

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. [2014 Budget Looks to Balance Ends, Ways, Means, Hagel Says](#) (04-16-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2013 – President Barack Obama’s fiscal 2014 budget request for the Defense Department is the best effort to match ends, ways and means, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told the House Appropriations Committee’s defense subcommittee today.

This is a time of fiscal uncertainty, Hagel told the representatives, and Congress and the administration must work together to ensure the United States is safe.

But “significant changes to the department’s topline spending would require changes to this budget plan,” the secretary added.

The president’s request of \$526.6 billion for the department’s base budget will allow DOD to implement the defense strategic guidance, Hagel said. However, the old statement, “The president proposes, the Congress disposes,” is key to the budget process, and the budget may not pass in its current form.

If the budget is significantly reduced, the secretary told the lawmakers, there may not be enough money to implement the strategic guidance.

Hagel explained that is why he tasked Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter to lead a strategic choices and management review.

“I asked for that review in order to assess the potential impact of further reductions up to the level of full sequester,” he said. “The purpose of this review is to reassess the basic assumptions that drive the department’s investment and force structure decisions.”

The review is designed to help understand the challenges, articulate the risks, and look for opportunities for reform and efficiencies presented by resource constraints, the secretary said.

“Everything will be on the table during this review -- roles and missions, planning, business practices, force structure, personnel and compensation, acquisition and modernization investments, how we operate, and how we measure and maintain readiness,” Hagel added.

The results -- due at the end of May -- will be used to build the fiscal 2015 budget request and will be the foundation for the Quadrennial Defense Review due to Congress in February.

“It is already clear to me that achieving significant additional budget savings, without unacceptable risk to national security, will require not just tweaking or chipping away at existing structures and practices, but if necessary, fashioning entirely new ones that better reflect 21st century realities,” the secretary said, noting that Congress has a role to play in this.

In the past, modest reforms to personnel and benefits -- and moves to reduce infrastructure and restructure defense acquisitions -- met “fierce political resistance and were not implemented,” Hagel said.

“We are now in a different fiscal environment,” he added, “dealing with new realities that will force us to more fully confront these tough and painful choices and to make the reforms we need to make to put this department on a path to sustain our military strength for the 21st century.”

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2. Secretary Kerry on a 21st-Century Pacific Partnership (04-15-2013)

*Secretary of State John Kerry On a 21st Century Pacific Partnership, Monday, April 15, 2013
Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan*

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you very, very much. Thank you very much, President Mishima, for a generous introduction. It's a great privilege for me to be here. Thank you. And thank you all for coming to share some thoughts this morning.

I understand that Tokyo Tech has been referred to as Japan's M.I.T. So even halfway around the world from Boston, I feel very much at home, and thank you. (Applause.) I hate to tell you, but it's probably that familiar feeling of knowing there isn't a chance in the world that I could have gotten admitted here. (Laughter.)

But anyway, I want to thank the distinguished members of the Diet who have joined us here this morning. I'm very honored to be joined by members of the Japan-U.S. Parliamentary Friendship League, including Chairman Nakasone and also Chief Secretary Kosaka, as well as New Komeito Party Leader Yamaguchi. I appreciate your being here very much. Thank you for the work you do to promote parliamentary exchanges that deepen the bond between our countries.

I also want to recognize leaders of the American business community who are here today, including Larry Bates of the American Chamber of Commerce -- Chamber of Commerce here in Japan, obviously, and Charles Lake of the U.S.-Japan Business Council. And I want to say particularly hello and congratulations for the job well done to my friend, the ambassador, John Roos, who I think has been a good leader during a difficult time here.

So we begin by allowing me to say how much of a pleasure it is for me to be back here in Japan. I have been here before, and I am reminded that you all have been through some difficult periods of time here. Our friendship is essential to peace in the region, and America is very grateful for the strength of our relationship.

I was reminded at the Embassy yesterday that I actually have some family connections here. A long time ago, my grandfather's cousin William Cameron Forbes served as the ambassador here in Tokyo, and today I have a cousin working here on the TOMODACHI program while her husband helps to defend Japan as a Navy aviator based at Atsugi.

So I really feel like I have personal connections to Japan, past and present, and I'm among family when I visit here. That makes it even more meaningful to be here today to share some thoughts with you about America's vision for the Asia Pacific.

Some people might be skeptical of America's commitment to this region. Well, let me be clear: President Obama made a smart and a strategic commitment to rebalance our interests and investments in Asia. My commitment to you is that as a Pacific nation that takes our Pacific partnership seriously, we will continue to build on our active and enduring presence.

I want you to know that right now while I'm here, back in Washington right now, Americans are enjoying the blooming of the sakura, the flowering cherry trees you so generously gave us 101 years ago. And I hope that if you haven't seen them in person, you could at least have been able to see photographs, the beautiful ribbon of color that surrounds our memorial to America's third President, Thomas Jefferson, who also happened to be our first Secretary of State. I can't tell you

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how beautiful those trees are. As a senator, I've gone down there many times to see them, and those trees are an enduring and deeply loved symbol of the great friendship between our two nations.

