

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Economics at Core of U.S. Foreign Policy, Secretary Kerry Says

By Phillip Kurata | Staff Writer | 18 April 2013

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry says economics is at the core of U.S. foreign policy.

Testifying at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 18, Kerry said his recent trips to Europe, the Middle East and Asia have strengthened his conviction that a foreign policy based on “economic action is where the United States needs to be.”

Kerry was explaining to lawmakers the rationale for the Obama administration’s request for \$52 billion to fund its national security and foreign policy priorities in the international affairs budget of the 2014 fiscal year.

Kerry said \$52 billion, about 1 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product, is “responsible investing in areas that attract economic growth, create good jobs in America and secure our national interests.”

The secretary said that U.S. assistance has transformed yesterday’s enemies and aid recipients into today’s allies and aid donors.

“Japan and Germany today are two of the strongest allies we have. Europe as a whole, whose economy was flat and broken and destroyed by the war, came back. And Europe and NATO have been indispensable to us,” Kerry said. He said that 11 of the top 15 U.S. trading partners once received U.S. aid. “One penny on the dollar. I’ll argue that anywhere,” he said.

Kerry said that the Obama administration’s goal to negotiate two high-level trade agreements — the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — is generating excitement in Europe and Asia. Answering a question about how the TPP will affect human rights and rule of law in Asia, the secretary said that strengthening those universal values is part of the Obama administration’s rebalancing of U.S. foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region.

Kerry said one of the most visible changes in the coming budget relates to how the United States will distribute food aid in the future. He said the United States is going to cut about \$500 million in mandatory funding for food aid during the coming decade while delivering vital food shipments to an estimated 2 million to 4 million more people. This will be accomplished by procuring food closer to the crisis rather than buying the food in the United States and shipping it abroad.

“We can get food to malnourished people 11 to 14 weeks faster, and 11 to 14 weeks faster for malnourished people can mean the difference between life and death,” Kerry said.

The secretary said that the \$8.6 billion request to fund security, terrorism and law enforcement assistance is a small investment that saves lives in foreign countries and in the United States.

“Our anti-terrorism assistance funding has helped save hundreds of lives in place like Pakistan, India and Lebanon by training local law enforcement to detect and neutralize explosive devices. Our 2014 budget request maintains these commitments to advancing peace and stability in places where it’s hard to find them,” Kerry said.

By training and cooperating with foreign security and intelligence services, the United States has foiled numerous plots against it, he added.

Regarding the effort to combat the HIV/AIDS virus, Kerry said the U.S. program known as PEPFAR (President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) “is one of our great success stories. We’re really looking now at the prospect of an AIDS-free generation.”

## Secretary Kerry Cites Urgency in Mideast Peace Process

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 17 April 2013

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry says there is urgency in achieving a two-state solution in Middle East peace talks, and added that both sides — the Israelis and the Palestinians — have a “seriousness of purpose, a commitment to explore how we actually get to a negotiation.”

Kerry, who visited the region in April for the third time since becoming secretary in January, said he is fully committed to the peace process, but the United States now is trying to determine what is possible. He told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee during a discussion of the State Department’s fiscal year 2014 budget that he could not lay out a schedule or define the process at this stage.

“We’re in the process of working that out with the critical parties,” Kerry testified. “But in my meetings on both sides, I have found a seriousness of purpose, a commitment to explore how we actually get to a negotiation.”

Kerry told the congressional committee that he believes the window for a two-state solution is shutting. The two-

state solution calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state that lives at peace alongside Israel, and requires each side to agree to a number of commitments and measures designed to cement the peace process.

"We have some period of time, in a year to year-and-a-half to two years, or it's over," Kerry said in a blunt assessment. Kerry said that everyone he has discussed the Middle East peace process with and all of the supporters globally – those who care about the evolving peace process – want negotiations to move forward because they are worried that the opportunity for an eventual peace is slipping away.

