparts to discuss mutual interest and cooperation in Africa between the United States and Asia. On November 10 in Beijing, he also co-chaired the fifth round of the U.S.-China Sub-Dialogue on Africa, which was initiated at the last round of the annual U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue.

"In China, I had an opportunity to exchange views with the vice foreign minister, Zhai Jun, about how China views the current situation on the continent, especially those areas of most concern — Somalia, Sudan and eastern Congo," Carson told journalists in Africa on a November 22 conference call from Washington.

The two senior diplomats also discussed how the United States and China can work together in promoting a number of trilateral development initiatives in a number of African countries.

"We are eager to see if we can work with China to leverage our comparative advantages to help Africa overcome some of its economic challenges, particularly in the area of agriculture, health and clean water," Carson said.

The United States applauds China's additional humanitarian assistance and financial support to Somalia, he said. "The issue of Somalia was a topic in all three countries," he added.

"And we applauded both Japan and China for their cooperation in helping to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Red Sea, where the United States is also working to combat piracy," Carson said.

Carson said that the United States also continues to applaud Japan's continuing contributions to the U.N. trust fund for Somalia and their willingness to consider putting additional resources into Sudan, and to possibly put a Japanese military engineering battalion into the UNAMID (African Union/United Nations Hybrid

Operation in Darfur) peacekeeping force.

The United States, China, Japan and South Korea are equally concerned about the continuing instability inside of Somalia, he said, not only for Somalis, but also for its neighbors, like Kenya, where thousands have fled for sanctuary from continuing violence.

South Korea, Carson noted, is increasingly interested in augmenting its level of development assistance in Africa and in expanding its diplomatic presence on the continent. "And we encourage both of those moves," he added.

Carson said that the United States is also looking to Africa for some of its energy needs. "We in the United States import some 18 or 19 percent of all of our petroleum needs from the continent," he said. "And we get as much oil from Africa as we do from Saudi Arabia." He noted that Nigeria provides some 8 percent of U.S. energy needs and is the United States' largest source of low sulfa crude oil.

Violence Against Women Has Broad Social Consequences, Experts Say

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — Long a subject locked in the home behind a curtain of silence, violence against women will be pushed into an international spotlight in the days and weeks ahead in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The occasion is marked on November 25, but Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer said advocates of the cause will be recognizing this international problem with events scheduled through the end of the month and up to December 10, Human Rights Day. Verveer said advocates are linking the cause to human rights day as a demonstration of the fact that the rights of women and girls are also human rights. Striking a blow against a woman is a blow against human rights, she said.

"Not something marginal to human rights, not a subset of human rights, but violations of human rights," said Verveer at a State Department discussion forum held November 21. "It is truly and sadly a global scourge."

In the 16 days leading up to Human Rights Day, Verveer

said, thousands of organizations and tens of thousands of people in more than 150 nations have organized events and activities to denounce violence against women.

The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues organized a State Department event to focus on the economic, health, legal and social costs that are the consequences of violence against women. United Nations surveys show that one in three women worldwide will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime, and that violence against women causes more death and disability for women and girls between the ages of 15 and 44 than do cancer, traffic accidents, malaria and war combined.

The World Bank has recently issued a wide-ranging report on gender equality, said Jeni Klugman, a specialist on women's issues. She said one finding is that gender equality is a smart economic policy.

"Gender equality has important benefits in terms of productivity, incomes, and improves development outcomes, including for future generations," said Klugman. Economic analysis further shows that violence incurs significant costs. As a woman is debilitated by violence or seeks to escape it, costs are incurred by the individual, her employer and her community, state and nation.

Jay Silverman, a professor in the Division of Global Public Health at the University of California-San Diego, said domestic violence is a contender to be the most preventable and modifiable risk factor that prevents the achievement of community and global health goals. Even beyond injury or death caused by violence, Silverman said, domestic violence can also degrade a woman's reproductive health and maternal health, and affect her HIV status and vulnerability to other sexually transmitted conditions.

Children in a violent home also suffer, even before birth. Evidence shows that infants born to abused women are most likely to be of low birth weight, one of the greatest risk factors for a newborn. "Once born, they are far more likely to get sick from major, major sources of child mortality," Silverman said, "such as diarrheal disease and acute respiratory infection; they are also more likely to experience stunting, malnutrition and other development issues."

And if violence is routine in domestic life, children of the household are also likely to become victims, Silverman said. Girl children in a violent home are at significantly

greater risk of sexual assault; or a male relative might force them into prostitution or sell them to a human trafficker.

