

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

April 25, 2011

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Proclamation by President Obama on Earth Day, 2011

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
April 22, 2011

EARTH DAY, 2011

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

For over 40 years, our Nation has come together on Earth Day to appreciate and raise awareness about our environment, natural heritage, and the resources upon which generations of Americans have depended. Healthy land and clean water and air are essential to the health of our communities and wildlife. Earth Day is an opportunity to renew America's commitment to preserving and protecting the state of our environment through community service and responsible stewardship.

From the purity of the air we breathe and the water we drink to the condition of the land where we live, work, and play, the vitality of our natural resources has a profound influence on the well-being of our families and the strength of our economy. Our Nation has a proud conservation tradition, which includes countless individuals who have worked to safeguard our natural legacy and ensure our children can benefit from these resources. Looking to the future of our planet, American leadership will continue to be pivotal as we confront the environmental challenges that threaten the health of both our country and the globe.

Today, our world faces the major global environmental challenge of a changing climate. Our entire planet must address this problem because no nation, however large or small, wealthy or poor, can escape the impact of climate change. The United States can be a leader in reducing the dangerous pollution that causes global warming and can propel these advances by investing in the clean energy technologies, markets, and practices that will empower us to win the future.

While our changing climate requires international leadership, global action on clean energy and climate change must be joined with local action. Every American deserves the cleanest air, the safest water, and unpolluted land, and each person can take steps to protect those precious resources. When we reduce environmental hazards, especially in our most overburdened and polluted cities and neighborhoods, we prioritize the health of our families, and move towards building the clean energy economy of the 21st century.

To meet this responsibility, Federal and local programs will continue to ensure our Nation's clean air and water laws are effective, that our communities are protected from contaminated sites and other pollution, and that our children are safe from chemicals, toxins, and other environmental threats. Partnerships and community-driven strategies, like those highlighted by the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, are vital to building a future where children have access to outdoor places close to their homes; where our rural working lands and waters are conserved and restored; and our parks, forests, waters, and other natural areas are protected for future generations.

On Earth Day, we recognize the role that each of us can play in preserving our natural heritage. To protect our environment, keep our communities healthy, and help develop the economy of the future, I encourage all Americans to visit www.WhiteHouse.Gov/EarthDay to learn ways to protect and preserve our environment for centuries to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 22, 2011, as Earth Day. I encourage all Americans to participate in service programs and activities that will protect our environment and contribute to a prosperous, healthy, and sustainable future.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

White House Statement on Situation in Yemen

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
April 23, 2011

Statement by the Press Secretary on Developments in Yemen

The United States supports a peaceful transfer of power in Yemen that is responsive to the aspirations of the Yemeni people. We applaud the announcements by the Yemeni Government and the opposition that they have accepted the GCC-brokered agreement to resolve the political crisis in a peaceful and orderly manner. We encourage all parties to move swiftly to implement the terms of the agreement so that the Yemeni people can soon realize the security, unity, and prosperity that they have so

courageously sought and so richly deserve.

United States Condemns Syria's Violence Against Demonstrators

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Statement by the President on Syria

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of force by the Syrian government against demonstrators. This outrageous use of violence to quell protests must come to an end now. We regret the loss of life and our thoughts are with the families and loved ones of the victims, and with the Syrian people in this challenging time.

The Syrian Government's moves yesterday to repeal Syria's decades-old Emergency Law and allow for peaceful demonstrations were not serious given the continued violent repression against protesters today. Over the course of two months since protests in Syria began, the United States has repeatedly encouraged President Assad and the Syrian Government to implement meaningful reforms, but they refuse to respect the rights of the Syrian people or be responsive to their aspirations. The Syrian people have called for the freedoms that all individuals around the world should enjoy: freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and the ability to freely choose their leaders. President Assad and the Syrian authorities have repeatedly rejected their calls and chosen the path of repression. They have placed their personal interests ahead of the interests of the Syrian people, resorting to the use of force and outrageous human rights abuses to compound the already oppressive security measures in place before these demonstrations erupted. Instead of listening to their own people, President Assad is blaming outsiders while seeking Iranian assistance in repressing Syria's citizens through the same brutal tactics that have been used by his Iranian allies. We call on President Assad to change course now, and heed the calls of his own people.

