

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Says Egyptians Have Shown “the Power of Human Dignity”

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama said the Egyptian people have inspired the world through their nonviolent struggle to change their country’s government and the United States stands ready to provide any assistance the country needs as it transitions to a more democratic future.

“The people of Egypt have spoken, their voices have been heard, and Egypt will never be the same,” Obama said February 11 after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak had been announced.

Egypt is at the beginning of its transition, Obama said; many questions remain unanswered and the country may experience “difficult days ahead.” But he expressed confidence that the Egyptian people will determine their future “peacefully, constructively and in the spirit of unity that has defined these last few weeks.”

Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman announced Mubarak’s resignation to the Egyptian people earlier February 11 in a televised statement. The announcement came after weeks of protests against Mubarak’s 30-year rule. The Egyptian military is now in control of the country.

Obama praised the military’s conduct during the demonstrations and urged it to ensure a political transition that the Egyptian people will accept as credible, saying the people have “made it clear that nothing less than genuine democracy will carry the day.”

“The United States will continue to be a friend and partner to Egypt. We stand ready to provide whatever assistance is necessary and asked for to pursue a credible transition to a democracy,” Obama said.

The Egyptian people have inspired the United States and the world “by putting the lie to the idea that justice is best gained through violence” and by showing “the power of human dignity.” Through nonviolence and moral force, the Egyptians have “bent the arc of history toward justice,” he said.

“Today belongs to the people of Egypt. And the American people are moved by these scenes in Cairo and across Egypt because of who we are as a people and the kind of world that we want our children to grow up in,” the president said.

In remarks to university students in Kentucky February 11, Vice President Biden described Mubarak’s resignation

as “a pivotal moment” in the history of both the Middle East and the world.

“What is at stake in Egypt and across the Mideast is not just about Egypt alone. It will not just touch Egypt,” Biden said.

The vice president paid tribute to Mohamed Bouazizi of Tunisia, whose December 2010 suicide in protest of the regime of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali “ignited the passions of millions and millions of people” in the region and spurred their desire for reform.

Change will continue to take place, he said. “The future depends on our ability to adequately understand and engage the truths of our time.”

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged a “transparent, orderly and peaceful transition” in Egypt and for the country to have “free, fair and credible” elections to install a civilian government.

“The voice of the Egyptian people, particularly the youth, has been heard, and it is for them to determine the future of their country,” Ban said in New York February 11.

## Democratic Principles Behind U.S. Calls for Mideast Reform

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States cannot decide the outcome of Egypt’s political unrest, but the Obama administration says its approach to the situation is being guided by America’s founding principles and by its desire to see the unrest be resolved without violence and in a manner that respects the universal rights of the Egyptian people.

“The Egyptian people are going to be the drivers of this process,” said Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes. “We don’t see this as a situation where we dictate outcomes, but we do stand for a set of principles and we stand for a process that can make this, as the president said, a moment of opportunity in Egypt, not simply a moment of turmoil.”

Rhodes and Jake Sullivan, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s deputy chief of staff and director of policy planning, spoke to reporters in a February 9 teleconference. They said the United States has been sending three clear messages both publicly and privately concerning the protests.

“The first is that we wanted to see nonviolence,” Rhodes said. Violence and suppression “is not the way through

this period of protest and change." The Obama administration has been urging the Egyptian government to show restraint and for the protesters to be peaceful.

Secondly, "we want to see the universal rights of the Egyptian people respected," he said. "That includes the right to assembly, the right to information including access to information over the Internet and social media and cell phones, and that any process going forward has to respect the universal rights of the Egyptian people."

"And third, that we believe that this has to be a period of political change in Egypt, that we support an orderly transition in Egypt that is meaningful, lasting and legitimate. And that transition must begin without delay and produce immediate, irreversible progress that the people of Egypt can see and that they are demanding," Rhodes said.

Sullivan said there has been "an aggressive diplomatic outreach" to convey those principles and policies to people inside and outside of the Egyptian government, to U.S. regional partners and to other governments around the world.

