

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Weekly Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

June 22, 2012

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Arms Reduction Treaty Progress Seen as Significant

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 21 June 2012

Washington — The New START Treaty ratified by the United States and Russia a year ago is demonstrating significant progress in lessening the nuclear dangers facing the Russian and American people while strengthening global security, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

“When the treaty is fully implemented, it will result in the lowest number of deployed nuclear warheads since the 1950s, the first full decade of the nuclear age,” Acting Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller testified June 21 before a U.S. Senate committee.

Gottemoeller, who led the U.S. negotiating team for the New START Treaty, said that to understand where the two nations are now, people must consider where they were in July 1991. When fully implemented the New START Treaty will reduce the number of nuclear warheads in each nation’s arsenal to 1,550. When the first START Treaty was signed in July 1991, the United States and the former Soviet Union each deployed approximately 10,500 nuclear warheads, she said.

“In negotiating the treaty, both sides worked hard to find innovative new mechanisms to aid in the verification of the treaty, and the results of that work are already evident,” Gottemoeller said before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The committee was conducting an oversight hearing to determine if the treaty has begun achieving its intended goals in reducing the number of nuclear warheads each nation has and if it will ultimately lead to a reduced nuclear threat.

“The regime provides for effective verification and, at the same time, is simpler to implement and lessens disruptions to the day-to-day operations of both sides’ strategic forces,” Gottemoeller said in prepared remarks for the committee.

Gottemoeller, who is acting under secretary of state for arms control and international security, said the implementation process with the Russians has been positive and pragmatic, and that both sides are continuing a professional working relationship that began during the treaty negotiations in Geneva.

“Our experience so far is demonstrating that the New START’s verification regime works, and will help to push the door open to new, more complicated verification techniques for the future,” Gottemoeller said. “Verification will be crucial to any future nuclear reduction plans, and the United States has made it clear that we are committed to continuing a step-by-step process to reduce the overall number of nuclear

weapons.”

President Obama announced in a 2009 speech in Prague that he would pursue the long-term goal of a nuclear-free world, and has formulated U.S. foreign policies to support that goal.

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman John Kerry said the treaty has permitted inspectors from the United States and Russia to conduct numerous short-notice inspections to verify the accuracy of reports from both nations, and it has provided considerable visibility into each nation’s nuclear activities.

Senator Richard Lugar, the senior Republican on the committee, said the treaty, which was approved by the U.S. Senate by a vote of 71-26 on September 22, 2010, provides for a gradual and systematic reduction in nuclear arsenals, but also for the modernization of the U.S. arsenal over 10 years. “This is a rational policy outcome that bolstered United States national security,” he added.

The treaty gave the United States and Russia seven years to reduce forces and remains in force for 10 years from ratification. It contains detailed definitions and counting rules that will help the nations calculate the number of warheads that count under the treaty limits. Additionally, the treaty provides for regular, on-site inspections of each country’s nuclear arsenals to assure compliance and implementation of the immense technical aspects of nuclear arms reduction programs.

The New START agreement succeeds the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the 2002 Moscow Treaty. It does not block efforts to create missile defense systems.

The treaty limits the United States and Russia to 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads for each country, down from the current limit of 2,000 warheads, and 700 launchers. The treaty also requires on-site verification inspections, which had lapsed in December 2009 when the old START Treaty expired. Russia and the United States possess 90 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons.

U.S. nuclear forces will continue to be based on the triad of delivery systems: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic bombers. The treaty provides an upper boundary of 1,550 deployed warheads for each nation and up to 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers. Additionally, the treaty would permit up to 800 deployed and nondeployed missile and submarine launchers or heavy bombers.

U.S. Works with Japan, Switzerland to Combat Global Tax Evasion

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer | 21 June 2012

Washington — The U.S. Treasury Department has issued bilateral statements with both Japan and Switzerland expressing mutual intent to pursue cooperation in international tax compliance.

The Treasury Department on June 21 welcomed Japan's and Switzerland's willingness to strengthen their cooperation with the United States in combating tax evasion.

The cooperation offers a new model for implementing the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) "in a way that addresses domestic legal impediments and reduces burdens on financial institutions," according to acting Assistant Treasury Secretary for Tax Policy Emily McMahon.

