

American

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Obama Condemns Ukraine Violence

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 20 February 2014

Washington — President Obama reiterated his condemnation of the violence that has erupted in Ukraine, killing dozens and leaving hundreds more injured over the past few days.

“We have been deeply engaged with our European partners as well as both the Ukrainian government and the opposition to try to assure that that violence ends,” Obama said in brief remarks to journalists while in Mexico for the North American Leaders Summit on February 19.

“But we hold the Ukrainian government primarily responsible for making sure that it is dealing with peaceful protesters in an appropriate way, that the Ukrainian people are able to assemble and speak freely about their interests without fear of repression,” Obama added.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said in a separate statement that President Obama is “outraged by the images of Ukrainian security forces firing automatic weapons on their own people.” The White House urged President Viktor Yanukovich to immediately withdraw his security forces from downtown Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, respect the right of peaceful protest, and initiate meaningful dialogue that reduces tension and addresses the grievances of the Ukrainian people.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Kerry, who is in Paris for meetings with French officials and others, told journalists February 19 that it’s up to Yanukovich to determine the future of his country. But Kerry said it is the U.S. desire that Yanukovich bring his people together, hold talks with opposition leaders and find a suitable compromise that puts the interests of the Ukrainian people first.

Kerry also said, “We are talking about the possibility of sanctions or other steps with our friends in Europe and elsewhere in order to try to create the environment for compromise.” As of February 19, the U.S. government has started the process of denying visas to senior members of the Ukrainian government and individuals who are responsible for human rights abuses related to political repression.

In Brussels, the European Union called its 28 member countries into an extraordinary meeting February 20 to address the situation. They agreed to impose sanctions on Ukraine, including visa bans, asset freezes and restrictions on the export of anti-riot equipment, ministers and officials said.

President Obama spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel by phone February 20 to consult on the situation in Ukraine. According to the White House, the two leaders agreed that it is critical that the United States, Germany and the European Union continue to stay in close touch in the days ahead on steps that can be taken to support an end to the violence and a political solution.

At a special State Department briefing, a senior diplomat said the United States has intensified diplomacy with the European Union, with support by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, to negotiate a dialogue between Yanukovich and leading opposition figures. The talks have also included members of civil society groups, church leaders, the business community and people on the Maidan in Kyiv with the goals of a de-escalation of tensions, an amnesty for protestors and an end to human rights abuses. The Maidan is called Independence Square in Kyiv and has been the site of peaceful protests and clashes with government riot police.

The senior official said that in exchange for organizing the talks, the Ukrainian government would allow protestors to be able to maintain their peaceful posture on the Maidan and at other key sites, and the protestors would give up some of the buildings that had been seized.

“The idea then was to try to move on to a power-sharing arrangement, a technical government that could take the country forward,” the official said.

Peaceful protests began in November 2013 after President Yanukovich rejected a long-anticipated political association and free-trade agreement with the European Union, opting instead for closer ties with Russia. Efforts by protestors to convince Yanukovich to reverse his decision failed and the ensuing protests swelled to hundreds of thousands after a riot police crackdown. The most intense protests began in January and have continued.

Social Media Seen as Powerful Force for Foreign Policy Messages

By Sonya Weakley | Staff Writer | 20 February 2014

Washington — In a round-table discussion February 18, representatives from the U.S. Department of State shared their opinions on using social media to promote U.S. foreign policy objectives on a personal level. The discussion was part of a Social Media Week conference in New York City.

The panelists described social media as a form of grass-roots community organization that enables global communication of ideas in ways that can resonate on a local level.

The use of social media — the convergence of electronic

communication technology and social interaction – “empowers regular people in their own society to effect the change they wanted to see,” said Macon Phillips, coordinator of the Department of State’s Bureau of International Information Programs.

The evolution of social media has helped turn traditional social hierarchy on its head, he said. “Institutions are less powerful and people are more powerful, and that’s a good thing,” Phillips said.

Evan Ryan, assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, said social media also has become a vital tool for international exchange programs, which typically involve traveling between countries.

“We really are making a move ... to virtual exchanges because there are so many people that, unfortunately, don’t have the opportunity to come here to the United States. And what’s the best way to tie us all together? And that’s online.”

Doug Frantz, assistant secretary of state for public affairs, cautioned that social media should be considered one of several outreach tools.

“I still believe that journalism has a role here. ... The mediation of the professionals is sometimes lost in the din of what happens in the social media world,” Frantz said.