We are now very happy to be reciprocating by planting thousands of American dogwood trees across Japan as a token of the Friendship Blossoms program my predecessor, Secretary Clinton, began last year. So we have a special relationship, my friends.

Decades after our modern partnership rose from the ashes of war, this relationship has matured into one of the strongest on earth. Our alliance has underwritten the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Asia Pacific. Ours is a global partnership, based on common values, with a strong bilateral security alliance and common approaches to regional and to global challenges. As Prime Minister Abe said in Washington, no one should ever doubt the strength of our remarkable alliance.

Today I come here to reiterate, on behalf of all Americans, our continued commitment is to stand with the people of Japan in preventing conflict and ensuring safety and security, especially as you continue the difficult and sometimes dangerous work of recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake. As you say here: *nana korobi ya oki*; fall down seven times, get up eight. So that is exactly what you have done, and we admire the strength of the Japanese people as you undertake this difficult task of rebuilding.

The past few generations have produced an extraordinary period of prosperity in Asia. It has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty across the entire region and it has fostered dynamic, innovative economies that today are fueling global growth. Today, it is fair to say that Asia is quite simply the world's most dynamic region.

Equally as important, Asia is showing the world what can happen when you look forward. That's a lesson that I learned from a colleague that I came to respect immensely, Senator Dan Inouye. Some of you may have known him personally, remember him well. He was a special friend of Japan. He was the first Japanese-American elected to the United States Senate. But before that, despite the incredible injustices he endured in his own country, Dan volunteered to fight for his nation, losing his arm in World War II. In the three decades that I had the honor to work with Dan, I came to know a quiet optimist who always looked ahead, who was never a prisoner of the past. He was informed by the past, but never locked by it. And there's a lesson for all of us in his life and in his wisdom.

Throughout Asia, I have now seen that very same spirit firsthand, people overcoming conflicts that seem to be locked in time. Indeed, much of my work personally over 29 years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was about trying to resolve the lingering questions of the 20th century.

In the Philippines I worked with people who struggled to shake free the yoke of dictatorship and who fought for the fullness of democracy. I will never forget being in Manila during elections, seeing women come out of the voting booth with tears in their eyes, knowing that they now had the power to change their own country for the better and to buy a different future.

In Burma I met Aung Sung Sui Kyi in the very home in which she was imprisoned for nearly two decades for the simple crime of speaking her mind. Today, President Thein Sein and a resurgent parliament, one that incredibly includes former military officers working alongside Aung Sung Sui Kyi. They together have launched a journey toward democracy that was unthinkable just two years ago.

I was also deeply engaged in and witness to this same work in Vietnam. Decades after the war had left the battlefield, it still lived on in the hearts and in the minds of so many. Vietnam faced an embargo and an absence of true peace. But our two countries reached out and found the will to try to move forward, to find answers to important questions about prisoners of war and missing servicemen, and to move beyond the emotions in order to normalize relations. Our evolving relationship today is about the future, including the latest U.S.-Vietnam human rights dialogue that we held in Hanoi last Friday. Unimaginable not so long ago.

But still we all know, everybody understands some of the challenges of the last century have survived into the 21st century: the pursuit of nuclear weapons, maritime disputes, climate change. They all threaten stability. We have a choice. We can either stand still and see them as obstacles, or we can join together and move forward and see them as opportunities.

I believe and President Obama believes that we have a duty to make sure that we learn the lessons of a century in which so many lives and so many years were lost to war. We have a duty to look ahead and define a path toward progress in the Asia-Pacific. And that means making the most of this opportunity.

Now you have all heard, I know – and I say this without presumption that we're proud of it – you've all heard of the American Dream. It is embodied by no one more than by Barack Obama. Now Beijing's new leader has introduced what he calls a "China Dream." Today I'd like to speak with you about our opportunity in this increasingly global age to design and define our dream for the Pacific region, one in which nations and people forge a partnership that shapes our shared future.

President Obama said right here in this very city in the first year of his presidency, that the Pacific Ocean doesn't separate us so much as it connects us. I feel the same way about our shared principles and values, which bring us closer, closer together than we often imagine.

Quite simply, people everywhere share the same values, share the same universal values, and they resonate in every single human heart. Those values don't belong to any one country. They don't belong to a party. They don't belong to one leader. They don't belong to an ideology. And any leader who tries to suppress those values will find that they resist even the worst oppression.

And we see these values come to life every day. You see it in the hard work of a parent who struggles to give a child a good education, you see it in the dignity that comes with a decent job, you see it in the common desire to live in a safe neighborhood and a secure nation, you see it in the demand that leaders protect the rights of people and be responsive to our needs and aspirations. Those are the things that connect all of us no matter what nationality or country we live in.

Our job, all of us, as governments and as citizens, is to keep these universal values at the forefront of our international efforts so that they guide leaders at all levels in all countries, so that they help break down the resistance to change, so that they illuminate a beacon for people everywhere. And these shared values I respectfully say to you today should become the foundation of a new era of collaboration guided by clear rules of the road.