The FATCA, enacted by Congress in 2010, requires foreign financial institutions to report to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) information about financial accounts held by U.S. taxpayers or by foreign entities in which U.S. taxpayers hold a substantial ownership interest.

Under the new model, McMahon said, foreign financial institutions will report certain tax information directly to the IRS, with additional information exchanged government-to-government upon request.

The original model for implementing FATCA envisions the reporting of information by foreign financial institutions to their respective governments and the automatic exchange of that information with the United States. The original model was contemplated in a joint statement the Treasury Department signed in February with France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The department said both intergovernmental models for implementing FATCA represent important steps toward addressing legal impediments to financial institutions' ability to comply with the law. The department will use the models in the United States' work with other countries in tax compliance.

Foreign Press See U.S. Conventions Through a Different Lens

By Louise Fenner | Staff Writer | 21 June 2012

Washington — International journalists who report on the U.S. political conventions recently shared the challenges and frustrations of explaining a complicated political process when politicians and pundits are more interested

in scoring points with U.S. voters than reaching out to foreign audiences.

"U.S. officials don't quite get why it's important to reach out to foreign outlets, and frankly, in seeking votes and financial support, they tailor their message to a domestic audience," said Maria Peña, a Washington-based correspondent for EFE, a Spanish news agency.

Nevertheless, it's important for international journalists to be inside the convention halls to explain the nomination process "as well as the controversies that arise in each election cycle," Peña said in an email. "There's no substitute for being there."

She will be covering the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida, in August.

"It's very, very important to be at the conventions," said Pablo Pardo, deputy bureau chief of El Mundo in Washington. "Otherwise you get the speeches through the TV, but nothing else."

But he cautioned journalists against assuming that politicians and delegates who participate in political conventions are typical of everyone in their party.

"They are the core — they're very, very committed — so you have to be careful not to think that the whole Republican Party or the whole Democratic Party is like them."

Peña and Pardo said their news organizations probably have better access to U.S. officials than some other foreign media outlets because the political parties are eager to reach Hispanic Americans, a key voter demographic in the 2012 elections.

EFE covers the Hispanic community, Peña said, and its articles "get picked up by all major Spanish-language media outlets" in the United States. (EFE also publishes in English.) Pardo said El Mundo's website "has a readership in Florida, Texas and California," as well as other states with large Hispanic populations.

A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT U.S. POLITICS

Both journalists said they are focusing on the Republican convention this cycle because it might produce more interesting news, as well as some surprises.

"It seemed to me that the Democratic one would be a lot more predictable," said Peña.

Pardo said he is interested in the issue of Medicaid and other entitlement programs, which he expects to be discussed in Tampa.

Approximately 6,000 foreign journalists covered the conventions in 2008, according to the State Department's Foreign Press Center. Many media outlets, including EFE and El Mundo, sent one team to cover the Democrats and another team the Republicans.

Political conventions "are mainly designed for TV," Pardo said. He thinks that's why the most controversial speakers are often scheduled for the morning or early afternoon. "As the day advances, they have the more mainstream political figures speak so they'll match up with the big networks' [prime time] coverage."

He said that at the 2004 and 2008 Republican conventions, the delegates were very friendly, but also surprised to see him.

"They said, 'You're from Spain, what are you doing here?' It's like they really don't understand that this is an event that is interesting all over the world."

He recalled the delegates' reaction to vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin in 2008. "At the beginning, nobody knew her. There was a big degree of uncertainty. Then after her speech, everybody was so excited about her."

Peña, for whom Tampa will be her first national convention assignment, said she believes that international journalists have an important role to play in covering American politics.

"Decisions made in Washington, especially regarding trade, immigration or foreign assistance, have a clear impact abroad, and U.S. allies throughout the Americas are interested in learning about these through the media."

She added that many Hispanic voters "keep in touch with relatives and friends back in their home countries and are interested in U.S. foreign policy matters." Even though noncitizens outside the United States do not vote in U.S. elections, "they sure can influence those naturalized citizens who can and do [vote]."

Peña has covered three presidential elections. In 2008, she interviewed candidate Barack Obama, who was "actively courting the Hispanic vote. I remember it as a very revealing interview about him as a very driven politician."

She also recalled when candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton withdrew from the presidential race after losing in the primaries to Obama.