Phillips agreed. “It’s really important to start with a strategy not just for communications but for overall diplomacy, and then identify the tools that are going to help you build that, digital or otherwise,” he said.

He also pointed out that types of social media applications vary significantly around the world. “As the social media landscape continues to evolve, who knows what will be the predominant network in a certain country ... in two years, five years? When we’re looking at social media strategies, it’s really important not to talk about a specific network. ... Let’s talk about public engagement.”

The three panelists also discussed some of the risks involved in using social media to engage foreign audiences. “You have to say to [State Department] people ... get out there, take a responsible risk. Don’t take a big crazy risk and try and change our policy on Iran, but if you’re behaving responsibly, we can expect small mistakes,” Frantz said.

Phillips emphasized the importance of ensuring collaboration, rather than competition, among various offices involved in engaging different audiences. “What we need to do is create a culture that empowers them to move quickly, but also is collaborative enough that they can ask for help.”

DOD Official Meets With International Partners in Singapore

By U.S. Navy Commander Amy Derrick-Frost | Department of Defense | 20 February 2014

This article was previously published on the Defense Department website on February 19.

Singapore – The 2014 Singapore Air Show provided the setting last week for a senior U.S. Defense Department official to meet with numerous international partners and defense industry officials.

Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, told reporters at the air show that the United States was the “feature country” at this year’s event, the first time organizers have made such a designation.

U.S. military aircraft participating in ground displays and aerial demonstrations included two F-16 Fighting Falcons, two MV-22 Ospreys, a P-8A Poseidon, a C-17 Globemaster III, a KC-135 Stratotanker and a C-130J Super Hercules.

“The U.S. is honored to be the feature country,” Kendall said. “We have strong economic and security interests in the Asia-Pacific region, and Singapore is a valued partner nation. We are in the process of rebalancing our national security focus to this region, and our participation in the Singapore Air Show is of the highest importance to the U.S.

“It is also important that while here,” he continued, “we have an opportunity to meet with industry, government and military leaders and discuss how we can work together to ensure security, stability and prosperity in the region.”

The undersecretary added that the trade show portion of the event gave the Defense Department the opportunity to promote U.S. security cooperation programs and foreign military sales.

“We see ourselves as the ‘provider of choice’ and want to assist our partners who see a need to improve their military capabilities,” he said. “We also want to ensure technical and operational interoperability with our partners; this can be critical during times of crisis and helps strengthen our military-to-military relationships.”

Formally known as the Changi International Air Show, the Singapore air show started in 2008 as a partnership between the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Defence Science and Technology Agency. It is among the most prominent air shows in the world, and is Asia’s largest aerospace and defense exhibition.

This is the fourth edition of the biennial aerospace and

defense event, with more than 1,000 companies from 50 countries exhibiting, including 163 from the United States, the largest number ever.

The 2012 air show hosted more than 120,000 visitors. Singaporean officials and event organizers said they expected even more visitors to attend this year. The air show, held at Changi East International Airport, was open to the public February 15-16.

Trade Deals Can Boost Labor, Environment Protections, USTR Says

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 19 February 2014

Washington – Two major trade deals the United States is negotiating could lead to greater protections for labor, the environment and intellectual property rights worldwide, according to U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman.

Froman told a meeting February 18 at the Center for American Progress that globalization and technological change, especially since the start of the Obama administration, have accelerated and are not slowing down. “Our trade agreements need to take on that challenge,” he said. The Center for American Progress is a Washington think tank.

LABOR

Froman said the new trade agreements would level the playing field for partners by raising labor and environmental standards, by reducing barriers, and by “putting disciplines on state-owned enterprises.” He added that trade can be an important tool in efforts to address income inequality. “The heart of the global economy should be working people who stand to share in the benefits of global growth,” he said.

Froman noted that in negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the United States seeks to include sections requiring adherence to “fundamental labor rights,” including the right to organize and collectively bargain, and protections from child and forced labor and from employment discrimination. “We see TPP as the mechanism most likely to incentivize these countries [of the Pacific Rim] to make progress in reforming their labor systems and upholding workers’ rights,” he said.

The trade representative also said the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) would lay a foundation for cooperation with Europe to promote “high-standard labor practices around the world.”

ENVIRONMENT

“Our values also tell us that the future global economy should be more sustainable than it is today,” Froman said, noting that the United States is working to “set the world’s highest standards” in the environmental sections

of trade agreements that put environmental protection on “equal footing with commercial obligations.”