We strongly oppose the Syrian government's treatment of its citizens and we continue to oppose its continued destabilizing behavior more generally, including support for terrorism and terrorist groups. The United States will continue to stand up for democracy and the universal rights that all human beings deserve, in Syria and around the world.

U.S. Contributing Armed Drones to Libya Mission

By Jeff Baron, Staff Writer

Washington — The United States has added armed, unmanned Predator aircraft to the effort to protect

civilians and opponents of Libyan strongman Muammar Qadhafi, Defense Secretary Robert Gates says.

Gates told reporters April 21 that President Obama approved the use of the drones, which will allow for more precise airstrikes from low altitudes against Qadhafi's forces in populated areas.

Marine General James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the first armed Predator mission had been flown earlier in the day but that bad weather forced it to turn back. He didn't say what the mission was. Predators are armed with Hellfire missiles, which are designed to destroy armored vehicles.

Cartwright noted that armed Predators also were used in the initial phase of the Libya operation, and that unarmed Predators had been used for reconnaissance since then.

Cartwright said Predators will be valuable because of "their ability to get down lower, therefore to be able to get better visibility on particular targets now that have started to dig themselves into defensive positions. They're uniquely suited for urban areas where you can get low collateral damage."

Cartwright said the Predators can remain in the air over a battle zone for an extended period. Gates said the operation can keep as many as two Predators over Libya 24 hours a day.

When asked why the operation didn't include more of the aircraft, Gates said that with soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States is "the most stretched militarily" of all its allies.

The NATO force attacking Qadhafi's troops by air includes U.S. forces in a supporting role; Obama had said the United States would be more involved if needed. Gates said that in the case of the Predator, NATO is drawing on the United States' "unique capabilities."

"It's an evolving situation, but we saw an opportunity here and recommended it to the president, and he took it," Gates said.

U.S. Invests in Energy Innovation, Promise of Breakthroughs

By Charlene Porter, Staff Writer

Washington — Invention is widely viewed as one attractive route to find energy solutions that will wean the United States off carbon-based fuels, and the Department of Energy increased its support for the pursuit of invention with an announcement April 20.

Secretary of Energy Steven Chu announced investments

in five new program areas, which, it is hoped, could produce innovative technologies in clean energy.

“Breakthroughs in clean energy technologies can reduce our country’s dependence on foreign oil, decrease the cost of clean electricity and build a sustainable infrastructure for future generations of Americans,” Chu said.

One program focused on biofuels aims to develop new plants that will yield greater amounts of energy per acre than those currently grown for conversion into fuel. Another area of research will strive to develop “revolutionary, cost-effective thermal-energy storage technologies” that will allow, for example, the use of solar energy at night.

These new programs will be managed through the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), which will work with partners from universities, business and nonprofit organizations. A government initiative only a few years old, ARPA-E is modeled after the successful Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the agency responsible for technological innovations such as the Internet and the stealth technology used in modern fighter aircraft. Specifically, ARPA-E is committed to invigorating the field of energy research with a focus on transformational projects that may be too high-risk for the private sector to explore.

In announcing an ARPA-E partnership with a private electric utility company April 14, Chu explained his hopes for the way these innovative programs might push energy research into new areas. “ARPA-E technologies have the potential to lower utility customers’ energy costs and strengthen the reliability of the electric grid,” he said. “This partnership with the utility industry will move promising technologies from the lab into the marketplace at a much faster pace.”

The partnership between ARPA-E and Duke Energy, headquartered in North Carolina, will work to develop mechanisms to bridge the gap between the existing power grid and newly emerging energy technologies.

“ARPA-E is spurring innovation in a way that could help transform not just the energy sector, but the economy as a whole,” said Duke Energy Chief Executive Jim Rogers. “Our nation is at an energy crossroads, and we must develop and deploy advanced sources of clean, reliable, affordable energy more rapidly.”

The other new energy research programs announced April 20 will focus on more efficient electricity-delivery methods and alternatives for rare earth minerals, used in emerging energy technologies because of their unique magnetic properties. The final new ARPA-E program will pursue designs for solar power systems, which would

allow the distribution and delivery of solar energy on the scale of a public utility. That is not possible with the solar-generating methods currently in use in the United States.

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