Officials "at all levels of the State Department ... are on the phone around the clock, conveying these same messages and encouraging others who have influence and relationships in Egypt to stress these points with the Egyptian government," he said.

#### U.S. CALLS FOR REFORM ARE NOT NEW

In June 2009, President Obama said in Cairo that all people want "the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose." He said those "are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them."

More recently, Secretary Clinton warned Arab leaders in Doha, Qatar, that many people in the region "have grown tired of corrupt institutions and a stagnant political order," and are "demanding reform to make their governments more effective, more responsive and more open."

Sullivan said American officials are continuing to make Obama's and Clinton's case that the failure to take concrete steps to open up political systems "has led to a situation where people are going out into the street and saying, 'We want our voices heard and our aspirations met.'"

As events in Egypt unfold, Rhodes said, the United States has been supporting discussions between the Egyptian government and the opposition while also holding the government "accountable in terms of identifying the kinds of steps that we believe need to take place and that the Egyptian people are calling for throughout that process of negotiation."

"What we've called for is a process that is broadly inclusive, that therefore engages and includes a broad range of Egyptian voices and a broad representation of the Egyptian opposition, because that is the only way that you are going to move through a process that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people," he said.

#### U.S. Seeks to Cut Costs in Sustained War Against HIV/AIDS

By Phillip Kurata  
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. government is preparing for a sustained war against HIV/AIDS.

At a gathering of international health experts in Washington February 10, the Obama administration official in charge of the anti-HIV/AIDS campaign, Dr. Eric Goosby, said the watchword in the campaign has become "sustainability" — rather than "emergency" — and the key is reaching more people while reducing costs.

Since PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) was launched in 2003, the cost of administering anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to one patient has fallen from \$1,400 per year a few years ago to an average of \$435 per patient per year now, Goosby said. The former medical director of the AIDS clinic of the San Francisco General Hospital now heads the global AIDS office at the U.S. State Department.

In the first five years of PEPFAR, ARVs reached 1.7 million people as funding shot upward from \$2.3 billion in 2003 to \$6 billion in 2008, Goosby said. But because of budgetary constraints that have come with the global recession, funding increases to combat the disease have flattened out. In 2009, the Obama administration spent \$6.7 billion and in 2010, \$6.8 billion for PEPFAR. Nevertheless, the number of people receiving ARVs has mushroomed from 1.7 million in 2008 to 3.3 million through the end of 2010.

Goosby said that PEPFAR has a special focus on children.

"In the last year alone, we have been able to prevent 114,000 transmissions to children during pregnancy of HIV-positive mothers," he said, adding that 3.8 million

vulnerable children are cared for by PEPFAR programs. "From birth until they are 18 years old, we feed them, clothe them, house them, educate them, train them for jobs and turn them loose, and we have a case management relationship with them as they go into young adulthood. This is a remarkable example of the American people's tax dollars having a high impact to stabilize lives and save lives, stabilize communities and stabilize countries."

"Despite funding constraints, the number of people receiving treatment is increasing rapidly," said Dr. Charles Holmes, PEPFAR's chief medical officer.

As the United States prepares for a long-term campaign against the disease that destroys the body's immune system, Goosby said making health management systems more efficient is the core theme. "It's not flashy or sexy, but it has a huge monetary impact. We want to have one manager for 20 clinics, not 20 managers for 20 clinics. We want to have one procurement system for 20 clinics, not one procurement system for each clinic," he said.

Goosby said the international community needs to do more to support the anti-AIDS struggle, and said he hopes to see greater contributions from European countries, China and Saudi Arabia, among others. PEPFAR, he said, is engaging faith-based charities operating in AIDS-stricken countries as another measure to broaden its partnerships and cut costs.

"When the PEPFAR efforts move out of cities into rural areas, medical facilities thin out and people are more dependent on nonprofit groups. We have taken full advantage of that, especially with faith-based organizations," Goosby said.