"There's an urgency to this, in my mind, and I intend, on behalf of the president's instructions, to honor that urgency and see what we can do to move forward," Kerry testified.

Kerry also testified that it is crucial to Middle East peace progress to strengthen the Palestinian Authority. Failing to strengthen the Authority, he said, works against everyone's interests.

"We need to recognize, even as there are difficulties, a lot is happening" in the Palestinian Authority, he said. "There is a level of cooperation, which is growing, and capacity that's growing. I think that to not invest would be remarkably short-sighted, particularly given where we are now."

On Syria, Kerry told the congressional committee that the United States is working closely with the Syrian opposition, with the Syrian military coalition, and with core allies in providing assistance. He recently met with Syrian opposition representatives in London on the sidelines of the Group of Eight foreign ministers' meeting.

"I am flying to Istanbul for a Saturday [April 20] meeting with all of the core group members and more of the Syrian opposition because we're trying to get everybody on the same page," he added.

The current assessment is that the opposition forces are making considerable headway in pushing out the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and that "Assad's days are numbered," the secretary said.

Kerry told the panel that the United States wants to make certain that the people it is supporting are committed to pluralism, diversity and a democratic process, and that all Syrians are being represented.

"So we're trying to proceed carefully to make sure that we're not contributing to a worse mess but that we're actually finding a constructive path forward," he said.

Kerry testified that the United States is closely communicating with allies and others concerned about the nuclear weapons enrichment program being developed by Iran with the aim of creating nuclear bombs. He said the United States and its allies are discussing the time frame on the enrichment program and that time's running out to prevent weapons development.

"The president has made his policy crystal clear," Kerry said. "No option is off the table, and Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. And we're going to continue to leave the door to diplomacy open."

Separately, the Pentagon announced that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel will travel to Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates April 20–27.

"Hagel will first travel to Israel where he will meet with Minister of Defense Moshe Ya'alon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres to further the close military-to-military relationship between the United States and Israel," the Pentagon said in a statement April 17.

Hagel's trip follows on President Obama's visit to Israel, the Palestinian Territories and Amman, Jordan, in March. Hagel travels to Jordan to receive briefings on international efforts to address the crisis in Syria and to discuss U.S. and Jordanian cooperation to prepare for a number of contingencies.

Later Hagel travels to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he will meet with Saudi leaders on regional defense matters. In Cairo, Hagel will meet with senior Egyptian military and civilian officials to discuss the U.S.-Egypt defense partnership, as well as Egypt's democratic transition. Hagel concludes this trip in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

### **Hagel Orders Unit to Jordan, Warns About Intervention in Syria**

By Donna Miles | American Forces Press Service |  
17 April 2013

*This article was originally posted April 17 on the Defense Department website.*

Washington – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced April 17 the deployment of an Army headquarters element to help Jordanian forces defend their border with Syria, while warning Congress of potential consequences of direct U.S. military action in the Syrian conflict.

Hagel joined Army General Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in reporting to the Senate Armed Services Committee that he ordered the Army

deployment last week.

The contingent will enhance efforts of a small U.S. military team that has been working in Jordan since last year on planning related to chemical weapons and preventing a spillover of violence across Jordan's borders, the secretary told the Senate panel.

"These personnel will continue to work alongside Jordanian Armed Forces to improve readiness and prepare for a number of scenarios," he said.

Defense Department personnel and their interagency partners are helping Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and other Syrian neighbors counter the threat posed by Syria's chemical weapons, Hagel said. He noted that DOD deployed Patriot missile batteries to southern Turkey in December as part of NATO's mission to help Turkey protect its border with Syria.

These initiatives, being conducted through the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, include more than \$70 million for activities in Jordan, he reported. This includes training and equipment to detect and stop chemical weapons transfers along Jordan's border with Syria, and developing Jordan's capacity to identify and secure chemical weapons assets.

