

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Weekly Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

December 6, 2013

Vice President Biden Urges “Practical Cooperation” in U.S.-China Relations	1
Secretary Kerry Cites Goals for 2014 NATO Summit	1
To Win Fight Against AIDS, We Must First Defeat TB.....	2
Japan, U.S. Seek to Make Their Strong Alliance Stronger	3
President Obama Increases U.S. Commitment on World AIDS Day	3

Vice President Biden Urges “Practical Cooperation” in U.S.-China Relations

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 05 December 2013

Washington — U.S.-China relations should be based on “practical cooperation,” says Vice President Biden.

“We need to keep building practical cooperation and manage areas where we do not see eye to eye,” he told the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing and the U.S.-China Business Council in a speech December 5.

Biden said China’s recent announcement establishing a new Air Defense Identification Zone has “caused significant apprehension in the region.”

“As businesses know well,” the vice president said, “prosperity critically depends upon predictability and stability.”

“As China’s economy grows,” he said, “its stake in regional peace and stability will continue to grow as well because it has so much more to lose. That’s why China will bear increasing responsibility to contribute positively to peace and security.”

He said the economic progress the Asia-Pacific region — including China — has enjoyed in past decades was aided by the guaranteed peace and security provided by the United States and its allies.

Biden said that, despite real disagreements with China, “there’s nothing inevitable about a conflict with China,” and that China and the United States have “considerable common interest on the security side” that includes halting the spread of weapons of mass destruction and North Korea’s nuclear missile program.

“A secure and peaceful Asia Pacific enables economic growth for the entire region,” Biden said. “This area of the world is going to be the economic engine of the 21st century.”

Biden said he hoped that China would soon implement proposed economic reforms for a system where the market plays a decisive role.

China’s economic growth is of interest to the United States, he said, “because ultimately what matters most on both sides is our ability to deliver better for our people without it being viewed as a zero-sum game.”

But for China to successfully implement reforms, Biden said, it will have to level the playing field for private and foreign-owned companies, protect intellectual property, establish transparent court systems, open service sectors

to private and foreign investment and move to a market-demand exchange rate.

Implementing the necessary economic reforms will be difficult for China, Biden acknowledged, “but the more China delivers on its proposed reforms the stronger our bilateral trade and investment relationship will be.”

Biden called on China to open its politics and society as well as its economy. “I believe China will be stronger and more stable and more innovative if it respects universal human rights,” Biden said.

“History tells us that innovation is the currency of 21st-century success,” Biden said. And innovation, he said, thrives where people can “speak freely, are able to challenge orthodoxy, where newspapers can report the truth without fear of consequences.”

Biden said he believes that China and the United States are at a moment in history “where we can potentially establish a set of rules of the road that provide for mutual benefit and growth of both our countries and the region....”

Biden was in China as part of a six-day trip to reinforce U.S. ties with the Asia-Pacific region. Having visited Japan and China, he next will travel to the Republic of Korea.

Secretary Kerry Cites Goals for 2014 NATO Summit

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 04 December 2013

Washington — The 27-member NATO alliance is preparing for a 2014 summit in Britain and is focusing on three crucial issues: its future supporting Afghanistan security, future military capabilities and its partnerships with more than 44 nations, Secretary of State John Kerry says.

At a press briefing, Kerry said 2014 will be a pivotal time for the Afghan mission and preparations for the transformation of future NATO engagement.

Kerry attended the annual NATO foreign ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels December 3–4. Kerry met separately with a number of foreign ministers and European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton. She has been leading talks in Geneva between a group of six nations — Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — and Iran over Iran’s nuclear development program.

Speaking with journalists December 3, Kerry said the foreign ministers discussed at length the transition to full Afghan leadership of the country’s security after the

NATO security assistance mission ends next year and the United States completes its drawdown of combat forces.

“We will also address the importance of maintaining a strong commitment to Afghanistan even after we end the NATO combat mission next year,” Kerry said. “The United States is committed to do its part in contributing to the new mission to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces.”

The United States is encouraging Afghan President Hamid Karzai to sign “sooner, not later” a security agreement with the United States to allow some American military forces to remain in Afghanistan after the combat mission ends.

The agreement under negotiation – known as a bilateral security agreement – will serve as a template for a similar status-of-forces agreement that would be signed by NATO nations with Afghanistan. Kerry said there are more than 50 nations who are engaged in Afghanistan through the NATO-led security mission and they will need time to adjust forces, make planning requirements, meet deployment and equipment requirements, and conduct budgetary planning in a brief period of time.

Karzai has acknowledged support for the security agreement, and it has also won support from the council of Afghan elders known as the Loya Jirga.

