

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## State Dept. Sets Two Youth Sports Exchanges with Russia

05 July 2012

Washington – The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on July 3 announced two bilateral sports exchange programs with Russia.

The programs – one of which brings Russians to the United States and the other which sends Americans to Russia – support the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission's efforts to increase cooperation between the peoples of the United States and Russia.

The first program will bring 24 Russians – 10 boys, 10 girls and four coaches – to Southern California for a beach volleyball program July 6-20. The delegation will participate in volleyball clinics with young Americans. The clinics were organized in cooperation with USA Volleyball. The group will also take part in team building, conflict resolution and disability sports activities.

This beach volleyball program reciprocates the 2010 program that sent 24 American youth and coaches to Moscow and Anapa. Three-time Olympic gold medalist Misty May-Treanor joined the 2010 delegation to lead sessions and speak with the participants about the importance of discipline and teamwork in sports.

The second program will send 24 Americans – 10 boys, 10 girls and four coaches – to Moscow from July 14 to 27. The participants, selected in coordination with USA Swimming, will take part in swimming practices and engage with their Russian peers during cross-cultural programs. The swimming program also reciprocates a 2010 program, when 24 Russian swimmers and coaches traveled to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

This summer's beach volleyball and swimming programs are part of a series of Bilateral Presidential Commission exchanges.

SportsUnited is the State Department's premier sports exchange program. Athletes and coaches from a range of sports are chosen to conduct clinics, visit schools, and engage with youth overseas in a dialogue on the importance of education, positive health practices, and respect for diversity. Since 2003, SportsUnited has brought nearly 1,000 athletes from more than 60 countries to the United States to participate in Sport Visitor programs. Since 2005, SportsUnited has sent more than 220 U.S. athletes to more than 50 countries to participate in Sports Envoy programs.

## President Obama Welcomes New U.S. Citizens on America's Birthday

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer | 04 July 2012

Washington – President Obama, hosting a naturalization ceremony for active duty service members to kick off Independence Day festivities at the White House, called the welcoming of new citizens to the United States “the perfect way to celebrate America’s birthday.”

The ceremony, held the morning of July 4 in the East Room of the White House, brought together 25 candidates for naturalization and their families.

“I could not be prouder to be among the first to greet you as my fellow Americans,” Obama said to the service members after they pledged the oath of citizenship. “It brings me great joy and inspiration because it reminds us that we are a country that is bound together not simply by ethnicity or bloodlines, but by fidelity to a set of ideas.”

Obama said that since declaring independence in 1776, the United States has been proud to stand as a nation of immigrants.

“Our American journey, our success, would simply not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have come to our shores from every corner of the globe,” he said. “The story of immigrants in America isn’t a story of ‘them,’ it’s a story of ‘us’ – it’s who we are.”

The president said that some of the service members had come to the United States as children, and others as adults. But all did something profound in choosing to serve the U.S. military.

“You put on the uniform of a country that was not yet fully your own,” he said, adding that for many, choosing to serve during a time of war meant deploying into harm’s way. “You displayed the values that we celebrate every Fourth of July – duty, responsibility and patriotism.”

Saluting the service members, Obama said he was honored to serve as their commander in chief.

Immigrants, Obama said, continue make America stronger, more prosperous and will enable the country to lead in the 21st century.

“These young men and women are testaments to that,” Obama said. Noting that no other nation welcomes so many new arrivals each year, he said the United States constantly renews itself with the hopes, drive, optimism and dynamism of each new generation of immigrants.

“You are all one of the reasons that America is

exceptional," he said. "You're one of the reasons why, even after two centuries, America is always young, always looking to the future, always confident that our greatest days are still to come."

The candidates for naturalization were presented by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Alejandro Mayorkas. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano delivered the oath of allegiance to the service members.

Senior Obama administration officials spoke at naturalization ceremonies around the country July 4, including Labor Secretary Hilda Solis in New York, Small Business Administration Administrator Karen Mills and Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley in Massachusetts, Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz in Virginia, and White House Cabinet Secretary Chris Lu in Maryland.

### **Missile Defense Crucial in U.S. International Security**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 03 July 2012

Washington — Missile defense is a crucial element in the U.S. international security strategy, supporting deterrence and diplomacy, a senior U.S. diplomat said July 3 at an international conference in Paris.

