

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Bilateral Team Assesses Remote Sites in Philippines

By Caleb Eames | Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps |  
21 November 2013

*This article was originally published on the Defense Department website on November 20.*

Leyte, Philippines – A bilateral assessment team recently traveled to remote areas in and near Leyte, Philippines, using an MV-22 tiltrotor Osprey aircraft to assess the needs of people isolated by Typhoon Haiyan, as part of Operation Damayan.

Marine Corps Col. John Merna, commanding officer of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and other U.S. Marines, assisted Angel Pana, of the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development, and members of the armed forces of the Philippines in checking the needs of three small villages, which were destroyed in the storm.

During the assessment, the team also delivered U.S. Agency for International Development relief supplies.

Elements of the 31st MEU, traveling aboard USS Germantown and USS Ashland, were expected to arrive in a day or so.

The 31st MEU brings approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors to add to the relief efforts in support of the government of the Philippines response to the massive typhoon, which has affected more than 4 million people.

“The assessment team determined requirements for food, water and medical support, basic needs that the 31st MEU, in coordination with USAID and in support of the ongoing efforts of the Philippine government, might be able to assist with,” Merna said. “The team was able to travel quickly to these remote areas because of the speed of the MV-22 Osprey when compared to traditional helicopters.”

The 31st MEU last assisted with a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission in 2011, after the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

The Philippines assessment team traveled to Casuguran, on Homonhon Island; Buena Vista, on Mamicami Island; and Pandan, Burawen, on Leyte Island.

At each site, the bilateral team met with local leadership to record needs, take requests, and determine emergent medical requirements.

“The aid is quickly getting to these people in need due to the speed and range of the Osprey,” Pana said. “Most of

the remote areas are now being reached through our united efforts.”

Midway through the assessment flight, the Osprey carried the assessment team refueled aboard the USS George Washington aircraft carrier. Operation Damayan is the first event where Ospreys have landed on the ship.

The 31st MEU will supplement the ongoing efforts of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade as part of Joint Task Force 505, operating in support of the government of the Philippines in coordination with USAID.

## Native American Code Talkers Get Congressional Gold Medal

By Terri Moon Cronk | American Forces Press Service |  
21 November 2013

*This article was originally published on the Defense Department website on November 20.*

Washington – Native American “code talkers” who transmitted codes based on 33 tribal dialects during World Wars I and II so enemies could not decipher them were patriots with “unique capabilities and willingness to give their talents and lives” to the nation, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said today at a Congressional Gold Medal ceremony to honor them.

Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., joined in the U.S. Capitol’s Emancipation Hall by House and Senate leaders and other officials, recognized 216 code talkers and members of their families from those wars with the highest honor Congress can bestow.

Winnefeld said, “During Native American Heritage Month, I have the great privilege of representing the finest military in the world in recognizing hundreds of Native Americans who wore the cloth of our nation in the distinctive way we celebrate today, and in such a courageous way, defending a country that did not always keep its word to their ancestors.”

Conceived in 1918, the code talker program eventually comprised more than 400 Native Americans who volunteered to defend the nation, the vice chairman said.

The role of the code talkers during the two world wars was kept a secret until 1968, officials said.

“Throughout history, military leaders have sought the perfect code – signals the enemy cannot break, no matter how able the intelligence team,” the vice chairman said. “It was our code talkers who created voice codes that defied decoding.”

Winnefeld said the codes were “doubly clever” by using

words that were confusing to the enemy, such as “crazy white man” for Adolf Hitler and “tortoise” for tank.

“Our code talkers’ role in combat required intelligence, adaptability, grace under pressure, and bravery – key attributes handed down by their ancestors,” the admiral said.

Winnefeld said the code talkers endured some of the nation’s most dangerous battles and served proudly during critical combat operations, such as the Choctaws at the Meuse-Argonne, Comanches on Utah Beach on D-Day, Hopis in the Caroline Islands and the Cherokees at the Second Battle of the Somme.

“These men were integral members of their teams – the 36th Infantry Division, the 4th Signals Company, the 81st Infantry Division, the 30th Infantry Division – learning Morse code and operating equipment to transmit messages quickly and accurately,” he added.

Contributing even more than battle skills, the code talkers also “fundamentally contributed to our military intelligence community’s work” in cryptology, Winnefeld said.

The National Security Agency Museum highlights the code talkers of World War I and World War II as pioneers of this specialty, he added.

The code talkers are a national resource, a wellspring of intelligence, innovation, hard work and resilience, the vice chairman said.

