

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Secretary Clinton Says U.S. Inspired by Nonviolent Egyptian Protests

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told Egyptians that they have inspired Americans through their “extraordinary example of nonviolent, peaceful protest,” and urged them to remain vigilant, since building and sustaining a democracy is long and difficult work, but said the United States stands ready to help them.

Clinton answered questions from Washington February 23 that were posed by Dr. Ahmed Ghanim of Masrawy.com, Egypt’s oldest and largest online portal. The site had invited Egyptians to address questions to her in a social media dialogue through outlets including Masrawy.com, Twitter and Facebook. Ghanim reported that in only two days, Egyptians had submitted more than 6,500 questions, which he said was “another reminder of the power of the Internet.”

The secretary said the United States asked for nonviolence and supported the aspirations of the Egyptian people. After nearly three weeks of anti-government protests in Egypt, “what we hoped for is what happened,” she said.

“We wanted to see no violence against the protesters. ... We wanted to see the aspirations of the Egyptian people, particularly young people, realized. And then we advocated from the very beginning for a reform process that would lead to an Egyptian model of democracy,” Clinton said.

During the unrest, the United States was “walking a balance ... because we wanted to be sure that our messages did not push anyone into doing something that we disagreed with, namely violence, which we tried to, in every way possible, prevent,” she said.

The secretary said the relationship between the former Egyptian government and the United States had helped U.S. officials convey messages to Egyptian leaders not to use violence, to allow peaceful protests to continue, and that it was time to make political changes.

“I think some of those messages had an impact. It was behind the scenes, but it was part of our effort to see a peaceful outcome here. So there was something that we could rely on coming from the past that I think was important in the moment of the demonstrations,” she said.

During the past 30 years, the United States spoke publicly and privately to the Egyptian government in favor of

democratic reforms and supported civil society groups inside the country, sometimes against the wishes of the government. Despite this, Clinton said, the United States was not able to bring about change.

“But the Egyptian people were, and that is as it should be, because it is the future of Egypt that should be led by the Egyptian people themselves,” she said.

“The United States had nothing to do with the uprising, the revolution that we are now witnessing in Egypt. That was led by, organized by, run by Egyptians themselves, starting with young people,” Clinton said.

She compared Egypt’s achievement with what Martin Luther King Jr. was able to accomplish for African Americans and what Mahatma Gandhi was able to achieve for India through peaceful protests.

“I have always believed that nonviolent protest, well-organized and disciplined as I saw in Egypt, will bring down dictators, will change laws, will change the future,” she said.

Now that Egyptians have succeeded in bringing down their former regime, Clinton said she hopes they will “stay engaged and involved” as the country begins “the hard work of creating and keeping a democracy” where “everyone will have a place at the table.”

Democracy is more than just free elections, she said. It is also a system that protects the rights of women and minorities, and allows an independent judiciary, a free media and an open economic system that is free from corruption.

Based on their own 220-year history, Americans understand that “it takes real effort to implement a democracy that is sustainable,” she said.

“Your country needs you more than ever. And we will stand with you,” Clinton told her Egyptian audience. “We want to be your partners. We are inspired by you and we believe in you. And the United States is ready to assist in any way that would be appropriate.”

## Secretary Clinton Consults with Brazil’s Patriota on Regional Issues

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota held wide-ranging talks February 23 on U.S.-Brazilian issues, regional concerns and President Obama’s trip in March.

Obama is making his first presidential visit to South America, traveling to Brazil, Chile and El Salvador March 19-23.

"It comes at a time when we are cooperating closely, and our bilateral work on issues and global challenges, including food security and human rights and clean energy and global inequality, is key to both of us," Clinton said at a joint press briefing with Patriota.

Patriota told reporters that the U.S.-Brazilian relationship has developed into a solid partnership in areas that include trade and investment, contacts between civil societies, combating racial discrimination, promoting gender equality, and in emerging areas such as science and technology.

"In particular, we've had a very useful discussion on science and technology, how to enhance our cooperation in this area, innovation, in addition to looking at business opportunities," Patriota said.

"Of course, political dialogue is also increasingly important for Brazil with the key actors in today's increasingly multipolar world," he added.

Patriota said Brazil was pleased that the United States supported its initiative to hold a debate at the U.N. Security Council on the linkage between peace, security and development. He said this approach is the essence of trying to address some of the challenges nations face and where the nations of the Western Hemisphere are working cooperatively, such as improving conditions in Haiti. Both Brazil and the United States are among Haiti's top 10 donors of humanitarian assistance.