Our Pacific Dream is to translate our strongest values into an unprecedented security, economic, and social cooperation. We can break new ground in how we keep countries safe, help economies to mature, create new jobs and embrace partnerships for the future. And we can do it while empowering people to make these choices for themselves. We can turn our potential and our promise into widespread prosperity and opportunity, and in doing so, we can pass the test by which every generation is judged.

Now I'm not speaking about a static set of commandments. I'm talking about a mutual recognition that we are all in this together, *otagai-sama* – (laughter) – and a conversation that begins with the realization that cooperation can benefit us all. It is increasingly clear that what happens around the Pacific matters around the rest of the world now more than ever before. After all, this region is home to both enormous opportunities and enormous challenges at the same time, and how we handle them together will be felt for a long time everywhere in the world.

So to make our shared vision a reality for the region and to ensure that Asia contributes to global peace and prosperity, together I submit to you that we need to organize ourselves around four principles: strong growth, fair growth, smart growth, and just growth. Let me talk about that for a moment.

First, the successful region we can build as partners must be stable, peaceful and a contributor to global security. The presence of the United States in the Asia Pacific and our network of alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, these have already formed a fundamental platform. But many challenges remain, and the most immediate among them, as we all know, is North Korea.

In the last few days I have consulted closely with the leaders of the Republic of Korea and China and with your Foreign Minister, and I will speak again today with Prime Minister Abe. One thing is certain: We are united. There can be no confusion on this point. 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. The United States remains open to authentic and credible negotiations on denuclearization, but the burden is on Pyongyang. North Korea must take meaningful steps to show that it will honor commitments it has already made, and it has to observe laws and the norms of international behavior.

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 states bucking the trend of history and common sense. The world does not need more potential for war. And so we will stand together, and we welcome China's strong statement of its commitment two days ago to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Moving forward together means it is time also to put long-festering territorial pursuits behind us. The stakes are far too high and the global economy is too fragile for anyone to allow these inherited problems to divide the region and to enflame it. Unilateral action and the failure of diplomacy would carry too great a cost, so we need to follow the example of the students at this school, think creatively and innovatively, and work together to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to these differences.

And moving forward also means that people must be free from the fear of human trafficking, narcotics, and other transnational threats like cyber attacks. Some of the most serious cyber threats to businesses emanate from this region, and they threaten the entire global economy. That is precisely why we have established a cyber working group with Japan and another with China in order to ensure that the Asia Pacific will be part of the solution.

Working cooperatively and proactively to peacefully resolve these issues I know will provide the security this region needs to build the Pacific Dream.

Our second shared challenge is ensuring Pacific economies create prosperity in marketplaces that are fair, meaning that they are open, transparent, and accountable. The collaborative region that I envision must enjoy sustainable economies, free trade, fast growth, but it must offer every nation, big and small, a seat at the table and a clear sense of what everybody's responsibilities are.

Japan is America's fourth-largest export market, and the nearly 300 billion trade and investment relationships that our workers have spent decades building is especially critical in an interdependent world. Last week, the United States and Japan reached an important bilateral agreement that marks a significant step toward Japan joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade negotiations. I can't tell you, this is really an exciting opportunity, a great opportunity for Japan and for the region and for the world. With Japan onboard, this trade agreement would represent 40 percent of global GDP. And as we continue to work together through the next steps, I assure you the United States and its TPP partners are committed to having Japan join us at the negotiating table as soon as possible.

But we need to do more to make this vision real. Like any profitable enterprise, growth requires investment, investment in the neighborhood and investment beyond. Japan knows this, and I think can be very, very proud of the extremely high standard that it has set with its contributions to development and international assistance.

In the United States, we share this tradition of trying to help people throughout the world to help themselves. Your neighbor South Korea is a case in point. On Friday, I met with business leaders in Seoul and saw the extraordinary economic gains that they have made. It's remarkable in their own right, but I've got to tell you, it's even more remarkable when you just consider that a few decades ago, South Korea was an aid recipient of the United States. Today, that nation is one of the most modern and advanced economies, and it gives aid to other countries. That's what this kind of partnership means. That's how you build a future, believing in the possibilities of investment and in the possibilities of other people coming to the table.

Like foreign aid investments, education – need I say it here at this famous university – education yields enormous dividends on relatively small down payments, and international educational exchanges pay some of the best social dividends. Only by immersing ourselves in each other's languages and cultures can we truly understand each other and build partnerships. Tokyo Tech President Mishima understood that when he went to study in California. And we were talking about his years at Berkley just before I came out here. Our Fulbright scholars understand this around the world. So do the hundreds of international students who came to Tokyo to pursue their degrees at this prestigious university.

And I invite all of you at Tokyo Tech to reverse the troubling trend of fewer Japanese students studying in the United States. Come and learn in our universities. The value of educational exchanges can never be underestimated. It is so important to us, and the more of these exchanges that there are, the faster our vision can become a reality. I can't tell you how many foreign ministers I have met and finance ministers and prime ministers around the world who proudly tell me of the years they spent in the United States learning at one of our universities. And it creates an understanding that helps us build this kind of common enterprise.