He added that protections for endangered species “must be taken as seriously” as commitments to lower tariffs and to protect intellectual property. He said the United States is asking its trading partners to effectively enforce environmental laws, including those implementing multilateral environmental agreements.

He said the United States encourages partners to take a more sustainable approach to development that “levels the playing field for ... companies who maintain high standards for their workers and the communities where they operate.”

He said that through TPP, the United States seeks to address conservation challenges that are “particularly prevalent” in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in areas in the region that have served as conduits for illegal trade and for smuggling of threatened animal, timber, plant and marine species.

He called TPP “a unique opportunity” to improve regional cooperation and enforcement of the rules of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

“Whether protecting big-leaf mahogany or tigers, sharks and chinchillas, stronger legal frameworks, more cooperation and better enforcement will improve the chances that these species survive,” he said.

Froman added that TPP and TTIP are good opportunities to make progress on the deadlocked issue of fishing subsidies.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Froman also said that as “the world’s oldest democracy and innovative economy,” the United States believes that “inventors should be able to patent their inventions and creators should be able to copyright their works.”

He said that while the United States holds its partners accountable to their intellectual property rights commitments and seeks to combat trade-secret theft, it wants to broaden the benefits of innovation to the public and enable cross-border collaboration and data exchange. Those, he said, will drive future innovations.

Froman said the United States wants its TPP partners to accept World Trade Organization provisions allowing for the export of generic versions of patented drugs to countries with insufficient capacity to manufacture their own.

He added that for the first time in a trade agreement, the United States is asking its trading partners to secure a balance in their copyright systems, including fair use for

purposes like “scholarship, criticism, news commentary, teaching and research.”

He said balance also would ensure that safe harbors for Internet service providers are available so legitimate providers of cloud computing, user-generated content sites and other Internet-related services that act responsibly can stay online.

“Cross-border information flows are important to spurring innovation, incorporating small and medium-sized businesses into the global economy, and laying the foundation for the next generation of economic drivers,” he said.

In Indonesia, Kerry Urges Global Action to Halt Climate Change

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 16 February 2014

Washington – Secretary of State John Kerry told an Indonesian audience that the threat of climate change is real and that the cost of inaction outweighs the expense of investing in solutions.

Climate change, Kerry said, is as much a threat to global security and prosperity as is terrorism, epidemics, poverty, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The impact on economies, the environment and human life grows at staggering rates with little chance now of it ending or slowing because of inaction, he added.

Despite 25 years of scientific warnings and repeated calls to pursue a significant response to this threat, nations have not summoned the urgency necessary to respond effectively, Kerry said in a February 16 speech to students, civic leaders and government officials at the America Center in Jakarta.

“The science is unequivocal, and those who refuse to believe it are simply burying their heads in the sand,” Kerry said. “The cost of flooding, the cost of drought, the cost of famine, the cost of health care, the cost of addressing this challenge is simply far less – the costs of addressing this challenge are far less than the costs of doing nothing.”

Kerry cited a spate of recent weather disasters – flooding and typhoons – in East Asia and the Pacific that have affected commerce, agriculture, fishing and daily life. Environmental scientists have warned that changes caused by climate change lead to drought, wildfires, rising sea levels, melting polar ice, animal extinctions and other extreme outcomes.

An enormous body of scientific research spanning more than a quarter century cites emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as causing the atmosphere to

trap solar heat and alter the climate. Kerry said that the energy sources nations have relied on for decades to fuel cars and power homes – like oil and coal – are largely responsible for producing those greenhouse gases that go into the atmosphere.

In addition, emissions coming from deforestation and agriculture also send enormous quantities of carbon dioxide pollution into the atmosphere, Kerry added. “If we continue to go down the same path that we are going down today, the world as we know it will change – and it will change dramatically for the worse,” he said.

Kerry said there is still time for the global community to significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions and prevent the worst consequences of climate change from happening. The solution is in new global energy policies that shift reliance from fossil fuels to cleaner environmentally friendly technologies and sources, he said.

Through President Obama’s Climate Action Plan, the United States is well on its way to meeting international commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, Kerry said. The United States is targeting the largest sources of pollution – transportation and power generation – that account for more than 60 percent of the dangerous greenhouse gases released.

Added to that are new standards to double the fuel efficiency of cars used on American roads, he added. The United States has also proposed regulations that would curb carbon dioxide pollution coming from new power generation plants, and similar regulations are being prepared to limit carbon pollution coming from existing power generation facilities.

