

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

*A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy*

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January 11, 2010

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## Secretary Clinton's Asia-Pacific Trip Will Focus on Security Issues

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — During a stop in Hawaii that is part of a broader trip to the Asia-Pacific region, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is expected to discuss with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada the future of a U.S. military base on the island of Okinawa, along with other pressing regional security issues, says Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell.

"I would expect this to be a very deep and extensive interaction," Campbell said during a pre-trip briefing with reporters at the Washington Foreign Press Center January 7. "We will talk about the security alliance. We will talk about Okinawa and Futenma [Marine Corps Air Station]."

Campbell, who is the assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said the talks will include new developments on the Korean Peninsula and North Korea, recent engagement with China, Iran's nuclear weapons development program, Burma and related security issues.

Clinton is traveling in the Asia-Pacific region January 12-19. Her trip will include a visit to Hawaii, where she will make a major address on U.S. policies for the Asia-Pacific region; Papua New Guinea, to discuss issues affecting Pacific island nations; and Australia and New Zealand, where she will be joined by Defense Secretary Robert Gates to discuss specific security issues. Australia and New Zealand have contributed military forces to operations in Afghanistan.

### MARINE BASE RELOCATION

The United States and Japan have agreed to set up a high-level working group to focus on implementation of a 2006 agreement to relocate the U.S. Marine Air Station at Futenma on Okinawa. The air crews and aircraft would be relocated to expanded facilities at Camp Schwab, which is near Nago, a less populous area on Okinawa.

The Marine air station and most U.S. military facilities in Japan were established under the 1960 U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement. The Okinawa facilities account for approximately 65 percent of U.S. forces currently in Japan.

In addition to the air station agreement, the United States has agreed to move the Third Marine Expeditionary Force, which includes 8,000 Marines and their families, from Futenma to expanded facilities on Guam. Under the terms of the agreement, Japan agreed to pay \$6.09 billion of the estimated \$10.27 billion in costs associated with the

move, according to a U.S. Congressional Research Service report on U.S.-Japanese relations.

Campbell said Clinton and Okada will focus on what has been accomplished over the past 50 years in the joint security alliance, and also on where the alliance is going.

"This alliance for the United States and ... for Japan is indispensable, and we need to work closely to sustain its health and vitality moving forward," he said. The 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance is January 19.

### MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

Clinton will speak at the East-West Center in Honolulu January 12 on Asia-Pacific multilateral engagement with the United States.

"We've been working for a considerable period of time and involved for months in a deep process of consultations with our allies and friends in the Asian-Pacific region," Campbell said. "I think we've come to the conclusion that it's appropriate for the United States to step up and play a more active role in some of the institutional thinking and engagement in the region."

The process over the next couple of months, he added, is to deepen consultations and expand multilateral relations.

While in Honolulu, Clinton also will meet with officials of the U.S. Pacific Command to discuss regional security issues.

During the Australian and New Zealand portion of her trip, Clinton — along with Gates — will participate in the 25th Australia-New Zealand Ministerial Consultations to discuss global and regional security challenges, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said January 6.

The U.S. officials will meet January 17-19 with Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and Australian Defense Minister John Faulkner in Australia's capital, Canberra.

Clinton's Pacific trip will also include a stop in Papua New Guinea on January 14, where she will meet with officials as well as with local civil society leaders to discuss environmental protection and women's empowerment.

"She will have an opportunity to view some projects that are involved with sustaining one of the most diverse biological habitats on the planet," Campbell said.

## Increased Efforts for Mideast Peace in 2010, Secretary Clinton Says

*Secretary says there is "a hunger for a resolution of this matter"*

By Stephen Kaufman

Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton calls for "good faith negotiations" to be relaunched between Israel and the Palestinians to end their decades-long conflict based on the 1967 borders and mutually agreed land swaps, and says 2010 will be a "year of renewed commitment and increased effort" to reach that goal.

In remarks following a meeting with Jordan's minister of foreign affairs, Nasser Judeh, Clinton said the Obama administration is "absolutely committed" to working with all partners for a two-state solution.