Yesterday I saw this actually in some of your contemporaries, those of you who are students here, because I met with a bunch of students from the TOMODACHI exchange initiative. And this is a groundbreaking public-private partnership. It was started by Ambassador Roos, and it invests in the next generation of Japanese and American leaders. I found these students exciting, interesting to listen to, inspiring. They were curious, and they were caring about our shared future, and they were engaged in the issues of the world. Most important, as one young Filipino-American studying in

Tokyo said to me yesterday, they aren't bound or burdened by the past. Her generation, she said, is a clean slate, looking outward and forward, and I think we would do well to follow that example.

Now I said we need to grow smart, too. As the world's biggest consumers of energy and the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, Pacific nations – and that includes us – have an enormous responsibility to lead a transformation that can save lives and property and create jobs at the same time. My friends, I cannot say this to you more seriously. I cannot emphasize it enough. This is not a choice. This is something we have to do together, because climate change grows more and more serious and threatening and challenging by the day, and it is one of the most obvious shared challenges on the face of this planet.

People on the streets of Beijing – you've been hearing from them this last few years – they want to breathe clean air just as much as people on the streets of Tokyo or the streets of Boston do. Farmers in India and Indonesia, they lose sleep over droughts just as much as farmers in Indiana do. So this is not a local problem. And I'll tell you in a more collaborative Asia Pacific, I am absolutely confident we will find the solutions, we will push the curve of discovery, and we can do it without jeopardizing our economies. We will grow our economies.

Every – the most important thing to remember about this is the solution to climate change is not some pie-in-the-sky, complicated, hard-to-find policy. Energy policy is the solution to climate change. It's staring us in the face, and the energy market is a \$6 trillion market now with 4 billion users today, growing to 9 billion users in the course of this century. That is the biggest market of all markets of all time, folks.

And a far-sighted and a sure-footed approach to energy, including exploring new kinds of energy, will do extraordinary things for business, and it will mean sustainable growth for the long term. So to grow smart, we have to be willing to try new things.

I want you to know that we greatly appreciate Japan's partnership as we begin to realize the mutual benefits of natural gas and what that can offer to both of our economies and to the world. We also appreciate China's exploding investments into clean and alternative and renewable energies. A couple of nights ago, I stood in Beijing alongside U.S. and Chinese companies that are working together on green technologies that can benefit the environment and markets all over the world. And just think, 10 years ago, Chinese companies were investing \$1 million in energy projects in the United States. Last year, that number was \$9 billion. That's the future, and we all need to grasp it.

And I also want to say we not only appreciate the work that Tokyo Tech is doing, but we admire you for having set the gold standard for green living, including the Environmental Energy Innovation Building that you opened on this campus last year, and it's covered in solar panels and generates almost all of the energy that it consumes. That's the future. And in the conversion of our buildings, there are millions of jobs to be created, new products to be sold.

It just underscores something else, too. We can learn a lot from each other. It takes the average Japanese household about three years to use as much energy as an American household uses in just one year. We have to do better. And with President Obama's leadership we are doing better than ever before to combat climate change, but we know we need smarter energy policies to live up to the responsibility before us and in order to contribute to this critical, collaborative effort.

Finally, we must use our Pacific partnership to build a region whose people can enjoy the full benefits of democracy, the rule of law, universal human rights, including the freedom of expression, freedom of association, and peaceful assembly, freedom of religion, conscience and belief. Human

rights are quite simply are the foundation for a free and an open society. And history shows us that countries whose policies respect and reflect these rights are far more likely to be more peaceful and more prosperous, far more effective at tapping the talents of their people, far more capable of being innovative and moving rapidly and innovatively in the marketplace, and they are better long-term partners.

Now I will say to you we are well aware of all the challenges that remain. But the truth is the trend lines in the Asia Pacific are heading in the right direction, the direction of reform and responsive government. And countries that have succeeded are now beginning to serve – excuse me – are now beginning to serve as examples to other countries. Just look at Mongolia, a young democracy. It's about to host a meeting of the Community of Democracies in its own capital, an event that you would have thought was impossible just 10 years ago. Indonesia, which embraced democracy after decades of dictatorship, and now reaches out to the region through its own Bali Democracy Forum.

The transformations that the world has witnessed in those countries, and in Japan and South Korea, or what I saw in the Philippines and that is now beginning in Burma, are powerful simply because they grew from within. Blood and battle are not the only catalysts of change. Other countries can similarly choose to replicate the transitions of their neighbors. And they can do so peacefully, inspire the world, and join us in the Pacific community we're building for the future.

In each of these efforts – growing strong, growing fair, growing smart and growing just – China is, of course, a critical partner.

As I told President Xi this weekend, the United States and the world benefit from a stable and prosperous China that assumes the responsibilities of a great power, a China that respects the will of its people, a China that plays a key role in world affairs, but that also plays by the rules. We all have a stake in China's success, just as China has a stake in ours.

I'm pleased to tell you that we have had more high-level engagement and dialogue with China than ever before, and I believe it is constructive and productive. I'm pleased to say we enjoy unprecedented people-to-people ties, and I hope that that will grow stronger. And even as we are clear-eyed about our differences – and we will be, and there are differences – we are committed to building a comprehensive and a cooperative partnership that allows us to work together in mutual respect.