"I was somewhat surprised to see many people in heartfelt tears, loudly chanting her name," Peña said. "The memory of tear-stained faces has stayed with me, and I guess it's because there had been a lot of talk about

how Clinton was a polarizing figure, but that crowd told a different story."

President Obama Confident in Europe's Economic Recovery

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 20 June 2012

Washington — President Obama expressed confidence that countries in the eurozone, which are coping with a currency and debt crisis that has rattled world markets, will take "bold and decisive action" toward greater fiscal consolidation, adding that the continent "remains one of the wealthiest, most productive regions of the world."

Speaking June 19 at the conclusion of the Group of 20 (G20) summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, Obama said that following his conversations with European leaders at the G20 and over the past few months he is confident that they "are very much committed" to Europe's economic and monetary union.

"These are advanced economies with extraordinarily productive people. They've got a particular challenge that has to do with a currency union that didn't have all the best bells and whistles of a fiscal or a monetary union, and they're catching up now to some of those needs. And they just need the time and the space to do it," he said.

The current crisis is a combination of factors, including some member countries that had undisciplined fiscal practices and public debt, and others, such as Spain, "whose problems actually arose out of housing speculation and problems in the private sector that didn't have to do with public debt," he said.

The president said there is "no doubt" that all European countries "recognize the need for growth strategies inside of Europe that are consistent with fiscal consolidation plans," and he said their leaders "understand the stakes," and "understand why it's important for them to take bold and decisive action."

"I'm confident that they can meet those tests," Obama said, and he urged them to "work through all the politics to get it done" in order to send a strong signal to "impatient" and "risk-averse" world markets.

The president said Europe has the resources to solve its crisis, and mainly needs "a sense of specifics and the path" to the solution, which in turn will help "build confidence and reverse psychology" for global investors.

"What I've encouraged them to do is to lay out a framework for where they want to go in increasing European integration, in resolving the financial pressures that are on sovereign countries. Even if they can't achieve all of it in one full swoop, I think if people have a sense of

where they're going, that can provide confidence and break the fever," he said.

Neither the United States nor the G20 can solve Europe's current challenges, he said, but with Europe being the largest U.S. trading partner, "we have a profound interest in seeing Europe prosper."

Trafficking Victims Must Be Made Whole, Secretary Clinton Says

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 20 June 2012

Washington — Survivors of human trafficking must be given the opportunity "to move past what they endured and make the most of their potential," says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Speaking at the State Department June 19 at an event marking the release of the department's 2012 Trafficking in Persons Report, Clinton said: "Traffickers prey on the hopes and dreams of those seeking a better life. And our goal should be to put those hopes and dreams back within reach, whether it's getting a good job to send money home to support a family, trying to get an education for oneself or one's children, or simply pursuing new opportunities that might lead to a better life."

The annual report, which tracks how human trafficking is handled in 186 countries and territories — including the United States — emphasizes proven and innovative practices for protecting victims via psychological support for victims, immigration laws to protect migrant victims and training for labor inspectors to recognize trafficking, Clinton said.

According to the State Department, there are some 27 million people around the world who are enslaved for labor or for the sex industry. Statistics provided by the United Nations' International Labour Organization estimate that 55 percent of forced labor victims are women or girls, as are 98 percent of sex trafficking victims.

Maria Otero, the under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy and human rights, said the United States is working with other governments to strengthen judicial systems, build strong law enforcement capacities, help protect individual citizens and combat trafficking in persons.

Fighting modern slavery, Otero said, is a priority for the United States because trafficking challenges the most fundamental human rights of freedom and dignity for every individual. "Trafficking also tears at the very fabric of society," she said. "It rips families apart. It devastates communities. It holds people back from becoming full

participants in their own political processes in their own economies. And it challenges the ability of countries to build strong justice systems and transparent governments."

In his written remarks in this year's report, the State Department's ambassador-at-large to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, Luis CdeBaca, noted that "some governments are treating victims as criminals or ignoring them entirely." He called upon governments not to shirk their responsibility to bring traffickers to justice and help victims recover.

This year's report explains that traffickers "use coercive tactics and force to make their victims feel worthless and emotionally imprisoned. As a result, victims can lose their sense of identity and security."

"A variety of psychological symptoms can surface over a period of time even after victims escape or are rescued from the trafficking environment," the report says. "Thus, it is critically important to incorporate psychological support and treatment within victims' services and protocols."