Kerry also cited U.S. assistance to its international partners, like Indonesia, where the Millennium Challenge Corporation has launched the \$332 million Green Prosperity program to address deforestation and support innovation in clean energy throughout the country.

The United States and China issued a joint statement on February 15 agreeing to carry out commitments to curb greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vehicle emissions, improve energy efficiency of buildings and other measures. In 2013, China and the United States launched the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group to develop strategies and methods for addressing the prime areas of greenhouse gas emissions.

North Korea, Climate Change Top Agenda for Kerry, China’s Leaders

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 14 February 2014

Washington – Secretary of State John Kerry met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior Chinese

officials during a visit to Beijing on February 14 and received a commitment from China to help convince North Korea to return to nuclear disarmament talks.

Kerry also emphasized the Obama administration's commitment to refocusing U.S. foreign policy on the Asia-Pacific region. During Kerry's talks with Xi and other officials, they discussed climate change, human rights and the rule of law, Syria's civil war, and efforts to reduce tensions with Iran over its nuclear development program.

"Our partnership with China we view as one of great potential. It is one that is continuing to be defined, and we are convinced that [in] both regional and global challenges that we face, China and the United States, when they can act together in concert with common purpose, have the opportunity to be able to make a significant difference," Kerry said at a press conference after his talks with Chinese leaders.

Kerry thanked China for supporting the U.S. call for North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons development program and resume the six-party disarmament talks that include China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

North Korea must make meaningful, concrete and irreversible steps toward ending its nuclear weapons program and it needs to begin now, Kerry told journalists. "China could not have more forcefully reiterated its commitment to that goal, its interests in achieving that goal, and its concerns about the risks of not achieving that goal," he said.

"China could not have been more emphatic or made it more clear that they will not allow a nuclear program over the long run, that they believe deeply in denuclearization, and that denuclearization must occur, that they are committed to doing their part to help make it happen, and that they also will not allow instability and war to break out in the region," Kerry said.

Chinese leaders believe this has to be done in political negotiation and through diplomacy, he added.

Chinese leaders and Kerry also discussed climate change and clean energy cooperation. While both nations are large emitters of carbon pollution, Kerry said, it is urgent that they join together to respond to the growing problem. It is imperative, the secretary said, for China and the United States to work together to ensure an ambitious international climate change agreement is signed at the United Nations' climate summit in December 2015 in Paris.

"In addition, today, we spoke about our shared interest in preventing Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon," Kerry told journalists. He added that they agreed on the importance of continued negotiations being held by

Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States with the help of the European Union.

Kerry and Chinese leaders also discussed human rights challenges and the role of the rule of law and the free flow of information in "a robust civil society." The secretary said they also discussed issues involving the South China Sea and the importance of cooperation in a peaceful, nonconfrontational way that respects international maritime law.

On Syria, Kerry said they discussed the importance of China's support in U.N. Security Council efforts to deal with the humanitarian crisis.

Kerry was in Beijing on the second stop of his fifth trip to Asia in the past year. His first stop was in Seoul for extensive talks with South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se.

Following his visit to Beijing, Kerry will travel to Jakarta for talks with officials at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations headquarters and with Indonesian officials. While in Jakarta, Kerry will deliver an address on climate change.

The White House announced that President Obama will visit Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines in April.

'Notorious Markets' List Focuses Fight Against Global Piracy

14 February 2014

Washington — "Trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy on a commercial scale cause significant financial losses for rights holders and legitimate businesses," the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) asserts in a new report that identifies select online and physical marketplaces that engage in and facilitate substantial piracy and counterfeiting.

USTR Michael Froman announced February 12 the findings of the *2013 Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets*, which identifies markets around the world that harm businesses and undermine workers through the infringement of intellectual property rights (IPR).

The annual review identifies both online and physical marketplaces engaging in commercial-scale IPR infringement. Publication of this report helps the United States and its trade partners prioritize enforcement of the intellectual property rights that protect job-supporting innovation and creativity around the world.

"According to a U.S. Commerce Department study released in 2012, America's innovative and creative industries support roughly \$775 billion in merchandise exports annually and 40 million jobs here at home,"

Froman said. "The markets we have identified unfairly take from these American workers, diminishing the value and salability of their work and threatening their jobs. And some of the counterfeit goods sold in the identified physical markets, from medicines and personal care products to automotive parts, can even threaten the health and safety of consumers. The marketplaces identified here warrant the immediate attention of our trading partners."

