

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Announces New Energy Security Measures

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States will begin an effort to reduce its dependence on imported oil by a third over 10 years by increasing domestic energy production, increasing the use of biofuels and natural gas, and improving the fuel efficiency of U.S.-built cars and trucks, President Obama says.

“We cannot keep going from shock to trance on the issue of energy security, rushing to propose action when gas prices rise, then hitting the snooze button when they fall again,” Obama said. “The United States of America cannot afford to bet our long-term prosperity and security on a resource that will eventually run out.”

In a speech March 30 at Georgetown University in Washington, Obama said he set this goal knowing that imported oil will remain a vital part of the U.S. energy portfolio for many more years. But he said that instead of importing oil from faraway nations, the United States can partner with neighbors like Canada, Mexico and Brazil, which only recently discovered significant new oil reserves, and with whom technology and know-how can be shared.

Obama said that meeting such a significant long-term goal requires two things: finding and producing more oil in the United States and offshore, and reducing dependence on imported oil with clean alternative fuels and greater efficiency.

In 2010, U.S. oil production reached its highest level since the record set in 2003. And for the first time in more than a decade, the oil imported by United States fell to less than half of the oil it consumed.

The United States will actively encourage offshore oil exploration and production that is both safe and responsible, Obama said. It has been about a year since the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that was the largest oil spill in U.S. history.

A recent study conducted by the U.S. Interior Department found that 57 percent of federal land leased for oil exploration and 70 percent of the offshore leased area is inactive — not being explored or developed, the White House said in an energy security fact sheet published March 30 to coincide with the president’s speech.

Since new drilling standards were imposed in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the government has approved 39 new shallow-water permits

for drilling and seven deep-water permits. In a year’s time, the government has issued two permits for drilling for every new well that the oil industry has started to drill, Obama said.

Obama also acknowledged that with only 2 percent of the world’s known oil reserves, the United States must develop better long-term solutions than finding new places to drill for oil.

The president’s energy security plan envisions a series of steps that will create greater energy independence:

- Developing alternatives to imported oil, including biofuels, natural gas and nuclear energy generation. Obama called for the construction of four new advanced biofuel plants in the United States within the next two years.
- Increasing natural gas supplies and replacing oil with natural gas in power-generation stations and plants.
- Reducing the price at gas pumps for cars and trucks by expanding on investments aimed at improving car and truck fuel efficiency, greater reliance on high-speed rail services between cities, and greater use of public transit nationwide.
- Expanding incentives for construction of new houses, businesses and factories with more efficient design to reduce energy consumption, while also providing programs to finance retrofits of older houses and buildings.
- Expanding the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) program to invest in projects that range from smart-grid technology, to carbon capture, to new battery technology for electric vehicles.

## U.S. Military Pours Supplies, Equipment, Skills into Japan Relief

By Charlene Porter  
Staff Writer

Washington — More than 18,000 U.S. military personnel have delivered 240 tons of supplies to quake-stricken Japan, with 19 ships and more than 130 aircraft participating in an operation they’re calling Tomodachi, the Japanese word for “friend.”

The supplies come in the form of food and fuel, drinking water, hygiene supplies and another 500,000 gallons of fresh water to pour on the overheating nuclear reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. Navy divers are clearing cluttered harbors for navigation. Pilots are delivering aid and personnel, flying over a ravaged landscape of collapsed bridges and blocked roads

damaged in the March 11 earthquake and the punishing tsunami that followed.

Video footage like none ever seen before showed walls of water pounding ashore, tossing boats and vehicles like bathtub toys, crushing buildings and crumbling infrastructure. When the water receded, much of that debris was sucked back out into the ocean, and U.S. naval personnel joined Japanese counterparts to begin clearing channels out of Hachinohe on the northeast coast of Honshu Island.

The teams mapped the waters to establish routes for boats to operate safely through the channel. Using sonar identification, dive teams recovered foreign objects that were potentially blocking safe passage through the channel.

"Over 4 million square meters of harbor have been sonared," said Chief Petty Officer Jon Klukas. "We have also pulled about five tons of wreckage, consisting of various items like cars, large [shipping containers] and diesel generators." Klukas was quoted in a story published by the U.S. Pacific Command.

Navy teams worked with the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) for three days at Hachinohe starting March 25, according to a U.S. Embassy press release, and will be moving on to clear other damaged ports in this maritime nation: Miyako, Kamaishi, Ofunato and Sendai.

Admiral Robert F. Willard, commander of the Pacific Command, said soon after the military's role in the relief operation began that the U.S. Navy is in Operation Tomodachi "for the long haul."