That outcome "would rebuke the terrorists and the naysayers," give the Palestinian people "a legitimate state for their own aspirations," and give the Israelis "the security they deserve to have," she said.

"This negotiation is clearly about issues that most directly affect the Israelis and the Palestinians, but it is of great matter not just to the people of the region, not just to the Arab nations, but really to the entire world," she said. "There is a hunger for a resolution of this matter."

The elements of a final resolution are already known, she said, and involve recognized borders and security for both parties, and agreements on water rights, Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.

She said the United States and Jordan share concern over Jerusalem, which has seen recent Israeli building activities.

"The United States recognizes that Jerusalem is a deeply important issue for Israelis and Palestinians, for Jews, Muslims and Christians around the world. And we believe that it is possible to realize the aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians for Jerusalem, and safeguard its status as a symbol of the three great religions for all people," Clinton said.

Resolving borders and the question of Jerusalem will also resolve the issue of Israeli settlements. "I think we need to lift our sights. And instead of ... looking down at the trees, we need to look at the forest," she said.

The secretary also said the United States and Jordan share a common struggle against violent extremists, recalling the 2005 bombing of hotels in Amman. "This is a struggle that unites people of faith, people of peace, people of conscience everywhere," she said.

Foreign Minister Judeh said the United States, Jordan and "other like-minded countries" are "fully on board" in cooperation against terrorism.

As a target of extremist violence, Jordan has had to be "extremely effective in our pursuit of those who want to do harm to our country and to our citizens," he said. But he described Jordan's commitment and ongoing operations to respond to and prevent extremist attacks as humanitarian work "because in our pursuit of terrorists, we're saving humanity."

## Activists Make the Federal Deficit a Personal Issue

By Katherine Lewis

Special Correspondent

Washington — It's easy to understand grass-roots activists fighting against a hazardous waste dump in their town or pushing for lower property taxes. But becoming passionate about the federal budget deficit?

"It's very difficult to get it to be a top-tier issue," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a bipartisan, nonprofit group. "You're never going to get a Million Man March on the deficit."

MacGuineas is a member of the newly founded Peterson-Pew Commission on Budget Reform, a group of former members of Congress and congressional, administration and other fiscal specialists. In December 2009, the commission released a report calling for spending cuts and tax increases to reduce the country's dependence on debt.

Typically, grass-roots activism stems from personal experience — when someone has suffered hardship and wants to do something about the cause, according to Dana R. Fisher, an associate sociology professor at Columbia University. When it comes to the \$12 trillion national debt, it's difficult to even understand numbers that big, much less point to the effect on your own life, Fisher said.

But defying conventional wisdom, 8 percent of Americans named the national debt as the most important problem facing the country in a Gallup Poll in December 2009, up from 2 percent a year earlier and in line with 9 percent recorded in September 2009 — the highest level of concern over the deficit in a decade.

The national debt is the federal government's total indebtedness. It is calculated by adding up the current and previous budget deficits and the outstanding interest. The U.S. government borrows money to finance its debt by selling bonds and other securities to domestic and

foreign investors in the private and public sectors.

#### NEW ATTITUDE

What's motivating fiscal activism? For Avery Chope, 73, it was reaching a stage of life with more free time and a desire to serve others. But the San Francisco financial adviser didn't want to waste his years of experience in banking by serving meals to the homeless. So he contacted the Concord Coalition, an advocacy group focusing on reform of public pension and health care programs and fiscal responsibility.

"I told them ... given my background in finance, maybe I could contribute in some sense to the discussion," said Chope, who spearheaded a Concord advisory council for Northern California and visited Washington for a national conference in December 2009.

Not everybody shares a sense of crisis about social program costs and their effect on the budget deficits, though. In a December 2009 letter to the Washington Post newspaper, a group of financial and economic analysts called Project to Defend and Expand Social Security protested the use of "fiscal distress as a stalking horse to destroy social insurance."