The end goal of PEPFAR is to enable health ministries in AIDS-affected countries to take control of the efforts to counter the epidemic.

"The unifying thread is having a ministry of health that is strong enough to take the reins so that they are able to plan effectively, define and prioritize unmet needs, then move to implement the program," he said. "We are making a permanent system of care embedded in the existing ministries of health that will be there long after PEPFAR is gone."

Dr. Ndwapi Ndwapi of Botswana said he is taking many ideas from the conference to make his country's anti-AIDS programs more effective.

"The emphasis on cost control, knowing how much things cost, going into the details, looking at those areas that are most costly and finding interventions, such as the procurement of ARV drugs, a strategy that South Africa is

undertaking. I look at them with great interest," Ndwapi said.

Ndwapi said it is urgent for the Botswana Health Ministry to bring down costs and develop a self-sustaining program because international donors are beginning to send their anti-AIDS funds to other countries deemed to be in greater need.

### **Reports Say World Can Be Fossil Fuel Free by 2050**

By Karin Rives  
Staff Writer

Washington — The world has the technical know-how and financial capability to run entirely on renewable energy by the middle of this century, two California researchers say.

Their study says that a large-scale transformation of the world's energy systems to wind, solar, water, geothermal and other renewable sources would not cost substantially more than continued reliance on conventional power generation.

The research comes as world leaders seek to tackle climate change while also providing electricity to the 1.4 billion people who still lack access to energy.

President Obama said in his 2011 State of the Union address to Congress that he wants the United States to get 80 percent of its energy from clean sources by 2035, a goal that can be achieved only if more Americans get their power from renewable and nonfossil sources.

Mark Jacobson, an atmospheric scientist and professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University, and Mark Delucchi, a research scientist at the Institute for Transportation Studies at the University of California-Davis, published their article in a recent issue of the journal Energy Policy.

It has received significant attention in trade and mainstream media as it provides a rare road map for how the world can move away from coal and oil.

"We wanted to show that there are no large technical or even economic barriers to powering all energy sectors globally on wind, water or solar power because that point is not widely appreciated," Delucchi told America.gov. "The biggest obstacle is politics."

Another recent study, this one published by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Dutch research group Ecofys, also concluded that a fossil fuel-free world is within reach.

The groups' 2011 Energy Report estimates that it will cost \$4.8 trillion annually, or about 2 percent of the world's gross domestic product, to switch to 95 percent renewables by 2050. After 2040, however, the world would start to see net savings through diminished energy costs and greater efficiencies — with annual savings approaching \$5 trillion by midcentury, the WWF/Ecofys report says.

"While investments would pay for themselves over time, we need to mobilize significant capital upfront," said Jim Leape, WWF's director general. "It won't necessarily be an easy task. We have to drive efficiency very deep into the economy, and ... cut our energy use in half, so [by 2050] we use only what we used in year 2000."

#### FOSSIL FUELS HAVE HIDDEN COSTS

Included in the two studies are factors such as the costs of climate change — an expense that would be significantly reduced with a switch to renewable energy. In the United States, for example, air pollution from coal plants and cars cost the nation \$120 billion in health care costs in 2005, according to the National Research Council, which gives scientific guidance to U.S. policymakers.

"Our plan would eliminate all air pollution and 2.5 million to 3 million premature deaths per year, as well as facilities and exhaust pipes responsible for such pollution," said Jacobson, the Stanford researcher.

The California and Dutch researchers also factored in future savings, such as a significant reduction in overall energy consumption and the elimination of fossil-fuel subsidies. According to the International Energy Agency, global government subsidies for the oil, gas and coal industry amount to more than \$500 billion annually.

Prospects for renewable energy have improved significantly in recent years, the researchers said.

"Technology keeps improving and costs keep coming down," Delucchi said. "For example, there are several interesting wind-power designs and technologies that promise some technical and economic benefits. [And] given recent developments in lithium-ion batteries, I think we will see economical battery-driven electric vehicles sooner than most people expect."

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