The U.N. General Assembly designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1999, while women's rights activists have marked the day since 1981, in solemn recognition of assassinations that occurred in 1960. Three sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, were murdered in 1960 after their ongoing protests against the Dominican dictator of the time, Rafael Trujillo.

Ambassador Rice at U.N. on Iran, Burma, North Korea Human Rights

USUN PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Iran, North Korea, and Burma Human Rights Resolutions in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), November 21, 2011

The United States welcomes decisions by the UN General Assembly's Third Committee to highlight human rights abuses in Iran, Burma, and North Korea.

This year's resolution on Iran, which passed this afternoon by a record margin, underscores the ongoing, systematic targeting of human rights defenders by the Government of Iran. Lawyers, journalists, Internet providers and bloggers have been harassed, intimidated, interrogated and arbitrarily detained as a consequence of their exercise of speech and the press in Iran. The Government of Iran continues to violently repress women, minority groups, and broad sections of civil society. We share the General Assembly's deep concerns about such abuses and join its call for the Iranian government to cooperate fully with the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights.

On North Korea, the General Assembly has noted the government's continuing refusal to cooperate with the Secretary-General's Special Rapporteur for human rights and "the persistence of continuing reports of systematic, widespread and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights." This includes cruel and degrading treatment, including public executions and extrajudicial and arbitrary detentions, as well as profound restrictions on freedom of thought.

On Burma, the General Assembly has welcomed recent

talks between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi and opposition parties, reflecting the international community's hope for progress in the country. Today's resolution calls on the government to lift all restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, association and movement and the freedom of expression, and expresses continuing concern over violations of human rights.

Today's votes show that the international community will continue to side with the UN's founding values, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and against violators of human rights.

Earth Observation Grows in Importance as Landsat Turns 40

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — Population analysts estimated that world population exceeded 7 billion in October and now marches onward to 8 billion. With every passing moment, a scientific program operated by NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) collects data that will help determine how rapidly humans are using the planet's resources and whether those resources will meet the needs of an ever-growing population.

The Landsat program began in 1972, and since then seven earth-observation satellites have been launched. Two remain in orbit today — Landsats 5 and 7 — and the 40th anniversary of the program will be noted as scientists and engineers work to ready Landsat 8 for launch in 2013. More than 3 million images of the earth's surface have been collected and archived through the life of the program. This massive database is available for free, and is tapped by millions of people each year in more than 180 countries.

"This easily accessible, impartial record is really the great enabler in understanding earth resources management," said Thomas Loveland, senior scientist at the U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center at a scientific symposium November 16.

A single Landsat orbits the Earth in 16 days, Loveland said, recording images of the same spot on the surface at regular intervals. "It gives us the opportunity to look at the planting of our crops, watching their development through the season and estimating the extent of harvest," Loveland said. "But it also lets us look at the growth of cities over time, changes in our forests, and monitoring the impact of floods, fires and other disasters."

Scientists are also able to use the data to help governments better understand resources, such as water and forests, and use that information to make better plans for use and conservation of the resources.

Europeans have also made important use of the data provided by Landsat, according to Alan Belward of the European Commission Joint Research Centre. His agency has been working with about 30 sub-Saharan African governments to create an accurate accounting of the amount and rate of African land conversion from natural vegetation to agriculture. Their analysis has determined that about 50,000 square kilometers are being converted each year.

"It is big," Belward said. "But at the same time, the population of Africa has about doubled in that time. So there's less agriculture acreage per person now than there was in the 1970s. This pressure on the land is relentless."

Belward expects the pressure on land use to remain relentless, and says the Landsat program must remain in place to keep track of the changing landscape.

Matthew Hansen also taps into Landsat data to watch changing land use on a global scale in his role as a remote sensing scientist at the University of Maryland. He said the free availability of Landsat data is going to encourage greater understanding of land use. "We've democratized the process by having all these data freely available around the world," he said.

Hansen foresees that more and more countries will be using the data to gain a better understanding of planetary systems such as the carbon cycle, climate change, biodiversity, cropping systems and hydrology. He suggests a new era of explosive activity in this area is just beginning.

NASA and USGS are planning on a launch of Landsat 8 in early 2013, which may be none too soon. Since the November 16 symposium, USGS reports that Landsat 5 is starting to malfunction, and it appears the craft is reaching the end of its days, leaving Landsat 7 to work alone in monitoring the earth's surface.

Though the U.S. Congress has not authorized funding to begin planning for Landsat 9, Loveland is optimistic that the program will persist.

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