Among the recommendations the report makes:

- Provide victims with shelters but do not detain them there. Victims should have freedom of movement.
- Victims should be informed of their rights as early as possible in a language they understand.
- Victims should be given the choice of how much of their information is shared.
- Governments should offer victims permanent residency and the right to work. Benefits — rather than forced deportation — facilitate the law enforcement process, the report says.

The report also cautions governments not to confuse trafficking, in which victims are coerced, with illegal immigration.

"Authorities often fail to look beneath the surface for possible indicators of forced labor, debt bondage or sex trafficking," the report says. It is the traffickers, not the trafficking victims, who are the criminals, the report says.

Rio+20: NASA Satellite Data Support Sustainable Development

20 June 2012

Washington — Forest fires in Guatemala, snow pack in the Himalayas, changes in ground cover in Africa — their potential impact on populations, water supplies and farmlands is better understood when seen from a satellite. U.S. agencies are collecting this data and giving it to decision makers in other countries so they'll be better

informed about how to protect their lands and their people.

Officials with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and NASA explained how the SERVIR Regional Visualization and Monitoring System is working to support better decisions for sustainable economic development and adaptation to climate change. They led a discussion June 20 on the sidelines of the Rio+20 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development being held in Brazil through June 23.

“SERVIR has many applications,” said USAID’s Kit Batten, director of the climate change program. “It is increasingly focusing on providing historic, real-time and future weather, climate and land-cover information that can support decisionmaking related to adaptation, forest management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

SERVIR has become operative in three world regions since 2005: Central America, the Hindu Kush–Himalayas, and East Africa. Batten said the two U.S. agencies aim to achieve global environmental monitoring through SERVIR in the future.

“The studying, the monitoring of our home planet is a key goal of NASA,” said Daniel Irwin, the SERVIR expert from NASA. A network of satellites orbits Earth to “take the pulse of the planet,” with support from governments and scientific and academic institutions around the world.

Governments can use the data effectively as they see how climate and environment are changing their lands, and that is “where good science can really be used for decisionmaking,” Irwin said.

First recognition of the power of satellite images and their capability to influence decisionmaking developed about 1986, Irwin said, with a sky-high view of the Mexican and Guatemalan border. The image, which was published internationally, depicted the sharp contrast between land-use decisions made in the two countries, with lush forests on the Guatemalan side of the border and scrubland on the Mexican side where forests had been cut down.

Irwin said the image motivated Guatemalan lawmakers to declare a forest preserve in that area, and leaders throughout the region gained an early awareness of what they could learn from satellite images.

That episode led in 2005 to creation of the SERVIR program for Central America, where satellite data are analyzed by geographic and other specialists from across the region. Their analysis provides decisionmakers with background data applicable to a variety of environmental and land-use considerations, but the most common use is in assessing the impacts of extreme events – floods or

hurricanes, for example – preparing for those events and attempting to mitigate damage with foreknowledge.

Several African governments learned of the Mesoamerican success with SERVIR and sought out a similar partnership with NASA and USAID. That partnership now involves 18 member countries in southern and eastern Africa. A third partnership followed soon thereafter with governments and institutions in the Hindu Kush–Himalayan region.

The SERVIR partnerships help broaden skills and expertise among technical and scientific personnel in each region and introduce students to the use of satellite data. NASA and USAID hold workshops for local leaders so they can learn to interpret the data and use it to better inform environmental policy decisions.

In Guatemala, for example, the satellite data provided vivid pictures of forest fires as they developed during the annual dry season. That data helped leaders on the ground make better decisions about where to allocate firefighting resources.

Then Guatemalan officials saw potential to get more high-value information from the satellite data, and asked NASA to create a model that could make some predictions about where fires might be likely to break out in the weeks ahead.

NASA rose to the occasion, Irwin said, producing “a fire-forecast map that is produced weekly during fire season so they can actually allocate the resources accordingly, based on the fire-forecast system.”

Irwin said the SERVIR program has also tracked the progress of floods in low-lying South Asia, and is on the way to developing other data tools that will help nations keep inventory on their greenhouse gases.

RIO+20 AGREEMENT DRAFT REACHED

The Rio+20 summit goal is to produce a document that will serve as an epilogue to the international commitments to environmental protection first made at the Rio Earth Summit 20 years ago. Negotiators have been working on a draft document to present to leaders at the summit finale. They issued a draft June 19 that is expected to be adopted by national leaders who attend.