#### HIGH-LEVEL COMMUNICATION

As U.S. and Japanese military personnel work side by side in the relief effort, their national leaders are also keeping the lines of communication open. President Obama spoke with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan on the evening of March 29 in their third telephone conversation since the disaster struck. The two leaders reaffirmed the importance of close U.S.-Japanese cooperation in dealing with the ongoing nuclear emergency. President Obama reaffirmed U.S. support for recovery efforts, for which the prime minister expressed his gratitude.

On March 30 the U.S. ambassador to Japan, John Roos, met with Liberal Democratic Party President Sadakazu Tanigaki at the U.S. Embassy. Tanigaki requested the meeting, and the two spoke of the situation facing the country, including the U.S. involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

The ambassador expressed his gratitude for the close cooperation between U.S. and Japanese experts in the fields of health, safety and nuclear issues and reiterated that the United States will continue to stand by its friend and ally as Japan recovers from the earthquake and its aftermath.

#### SOLDIER TO SOLDIER

The victims of the disaster, the rescue volunteers, and the U.S. and Japanese military personnel are performing jobs not for the fainthearted. Sifting through the rubble of an epic catastrophe must be an extremely difficult job. But these military crews undertake this work with one more handicap: They don't speak the same language. Coordination of efforts must be channeled through trained translators who jump the language barrier to deliver instructions on the other side. JSDF Captain Masanori Ide is one of those liaison officers; he has come to appreciate the friendship of the two countries on a personal level.

"I am moved that all the people I am working with here are dedicating themselves to helping out not because they were ordered to, but because they care as friends," Ide said. He is quoted in a story filed from the Pacific by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Juan Manuel Pinalez.

Pinalez reports similar remarks from the Americans contributing to the effort.

"It's been a great honor and privilege to serve side by side with our Japanese partners," said Lieutenant Colonel William Arick of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. "Our liaison officer partners' enthusiasm, work ethic and dedication to help their country is a testament to the Japanese military and people and is humbling to witness."

#### **Social Media Help Americans Donate for Japanese Quake Recovery**

By Kathryn McConnell  
Staff Writer

Washington — Americans are embracing social media to raise money for survivors of the March 11 Japan earthquake and Pacific tsunami.

Five hours after the earthquake struck March 11 and sent a deadly tsunami toward northern Japan, American Red Cross staff members began arriving at their offices. They found Twitter flooded with messages about Japan relief and people eager to text donations, said Suzy DeFrancis, the group's chief public affairs officer. So far, more than 4 million Americans each have donated \$10 to the American Red Cross, through texting, of the total \$120.5 million pledged, said Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, American

Red Cross chairwoman.

On March 29, she announced that the American Red Cross will give an additional \$50 million to Japan, bringing its total gift so far to \$60 million.

As the rest of Americans' \$120.5 million in pledges comes in, the American Red Cross will send more funds for relief and recovery efforts, McElveen-Hunter said.

Many large corporations now offer spaces on their websites to help employees and customers pledge donations to help the people of Japan. Some companies are matching pledges dollar for dollar.

Most of the money American individuals and businesses have donated to the American Red Cross will be directed to the Japanese Red Cross, which is providing emergency relief, medical care and emotional counseling for survivors at evacuation centers, hospitals and mobile clinics, said McElveen-Hunter.

"As part of the world's largest humanitarian organization, the American Red Cross is eager to support our counterparts in the Japanese Red Cross, whose staff and volunteers are working tirelessly to meet the immense needs of their people," she said.

The U.N. World Food Programme will receive \$500,000 of the donated funds for delivery and storage of relief items.

#### AMERICANS CONTINUE TO PLEDGE DONATIONS

Almost three weeks after one of the most devastating earthquakes in history, American giving continues at a steady pace. Some donations as small as a few cents are sent by schoolchildren, but most pledges are between \$10 and \$100. Several have been as high as \$1 million, McElveen-Hunter said, calling Americans' response to the disaster "extraordinary."

At the Japanese Embassy in Washington March 29, McElveen-Hunter told Ichiro Fujisaki, Japan's ambassador to the United States, "The American people and the American Red Cross have not forgotten the generosity of the Japanese people when we suffered tremendous loss after the 9/11 attacks and, more recently, after Hurricane Katrina." In total, the Japanese Red Cross sent around \$30 million after those events, she said.

"You do not stand alone during these challenging times," said McElveen-Hunter. "It's wonderful to see the response from every spectrum of the American public."

Fujisaki extended "heartfelt gratitude" for the donation. He said that 11,000 people so far have been confirmed dead in Japan as a result of the quake, 17,000 people are

missing, and those "totals are rising every day." In addition, he said, the people of Japan now are also coping with the effects of the destabilized Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

"We value this friendship and solidarity with the American people," he said.

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