The national debt amounts to about \$40,000 for each person in the United States, and interest costs consume nearly 10 percent of the federal budget. In fiscal year 2009, which ended September 30, 2009, the federal budget deficit reached \$1.4 trillion.

"We are burdening [the next generation] with something quite horrific," Chope said.

Large budget deficits drive up interest rates, discouraging private-sector investment. This slows the economy and threatens the living standard of future generations.

People who become active on the issue tend to share a sense of responsibility and concern for the well-being of the country, said Robert L. Bixby, executive director of the Concord Coalition. They "are concerned that we're letting down the future and that's not consistent with our American dream," Bixby said.

#### THE DEBT CLOCK IS TICKING

That's what motivated the late Seymour Durst to erect a clock in Times Square in New York City. The clock, now located on 6th Avenue, tracks the increasing national debt, explained Jordan Barowitz, a spokesman for the Durst Organization, a real estate company that has maintained the clock since 1989.

A number of factors have combined to drive attention to

debt, MacGuineas said. First was the deficit topping the symbolic \$1 trillion last year. Then the Chinese government expressed concern about unsustainable U.S. spending. Finally, initial signs of the economic recovery make it possible to shift attention from recovery to the deficit. "2010 is going to be the swing year," MacGuineas predicted.

For those in the trenches, it's important to see incremental progress, said Amy Showalter, a grass-roots influence consultant based in Cincinnati.

There's also a social aspect, Showalter said. Once people start recruiting other volunteers and going to rallies, it becomes a fun activity.

Kelvin Poon, a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania, never campaigned for anything before he launched Pound-It.org, a Web site aiming to raise awareness about the national debt.

Poon sprang into action when he learned that public health care and pension programs were projected to run into serious financial troubles before he even neared retirement. "It was kind of scary that no one was doing anything about it."

Pound-It.org held two events with speakers and organized a screening of I.O.U.S.A., a documentary about the impact of the national debt that, like the Concord Coalition, was funded by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation.

"Working on this project really changed my worldview," Poon said. "I'd never thought of going out to change things before this."

#### **New USAID Chief Sees U.S. Forging Deeper Partnerships Overseas**

By William Ide  
*VOA News*

The U.S. Agency for International Development has sworn in a new administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah, at a ceremony January 7 in Washington. In an exclusive interview with Voice of America, Shah talked about the Obama administration's plans to deepen its partnerships overseas and listen more to the countries the agency serves.

A 36-year-old medical doctor by training, Shah comes to USAID with expertise in agriculture. He previously served as the director of agricultural development with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and later in a top post at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

But, he says, the mission of USAID is his passion.

As a son of Indian immigrants, Shah says that he started visiting India and other parts of the world at a young age and saw firsthand the kind of extreme conditions of poverty and human suffering that exist across the globe. "The opportunity to join an agency that has as its core mission working on that problem, working in a way that it's respectful of the people who live in those environments and learns from them, is a great, great honor," he said.

As head of USAID, Shah says he plans to hire several hundred new development experts and individuals with technical expertise to expand the agency's work capacity.

He says that some changes will be necessary and that he will seek to establish deeper relationships with the countries the agency serves. He says Washington will listen more and make sure that the countries it works with have the political commitment to move forward with development plans, programs and activities. "Really, the long-term, sustainable, large-scale transformation of a society that represents the success of global development can only happen if those countries are completely committed to and vested in that vision of success," he said.

President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton plan to devote more funding to development, which they see as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy.

Shah says the U.S. government now wants to give foreign countries more control over how American aid is spent. But, he also says measures will be in place to make sure that money is used wisely. "As we, and if we, give up control to some extent in order to support country leadership, we should have high standards and we should have strong ability to track outcomes to monitor resources and how they flow and to ensure that we're generating real results in a sustainable way for American taxpayers," he said.

USAID currently provides \$20 billion in annual aid to development projects around the world. The Obama administration plans to expand that to \$50 billion a year by 2012 for healthcare, education and agriculture.

Shah says while USAID will be helping countries around the world, its immediate priorities include regions of extremism such as Afghanistan and Yemen.

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