Meanwhile, DOD has expanded security consultations regarding Syria with allies and partners, ensured that the U.S. military is strategically postured in the region and "engaged in robust military planning for a range of contingencies," Hagel said.

Regional security efforts will be a key focus of his trip April 20-21 to meet with defense leaders of Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, Hagel said. The situation in Syria also will be a topic when Secretary of State John F. Kerry visits Turkey April 20 and during Dempsey's trip to China next week for talks with Chinese leaders.

The goal, Hagel said, is "to support broader U.S. diplomatic efforts while ensuring that the U.S. military is fully prepared to protect America's interests and meet our security commitments in the region."

Hagel spelled out U.S. government policy regarding the Syrian conflict:

- To work with allies and partners, as well as the Syrian opposition.
- To provide humanitarian assistance across Syria and the region.
- To hasten an end to the violence.
- To bring about a political transition to a post-Assad authority that will restore stability, respect the rights of all

people, prevent Syria from becoming an extremist safe haven and secure Syria's chemical and biological weapons.

"The best outcome for Syria — and the region — is a negotiated, political transition," Hagel told the senators.

Toward that end, the U.S. government is working to mobilize the international community, further isolate the Assad regime and support the Syrian Opposition Coalition, the moderate Syrian opposition, he said.

The U.S. has committed \$117 million to the coalition in nonlethal assistance such as communications and medical equipment, Hagel said, and President Obama has directed more for both the Syrian Opposition Coalition and the Supreme Military Council.

In addition, the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are providing technical assistance and training for Syrian opposition leaders and activists.

"The goal is to strengthen those opposition groups that share the international community's vision for Syria's future and minimize the influence of extremists," Hagel said.

Meanwhile, the United States has provided \$385 million to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Syria and to help more than 1 million Syrian refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, he said.

The United States is rallying the international community, including Russia and China, to provide humanitarian support and resolve the crisis, Hagel said. He reported that international sanctions designed to pressure the Syrian government and help end the conflict are having an impact on the Assad regime's finances.

In addition, DOD has engaged in robust military planning for a range of contingencies, he said.

"President Obama has made clear that if Assad and those under his command use chemical weapons, or fail to meet their obligations to secure them, there will be consequences, and they will be held accountable," Hagel said. "The Department of Defense has plans in place to respond to the full range of chemical weapons scenarios."

So even as it provides options and planning for a post-Assad Syria, Hagel said, DOD is providing Obama and Congress regular assessments of options for U.S. military intervention.

He warned, however, of possible consequences of direct U.S. military action in Syria. It could hinder humanitarian

relief operations, embroil the United States in a significant, lengthy and uncertain military commitment, and, if conducted unilaterally, strain U.S. relationships around the world, the secretary told the senators.

“And finally, a military intervention could have the unintended consequence of bringing the United States into a broader regional conflict or proxy war,” he said.

Dempsey echoed Hagel, emphasizing that although the military stands ready to provide force, if directed, that such a decision is one no one takes lightly.

“In weighing options, we have a responsibility to align the use of force to the intended outcome,” Dempsey said. “We also have a responsibility to articulate risk” — not just to U.S. forces, but to other security responsibilities that could be compromised.

“So before we take action, we have to be prepared for what comes next,” the chairman said. “The use of force, especially in circumstances where ethnic and religious factors dominate, is unlikely to produce predictable outcomes. ... Unintended consequences are the rule with military interventions of this sort.”

“Military intervention is always an option, but an option of last resort,” Hagel summarized. “The best outcome for Syria — and the region — is a negotiated, political transition to a post-Assad Syria.”

### **IMF Projects Modest Global Growth in 2013**

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 17 April 2013

Washington — The global economy is expected to grow a modest 3.3 percent in 2013 and a slightly improved 4 percent in 2014, the International Monetary Fund reports.

In its World Economic Outlook released April 16, the IMF warns that old dangers to advanced economies remain as new risks emerge. That means policymakers should not relax, according to the report, which came out in advance of the IMF’s joint meetings with the World Bank April 20–21 in Washington.