Just imagine – imagine how different today's challenges can look tomorrow if we embrace this concept of a dream, if we go from job growth to climate change to pandemic disease to the proliferation of dangerous weapons and with all of us acting as full and constructive partners, we tame the worst elements of those challenges. We simply must work together.

Half a century ago, President John F. Kennedy urged Americans to look intercontinentally instead of inwardly, to bridge oceans with purposeful partnerships. Well, he said we must “look outward to cooperate with all nations in meeting their common concerns.” Today I am here to say that we are just as committed as we became then to looking outward. We're still committed to an Asia-Pacific partnership that does the same, and we are still committed to cooperating with all nations in meeting our common concerns.

To ensure these partnerships succeed, we need to reach agreement on the real rules of the road through both bilateral discussions as well as through multilateral institutions where all voices can be heard equally. Forums like ASEAN, the East Asia Summit, APEC, the Pacific Islands Forum, they all provide important institutional architecture that helps us creatively solve global problems. And I

personally look forward to attending the ASEAN Regional Forum in June, and am optimistic we can agree on tangible steps to enhance security and stability in the region.

All of our partners – all of them have a role to play in supporting regional peace and prosperity. And that includes trying to ultimately make a partner out of North Korea and make it part (inaudible). India, the world's largest democracy and a nation with a booming young population, is building an Indo-Pacific economic corridor that can promote development, trade, and security in a crucial part of the world. And we strongly believe that our cooperation with our friends in Europe and the West enriches our effort in the East. They are not separate. They are complementary.

Ladies and gentlemen, tackling the challenges that I've discussed today requires a region-wide partnership that harnesses the dynamism, the growth, the energy, the resources, the creativity, the dreams of all of our people. We must learn from each other and enrich the common knowledge base that drives global security for growth and progress.

I mentioned Thomas Jefferson earlier. He was not only America's first Secretary of State and third President, as I said, he was also was a scientist and the founder of a prestigious university like yours. So he would no doubt have strongly supported the innovative mission of Tokyo Tech. And when he died, he didn't want President and Secretary of State, all those things on his tombstone. He just wanted Founder of the University of Virginia. Jefferson once spoke about the beauty of lighting one's candle with another person's candle. And he said that when that happens, both people gain light, and none loses any. Jefferson understood long ago the folly of zero-sum thinking. He appreciated the contagious quality of shared knowledge.

Japan and the United States are no strangers to this kind of cooperation, and that is the story I want to leave you with today.

If you take a map of the United States and drop a pencil right in the middle of it, you would point to a tiny, little town called Greensburg, Kansas. In 2007, a tornado wider than the town itself flattened 95 percent of it; homes, schools, stores just disappeared. You could fit nearly the entire remaining population right here in this room.

But the people in Kansas have the same DNA that you do, that all of us do. They share the same instinct to rebuild better than before. So those who stayed started to create a green city that lives up to its name, Greensburg. And now Greensburg is rising from the rubble of disaster, generating its power from wind turbines and constructing energy efficient buildings. It gets better.

Then, a few months ago, community leaders from towns that were destroyed by the tragedy in Tohoku traveled to Greensburg to learn how they did it. And the communities formed a bond of mutual understanding, *kizuna*, and through their similar experiences, they went to work. And the people of Tohoku came back here inspired to respond the same way Greensburg had, to rebuild better, smarter, greener, focused firmly on the road ahead.

I know the story is not going to end there. In time, America and others will learn from how you rebuild Tohoku, and we will all continue to share light from one candle to another.

That's the promise of the Asia Pacific, a region that comes together to make its partners better, knowing there is more that unites us than divides us; a region built for the future, not bound to the past, that answers danger and difficulty with courage and collaboration, that knows that what happens over there matters over here, and what happens here matters over there.

Though our journey may sometimes seem a million miles long, my friends, it is fully within our power to choose how we take our next step. We can only realize the promise of this Pacific Dream if we choose to take that step together, building a partnership that grows strong and fair and smart and just. And if we achieve that together, we will have lived up to our responsibilities for future generations. Thank you very, very much. (Applause.)

3. Peaceful, Stable Korean Peninsula Goal for U.S., Asian Partners (04-15-2013)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

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."

4. U.S. Supports Justice Reform in Afghanistan, South Sudan (04-12-2013)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is providing the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) with \$59 million to reform the Afghan justice sector and \$2.5 million to upgrade the justice sector of South Sudan, the newest country in Africa.

Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William Brownfield provided the funding figures April 11 when he participated in a conference in Washington on justice sector reforms in transitioning countries.

The assistant secretary was highlighting the State Department's "growing partnership" with IDLO, which he described as "the only international organization specifically dedicated to rule of law capacity building."

The United States channels \$47 million to fund the IDLO's work of overall training for the Afghan justice sector and another \$12 million for a separate IDLO program to "provide support and training for prosecution of crimes against women," Brownfield said. He added that the IDLO is the best organization to conduct these programs in Afghanistan at this time.

With regard to South Sudan, Brownfield said the United States contributes nearly \$2.5 million to fund the IDLO's work of establishing a judicial training institute as well as coordinating overall international legal assistance. South Sudan became an independent country on July 9, 2011.