"Missile defense assures our allies and partners that the United States has the will and the means to deter and, if necessary, defeat a limited ballistic missile attack against the U.S. homeland and regional ballistic missile attacks against our deployed forces, allies and partners," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose said at the 8th International Conference on Missile Defense.

Rose, who is in the State Department's Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, said the United States recognizes the serious threat posed by ballistic missiles to its military forces stationed abroad, its allies and its partners, and is working to create an environment based on strong cooperation to diminish any adversary's belief in the value of a ballistic missile attack.

The threat from ballistic missiles is expected to grow in the coming years as some states are increasing their inventories and making their ballistic missiles more accurate, reliable and survivable, Rose said.

President Obama in September 2009, acting on the recommendation of the U.S. secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced the European Phased Adaptive Approach for missile defense to provide protection as quickly as possible. Through the phased approach, the United States will deploy assets to defend Europe against a ballistic missile threat from the Middle East, Rose said.

And at the November 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon, alliance members committed to adopt missile defense as an alliance mission. NATO allies have committed to investing more than \$1 billion for command, control and communications infrastructure to support NATO missile defense, Rose said.

Obama chose to shift away from the deployment of 10 ground-based interceptors and a single radar site in Europe to a system using land- and sea-based SM-3 missile interceptors to provide protection for the United States homeland and NATO European allies. Since September last year, there have been several major breakthroughs that are driving the program to completion.

First, Turkey has agreed to host the Phase One advanced radar system. Romania has agreed to host the Phase Two land-based SM-3 antimissile interceptor site, and Poland has agreed to host the Phase 3 land-based interceptor site, which is expected to be completed in the 2018 timeframe, Rose said.

"The land-based SM-3 system to be deployed to Romania is anticipated to become operational in the 2015 timeframe," Rose told the conference.

In October, Spain agreed to serve as the home port for four U.S. Navy Aegis destroyers at Naval Station Rota, about 100 kilometers northwest of Gibraltar. The port has hosted U.S. Navy ships since the early 1950s.

Rose added that at the 2012 Chicago NATO Summit the allies announced that NATO has achieved an interim ballistic missile defense capability. "This means that the alliance has an operationally meaningful, standing, peacetime ballistic missile defense capability," he said.

Rose said the United States and NATO welcome Russia's cooperation to bring its missile defense capabilities into a broader defense of common strategic interests.

"Missile defense cooperation with Russia will not only strengthen our bilateral and NATO-Russian relationships, but also could enhance NATO's missile defense capabilities," Rose said. "Successful missile defense cooperation would provide concrete benefits to Russia, our NATO allies and the United States, and will strengthen, not weaken, strategic stability over the long run."

### **U.N. Security Council Now United Behind Syria Plan, Secretary Clinton Says**

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 02 July 2012

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the transition and peace plan for Syria that was

agreed to in Geneva June 30 is significant because of Russia and China's support, and she said Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad will not play a role on the transitional governing body for Syria that is called for under the plan.

Speaking to Bloomberg News in Geneva June 30, Clinton said the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and other key states have now endorsed the guidelines and principles of U.N.-Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan and they have empowered him in his discussions with the Assad regime about ending the violence in Syria and following through with a peaceful political transition.

"Where we are today gives us the basis for going to the U.N. Security Council to discuss what consequences have to be considered and imposed if after empowering Kofi Annan he comes to the Security Council and reports to us — as he said he will do — that the government's not cooperating, that other parties are not cooperating, that he's not making progress," Clinton said.

The United States and other countries have unsuccessfully tried to use the Security Council to address the violence in Syria that has killed at least 14,000 people since March 2011, but resolutions have been vetoed by permanent Security Council members Russia and China.

Clinton said that with Russia and China's support for Annan's efforts, "we will have to act" if the envoy reports noncompliance with the peace plan. "I believe we will be building the case as to why the Security Council should take such action," she said.

Along with ending the violence, Annan's plan calls for the establishment of a transitional governing body ahead of constitutional reform and free elections that could include members of the Syrian government and opposition groups and would be formed by mutual consent.