The organization said that while global economic recovery is gaining strength, it remains uneven. “Not all benefited to the same extent from the improved financial market conditions and confidence,” it stated in a press release. It said private demand in the United States has improved at a more rapid pace than in the euro area and projects that emerging markets and developing economies will grow at stronger rates than developed countries.

### **EMERGING MARKETS**

Growth in emerging markets is forecast to be 5.3 percent in 2013 and 5.7 percent in 2014, the IMF reports. Olivier Blanchard, the IMF’s chief economist, said the main challenge these countries face is handling capital flows to stem volatility. Attractive prospects in emerging economies and low interest rates in developed countries are likely to lead to more money going into emerging economies, he said. Activity in most of these economies has already picked up after a slowdown in 2012, thanks to resilient consumer demand, supportive macroeconomic policies, and revived exports, according to the report.

“Further progress calls for vigilance against macroeconomic imbalances and sustained structural reform,” the report states.

The IMF advises emerging markets to rein in excesses in their financial sectors and return fiscal balances to levels that include buffers to protect against potential downturns in the future.

### **U.S. GROWTH**

Growth in the United States of 1.9 percent in 2013 and 3 percent the following year “is insufficient to make a large dent in a still very high unemployment rate, but it comes in the face of very strong, indeed an overly strong, fiscal consolidation of about 1.8 percent of GDP,” Blanchard said. Growth in demand also is getting stronger as credit and housing markets heal, the IMF reported.

Blanchard said the United States should focus on better fiscal consolidation now and a commitment to more consolidation in the future.

### **EURO AREA**

In the euro area, growth will be minus 0.3 percent in 2013 and just 1.1 percent in 2014. Blanchard said that while euro-area countries have made institutional progress over the years, borrowers still face interest rates that are too high to secure a recovery. In addition, credit channels in those countries are broken and better financial conditions are not yet being passed on to companies and households because banks are still restrained by poor profitability and low capital, the IMF reports. The exceptions are France and Germany, which have had long-standing strong fiscal policies.

### **OTHER COUNTRIES**

In Japan, the recent fiscal and monetary stimulus is expected to drive a rebound, with growth reaching 1.6 percent in 2013 and 1.4 percent in 2014.

In South America, growth slowed in 2012, particularly in Brazil and Argentina, but growth is expected to pick up, Blanchard said. The slowdown has affected trade linkages in the region, noted Thomas Helbling, the IMF's chief of world economic studies.

"A year ago, there were two very short-term tail risks. The first one was in the U.S. about fiscal policy, the fiscal cliff and the debt ceiling. But the other was the notion that the euro might not stay together," Blanchard said.

Now, he continued, "we're in a better place. We don't have these short-term tail risks or high risks, but as I said, we're not out of the woods."

### The Many Ways to Speak "American"

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 16 April 2013

Washington – When you meet Americans, can you tell which part of the country they are from simply by listening to them? Or if someone asked you to imitate an American, would you try to sound like you were from Texas, Southern California or somewhere else? Chances are, it would be an accent you heard in a film or TV show rather than what you learned in class.

The American accent most nonnative speakers learn is just one among many used daily across the United States. Known as General American (GenAm), it is the same accent you would typically hear on network news, nationally syndicated radio, films and other media where the speakers do not want to draw attention to their background.

GenAm has its roots in Pennsylvania, Ohio and other areas that make up "the Rust Belt," and it followed settlers westward through the Midwest to California and the Pacific Northwest. The rise of radio and television in the 20th century led media outlets to investigate which American accent seemed the most "neutral" to the public and would therefore be understood by the widest audience.

While most Americans can easily identify a Southern or New England accent, for example, GenAm has become the national standard, even though its native speakers are confined to a small area of the Midwest.