Brownfield said that the IDLO carries out its mission in dangerous circumstances that put its staffers and trainees at risk, such as a suicide bomber attack on a courthouse in the western Afghan city of Farah April 3 that left at least 10 people dead. "Many of these Afghans were in that building at that time as students of an IDLO program," he said.

"As we support IDLO, as we ask them to perform these missions in some of the world's most difficult and dangerous places, let us not forget that we are putting them, to a certain extent, in harm's way and support them when they come under difficult situations," Brownfield said.

The Rome-based IDLO was established in 1983 and has worked with more than 20,000 legal professionals in 175 countries, according to its website.

5. Obama and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon After Their Meeting (04-11-2013)

Remarks by President Obama and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon after meeting

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, it is wonderful to have the opportunity to welcome my good friend, Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, to the Oval Office. He and I consult quite frequently and in various multilateral settings, but this has been a useful opportunity for us to talk more specifically about how the United States and the United Nations can work together.

Let me first of all say that I think I speak for world leaders in a wide variety of countries when I say that the Secretary General has shown outstanding leadership during what has been one of the most challenging and turbulent times in international affairs. I think he's fair-minded. I think he has shown a willingness to tackle tough issues and to speak hard truths, and I very much appreciate personally the work that he's done.

Sometimes people ask why the United States is so devoted to the United Nations, and, obviously, beyond the fact that we helped set up the United Nations, what was true 60, 70 years ago is still true today. And that is that without a forum for discussion, negotiation, and diplomacy, the world is a worse place, and it is very much in the United States' interests to ensure that international norms, rules of the road, and humanitarian norms are observed. And the United Nations gives us a critical opportunity to try to prevent conflict, create peace, maintain stability -- all of which ultimately is good for America's security and America's prosperity.

We discussed a wide range of issues during this meeting. We started with Syria, where obviously the humanitarian crisis has gotten worse. And Secretary General Ban and I shared the view that we are at a critical juncture; that it is important for us to bring about an effective political transition that would respect the rights of all Syrians; and that, in the interim, it's important for us to try to eliminate some of the carnage that's been taking place directed at civilians and non-combatants.

And so we'll be strategizing about how the United Nations -- or the United States -- which is the largest donor to the humanitarian assistance in Syria, and is also a strong supporter of the more moderate elements of the Syrian Opposition -- can work together with the United Nations to bring about if not a full resolution to the crisis, at least an improvement for the people of Syria and lay the foundation for a kind of political transition that is necessary.

We had an opportunity to discuss North Korea, where the Secretary General obviously has an important political interest but also a personal interest as a native of the Republic of Korea. And we both agree that now is the time for North Korea to end the kind of belligerent approach that they've been taking, and to try to lower temperatures -- nobody wants to see a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. But it's important for North Korea, like every other country in the world, to observe the basic rules and norms that are set forth, including a wide variety of U.N. resolutions that have passed. And we will continue to try to work to resolve some of those issues diplomatically, even as I indicated to the Secretary General that the United States will take all necessary steps to protect its people and to meet our obligations under our alliances in the region.

We talked about Middle East peace, where there is at least a window of opportunity for both Israelis and Palestinians to get back to the peace table. And we explored how the United States, as a strong friend of Israel and a supporter of a Palestinian state, can work with the United Nations and other multilateral bodies to try to move that process forward.

And we also had an opportunity to talk more broadly about an issue that affects every country, and that is climate change. And I appreciate very much the Secretary General's leadership on that front.

The last point I'd make is that the Secretary General has actually shown significant progress in U.N. reform -- making the institution more efficient, more effective. I think the Secretary General would be the first to acknowledge that there is more work to do on that front, but he is making an earnest effort in making progress. And we very much appreciate that and encourage that to continue, because we think we need a strong, healthy United Nations, but at a time when all the member countries are under severe fiscal constraints, we want to make sure, obviously, that the United Nations is operating as efficiently as possible.

So, overall, I found it to be a very useful conversation, and I want to thank, once again, the Secretary General for his leadership. The Secretary General has been quoted as saying that there is no opt-out clause to the great challenges that we face around the world, and I assured him that the United States of America, as the largest economy and the most powerful military in the world, has no intention of opting out any time soon.

We have a deep interest in making sure that the United Nations and the various international institutions that we have are functioning effectively, because when they do, the United States does well and all its partner countries do well. And so I'm looking forward to continuing to support his efforts in any way that I can.

Thank you very much.

SECRETARY GENERAL BAN: Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. President. I really appreciate President Obama for inviting me to the Oval Office, and I really appreciate your global leadership to make this world more peaceful, more prosperous, and where all human rights are protected and respected.

The United Nations and the United States share common goals in peace and security, human rights and development. In that regard, I really appreciate such a strong leadership and cooperation and support of the U.S. government and President Obama. You and the American people care about the world of justice, freedom, and opportunity for all. I am very confident that the partnership between the United Nations and the United States is now making very solid foundation and strong and stronger, and I count on your continuing support on that.