The secretary told CNN on June 30 that because both the opposition and the government would need to agree on who would serve on the transitional governing body, "there is no way anyone in the opposition would ever consent to Assad or his inside regime cronies with blood on their hands" participating.

All five permanent Security Council members have now agreed to "an approach that absolutely guarantees, if there is a transition that is still the hard work ahead, Assad will not be part of it," she said.

Obama administration, Turkish and Arab League officials, as well as others, are currently meeting with Syrian opposition representatives in Cairo to encourage them to choose representatives for the transitional governing body and for negotiations with the

government.

Clinton said the opposition needs to come together and "make a decision about what it means to take responsibility for trying to end a conflict and lead a nation."

### **Global Cities at Forefront of Sustainability Movement**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 02 July 2012

Washington — With their smaller scales and grass-roots governments, cities and towns around the world are becoming the greatest innovators in the search for sustainable solutions for energy, water, land and other resource needs. Their populations, their economic clout and their cultural influence put cities at the vanguard of change, and no one realizes this better than city governments themselves.

C40 is a self-formed group of the world's megacities that is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address climate change and mitigate the changes that are already affecting their urban areas. While still recognizing the importance of high-level, multilateral agreements in addressing planet-wide problems, city governments on every continent are also making contributions to sustainability with the mundane business of street lights, sewage treatment, bicycle paths and other infrastructure operations that make cities livable.

First conceived by a group of 18 international mayors in 2005, C40 has now grown to include 59 large cities. The group met on the fringes of the recent Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, making the announcement that urban areas have the potential to reduce their annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than a billion tons by 2030, an amount that "is equivalent to the annual GHG emissions of Mexico and Canada combined."

C40 announced that cities have taken nearly 5,000 actions to address climate change, and are well on track through existing and committed activities to reduce their collective annual emissions by 248 million tons by 2020.

The immediacy of urban problems teaches city officials to act quickly and decisively. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the current C40 chairman, said that background may be the secret to C40 success.

"Because of mayors' commitment to action, cities are making great progress in reducing greenhouse gases, which helps beat back climate change and makes our cities better, more livable places," Bloomberg said. "The data we are releasing today is more evidence that cities have been and will continue to lead the way."

C40 also announced a partnership with the Joint Initiative

on Urban Sustainability (JIUS) to create an online reference library to catalog the successful policy and financing solutions that cities have found to address environmental issues and climate change.

JIUS is a partnership between the United States, Brazil and private-sector groups, announced in March by the presidents of the two nations. It will provide a showcase for innovation in sustainability, with the goal of transferring these solutions for urban problems to other cities in the United States and around the world.

In the June 19 announcement of these actions, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes offered his thoughts on cities' effectiveness. "When mobilized as one, cities wield sufficient collective power to influence opinion and nudge policy further up the legislative agenda," Paes said. "Cities have more freedom than nation-states to put into place progressive strategies that are already changing people's lives."

C40 members reported further progress June 19:

- 100 percent of the 45 reporting C40 cities are implementing a range of carbon emission reduction activities.
- 71 percent of the 45 reporting C40 cities reported citywide emission reduction targets.
- Mayors have direct control over 75 percent of urban emissions sources.

The Obama administration is applauding the innovation and the energy that urban governments are applying to sustainability and climate change issues. Reta Jo Lewis, special representative for global intergovernmental affairs within the Department of State, spoke to urban officials during their Rio meeting. She emphasized how sustainability policies can be introduced in many urban government functions.

"This includes deploying green technologies and services; prioritizing green infrastructure and buildings; protecting and restoring green spaces; creating more housing opportunities; reducing emissions; seeking greater efficiency in resource use and waste processing; and making more sustainable urban-system and land-use decisions," Lewis said.

As she met with C40 leaders, Lewis represented the Climate and Clean Air Initiative formed by the United States, Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden and the U.N. Environment Programme in early 2012. Expanded now to include the European Commission nations, Japan, Nigeria and others, the initiative is acting upon recent scientific findings that show significant short-term gains in GHG reduction can be achieved with a focus on what are known as short-lived pollutants and

soot.