Most Americans grow up speaking the same way as their parents and neighbors, but sometimes they adopt more common language characteristics to sound less regional or better educated. For example, as a child with a strong Mid-Atlantic background, I once pronounced the U.S. capital city as "Warshington" and the nearby city of Baltimore as "Bawldimer." My Virginia-born grandfather also worked hard to lose his Southern accent when he moved to New York, since regional accents often invite

biased social judgments about the speaker.

### BRITISH VERSUS AMERICAN ENGLISH

Like the United States, the United Kingdom has its own diversity of regional accents, and it has adopted a standard known as Received Pronunciation (RP) that is heard on the BBC and other national news outlets. If you are learning British English, you are most likely learning RP, which spread from southern England among the upper classes in the 18th and 19th centuries.

One noticeable difference is the American use of the flat "a," so the word "dance" does not sound like "dahnce." Perhaps the most easily identified difference between RP and GenAm is the pronunciation of the letter "r" in some words, which phoneticians call rhotacism. For example, an American newsreader will pronounce the r in "hard," but on British media it will sound more like "hahd."

Some American accents, especially in the South, New England and New York, where port cities maintained close trading ties with England, joined their British counterparts in dropping the r sound, but 18th- and 19th-century Americans living inland, many of whom were immigrants from Scotland, Ireland or northern England where the r is pronounced, kept the rhotic accent.

In fact, at the time of the American Revolution, the English language being spoken on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean was rhotic. Despite many films that show colonial Americans speaking in a modern British accent, it did not become fashionable to start dropping the r in places like Massachusetts and South Carolina until after the United States gained its independence.

English actor Hugh Laurie, famous for his role on the TV show *House*, has described American r's and l's as the "twin demons for anyone trying to do an American accent." In a 2012 interview with National Public Radio, he said he warms up for his character by practicing the word "really." Laurie's accent is so good that the executive producer of *House* is said to have been completely unaware that he was English when he auditioned.

Along with helping to preserve the r sound, American speech has also retained several words and expressions that have fallen out of use in the United Kingdom. For example, Americans will still use "mad" for "angry" and "fall" for "autumn."

Thanks to American films, music, TV shows and other media, American accents are becoming more familiar to nonnative English speakers. Some of the most famous examples of regional dialect have come from U.S. politicians. Compare the New England accent of

President John F. Kennedy to Arkansas-native President Bill Clinton's Southern style of speaking. Of course, both men, like most Americans, probably grew up thinking they didn't have any kind of an accent!

### **Peaceful, Stable Korean Peninsula Goal for U.S., Asian Partners**

By Phillip Kurata | Staff Writer | 15 April 2013

Washington — Japan, China and the Republic of Korea have reaffirmed that they share President Obama's goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula.

"We are united," Secretary of State John Kerry said in a speech at Japan's Tokyo Institute of Technology April 15. "The North's dangerous nuclear missile program threatens not only North Korea's neighbors, but it threatens its own people, and it threatens this concept of the Pacific Dream."

"At a time when the world is moving toward fewer nuclear weapons, not more, when President Obama has articulated a clear vision for nonproliferation, the last thing we need is one or two more states bucking the trend of history and common sense," he said.

Kerry visited Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo April 12-15 for talks in which North Korea was high on the agenda.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi said in a press briefing with Kerry in Beijing April 13, "China is firmly committed to upholding peace and stability and advancing the denuclearization process on the peninsula. We maintain that the issue should be handled and resolved peacefully through dialogue and consultation." China is North Korea's closest ally and has strong economic relations with South Korea.

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said in Seoul April 12, "We urge North Korea to respond to our call for building trust on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue, and now it is time for North Korea to make that choice."

South Korea has been free of nuclear weapons since 1991, when former South Korean President Roh Tae-woo declared that South Korea would not "manufacture, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons."

Standing beside Yun in Seoul, Kerry told reporters, "We are all united in the fact that North Korea will not be accepted as a nuclear power." He added, "The United States and the Republic of Korea both want to see a peaceful Korean Peninsula, and that means it must be free of nuclear weapons."