“We can best honor these great warriors among us not just with well-deserved and long overdue recognition,” the vice chairman said, “but also with our own efforts to continue leveraging our nation’s diversity and to forever honor our veterans.”

### **Australia, U.S. to Expand Defense, Space Cooperation**

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 20 November 2013

Washington – Australia and the United States are expanding cooperation in areas concerning defense and space, U.S. officials said at a November 20 press briefing after consultations with their Australian counterparts at the annual Australia-U.S. ministerial meeting.

Secretary of State John Kerry said both governments agreed to a nonbinding statement of principles that will guide a force posture agreement to be negotiated in December.

The initial force posture initiative with Australia was announced during President Obama’s trip to Australia in 2011. Under the agreement so far, two companies of

Marines have rotated through Darwin and the number of joint exercises between both countries’ air forces has increased. According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, starting in 2014, the U.S. Marine rotational force near Darwin will expand to 1,100 Marines.

“These ongoing rotational deployments to Australia are important to making U.S. military presence in Asia-Pacific more geographically distributed, operationally resilient and also politically sustainable,” Hagel said. “It’ll also help strengthen our capacity and the capacity of our partners in the region, like humanitarian assistance disaster relief efforts currently underway ... in the Philippines.

Hagel also said both sides agreed “to expand our situational awareness in space.” Hagel said he and Australian Defence Minister Johnston earlier signed an agreement to relocate an advanced space surveillance telescope to Western Australia. “This telescope,” Hagel said, “provides highly accurate detection, tracking and identification of deep space objects and will further strengthen our existing space cooperation.”

The Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) have been held most years since 1985. These meetings serve as the main annual forum for consultations between the two countries and involve the Australian ministers for foreign affairs and defense and the U.S. secretaries of state and defense. This year, Australia was represented by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and Defence Minister David Johnston.

Kerry said the U.S.-Australia partnership extends well beyond the Asia-Pacific region. For example, both countries are working to reach a political solution to the conflict in Syria. In addition, both countries, he said, are working to resolve the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as reach “a constructive and acceptable agreement” with respect to the threat of a nuclear weapon in Iran.

“We agreed on each of these,” Kerry said, “that diplomacy is always the preferred approach, and that it’s important to exhaust the remedies and possibilities of diplomacy.”

Regarding Iran, Kerry said: “We have the best chance we’ve had in a decade, we believe, to halt progress and roll back Iran’s program. And I made clear to our friends from Australia, as I have made clear to my former colleagues in meetings on Capitol Hill over this last week, we will not allow this agreement, should it be reached – and I say should it be reached – to buy time or to allow for the acceptance of an agreement that does not properly address our core fundamental concerns.”

In their comments to the press, officials from both sides emphasized the bonds forged in friendship and with blood. "Our forces have fought side by side in every conflict in which we have been engaged," Bishop said, noting that both she and Johnston were "deeply moved" at the wreath-laying ceremony held earlier that day at Arlington National Cemetery, the resting place for thousands of U.S. military veterans.

"When Secretary Hagel and I served in Vietnam," Kerry said, "both of us remember well that we fought alongside our Australian brothers. In fact, American and Australian men and women have fought together in every major conflict since World War I."

"The United States could ask for no better friend and no closer ally than Australia," Kerry said. "We really look forward to continuing our work side by side over the years to come."

### **U.S. Congress Supports PEPFAR into Its Second Decade**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 20 November 2013

Washington — The U.S. Congress has made quick work of legislation that extends the life of the nation's 10-year-old program targeting the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, the most extensive campaign a nation ever has mounted against a single disease.

Without controversy, the U.S. House and Senate on November 18–19 authorized another five-year funding period for the program, first adopted in 2003. Known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR originated with President George W. Bush, who urged congressional approval of a \$15 billion, five-year campaign targeting the epidemic in selected nations where young adults were succumbing to AIDS at a tragic rate.

The new PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act received strong support from both Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

"Today, nearly 6 million people are receiving life-sustaining antiretroviral treatment" with PEPFAR support, said Representative Eliot Engel, a Democrat from New York. "Last year, more than 46 million people received HIV testing and counseling."

With a particular focus on testing and treatment for pregnant mothers who are HIV-positive, PEPFAR has prevented mother-to-child HIV transmission and allowed the birth of 1 million HIV-free infants.

"This legislation will help reinforce those gains," said Senator Bob Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, "as the

program transitions from an emergency U.S.-led effort to one in which recipient countries increasingly sustain the program themselves."

The 2003 passage of PEPFAR came amid a cascade of actions in the international community, where universal alarm about the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis was rising. Today, U.S. agencies, international organizations and governments work together to contain the epidemic and build health care infrastructure to sustain a prolonged response.

