

U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and 21st Century Diplomacy

Scribed by Madison Foley

State Department Senior Advisor Karen Richardson discussed U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and 21st Century Diplomacy, focusing on five foreign policy priorities of the Obama Administration. The first issue she discussed was the Administration's efforts to counter violent extremism, which she said is the preeminent challenge of the 21st century. She indicated that America is focused on creating a safer and prosperous future which requires us not to be distracted by divisions grounded in hatred or bias. Terrorists believe that threatening the American people will divide us, but we must demonstrate to them that their tactics instead unite us and strengthen our resolve. The United States is building global partnerships to combat violent extremism and by working together we will prevail.

The second issue Richardson discussed concerned resolving our and the international community's concerns over Iran's nuclear program. The goal is to develop a durable and comprehensive agreement that blocks Iran's potential path to a nuclear weapon.

The third issue was about the Shared Prosperity agenda which promotes Secretary John Kerry's vision to elevate economics as a centerpiece of our economic agenda, focusing on innovation and creation of jobs for our economy. The State's Department's people, policies and programs directly benefit U.S. citizens by creating jobs, trade, travel, and opportunity. Richardson also discussed TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) and TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership), free trade agreements that are currently in negotiation, which she said will support economic growth by opening markets, enforcing high standards in our agreements, and leveling the playing field for our workers here in the United States. For example, in 2013, Pennsylvania exported \$41.2 billion in merchandise to countries all over the world, supporting 201,020 jobs in Pennsylvania. Richardson reinforced that we need better trade rules to protect our workers and to ensure access to foreign markets. Overall, this will open new export opportunities for American businesses and create jobs for American workers.

The fourth issue she discussed was the administration's efforts to address climate change. Richardson expressed that climate change is one of the biggest threats facing the earth today, and that nothing short of a global solution to fight it will work. To that end, she mentioned that the Administration is taking action to reduce carbon pollution, promote clean sources of energy, and is working with our partners to lead international climate change efforts.

Since President Obama took office, wind energy has tripled and solar energy has increased. We are also achieving measurable impact through the Green Climate Fund which will help countries strengthen their resilience to climate change impacts.

Last she discussed President Obama's December 2014 announcement about a new approach to U.S. policy toward Cuba. The goal is to empower the Cuban people and support the emergence of a democratic, stable, and prosperous Cuba. President Obama's decision reflects a historic turning of the page born of a different era and toward a bright and more promising future.

Richardson also spoke about the need to keep up with technological trends in order to effectively communicate with the American people. More than ever before, individuals around the world have direct access to information about our foreign policy and to our policy makers through social media. One of the ways the State Department engages domestic and international audiences is through the State Department's Twitter account, which now has 1.3 million followers. Richardson spoke about the State Department's domestic outreach efforts through its Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs, as well as the U.S. Diplomacy Center, new state of the art education center that will be dedicated to telling the story of American diplomacy.

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