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World Leaders Begin Congratulating Obama After Election Win

By Daniel Ten Kate and Andrew Frye - Nov 7, 2012

World leaders began congratulating U.S. President Barack Obama on his re-election and urged him to play a leading role on issues ranging from boosting the economy to climate change and relations with Muslims.

“I’ve really enjoyed working with him over these last few years and look forward to working with him again over the next four years,” U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron told the [BBC](#) during a visit to a Syrian refugee camp in [Jordan](#) today. “There’s so many things that we need to do. We need to kick start the world economy.”

Obama, who pulled the U.S. out of recession in his first four years by bailing out banks and expanding the deficit, will face a budget crunch in his second term that threatens to derail global growth. In terms of foreign policy, Obama must repair relations with traditional allies such as Israel and manage a leadership change in [China](#) as he seeks to end bloodshed in [Syria](#) and prevent [Iran](#) from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

“I will continue to work with President Obama to ensure the essential security interests of [Israel](#)’s citizens,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in an e-mail.

Slumping Economy

The Obama administration faces a global economy struggling to recover from the fallout from the debt crisis in [Europe](#). The euro-area economy may contract 0.4 percent this year, while China is forecast to grow 7.8 percent and the U.S. 2.2 percent, according to the International Monetary Fund.

European stocks advanced after Obama’s re-election with the Stoxx Europe 600 Index adding as much as 0.6 percent. U.S. Treasury bonds advanced, pushing the 10-year yields down the most in a week, as the election outcome bolstered expectations the Federal Reserve will stick to its policy of buying bonds to support the economy.

German [Chancellor Angela Merkel](#) said in a letter to Obama that she “greatly values” cooperation with the U.S. French Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici said Obama is a “great president” and congratulated him on the re-election.

“We work well with his administration,” Moscovici told RTL radio today. “It has always been helpful to solve the euro- zone crisis, preserve its integrity and favors a balance between austerity and growth.”

Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao offered their congratulations, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a briefing in Beijing today. China will hold a once-a-decade leadership transition starting this week.

Currency Manipulator

“China is ready to work with the U.S. side to deliver greater benefits to our two peoples and the people of the world,” Hong said.

Republican candidate Mitt Romney had pledged to label China a currency manipulator on his first day in office if he won. Obama’s victory means the value of the [yuan](#) won’t escalate into a major trade issue that would slow the global economy, Arjuna Mahendran, the Singapore-based head of Asia investment strategy at HSBC Private bank, which oversees \$409 billion, said in a telephone interview today.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, whose country is America’s biggest ally in Asia and hosts almost 40,000 of its military personnel, told reporters “we look forward to continued cooperation.”

Nuclear Threat

South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak welcomed Obama’s re- election and called for continued cooperation in stifling North Korea’s nuclear threat. Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said he plans to build on relations with the U.S. that are the strongest in 30 years, according to a statement on the website of the island’s Presidential Office.

[Australia](#) Prime Minister Julia Gillard called for U.S. leadership on financial stability and climate change in a statement saluting Obama for his victory. The U.S. is deploying 2,500 Marines in northern Australia and will station about 60 percent of the Pentagon’s naval assets in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020, up from about 50 percent now.

“Many challenges lie ahead, from ending the bloodshed in Syria, to getting the Middle East peace process back on track, to promoting sustainable development and tackling the challenges posed by climate change,” United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said in an e-mailed statement today. “All will require strong multilateral cooperation” and the UN counts on the “active engagement” of the U.S. on these and other issues.

Tensions With Netanyahu

Obama clashed with Netanyahu this year as Israel considered military attacks to halt Iran’s nuclear program. In September, Netanyahu said the U.S. had “no moral right” to stop an Israeli strike. Relations were strained during the campaign as Netanyahu appeared with Republican candidate [Mitt Romney](#).

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak congratulated Obama and highlighted strengthening relations with the U.S. Two months ago, protests erupted in [Malaysia](#), [Indonesia](#), [Thailand](#) and [Pakistan](#) over a video produced in

the U.S. that was offensive to Muslims.

“It is my hope that President Obama will continue in his efforts to foster understanding and respect between the United States and Muslims around the world,” Najib said in a statement. “As a moderate Muslim nation, Malaysia stands ready to help the United States as it seeks to better engage with those of Islamic faith.”

Obama spent part of his childhood in Indonesia and is scheduled to attend a summit of Asian leaders later this month in Cambodia. He said in 2009 the U.S. would join the [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#), an agreement involving nine Asia-Pacific countries that will undergo its 15th negotiation round next month.

“If [Barack Obama](#) comes and focuses on the economy and focuses on strengthening relations across the Asia-Pacific region, he can do it because he’s built up the network,” Kishore Mahbubani, dean of the National University of Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said in an interview with Bloomberg Television. “He can do a massive amount for the U.S. economy in Asia.”

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