As President Obama has just explained in detailed manner, I do not have much to add to all the subjects, but if I may just say a few words from my own perspective as the Secretary General. On Syria, this is the most troubling situation, where all the leaders of the world should really take much more strengthened leadership on. I have asked President Obama to demonstrate and exercise his stronger leadership in working together with the key partners of the Security Council.

As the Secretary General, I have been working very closely with Joint Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, and I will continue to do that. Unfortunately, this crisis, having entered a third year, in the absence of a political solution, we have seen well over 70,000 people be killed, and more than 50 percent of schools, hospitals, and all infrastructures have been destroyed. More than 6 million people have been internally displaced, and we have 1.3 million refugees around the neighboring countries of Syria. This continuing military struggle as well as intensifying this sectarian war -- make us really worried that unless we stop this violence, this whole Syrian society may be destroyed. We have been mobilizing all possible humanitarian assistance, and I really appreciate President Obama and his government's very generous support on this humanitarian assistance.

On chemical weapons investigation, it's regrettable that the Syrian government has rejected my offer to engage in an investigation. This is my authority in accordance with the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. I sincerely hope that the Syrian government will allow so that this investigation team will be able to conduct investigation, as requested by them. And I have received requests from other member states. That's why I have already assembled very experienced experts as a team. They are now ready. They can be deployed any time soon. So this is my original plan.

On the situation in and around the Korean Peninsula, I am deeply concerned, and we share such a grave concern together on these continuing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. I urge the DPRK authorities to refrain from making any further provocative (inaudible) and rhetoric. This is not helpful. And I really highly commended President Obama's firm, principled, but measured response in close consultation with the Republic of Korea government and with strong engagement with neighboring countries like China.

We hope that more of the countries, including China, who may have influence over North Korea, can exercise their leadership and influence so that this situation will be resolved peacefully. First and foremost, tension levels must come down. North Korea should not confront the international community as they are now doing. I hope that concerned parties, including the United States, China, the Republic of Korea, and Russia, and Japan will continue to work together on this matter.

On Middle East, I really appreciate President Obama's initiative to visit the region. We need to do more of our efforts to fully utilize the generated momentum by President Obama's visit so that a two-state solution can be successfully implemented as soon as possible.

On climate change, I intend to work very closely with the member states so that the legally binding global treaty can be achieved by the end of 2015. And for that possible -- to facilitate this process, I intend to convene a leaders meeting sometime next year. I have invited President Obama. I invited him to play a very important leadership role for humanity.

As far as the United Nations reform is concerned, we will continue to make this organization more effective, efficient, accountable, and more trustworthy. I thank you for your leadership.

6. U.S. Supports Negotiated Political Solution in Syria (04-11-2013)

Washington — The Obama administration believes that the best end to the crisis in Syria will come about through a negotiated political solution between the Syrian opposition and members of the government “without blood on their hands” to form a mutually agreeable transitional government to guide the country to elections.

In her prepared testimony to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 11, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Beth Jones said it is currently not in the interests of the United States or the Syrian people to provide opponents to Bashar al-Assad's regime with lethal support.

“The judgments we make must pass the test of making the situation better for the Syrian people and must also take into account the long-term human, financial and political costs for us, Syria and the region,” she said.

“Our assistance to the Syrian opposition, at the national and local levels, from local councils in liberated areas to civil society, is enabling these groups to plan for the future while providing essential services and extending the rule of law inside liberated areas of Syria now,” Jones said.

Jones said the Assad regime bears the “overwhelming responsibility” for the suffering of the Syrian people and the destruction of their country. She said at least 70,000 Syrians have been killed since the beginning of the two-year-old crisis, with 3 million to 4 million displaced from their homes and at least 1.3 million Syrians living outside the country as refugees.

She warned that the number of displaced and refugees “could double or even triple by the end of 2013,” which “would amount to nearly one-third of Syria’s population.”

The United States is giving nearly \$385 million in humanitarian assistance inside Syria and for refugees, to provide them with emergency medical care and supplies, blankets, food, clean water and shelter.

“We are sending flour to 50 bakeries in Aleppo and sponsoring food and sanitation projects for the desperate families in Atmeh refugee camp. But this is not enough to meet the overwhelming need,” Jones said. She urged countries to fulfill pledges made at a January 30 donors conference, where more than \$1.5 billion was promised to help Syrians in need.

As the result of economic sanctions imposed by the United States, the Arab League, the European Union and others, the Assad regime’s finances “have never been so weak,” and it “has never been so isolated in the world community,” she said.

“With each passing day, the regime’s grip on power weakens. Territory slips from its grasp, and, in a growing number of towns and villages, a new Syria is being born. The regime of Bashar al-Assad must and will go. The sooner he steps aside, the better for all Syrians,” she said.

In his prepared remarks to the committee, Treasury Department Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Daniel Glaser said U.S. sanctions have frozen close to \$80 million of the Assad regime’s funds in the United States and have blocked nearly 100 individuals and entities identified as key regime supporters from the U.S. financial system, as well as disrupting their access to financial services beyond the United States.

Sanctions “are not a silver bullet in ending the Assad regime’s vicious war on its own people,” but they are playing an important role within the broader international strategy, he said.

“While the U.S. government has implemented our own robust set of measures, it is important that we continue working with our partners around the world to multilateralize the effort to pressure the Assad regime. Ideally, such efforts would start at the United Nations,” he said.