Clinton praised Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff for placing significant emphasis on eliminating poverty and advancing women's empowerment, which are issues that the secretary has highlighted as key parts of her foreign affairs agenda.

"The two are connected because empowered women tend to be entrepreneurial women who lift their families and even their neighborhoods and communities out of poverty," Clinton said.

Over the past year, the U.S. and Brazilian energy ministries have concluded a work plan for energy that will help both nations advance sustainable technology such as hydropower generation, smart grids and energy efficient housing, Clinton said. And the United States and Brazil have recently initialed an open-skies agreement that will increase the number of commercial flights and make pricing more competitive, she added.

Patriota also met with National Security Advisor Tom

Donilon and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. Brazil and the United States are members of the Group of 20 advanced economies and have consulted regularly on measures to advance the global economy following the recent economic crisis.

#### PRESIDENT'S TRIP

The White House announced earlier that the president and first lady will travel to Brazil, Chile and El Salvador March 19-23. The president will meet with the countries' leaders and speak to the nations on issues including economic prosperity and job creation through increased trade and partnerships, energy and security cooperation, shared values and other issues of regional and global concern.

"The trip will provide an opportunity to engage key bilateral partners, to highlight the president's engagement with the hemisphere, and to advance our efforts to work as equal partners to address the basic challenges facing the people of the Americas," the White House announcement said. "The visit will include events in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago and San Salvador."

#### Russian Parks Officials Study How U.S. Manages Protected Areas

By Domenick DiPasquale  
Staff Writer

Washington – The snow-covered environs of Siberia's Lake Baikal and the subtropical ecosystem of Florida's Everglades may be separated by 11,165 kilometers and several climate zones, but when it comes to the challenge of managing such national treasures, these two protected natural areas have much in common.

Rudy D'Alessandro, an official with the U.S. National Park Service, explained, for example, that both sites are on UNESCO's World Heritage List and both are threatened by nearby human encroachment.

To better understand how the United States manages its protected areas such as the Everglades, and to allow an exchange of professional information and experience, 20 Russian national park and nature reserve managers are in the United States for a workshop and study tour that may lead to greater bilateral cooperation in the future.

During their February 20 to March 4 visit, the Russian officials are hearing from three relevant U.S. government agencies, and making hands-on visits to several national parks, forests and wildlife refuges in Florida. The program is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and occurring under the auspices of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission, established in 2009 to improve coordination between the

two nations in various fields.

The Russian delegation includes 14 park and natural reserve managers, officials from the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and representatives from environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The delegation began their American program February 22 with briefings by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. These three federal agencies oversee, respectively, 553 wildlife refuges, 395 national park sites and 155 national forests.

The Washington briefings provided the Russian delegation an overview of the history, mission and operation of the three agencies. Of particular interest to the Russian officials was how the United States balances public use of these natural areas with environmental stewardship.

Russia's protected areas include 42 national parks and 102 federal nature reserves; access to the latter is now largely limited to scientific researchers. Draft legislation before the Russian Parliament would provide for greater public access to the parks and reserves while also safeguarding their ecosystems. The legislation also aims to improve their infrastructure, end haphazard tourism development and increase ecotourism.

"The Russian visitors can gain an understanding that the U.S. national parks model is adaptable to their own protected areas," said D'Alessandro, adding that Russians are concerned that opening these areas to greater commercialization may ruin them.

Vsevolod Stepanitsky, the delegation leader and a deputy director in the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, echoed D'Alessandro's comments, saying that his country might find U.S. practices in wildlife management, environmental education and public outreach applicable to Russia.

"In selecting the delegation, we specifically chose people we thought would be able to pick up certain points and be able to adapt them for use at home," Stepanitsky told America.gov.

The U.S. model of managing the impact of visitors and tourism in protected areas was a major point of discussion at all three agencies visited in Washington.

Mike Carlo, a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service official, said that when his agency evaluates tourism activities in the 98 percent of wildlife refuges open to the public, "the impact on wildlife and natural resources is our first concern." Only activities appropriate to conservation, such as

wildlife watching, nature photography and environmental education, are permitted.

D'Alessandro advised the Russian officials to learn from U.S. mistakes in parks management.

"You don't want to have as many visitor centers as we do," he said, adding that there are four in the Everglades National Park and eight in Yellowstone National Park.

"Less is more," he continued. "We spend a lot of money maintaining tens of thousands of buildings in our parks and have a \$5 billion maintenance backlog."

Given that there are only 20,000 National Park Service employees, D'Alessandro spoke of the vital role played by the 150,000 individuals who volunteer each year in U.S. national parks, contributing labor worth an estimated \$72 million.