C40 announced in Rio that cities will be working with the Clean Air Initiative to assist local governments in reducing methane emissions through solid-waste management. Methane is one of the targeted short-lived pollutants. C40's partners are going to work to ensure that cities can learn from each other how to lower methane emissions from their waste programs and how to find ways to pay for GHG-reducing actions.

Governor of Jakarta Fauzi Bowo welcomed the initiatives introduced by C40 at the sustainable development conference in June, saying knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices are "crucial" to addressing climate change issues. "The basic approach Jakarta has taken in reducing greenhouse gas emissions has been a holistic approach based on the basic policy implemented in managing Jakarta, which is pro-poor, pro-jobs, pro growth and pro-environment," Bowo said. "These four factors cannot be separated from each other."

Lewis agrees with Bowo that the solutions to climate change and sustainability require a "holistic approach." The State Department representative said it is also imperative that all sectors of the society recognize that sustainability is "an issue for government at all levels, as well as for the private sector and civil society."

### **Testimony of Ambassador-designate to Burma Derek Mitchell**

27 June 2012

Testimony of Derek Mitchell

Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma  
Statement Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Washington, DC

June 27, 2012

Ambassador-Designate to Burma

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Burma, the first in more than two decades. I am humbled by the confidence that President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have shown in me with this nomination. Mr. Chairman, I know you take a particularly keen personal interest in the situation in Burma, and I commend all you have done during your tenure to advance the relationship between our two countries.

It was almost exactly a year ago that I sat before you and this Committee as the President's nominee to serve as the first Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma. I noted in my testimony then the many challenges facing Burma and our bilateral relationship. No one

would have thought possible the remarkable developments that have occurred since a year ago. Ongoing reform efforts have created an opening for increased engagement between our two countries, and instilled a sense of hope among millions inside and outside Burma who have worked and sacrificed so much for so long for real change.

During my time as the Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma, I traveled to the country many times. The government in Naypyitaw provided excellent hospitality and demonstrated a willingness to have open and candid discussions with me on each occasion. I also want to thank the many other interlocutors – political party officials, civil society representatives, ethnic minority and religious leaders, former political prisoners, business executives, international diplomats and non-governmental representatives, and many local citizens -- for opening their doors to me to discuss a full range of perspectives on the complexity and diversity of Burma.

I have also traveled throughout East Asia and Europe to share ideas and coordinate policy approaches. This included meetings with the many men and women in Thailand who have worked tirelessly along the border with Burma for decades to provide for the humanitarian needs of Burmese migrants and refugees. With so much attention focused on developments inside Burma, we should not forget the work of these committed individuals who help those in need. I am confident that these and many other committed individuals will join ongoing efforts inside the country when conditions are right.

And of course I have spent many hours with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. As we all know, Daw Suu Kyi remains a uniquely iconic figure inside and outside Burma. Upon helping bring her country to this point, she has now entered the field as an elected politician to help guide its next steps toward a secure, democratic, just, and prosperous future. I look forward to many more opportunities for discussions with her about her country and about how the United States can assist its progress going forward.

Perhaps the most important development of the past year, however, has been the partnership forged between Daw Suu Kyi and President Thein Sein. President Thein Sein has proven to be a remarkable figure. We should never forget to recognize his extraordinary vision and leadership, and for the many reformist steps he and his partners in government have taken over the past year. These actions have clearly reflected the aspirations, indeed sacrifices, of millions of brave Burmese.

At the same time, we have no illusions about the challenges that lie ahead. As Secretary Clinton has

observed, reform is not irreversible, and continued democratic change is not inevitable. We remain deeply concerned about the continued detention of hundreds of political prisoners and conditions placed on those previously released. The rule of law requires an independent and effective judiciary. The constitutional role of the military in the nation's affairs is inconsistent with traditional democratic principles of civil-military relations.

Human rights abuses, including military impunity, continue, particularly in ethnic minority areas. Although there may be some hope for an end to the violence and establishment of serious dialogue on fundamental political issues, mutual mistrust between the government and ethnic minority groups runs deep and a long road lies ahead. Recent sectarian violence in Rakhine State demonstrates the divisiveness in Burma cultivated over many decades, if not centuries, that will need to be overcome to realize lasting peace and national reconciliation in the country.