When Kerry got to Tokyo, Japanese Foreign Minister

Fumio Kishida said, "North Korea must immediately stop its provocative speech and behavior, and show it is taking specific steps toward denuclearization. We cannot in any way allow North Korea to possess nuclear weapons."

In remarks at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Kerry said, "All our partners have a role to play in supporting regional peace and prosperity. And that includes trying to ultimately make a partner out of North Korea."

### **U.S. Sees India as Strong Partner in Asia**

15 April 2013

Washington — The United States welcomes India's growing global and regional influence and sees the country as a "strong partner" to help build peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia, the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, said Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake.

Speaking at Harvard University's South Asia Institute April 12, Blake said the United States has made a "strategic investment" in its partnership with India that will continue to pay dividends as the country expands its economic growth and its global engagement.

"With its strong democratic institutions, unprecedented demographic growth, economic promise and rising military capabilities, India is poised to play a critical leadership role both regionally and globally," Blake said.

During his 2010 visit to the country, President Obama said the U.S.-India relationship is "one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century." Blake said the partnership "benefits not only our two nations; it is of vital importance to a global vision for a future of shared prosperity."

As part of its "Look East" policy, India has been working to better integrate itself with its East and Southeast Asian neighbors since 1991.

"Today, India is forging closer and deeper economic ties with its eastern neighbors by expanding regional markets and increasing both investments and industrial development from Burma to the Philippines," Blake said, as well as increasing its regional security and military cooperation.

"An India that is well integrated into Asia's economic architecture, that pursues open market policies, and that has diverse and broad-based economic relationships across the East Asia region is not only good for India, but is good for the United States and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole," he said.

Blake said India increased its trade with Southeast Asia

by 37 percent between 2011 and 2012, and the increased economic dynamism in Asia has spurred interest in revitalizing its land, road and sea links.

Both the United States and India are strong supporters of the New Silk Road initiative, which envisions economic integration in South and Central Asia with Afghanistan at the heart of what Blake described as "a rejuvenated network of commerce, communications and energy transmission, a 'land bridge' connecting the Middle East and central Asia to the dynamic markets of China, India and Southeast Asia."

He cited the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) as the best example of what the New Silk Road vision could mean for the region.

"By connecting abundant energy reserves in Turkmenistan with rapidly rising demand for that energy in South Asia and providing Afghanistan with much-needed transit revenue, TAPI can be transformative for the region," he said.

As India continues with its economic expansion and growing global influence, its leadership "has powerful implications that extend beyond its immediate neighborhood – as a beacon of democracy, stability and growth," which is crucial to U.S. foreign policy objectives, Blake said.

### **U.S. on Watch as Cases of New Flu Virus Appear in China**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 15 April 2013

Washington – U.S. and international health authorities are keeping a close eye on the emergence in humans of an influenza strain previously seen only in birds.

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Ch-CDC) reported the earliest cases of H7N9 to international health authorities in early April. While the human case count has now climbed above 60, the means of transmission do not show that the virus can leap from human to human through a cough, a sneeze or other contact with bodily fluids.

A virus that mutates to achieve that capability is a major global public health threat.

"So far, this virus has not been determined to have that capability," according to an advisory from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC). "However, influenza viruses constantly change and it's possible that this virus could gain that ability."

Thirteen people have died from infection with H7N9, according to an April 15 report from *Xinhua News*

Agency. The current cases are from Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Henan, according to Ch-CDC. Chinese health officials are investigating the outbreak, finding that this strain also is occurring among poultry in some of these regions. Some of the people stricken with the illness have had direct contact with birds, but not all.

Shanghai has detected the most cases, 24, with nine deaths. That is an alarmingly high death rate, but it is not consistent through the areas where H7N9 has appeared. In Jiangsu, 16 cases have been confirmed, with only a single death.