The U.S. delegation is also supporting the principles of an agreement to expand the availability of sustainable energy to populations still lacking electricity. A U.S. fact sheet notes that the nation is supporting about \$2 billion in loans and grants for clean-energy development. The United States is working with about 20 countries to promote low-emissions, high efficiency and renewable

energy sources.

Humanitarian Crises Create Tough Year for Global Refugees

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 19 June 2012

Washington — The threat of violence, assault, intimidation or other dangers made 800,000 people flee their homelands in 2011, the highest number in a single year since 2000, according to the annual assessment of global trends as compiled by the U.N. refugee agency.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) releases the report as part of its commemoration of World Refugee Day June 20. The forced displacement documented in the 2011 report comes from “a string of major humanitarian crises,” noting Côte d’Ivoire, Somalia and Sudan.

“Global Trends 2011” reports that the year ended with 42.5 million people living unsettled and uncertain lives — 15.2 million as refugees, across an international border from their homeland; 26.4 million as internally displaced persons, in flight from violence or disaster in their home region, but still within their country; and 895,000 seeking asylum.

“2011 saw suffering on an epic scale,” said U.N. High Commissioner António Guterres in a June 18 press release. “We can be grateful only that the international system for protecting such people held firm for the most part and that borders stayed open.”

The United States serves an important role in that international system, both in providing emergency aid and supplies in sudden displacements and in offering permanent resettlement opportunities for refugees who decide they will never find safety or freedom in their homelands.

The United States resettled 56,000 refugees in 2011, according to an announcement from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Sponsoring refugees for resettlement in the United States is “intrinsic to our national values and our national virtues,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Robinson of the bureau.

Over the two centuries of U.S. history, many immigrants have come to escape persecution or repression in their homelands, Robinson said at a Washington press briefing. “It’s important that we continue this tradition, in part because it’s who we are and in part because we want to encourage other countries to also participate in this activity, to offer more spots for refugees to find new

lives.”

UNHCR launches a campaign with a compatible objective in recognition of World Refugee Day. It is called “Dilemmas” and focuses attention on the wrenching choices facing refugees as they struggle to decide whether they are safer in flight or staying where they are; whether they have a better future remaining in the place they know, despite its hardships, or leaving everything familiar in search of greater safety.

The campaign is designed to build public empathy for the refugees’ dilemma. It even includes a smartphone app that engages the public in a role-playing game called “My Life as a Refugee.”

“Every minute eight people around the world are forced to leave their homes for fear of war and persecution,” says UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie in a public service announcement supporting the campaign. “No one chooses to be a refugee.”

Since its program began in the 1970s, the United States has resettled about 3 million refugees, Robinson said June 18. The urgency of an individual’s need is the chief criteria for determining resettlement eligibility, he said, not education, race, religion or wealth.

Egypt Facing “Crucial Time,” U.S. Says

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 19 June 2012

Washington — The Obama administration called on Egypt’s military rulers to uphold their commitment to free and fair elections as the country’s election officials prepare to announce the winner of Egypt’s presidential runoff contest.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said June 19 that “this is a crucial time for the right decisions to be made, and those decisions are going to have an impact on how we go forward.”

Egyptians voted June 16–17, and some press reports predicted that Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi would defeat former Prime Minister Ahmad Shafiq to become Egypt’s first president since protesters successfully ousted the regime of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011.

Nuland said the election has not been officially called, and there has not been a formal report issued by the election monitoring group, but said U.S. officials “will take their views very seriously.”

“This is a very important couple of days for the Egyptians to get it right in keeping with their commitment to have free, fair and transparent presidential elections,” she said.

The election was held two days after the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court's June 14 ruling that a third of Egypt's parliament had been illegally elected in 2011, and it declared that "the makeup of the entire chamber is illegal and, consequently, it does not legally stand."

U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, have been in contact with members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and "we've been very clear with them, privately and publicly, what our expectations are if they're going to meet their commitments to the Egyptian people," Nuland said.

On June 18, Nuland said the United States is "particularly concerned" by the recent legal and political decisions "that appear to prolong the military's hold on power."

She called on the SCAF to "restore popular and international confidence in the democratic transition process by following through on their stated commitments to an inclusive, constitutional drafting process; the timely seating of a democratically elected parliament; and the swift, permanent transfer of power to a civilian government."