We have been quite consistent and direct in public and private about our continuing concerns about the lack of transparency in Burma's military relationship with North Korea, and specifically that the government must adhere to its obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and its other international nonproliferation obligations. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to make this issue of highest priority in my conversations with the government, and be clear that our bilateral relationship can never be fully normalized until we are fully satisfied that any illicit ties to North Korea have ended once and for all.

As the Burmese government has taken steps over the past year, so too has the United States in an action-for-action approach. Each action we have taken in recent months has had as its purpose to benefit the Burmese people and strengthen reform and reformers within the system.

Most recently, Secretary Clinton announced a broad easing of restrictions on new investment and the exportation of U.S. financial services to Burma. As she stated in May, we look forward to working with the business sector as a new partner in our principled engagement approach. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. business interests in Burma while ensuring companies understand the complex environment in which they will be engaging and the important role they can play in promoting American values and interests in the country. It is clear to me from my discussions inside the country that the Burmese people admire U.S. products, standards, and principles; staying true to them promises to serve both our public and private interests going forward.

As the Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for

Burma, I made it a priority to provide regular briefings and consultations with Capitol Hill. I also urged the Burmese government to open its doors to Congressional visitors so they may see the changes on the ground for themselves. I believe the Administration and Congress have formed an effective, bi-partisan partnership on Burma policy. It is critical to maintain this partnership going forward. Should I be confirmed, I will make every effort to continue to reach out to interested Members and staffs, and hope to see you all regularly on our doorstep in Rangoon.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, let me conclude by taking this opportunity to extend my utmost appreciation to my many partners within the Executive Branch with whom I have worked over the past year as Special Representative – including at USAID, Treasury, Commerce, DoD, the White House, and State. In particular, I want to commend the excellent career officers, interagency representatives, and locally employed staff members of our Embassy in Rangoon whom I have gotten to know during my visits. This team has proved again and again to me that we have people of the highest quality in Rangoon. They have responded superbly to a rapidly changing tempo of operations in the field, and have done so with professionalism and skill. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to ensure they have the tools and direction necessary to continue serving our interests in Burma in an exemplary fashion and be proud of the work they do for our country every day.

Thank you for considering my nomination.

### **U.S., Turkey Aim at Strategic Commercial Ties, U.S. Official Says**

By Andrzej Zwaniecki | Staff Writer | 27 June 2012

Washington — The United States and Turkey should explore ways of advancing their commercial partnership beyond trade, says a senior U.S. official.

Acting Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank said Washington and Ankara see a great potential for new bilateral economic linkages, which can form an essential part of a “model partnership” between the United States and Turkey. President Obama called for such a partnership on his first visit to Turkey in 2009. Blank made her remarks to a Turkish business group in Istanbul on June 25.

U.S.-Turkey bilateral trade has nearly doubled to \$20 billion in the past two years, according to the Commerce Department. But Blank said that the potential for bringing economic benefits to both countries is far greater than the trade figures would indicate.

Stronger and more balanced bilateral investment is of

particular importance, she said. For example, U.S. companies can play a major role in upgrading the infrastructure Turkey will need to achieve its goal of making it to the top 10 world’s economies by 2023.

However, Blank said, Turkish companies need to invest more in the U.S. economy to foster “even greater balance in our relationships.” An increasing number of Turkey’s businesses see the benefits of investing in the U.S. economy and seize related opportunities, Blank said. But U.S. investments in Turkey are still much larger than Turkish investments in the United States.

U.S.-Turkish commercial relations do not have to be limited to bilateral trade and investment though, Blank said. Working in partnerships, U.S. and Turkish companies can help accelerate economic development and economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa, she said.

Both countries need to address barriers that prevent them from tapping the full potential of commercial opportunities, Blank said. Issues related to market access, intellectual property protection and transparency and predictability of the investment environment are among major barriers, according to U.S. companies. Turkish investors have concerns of their own, she added.

A day later in Ankara, Blank participated in a meeting of a bilateral economic cooperation group. In a joint statement issued at the conclusion of the June 26 meeting, Turkey and the United States said they agreed to advance cooperation in several areas, such as reducing energy use by the industrial sector and building an electricity smart grid in Turkey. Efforts to promote entrepreneurship and innovation and assist small businesses to get access to foreign trade opportunities were also discussed.

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