“What we are asking for is the optimum, which is to try to manage this transition in Afghanistan,” Kerry said.

NATO is also examining how to invest in the capabilities, the exercises and the training that will enable the member nations to address the security challenges of the future, Kerry said.

One of the lessons learned from NATO’s history is the value of helping to support local security forces, particularly as a means of stabilizing post-conflict situations, Kerry said. “We now need to institutionalize this ability to be able to train, and we need to do what we can to help countries that need and want our support in that training exercise,” he said.

Kerry said NATO is also examining how to energize existing partnerships like the ones that exist in the countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf, and how to deepen cooperation with key operational partners. As NATO has conducted operations in other regions, it has drawn support from a considerable number of partners that has enhanced NATO’s ability to deploy whenever and wherever needed, Kerry noted.

The 2014 NATO Summit in South Wales will be hosted by British Prime Minister David Cameron September 4–5,

2014.

“We will take further steps to modernize our alliance so that it remains strong, flexible and ready to face any security challenge,” NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said December 4. “And we will reaffirm the bond between Europe and North America that is the source of our strength, our security and our success.”

To Win Fight Against AIDS, We Must First Defeat TB

04 December 2013

This blog post by Cheri Vincent, chief of the Infectious Diseases Division at the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Health Bureau, was published on the USAID website on December 3. There are no republication restrictions for use by U.S. embassies.

To Win the Fight Against AIDS, We Must First Defeat TB

By Cheri Vincent

This week, tremendous and unprecedented progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS is being celebrated around the world by the HIV and AIDS community. The world has definitely made crushing AIDS a top priority and we’ve been able to accomplish what many would have said 15 years ago was impossible. But let’s not forget that if the dream of making this the generation that defeats AIDS is to become reality, we must also tackle the leading killer of people with HIV – tuberculosis (TB).

The overlap of TB and HIV is a deadly combination with tragic consequences. TB is the leading killer of people with HIV, accounting for one in four HIV-related deaths. Globally, one-third of the 34 million people living with HIV is infected with TB, and if left unchecked and untreated, TB can kill a person with HIV/AIDS in a matter of weeks. Furthermore, the alarming increase in multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) threatens to reverse progress made against HIV/AIDS despite our efforts to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals related to TB.

Pressing public health challenges like this demand our collective and immediate attention. Today, the Global Fund is on the second and final day of its fourth Replenishment Conference in Washington D.C. Hosted by the United States government, this meeting is a pivotal opportunity for donor countries to increase their pledges over the next three years to bring treatment and hope for HIV, TB and malaria to some of the world’s most underserved and heavily disease-burdened populations.

In his remarks at the Global Fund Partnership Symposium yesterday, Secretary Kerry reminded global leaders that the goal of eliminating TB deaths in our

lifetime is achievable if we make the commitment and stay the course – “TB is curable, and make no mistake: With the right effort and the right focus, the right energy, we can eliminate it.”

Bold steps of commitment by the global community will indeed strengthen our fight against TB and will give countries the tools, particularly life-saving commodities, to reduce the spread of TB, cure people suffering with TB, and prevent the further development of MDR-TB. We need new drugs and tools that are safe and effective for people with TB, MDR-TB, and those co-infected with TB and HIV. The U.S. Government has worked together across agencies in the introduction and implementation of the new Xpert diagnostic. The Xpert MTB/RIF assay can detect TB more accurately than current methods, particularly among people co-infected with TB/HIV and can be a reliable proxy for MDR-TB. USAID is also working with partners to improve the currently toxic and lengthy MDR-TB treatment regimen as well as the availability and price of existing second line drugs. Most importantly, USAID and others are working together to prevent the spread of TB within communities and improve access to curable treatment for the most vulnerable and poor populations.

Simply put, we have a historic opportunity to turn the tide on an age-old killer that has plagued mankind for generations. By the global community banding together with resources and endorsements to meet the challenge, the goal of ending TB deaths in our lifetime is within our reach.

Japan, U.S. Seek to Make Their Strong Alliance Stronger

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 03 December 2013

Washington – Japan and the United States are seeking to make an already strong alliance stronger, says Vice President Biden.

Biden was in Tokyo December 3 to meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and members of Japan’s Diet and discuss opportunities to deepen the economic and security partnerships between the two countries. During a press briefing with Japan’s prime minister, Biden said the two had discussed ways to “modernize” the alliance “to meet the challenges and opportunities of this new century.”

“As we have for more than six decades,” Biden said, “the United States looks to our alliance with Japan as the cornerstone of stability and security in East Asia, and we are fully committed to our announced strategy of rebalancing as well in the Pacific.”