The United States is "maximizing our impact," said acting U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Deborah von Zinkernagel, "through unprecedented coordination with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, partner countries, the private sector, faith-based organizations, and civil society to invest our respective resources in the most complementary and synergistic manner possible."

The newly passed bill, awaiting President Obama's signature, extends the funding authority for PEPFAR programs for another five years. It also adds several accountability measures, an important concern for lawmakers ever watchful of waste or abuse in government spending.

According to a summary issued by bill sponsor Senator Robert Menendez, a Democrat of New Jersey, the measure requires new reporting methods that will "reflect the program's movement away from strictly U.S. support and toward greater partner country ownership."

The success of PEPFAR along with other international measures to contain the epidemic and increase the number of people on drug therapy has allowed advocates to look toward the next goal: the birth of an AIDS-free generation. This goal will be achieved through completely ending any transmission of HIV from mother to child at birth and preventing HIV infection from advancing to AIDS.

PEPFAR has served as a platform for the Obama administration's Global Health Initiative. Health care planners recognized early on that coping with HIV/AIDS required development of a broad-based system to deliver health care, counseling and preventive services at the local level. Millions of people are receiving AIDS treatment because of a vast network of community health workers and clinics developed over the last decade.

The Global Health Initiative is building on those beginnings to help other countries develop more health care services delivered more broadly. The initiative aims to improve health and quality of life everywhere. It helps create health care infrastructure and personnel capacity in developing countries to detect and prevent outbreaks of

local health problems before they escalate into regional pandemics or epidemics.

## U.S. Grants to Global Organization Will Help Reduce Child Labor

19 November 2013

Washington — The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded \$14.7 million to the International Labour Organization (ILO) for two multicountry grants to reduce child labor.

The department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs announced the award of two cooperative agreements with ILO in a November 18 news release. The agreements will address the worst forms of child labor by giving direct technical assistance to governments in 20 countries and providing support for updating statistics related to child labor in another 100 countries.

The department awarded \$7.7 million for a cooperative agreement to build the capacity of governments to reduce child labor in at least 10 countries, including Bangladesh, Paraguay, Philippines, Suriname and Uganda. The project will support efforts to bring national legislation on child labor issues into compliance with international standards, improve monitoring and enforcement of child labor laws and policies, and improve national plans of action on child labor.

The project will also enhance implementation of policies and programs to increase access to basic education, vocational training, social protection services and poverty-reduction initiatives for populations vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. It will collaborate with key government agencies at the national, regional and local levels.

The department awarded \$7 million for a second cooperative agreement to collect and analyze data on working children in 10 countries, including Armenia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Jamaica, Malawi, Morocco, Peru, Tanzania and an additional country to be identified. The project will conduct surveys to collect data on child labor at the national or sector level, develop policy appraisals, publish data files for public use, and build the capacity of national statistical offices to conduct research and analyze data on child labor. It will also update statistics on children's work and education for approximately 100 countries.

Since 1995, projects funded by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs have rescued approximately 1.7 million children from exploitive child labor. The Labor Department has funded 269 such projects, implemented by more than 65 organizations in 91 countries. The bureau currently oversees more than \$220 million of active

programming to combat the worst forms of child labor.

## China, U.S. Highlight People-to-People Exchanges

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 18 November 2013

Washington — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong will host an event November 21 where they will make an investment in the future. They will welcome about 200 Americans and Chinese to the Department of State to get acquainted for a day and for decades to come.

The fourth annual U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange (CPE) brings citizens in five key fields together to make plans for exchanges, mutual cooperation and shared goals. The goal of the effort is that these people — many of them quite young — will establish mutual familiarity and trust that will lead them to solutions for shared problems of the future.

"We realize that these exchanges, particularly among youth at much younger ages, help to create those bonds of understanding and those bonds of cooperation," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Stevenson at a November 18 press briefing. "As this generation grows older, there [will be] much broader connections ... between our two countries."

CPE brings together citizens with specialized interests in education, science and technology, culture, sports, and women's issues. Stevenson said genuine connections are being built among participants in the Young Scientist Forum.

"These forums not only build this mutual understanding, but they foster the career development of the young scientists and look for bilateral ways to tackle more global problems," Stevenson said.

Education is another vibrant area for exchange, with almost 235,000 Chinese students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, according to a comprehensive survey released in early November. About 14,600 U.S. students are studying in China, according to the Institute of International Education. The lower number of U.S. students going overseas is attributed to the lack of a tradition of foreign study among them.