The military has publicly committed to hand over power to the newly elected president by July 1, and "we want to see them meet" that commitment, she said.

But along with handing over power to the president, Egypt still needs to have a democratically elected parliament and a constitution if there is to be a full transfer to civilian power, Nuland said.

"The military has made a commitment to the Egyptian people that they would be good stewards during this period of a democratic transition process. They need to now complete that process and they need to complete it swiftly and give all of us, starting with their own people, confidence," she said.

U.S. Admiral Strongly Urges Approval of Law of the Sea Convention

18 June 2012

This article originally was posted June 14 to the Defense Department website.

Washington — Accession to the long-standing United Nations Law of the Sea Convention will have a positive impact on U.S. operations across the maritime domain, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said June 14.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Navy Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr. called himself a career sailor and former combatant commander who has come to his own judgment on the value for the

United States of the treaty's legal framework governing uses of the oceans.

Winnefeld appeared before the panel with five of the nation's top military officers.

It is "a privilege to appear alongside another generation of military leaders," he said, "as we join in sharing the view that now is the time for the United States to join the Law of the Sea Convention."

The treaty opened for signature in December 1982 and became effective in November 1994, after 60 countries had signed. Today, 162 parties — including most close U.S. allies — have ratified the Law of the Sea Convention.

"The convention improves on previous agreements, including the 1958 Geneva Convention," Winnefeld said.

The treaty will protect U.S. access to the maritime domain, fortify U.S. credibility as the world's leading naval power, the admiral added, and will allow the United States to bring to bear the full force of its influence on maritime disputes.

"In short," he said, "it preserves what we have and it gives us yet another tool to engage any nation that would threaten our maritime interests."

But not everyone agrees that the treaty will benefit the United States, Winnefeld acknowledged, adding that defense officials take these concerns seriously.

"Some say that joining the convention would result in a loss of sovereignty for the United States. I believe just the opposite to be true," the admiral said. "Some would say ... that joining the convention will open U.S. Navy operations to the jurisdiction of international courts. We know this is not true."

In 2007, the Senate proposed what it called "declarations and understandings" to the treaty that specifically express the right to exempt military activities from the convention, Winnefeld said. "Many other nations that have acceded [or ratified the treaty] have already exempted their military activities from the treaty without dispute," he noted.

Some believe the convention would require the United States to surrender its sovereignty over warships and other military vessels, the admiral said.

"I can assure you that we will not let this happen and the convention does not require it," he told the Senate panel. "If anything, it further protects our sovereignty in this regard well before we would have to resort to any use of force."

Winnefeld added that joining the convention will protect the United States from “ongoing and persistent efforts on the part of a number of nations, including those with growing economic and military power, to advance their national laws and set precedents that could restrict our maritime activities, particularly within the bounds of their exclusive economic zones.”

The term “lawfare” describes such efforts to erode the protections of customary international law, he said.

“It’s a trend that’s real and pressing and that could place your Navy at legal disadvantage unless we join the convention,” the admiral said. “And the nations that would challenge us in this and other ways are, frankly, delighted that we are not a party to the convention.”

Winnefeld told the senators that along with Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Army General Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he finds it awkward to suggest that other nations should follow rules to which the United States has not yet agreed. Ratifying the treaty will give the United States the ability to influence key decisions that could affect the nation’s sovereign rights and those of its partners and friends in the Arctic and elsewhere, he said. “This grows more important each day,” he added.

The real question, Winnefeld said, is whether the United States will choose to lead in the maritime environment from the inside or follow from the outside.

U.S. military leaders over two decades have studied the problem closely and arrived at the same conclusion, Winnefeld said: “that ratification is in our best interests.”

“I join these officers, including every chairman of the Joint Chiefs since 1994, in giving my support to the Law of the Sea Convention and in asking for your advice and consent,” he said.

Secretary Clinton Applauds AGOA at 11th Forum Kick-Off

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer | 14 June 2012

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton opened the 11th U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Forum, also known as the AGOA Forum, in Washington with remarks applauding the great success of the pivotal economic development program.

“AGOA has helped to increase trade and investment and opened new doors of opportunity,” Clinton said during the forum at the State Department June 14. “It’s led to new jobs, the rise of new sectors and new business opportunities for people in every country represented here, as well as the United States.”