Biden’s two-day stop in Tokyo was the first part of a six-

day trip that will include visits to China and the Republic of Korea.

The trip, according to a White House release, will reaffirm the “enduring presence” of the United States as a Pacific power, as well as promote economic and trade interests.

The U.S.-Japan alliance, Biden said, “extends far beyond Northeast Asia. It’s a global platform to act on values and interests that we share.” This includes a new initiative to support disaster relief and recovery training in Southeast Asia, building on lessons learned helping the Philippines recover from a deadly typhoon. It also includes stronger cooperation on maritime security throughout the Asia-Pacific region, he said.

“The world should not forget that our alliances have been critical for the stability that has made this region’s remarkable progress possible,” Biden said. “We will remain steadfast in our alliance commitments.”

Biden added that the United States “has an interest in the lowering of tensions in this vital region” and said he believed that “all the countries of Northeast Asia share that same interest with us.”

Biden travels next to Beijing, where he is scheduled to meet with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Vice President Li Yuanchao. There he will discuss “shared interests and cooperation, including energy and climate, as well as areas of concern, including regional tensions,” according to the White House.

During a December 3 background briefing at the U.S. ambassador’s residence in Tokyo, senior U.S. administration officials said Biden’s meetings in Beijing will include the topic of China’s recent declaration of an air defense identification zone over an area of the East China Sea that Japan and China both claim.

The United States is “deeply concerned by the attempt to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea,” Biden said. “This action has raised regional tensions and increased the risk of accidents and miscalculation.”

President Obama Increases U.S. Commitment on World AIDS Day

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 02 December 2013

Washington – At a White House World AIDS Day event December 2, President Obama promised new U.S. assistance to fight the disease, saying the more others contribute to the cause, the more the United States will contribute to better health worldwide.

Representatives from other donor nations and the international AIDS relief community heard the

commitment. They are in Washington December 2-3 for a meeting about renewing financial pledges to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Obama promised that the United States will contribute \$1 for every \$2 pledge made by other nations over the next three years, up to \$5 billion. "Don't leave our money on the table," Obama said, challenging ministers attending the event who represent other nations. He commended nations that carry the heaviest disease burden for the stepped-up investments they are making to address the epidemic.

"That ought to inspire all of us to give more, to do more, so we can save more lives," Obama said.

The commitment for matching funds was greeted by applause in the midst of otherwise solemn remarks, in which Obama recalled the dark, frightful years of the early epidemic when young adults were dying rapidly and mysteriously.

Nothing will ever reverse those losses, Obama said. "But what we can do, and what we have to do, is chart a different future, guided by our love for those we couldn't save. That allows us to do everything we can, everything in our power, to save those that we can."

Secretary of State John Kerry was another speaker at the White House event with sharp memories of the helpless dismay that pervaded the public in the early years when the the disease seemed like an imminent death sentence. Kerry was a U.S. senator and recalled how members of Congress set aside political differences to face the crisis and take action on HIV/AIDS.

"We all managed to be able to find a way for this issue to unite us," Kerry said. "In our collective refusal to allow AIDS to ravage yet another generation, we showed a deeper determination to meet our global responsibilities."

The U.S. Congress has continued that tradition with recent passage of a bill that continues funding for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the 10-year-old U.S. program that has provided treatment for 6.7 million people in hard-hit countries worldwide. President Obama said he intended to sign that bill into law as he left the December 2 event.

Obama said he also hopes that the U.S. global AIDS coordinator and representatives of other donor nations and international organizations will be able to meet early in 2014 to agree on new goals for increasing the numbers of people receiving lifesaving treatment and prevention services. Through intensive prevention and treatment efforts, the United States and international partners hope to achieve an AIDS-free generation in the near future.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria came together in 2002 as a coordinating agency for international funding to address the three diseases. The government and private-sector donors who contribute to the Global Fund have provided \$28 billion over the last decade. They convene in Washington December 2-3 for a "replenishment conference" to challenge each other to increase their assistance to end disease.

The last replenishment conference in 2010 won commitments of \$9.2 billion. Dr. Mark Dybul, executive director of the fund, expressed confidence in late November that donors attending the 2013 meeting will exceed that level of commitment.

The Geneva-based agency is involved in health programs in 140 nations. The Fund's work complements that of PEPFAR, also launched about a decade ago. Through these two efforts, with contributions from many other donor nations, nongovernmental organizations, philanthropists and host governments, about 10 million people are receiving treatment for the disease.

President Obama also announced that the United States is investing \$100 million in research on a potential cure for AIDS to achieve long-term remissions and stop the need for lifetime treatment.

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