State Department officials said part of their CPE work is to encourage more students to sign up for overseas studies. U.S. programs are also trying to encourage a more diverse range of young people to sign up for study abroad, including those from minority groups and of lower socio-economic status.

The 100,000 Strong Foundation, a private, nonprofit

group, is working on engaging 100,000 U.S. students in exchange programs in the near future.

The CPE has brought about some notable collaborations in cultural activities. Stevenson notes a shared project by U.S. and Chinese playwrights to develop a play that was viewed in a shared Internet stream between audiences in Shanghai and in Iowa City, Iowa.

The CPE's cultural pillar has been the springboard for cooperative projects and presentations by U.S. and Chinese museums.

Sports exchanges are another focus of the CPE program, with a particular focus on encouraging athletes with disabilities and women athletes. Exchanges built on sports activities have a long history between the United States and China, said Cynthia Gire, who heads the SportsUnited program within the State Department.

Each nation sent its championship ping-pong team to the other country in the 1970s, breaking a long period without official contact between the two nations. "Ping-Pong Diplomacy," conducted citizen to citizen, opened the door for then-President Richard Nixon to travel to China, resulting in a thaw in Cold War relations.

Exchanges of athletes playing basketball and soccer is a current important focus, Gire said. In keeping with that theme, Liu planned to attend a November 18 professional basketball game between the Chicago Bulls and the Charlotte Bobcats.

### **Women Critical to Afghanistan's Success, Secretary Kerry Says**

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 15 November 2013

Washington — The full participation of women in Afghan society — particularly through elections in 2014 — is critical to the success of the country, says Secretary of State John Kerry.

"There can be no peace without respecting the rights of all Afghans, and Afghan women have to have a seat at the table," Kerry said at a November 15 Georgetown University symposium, "Advancing Afghan Women: Promoting Peace and Progress in Afghanistan."

The event, which was co-sponsored by the George W. Bush Institute, the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council and the Alliance in Support of the Afghan People, was co-chaired by former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and former first lady Laura Bush.

Kerry lauded the progress Afghan women have made since 2001, citing the following statistics:

- In 2001, there were only 900,000 Afghan children in school, mostly boys. Today, nearly 8 million students are in school, and more than a third are girls.
- In 2001, maternal mortality was 1,600 per 100,000 births; today, it's down by 80 percent.
- Life expectancy for all Afghans has risen from 42 years to 62 years from 2004 to 2010.
- Access to health care has risen from 9 percent to 60 percent.
- Cellphone access for women, once virtually nonexistent, is now at 80 percent.

Kerry said more Afghan women are venturing into entrepreneurial enterprises and politics. "When Afghan women run their own businesses, all Afghans profit from a more diverse, dynamic and inclusive economy," he said. "And when Afghan women hold public office at the local and national levels, all Afghans gain a stronger voice in their communities."

Kerry emphasized the importance of the 2014 elections. "We all know that the single most important milestone over the next year is the peaceful transfer of power from President Karzai to a democratically elected successor," he said, saying that the election must be "a unifying moment for the country, not a divisive one."

Afghan women, Kerry said, "are leading the charge to ensure that the elections next year are credible, inclusive and transparent." The United States, he said, is "very pleased to lend our support, in partnership with the United Nations, to train female volunteers as they facilitate secure access for women at the polls. There is no question that lasting security and prosperity in a unified Afghanistan will take root only when women have as loud a voice as men — not just on election day, but every day."

Kerry added: "The success of the political transition is essential. It's the prerequisite to the future stability of Afghanistan. But make no mistake — it's not enough, it's not sufficient, it won't do the job alone. That's why the United States firmly supports and will continue to support an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation effort as the surest way to end the violence and bring lasting stability to Afghanistan and the region."

Kerry said that he has met many Afghan women who fear that the gains of the past decade could be lost, and he acknowledged that despite the significant achievements of Afghan women and girls, many challenges still remain.

"The road ahead is not easy," Kerry said. "The violence that has plagued Afghanistan for decades has left very deep wounds, and it is going to take time to heal. We also know that security is going to be a real challenge. We know that Afghans have to strengthen the rule of law.

They have to improve access to justice. We also know that discrimination and violence against women continue to be major problems.”

“As Afghanistan sees women standing up in Afghanistan to take control of their country’s future – not only for themselves, but for all Afghans – we have to be determined that they will not stand alone,” Kerry said. “America will stand up with them as they shape a strong and united Afghanistan that secures the rightful place in the community of nations. And that is why President Obama and President Karzai signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement last year that lays out our mutual commitments. And that’s why America’s relationship with Afghans is changing; it’s not ending.”

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