"The more people you have volunteering from the local community, the better the relationship with it," he said.

Both Carlo and D'Alessandro also pointed to the positive economic impact of protected areas on nearby communities, with each saying that every taxpayer dollar that goes to a wildlife refuge or national park returns \$4 to the local economy.

The Florida program for the Russian officials includes visits to Everglades and Biscayne national parks, Apalachicola National Forest, Big Cypress National Preserve and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Among the topics to be examined firsthand in Florida are wildlife management, multiple land-use issues, environmental education and balancing habitat conservation with public access.

The possibility of creating additional "sister park" relationships between individual U.S. and Russian national parks is also under consideration. At present, Fossil Butte National Monument in Wyoming is paired with Russia's Khvalynsky National Park, a relationship that D'Alessandro called one of the most active that the Park Service has anywhere in the world.

Victor Savinov, director of the 26,000-hectare Khvalynsky National Park, located in the Saratov oblast of Russia's Volga region, said he hoped the U.S. study program would help such international cooperation develop further.

"We need to preserve biodiversity and protect nature," he said, adding that 2010 had been a difficult year because of the massive summer wildfires that swept across Russia. "It's very important for us to preserve this planet for future generations," he said.

## Statistics Show Large Gains for Biotech Agriculture in 2010

By Mark Trainer  
Staff Writer

Washington – Between 1996 and 2010, the production of biotech crops – crops genetically modified to increase yield – rose 87-fold, surpassing 1 billion hectares, according to new statistics from the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

The increase in hectares in 2010 alone was 10 percent. That year, the 15th anniversary of the plantings of the first commercialized biotech crops, 29 countries planted biotech crops, up from 25 in 2009. Of these, 19 were developing countries. The United States was the leading grower of biotech crops at 66.8 million hectares, followed by Brazil (25.4 million) and Argentina (22.9 million). For the first time, each of the top 10 countries grew more than 1 million hectares of biotech crops.

By far, the leading biotech crop is soybean, accounting for a full 50 percent of the biotech crops worldwide. Biotech maize is the second most common, accounting for 31 percent.

Biotechnology has given the ability to impart beneficial characteristics to plants, making them more resilient to adverse conditions. Since the first commercial plantings in 1996, herbicide tolerance has been the dominant trait sought by farmers adopting biotech crops, and this continued in 2010. Crops with “stacked traits” use more than one genetic strand to allow multiple input traits (pest and drought resistance) and output traits (crops with enhanced provitamin A or high omega-3 oil), the ISAAA reported. The service sees stacked traits as an increasingly important feature of biotech crops, and says that 32.3 million hectares of stacked biotech crops were planted in 2010, up 3.6 million hectares from the 2009 level.

Of the 15.4 million farmers planting biotech crops, 90 percent were small, resource-poor farmers in developing countries. Developing countries produced 48 percent of global biotech crops. The ISAAA projects that 40 countries will have adopted biotech crops by 2015, and expects the trend toward an increased proportion of developing countries to continue. China, India, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa are the developing countries that lead in the adoption of biotech agriculture.

A record number of countries from the European Union planted biotech crops last year. Six EU countries, led by Spain, continued to plant biotech maize. Three countries – the Czech Republic, Sweden (the first Scandinavian country to plant biotech crops) and Germany planted the Amflora potato, the first biotech crop approved in the EU in 13 years. Other biotech potatoes are under

development in EU countries (including one resistant to the blight that caused the Irish famine of 1845), and the ISAAA predicts their release before 2015.

The ISAAA emphasizes the role biotech crops play in addressing global problems such as food security and self-sufficiency, alleviation of poverty and hunger and the challenges of climate change. By increasing productivity per hectare and reducing costs of production, biotech crops have generated approximately \$65 billion in economic gains between 1996 and 2009, ISAAA says. Additionally, its report asserts that the increase of efficiency in land use will conserve biodiversity and reduce agriculture’s environmental footprint. Biotech crops reduce the need for water and the use of pesticides and fossil-based fuels. The ISAAA estimates that in 2009 this resulted in a savings of 17.6 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide, the equivalent of removing 7.8 million cars from the road.

The ISAAA sees the greatest obstacle to the adoption of biotech agriculture in the developing world as the cumbersome regulatory systems of developing countries. “With the accumulated knowledge of the last 15 years it is now possible to design appropriate regulatory systems that are responsible, rigorous and yet not onerous, requiring only modest resources that are within the means of most developing countries,” the group said.

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