The 2013 *Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets* identifies particularly infamous markets but does not constitute an exhaustive list of all markets dealing in pirated or counterfeit goods around the world.

It also does not reflect the United States' analysis of the general IPR protection and enforcement climate in the country concerned. That analysis is contained in the annual Special 301 Report issued at the end of April each year.

However, the United States urges the responsible authorities to intensify efforts to combat piracy and counterfeiting, and to use the information contained in the notorious markets review to pursue legal actions where appropriate.

The [full report](#), which includes examples of previously identified notorious markets that have taken meaningful steps to address piracy and counterfeiting, is available on the USTR website.

USTR has identified notorious markets in the reports since 2006. In 2010, USTR announced that it would begin to publish the notorious markets list separately from the *Special 301 Report* to increase public awareness and guide related trade and other enforcement actions.

USTR published the first stand-alone notorious markets list in February 2011 as an *Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets*, and has published a list every year since.

The February 12 announcement concludes the 2013 out-of-cycle notorious markets review initiated on September 20, 2013, through publication in the *Federal Register* of a request for public comments.

The list was developed by U.S. government agencies represented on the USTR-chaired Special 301 Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee.

2014 Spending Plan Reflects U.S. Priorities

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 14 February 2014

Washington — The United States will provide \$49 billion in funding for 2014 commitments to allies, contributions to the United Nations and international organizations, the global fight against HIV/AIDS, and support for global Internet freedom programs.

The annual foreign assistance funding legislation, signed in January by President Obama, is about \$2.2 billion less than last year.

The president submitted his request in April 2013 for funding for fiscal year 2014 foreign operations. The House of Representatives and the Senate spent months deliberating before each passed versions of appropriations bills for foreign operations and other government functions. They then negotiated a final omnibus appropriations bill and sent it to the president for signature or veto.

KEY ALLIES, HUMANITARIAN CRISES

In support of key allies, the spending plan allocates more than \$3 billion for military aid for Israel and \$1 billion for Jordan. It provides up to \$1.3 billion in military aid for Egypt and \$250 million for Egypt's economic development.

The law also provides \$81 billion in new funding for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt.

The measure includes the amount the president requested to respond to humanitarian crises in Syria, Central Africa, Somalia and other places. That includes \$3 billion for migration and refugee assistance, nearly \$2 billion for international disaster aid, and \$460 million for the Complex Crisis Fund.

HEALTH, PEACEKEEPING, TECHNOLOGY AND CLIMATE

The law provides \$1.6 billion for global HIV/AIDS assistance; \$4 billion to fund the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); and \$330 million for USAID's AIDS programs.

The law increased to \$59 million funding for polio prevention, including \$8 million for Afghanistan and Pakistan and to support multilateral polio eradication efforts. It provides \$175 million to provide lifesaving vaccines to children in low-income countries, \$665 million to combat malaria, \$236 million to fight tuberculosis, \$100 million to combat neglected tropical diseases, and \$72 million to prepare for pandemics and other emerging health threats.

The legislation provides almost \$2 billion in contributions for peacekeeping operations, an additional nearly \$2 billion for NATO, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other U.N. organizations (except UNESCO), and more than \$1 billion for the World Bank's lending branch.

It authorizes \$185 million for the international Clean Technology Fund and \$50 million for the Strategic

Climate Fund.

INTERNET FREEDOM

The law includes more than \$50 million to promote Internet freedom to countries where governments restrict freedom of speech and freedom of association in online communications. It requires U.S. agencies to coordinate with other Internet freedom, democracy and broadcasting programs to continue research and development of new technologies, and to identify threats to Internet freedom.

EXPORTS

The law also supports promotion of U.S. goods and services exports around the world with more than \$115 million for the Export-Import Bank, \$89 million for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and \$55 million for the Trade and Development Agency.

FOOD AID

Under the section of the law that covers agriculture programs, \$1.5 billion was approved for Food for Peace grants, \$107 million more than in the previous year. Food for Peace, the anchor program for humanitarian aid, combats hunger and malnutrition worldwide and includes funding for multiyear development projects. Food for Peace has provided assistance for more than 50 years and has helped about 3 billion people in 150 countries.

The law maintains a level of \$185 million for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program. The program benefits low-income children and mothers and has been credited with improving school attendance, especially among girls.

The spending plan includes increases in funds for agricultural research, animal disease control, and food safety and inspection.

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