



Instant view: Obama lays out plans for reviving economy

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Barack Obama promised Americans on Wednesday that he will revive jobs growth and curb exploding deficits.

Following are reactions to Obama's annual State of the Union speech to Congress:

General comments:

KEN GRANT, PARTNER, WATERSTONE PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN OWASSO, OK:

"It's like typical speeches in campaigning. It has a great ring and a great message, one that people can applaud. The question is how much real policy will come out of it."

"One of the things that we overwhelmingly hear . . . is a lot of focus on jobs and economy and honestly it's about time. It's the number one thing Americans and businesses need."

ANDREW NEALE, PORTFOLIO MANAGER AT FOGEL NEALE WEALTH MANAGEMENT IN NEW YORK:

"The job growth (target) is great, but I would love to hear some concrete plans. Also about doubling exports -- that sounds wonderful, but I would like to see the concrete deals of how he's going to do this. As with any deal, the devil's in the details. Making a speech and getting things done are two very different things."

"It sounds like it could be good for oil companies (stocks). He talked about opening offshore areas to exploration, which hadn't been done in the past. He also mentioned a plan for high-speed rail ... Overall, I think what he said will probably be taken positively. But then again, talk is easy."

WALTER TODD, PORTFOLIO MANAGER, GREENWOOD CAPITAL ASSOCIATES, GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA:

"I haven't heard anything unusual from what was expected here. It is pretty much a bunch of rhetoric."

"In terms of financial reform, he is holding the line on that. The problem is that what they are going after is proprietary trading, which was not the problem or what caused the financial crisis."

On goal to double exports:

SUSUMU KATO, CHIEF ECONOMIST, CALYON CAPITAL MARKETS, TOKYO

"I have a strong impression that Obama is trying to strengthen U.S. trade relations with other economies in the Asia-Pacific by facilitating free-trade agreements with countries like South Korea."

"U.S. efforts to promote trade relations with regional economies would benefit Japan as it helps boost trade and economic activity in Asia. But it would be a worry if the U.S. is tempted to weaken the dollar to boost its exports."

ZHANG XIAOJI, A DIRECTOR AT THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH Center. A THINK-TANK UNDER THE STATE COUNCIL, CHINA'S CABINET:

"We welcome it! It's good news for China and all Asian countries. I'd like to wait and see what specific products the U.S. wants to export to China."

"We have said many times before that we want to buy their high-tech products. It is the U.S. that limits export of such products to China."

LIU XU, A FOREIGN TRADE RESEARCHER WITH A THINK-TANK UNDER CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM COMMISSION:

"China has been trying to balance its exports and imports, and China is set to increase imports from the outside world, including the United States."

"For hi-tech products and know-how, China will be hoping Washington will relax some export controls."

NORIHIRO TSURUTA, CHIEF STRATEGIST, SHINKO RESEARCH INSTITUTE, TOKYO:

"I think the United States is likely to increase exports as they are strong in IT. When you talk about energy efficiency and transport infrastructure, I could see the United States advancing in these areas. When Obama links exports to job creation, some people may speculate that he wants a weaker dollar. But the dollar has already weakened and the U.S. current account deficit has improved."

SEIJI SHIRAIISHI, CHIEF ECONOMIST, HSBC SECURITIES JAPAN, TOKYO:

"Obama's aim to double exports is apparently intended to take advantage of strong demand in China and the rest of Asia, as U.S. consumption has been weakened by households' accumulating debts."

"This has considerable implications for Japan because the U.S. and Japan would compete harder for a share of the pie in Asian markets, as domestic consumption is also weak in Japan, while the U.S. government is likely to favor a weak dollar, increasing the risk of the yen's appreciation."

KYOHEI MORITA, CHIEF ECONOMIST, BARCLAYS CAPITAL JAPAN LIMITED:

"I don't think there is such a thing as a global imbalance. What there is, is a U.S.-China imbalance. Improving that would raise the issue of the high yuan...America is starting to look to exports as a new source of growth."

KOJI FUKAYA, SENIOR CURRENCY STRATEGIST, DEUTSCHE BANK, TOKYO

"The plan to double exports sounds impossible to achieve. This probably doesn't mean they will try to weaken the dollar, but it's hard to know. Currency markets are showing no reaction as his speech lacks details."

On banks and financial reform:

MICHAEL HOLLAND, PRESIDENT OF HOLLAND & CO IN NEW YORK:

"I didn't hear anything that was not telegraphed. There were no surprises and that, in a way, is not bad news because the markets were going into this thing thinking it was going to be a negative for the banks."

"To the extent that he was not punishing and populist toward the banks, I view that as a positive for the markets tomorrow morning."

LAURA ANNE CORSELL, PARTNER, MONTGOMERY MCCrackEN (LAW FIRM) IN PHILADELPHIA:

"His tone was pretty even-handed. I don't think he was looking at the banks and saying it was all their fault. I think he was saying 'we offered you the support that was needed at that time, and now its time to settle the score'."

"He could have been much more negative. It's easy for democrats to scream and yell about fat cat investment bankers and I didn't hear that tone."

ALAN LANCZ, PRESIDENT OF ALAN B. LANCZ & ASSOCIATES INC, TOLEDO, OHIO:

"If you go back to what he said last week it was incredible how adversarial he was from a standpoint of the financial system -- banks and fat-cats on Wall Street versus poor little Americans. It seems from what I've heard he has toned down the rhetoric."

MATT MCCORMICK, PORTFOLIO MANAGER AT BAHL & GAYNOR INVESTMENT COUNSEL IN CINCINNATI:

"The main thing that struck me is his outright hatred of banks. He is saying he hated the bank bailout, but he voted for it. He doesn't want to punish anybody except the banks."

"You could hear the average American say, 'Yeah, stick it to those banks.'"

On fiscal deficits:

AYAKO SERA, STRATEGIST, SUMITOMO TRUST & BANKING, TOKYO:

"The currency market seems to have taken a favorable view of his pledge to curb the U.S. fiscal deficit, which is positive for the dollar. But it is unclear how the U.S. will curb the deficit while reforming its healthcare system."

"So far, there seems to be relief in the market that he has not made strong remarks about the bank regulation plan. But we need to continue to watch how that pans out."

On climate legislation:

FRANCES BEINECKE, PRESIDENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, NEW YORK:

"President Obama issued a full-throated call to action tonight, charging the Senate to pass the comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation."

"President Obama made it clear that investing in clean energy and climate solutions will help tackle Americans' two biggest concerns right now: economic recovery and job creation."

ALOKE BARNWAL, SENIOR CONSULTANT, EMERGENT VENTURES INDIA:

"The speech gives the message that Obama is not ignoring climate change but he is not very aggressive on it either at this point as he doesn't mention any targets."

"In sum, he has taken a moderate stand given that his policy priorities are jobs and fixing the economy in an election year."

(Reporting by Steve Eder, Ellis Mnyandu, Martine Geller and Clare Baldwin in New York; Hideyuki Sano in Tokyo; Zhou Xin and Aileen Wang in Beijing, Kritivas Mukherjee in New Delhi; Editing by Tomasz Janowski)

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