Glaser also said the Obama administration has been working with the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to prepare the groundwork for lifting sanctions once the Assad regime steps aside. This is aimed at helping facilitate the country’s economic recovery, he added.

“We will need to be ready both to help the legitimate new authorities rebuild the country and constrain those actors that either profit from continued bloodshed, like Iran and Hizballah, or thrive on instability, like the al-Nusrah Front,” he said.

U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford said the Syrian people themselves are starting to plan for a political transition. The country’s future, Ford said, will depend on its ability to build a tolerant society that respects the dignity and rights of its many sectarian and ethnic communities.

“To effectively make the transition beyond the Assad regime, the opposition will need a vision for a pluralistic Syria that abides by the rule of law, subordinates the military to civilian authority, and guarantees the rights of all of its citizens while preserving continuity of the state and its institutions,” Ford said in his prepared remarks.

[U.S. Officials at Senate Hearing on U.S. Policy toward Syria](#) (04-12-2013)

7. Kerry, Mideast Leaders Launch Business Initiative for West Bank (04-09-2013)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — An initiative forged by Secretary of State John Kerry and Israeli and Palestinian leaders aims to bring investment and commerce to the West Bank while creating conditions favorable to the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The agreement to stimulate the West Bank economy emerged from talks with Israeli President Shimon Peres, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in Jerusalem and Ramallah, West Bank, April 7–9, Kerry said.

The secretary of state said business expansion and private sector investment in the West Bank will improve the livelihoods of the people living there as well as the security of the people of Israel. The Obama administration will bring the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the Export-Import Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the trade partnership agency into the effort, along with international financial institutions, he said.

“We are going to engage in new efforts, very specific efforts, to promote economic development and to remove some of the bottlenecks and barriers that exist with respect to commerce in the West Bank,” Kerry said. “Economic growth will help us be able to provide a climate ... in which people have greater confidence about moving forward.”

While visiting Turkey April 7, Kerry and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said Turkey is ready to play a strong role in the economic development of Palestinian Authority areas.

Kerry said the West Bank development initiative does not replace Israeli-Palestinian peace talks aimed at a two-state solution to conflict.

“It is not a substitute. The political track remains the primary focus,” Kerry said, adding that creating jobs and businesses in the Palestinian Authority areas will improve the climate for political talks.

“We intend to try to create the conditions for peace so that we can resume negotiations between the parties in a clear and precise, predetermined manner,” he said.

The secretary said that future peace talks must take into account Israel’s security concerns and Palestinians’ aspirations for statehood. He said that the United States cares deeply about the security of Israel and cooperates on an unprecedented level with Israel’s military and intelligence services.

The Israeli prime minister said he was determined not only to resume the peace process with the Palestinians but to make a serious effort to end this conflict once and for all. “We welcome any initiatives that you and others will bring forward in this regard,” Netanyahu said in a news conference with Kerry. “This is a real effort, and we look forward to advance in this effort with you.”

8. Kerry Sees Key Role for Turkey in Renewed Mideast Peace Process (04-08-2013)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry says the agreement between Turkey and Israel to restore normal diplomatic relations in March opens the door for Turkey to play an important role in a renewed Middle East peace process, specifically in the economic transformation of the West Bank and Gaza.

“Turkey and Israel are both vital allies of the United States. And we are hopeful that their agreement to restore normalization between their countries will actually help to open the door to greater cooperation,” Kerry said at a news conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in Istanbul April 7.

In March, President Obama arranged a three-way telephone conversation with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that resulted in a decision to restore full diplomatic ties that had been downgraded since 2010.

Kerry said Turkey can play a key role in the economic development of the West Bank and Gaza .

“The West Bank, Gaza together, both need to transform,” he said. “Turkey can be very helpful, perhaps, in transitioning that component of the process, as well as in helping to build on our efforts to transform the economics of the West Bank itself.”

“Turkey will provide all forms of support within her capabilities, and we will try to contribute to the solution” based on the 1967 borders, Davutoğlu said. “In Israel, in West Bank, and in Gaza, the living standards should be improved, and all of the embargoes should be eliminated once and for all.” He said “a prospective visit by the prime minister of Turkey to Gaza” stems from Turkey’s vision for a new Middle East based on democracy and economic interdependence.

Regarding Syria, Kerry praised Turkey for its role in helping Syrian refugees and keeping pressure on the regime of Bashar al-Assad to leave power.

“Turkey has also been incredibly generous to the refugees of this crisis, and they have taken them in by the thousands, kept their borders open, done everything possible to try to respond to that increasing humanitarian crisis. And the United States and Turkey will continue cooperating towards the shared goal of a peaceful transition within Syria,” Kerry said.

The secretary paid homage to Turkey’s efforts to peacefully end its struggle with the Kurdish separatist group, PKK.

“Difficult steps lie ahead, but the foreign minister and I are confident that a lasting peace will improve the lives of all of Turkey’s citizens,” he said.

He urged the Turkish government, in its plans to redraft the constitution, to keep the protection of universal rights and basic freedoms at the center of the process.