Mutation of a form of bird flu created a virus lethal to humans in the second decade of the 20th century. The Spanish flu of 1918–1920 infected an estimated 500 million people and killed some 50 million to 100 million.

Against that historical backdrop, US-CDC follows the situation closely in coordination with international partners, and has issued guidance to U.S. clinicians and public health departments, alerting them to the symptoms of H7N9.

The coordination and information-sharing among Chinese, U.S. and international health authorities come as a result of a serious health scare 10 years ago, which also began in Asia. Unknown when the first illnesses and deaths occurred, what came to be known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) killed almost 800 people, sickened more than 8,000 and appeared in more than 20 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

SARS gave the world a new awareness of how fast disease can travel in the era of airliners, global trade, education and travel. Health officials everywhere developed a new awareness of the importance of sharing information and lab results. US-CDC assigned more than 800 medical experts to the SARS response and sent disease specialists to help health authorities in affected countries.

Soon after, another avian influenza virus – H5N1 – found its way across the species barrier and began to sicken humans.

Those outbreaks raised new awareness about the potential dangers of traditional rural ways of life where humans, especially children, may live in daily contact with poultry.

Government authorities in many countries ordered the culling of flocks when they detected H5N1, leading to serious economic losses for many. But the experience also taught professionals another lesson: animal health and human health are more closely linked than previously realized. That means that veterinarians and medical doctors must both be on the lookout for diseases that find

their way across the species barrier.

Specialists from both arenas are members of a consortium established by medical researchers to improve the sharing of influenza data, the analysis of such data, and the collaborative publication of findings that might emerge from that data.

Since its origins in 2006, the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data has become a storehouse of data on influenza. It hosts the EpiFlu Database, the world's most complete collection of influenza genetic sequences, available to researchers in both medical and veterinary science.

### **Patents for Humanity Program Helps Address Global Challenges**

12 April 2013

Washington – An improved strain of sorghum fortified with more protein and vitamins; a fast, accurate tuberculosis diagnosis machine; and a system to identify counterfeit drugs with an ordinary cellphone are among the 10 winners of the Patents for Humanity pilot program of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the U.S. Department of Commerce says.

Launched by the USPTO in February 2012 as part of an Obama administration initiative promoting innovations to solve long-standing development challenges, Patents for Humanity is a competition recognizing patent owners and licensees who address global challenges in health and standards of living.

“A strong patent system is crucial to supporting our continued economic growth, and its benefits don't stop at our borders. Patented inventions are bringing longer, healthier, fuller lives to people across the globe,” said U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank. “As part of the president's global development agenda, the Patents for Humanity program is a great example of how American innovation is helping solve critical global challenges and creating prosperity in emerging economies.”

“As a global leader, the United States has a responsibility to take the initiative on humanitarian issues,” said U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy. “Programs like Patents for Humanity highlight how we can create incentives for researchers and businesses to use American innovation to address global humanitarian needs. I am pleased to reintroduce legislation to further strengthen this program, and I congratulate the award winners today.”

“The USPTO's Patents for Humanity program is a wonderful example of President Obama's transformative

approach to development, and we're thankful to the Patent and Trademark Office for this initiative,” said Gayle Smith, special assistant to the president and National Security Council senior director. “The winners of this competition show how the private sector, NGOs, universities and the U.S. government are working together to create solutions to infectious diseases, nutrition and safe drinking water.”

“Time and again history shows the profound impact that one good idea – patented and marketed – can have on human beings, our world and our way of life,” said Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Acting Director of the USPTO Teresa Stanek Rea. “I am particularly excited about the Patents for Humanity program, which encourages patent owners to use their technologies to benefit those who live in underdeveloped and underserved regions around the world.”

Entrants competed in four categories: medical technology, food and nutrition, clean technology and information technology. In addition to being recognized for their work, winners will receive accelerated processing of select matters at the USPTO. In January, the nonprofit Licensing Executives Society International (LESI) presented the 2012 National IP and Technology Transfer Policy Award to Patents for Humanity.

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