In 2011, the secretary said, U.S. imports from AGOA countries were more than six times higher than they were 10 years ago. Since AGOA’s start in 2000, two-way trade between United States and sub-Saharan Africa has seen a 300 percent increase, reaching a total of more than \$716 billion. U.S. trade with the region hit \$95 billion in 2011 alone, and Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis said in a June 13 news briefing that 2012 is set to be another record year.

Clinton said trade between Africa and the rest of the world has also grown exponentially, tripling during the past 10 years as private foreign investment at last surpassed official aid.

She said the global investment in Africa is set to continue rising because the continent offers the highest rate of return on foreign direct investment of any developing region in the world.

“In fact, it is the only developing region where the growth rate is expected to rise this year,” Clinton said.

Africa is one of the fastest growing regions on the globe, home to six of the world’s 10 fastest growing economies.

“The middle class is growing, consumer spending is increasing, urban centers are becoming vital economic hubs,” Clinton said, adding that Africa is the 21st century “continent that is the land of opportunity.”

But in spite of the progress made, there remains a great deal more potential for trade and investment across Africa, she said.

She highlighted the importance of infrastructure development, which is the theme of this year’s forum. The secretary said that for Africa to realize its full potential, it will need to focus on developing its physical infrastructure, such as roads, ports and modern electrical grids.

Equally critical, Clinton said, will be improvements in regulatory infrastructure that make it easier to do things like register new businesses or get a construction permit.

Finally, she said, it is important for Africa to focus on investing in its human infrastructure.

“At a time when 60 percent of the people of sub-Saharan Africa are under 25 and millions of them are out of work, there has to be a concentrated effort by all of us to help equip these young people, to support them, because our economies and our societies need their talents, their energy and their ideas,” Clinton said.

“The same is true for women,” she said, adding that

supporting women entrepreneurs can lead to a “multiplier effect” for growing economies. Clinton said that’s one reason why the United States is a “strong supporter of women’s economic empowerment not only in Africa, but worldwide.”

The secretary announced a new partnership between the African Women’s Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) and Intel, the Exxon Mobil Foundation, a nongovernmental organization called Vital Voices and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women to give women more access to digital literacy training, business training and professional mentoring.

“Through programs like AWEP and the partnerships made possible by AGOA, we can see economic transformation with our own eyes,” Clinton said. The women’s entrepreneurship program takes place in the United States June 4-23, and the participants are currently in Washington to take part in AGOA talks.

Clinton announced also the designation of the first Global Economic Statecraft Day, which she said highlights the importance of economic issues as a key element of U.S. foreign policy.

“Our diplomats are engaging more on economic matters worldwide because we all know economic forces are increasingly shaping our world and our economies will be more and more interdependent,” she said.

-The secretary addressed the issue of third-country fabrics, a critical provision of AGOA that provides significant support to the textile and apparel sectors that is set to expire in September. She said the provision has widespread support in the United States and the State Department is working closely with its partners in Congress to accelerate the renewal process. She expressed confidence that the provision will be renewed successfully.

Clinton said earlier in the day, President Obama signed a new policy directive on sub-Saharan Africa outlining a strategy for countries to work in partnership to reach shared goals and solve challenges.

“It’s not only about economic growth but also democratic progress, improved security, development gains because, all taken together, we will strengthen the security, the prosperity and the democracies across Africa,” Clinton said. “By doing so, [we] will help to fulfill that dream of a future of peace, freedom, prosperity and dignity for all Africans.”

The secretary’s address followed remarks by U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk and Ghanaian Minister of Trade Hanna Tetteh.

The 2012 forum is bringing together more than 600 participants, including top U.S. and African government officials, private sector leaders and civil society representatives. It was preceded by a two-day civil society program June 12-13 in Washington and complemented by the African Women’s Entrepreneurship Program. The Corporate Council on Africa will host its infrastructure conference June 18-20 in Washington, and the U.S.-Africa Business Conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 21-22.

AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, signed into law by then-President Bill Clinton in 2000, was designed to promote U.S. trade and investment ties with sub-Saharan Africa. It provides trade preferences to the 40 participating African countries through the removal of nearly all tariffs on their exports. It has broken down many trade and customs barriers in an effort to stimulate economic growth, encourage economic integration and help bring sub-Saharan Africa into the global economy.

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