

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Praises Poland's Leadership in Democratic, Economic Reforms

By Merle Kellerhals  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama wrapped up a six-day, four-nation trip to Europe May 28, praising the influence Poland has exerted on the region and the world by its rapid economic modernization and democratic reforms in the aftermath of the half-century-long Cold War.

In reflecting on Poland's emergence from Soviet repression during the Cold War in the 20th century, Obama said that Poland has "charted a course for freedom that inspired many on this continent and beyond. And it has many relevant lessons, so we want to encourage all states undergoing similar experiences to learn from Poland."

Obama met May 28 with Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw for extensive talks on a broad range of security and economic issues. It was Obama's first visit to Poland since taking office and capped off his European tour that included Ireland, Britain and France.

In praising Poland's more than two decades of struggle to become one of Europe's most significant new democracies, Obama emphasized that the nations of the Middle East and North Africa — and specifically Egypt and Tunisia — are also struggling in their transitions to democracy and could benefit from Poland's example.

"We all know that in the aftermath of the overthrow of a repressive regime, emotions run high," Obama said in a briefing with Komorowski. "But new democratic governments have to show themselves to be able to channel that energy in constructive ways, to hold themselves to higher standards than their authoritarian predecessors in being inclusive, respecting the rule of law, respecting minority rights, believing in freedom of expression even when we don't agree with what's being expressed."

"And so I think that Poland has navigated that process as well as any country in recent history," Obama added.

Obama arrived in Warsaw late May 27. He attended a private dinner set up by Poland to meet in a "minisummit" with 18 Central and Eastern European leaders. The countries represented at the dinner were Albania, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, as well as Poland.

"What I emphasized was that a strong, integrated Europe is very much in the security and economic interests of the United States," Obama told reporters after meeting with Komorowski.

Obama said he wanted to encourage that process for the region. The United States and Poland, he said, want to make certain that NATO and European Union memberships remain open to those nations — and Poland's example as a democracy and a market-based economy is a model and example.

### INITIATIVES ANNOUNCED

Obama, Komorowski and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on May 28 announced several initiatives aimed at strengthening the U.S.-Polish alliance.

- The United States and Poland concluded a bilateral agreement to establish in 2012 a U.S. Air Force Aviation Detachment in Poland to serve military aircraft that will rotate through Poland. The detachment will help train Polish air force personnel in the use of F-16 fighter jets and C-130 cargo planes purchased from the United States. And elements from the California Air National Guard, flying F-16 jets, will also participate in the July 2011 SAFE SKIES training exercise with Polish F-16s, the White House said.
- Obama, Komorowski and Tusk also discussed the next steps in the European Phased Adaptive Approach to limited missile defense. The United States welcomed Poland's May ratification of the Missile Defense Agreement.
- Obama and Tusk also agreed to convene a special session of the Polish-U.S. Strategic Dialogue to promote comprehensive efforts to develop new clean and sustainable energy sources, including wind, clean coal, unconventional sources of natural gas (such as shale gas) and nuclear power, the White House said.
- Obama endorsed legislation co-sponsored by members of the U.S. Congress that would reform how countries qualify for the visa waiver program and specifically to extend the program to Poles traveling to the United States.
- Poland and the United States also announced convening of a high-level U.S.-Polish Business Roundtable to bring the private sectors and top government officials from the two nations together to identify and promote new commercial opportunities.
- The United States and Poland announced the expansion and joint funding of the U.S.-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program to bring American and Polish high

school students for visits to each country.

- The United States and Poland condemned the actions taken by Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko and those responsible for the crackdown in Belarus. The United States and Poland announced joint efforts to support civil society, including expansion of Kirkland and Kalinowski Scholarships for Belarusian youth, Belsat television programming, and collaboration through Poland's new International Solidarity Foundation.

### **Secretary Clinton Says U.S. Will Continue Support for Pakistan**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said during a brief visit to Islamabad May 27 that the United States will continue to support Pakistan, its elected leaders and its people.

“The United States knows that Pakistan’s future is imperatively important for us, but even more so for the people themselves,” Clinton said.

“We look toward a strong Pakistan, one that is democratic, one that is prosperous and stable, being a cornerstone for regional stability and global security,” she said at a press conference at the U.S. Embassy along with U.S. Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mullen joined Clinton in meetings with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Army Chief of Staff General Ashfaq Kayani, and General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, who is chief of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence.

The brief visit to Pakistan’s capital city was characterized by Clinton as “a turning point” in relations between the two nations, which have forged strong ties through a U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue that has brought the two governments together to discuss a full range of common concerns.

The talks were extensive, open, frank and constructive, Clinton told reporters. The visit comes in the aftermath of a U.S. raid on a safe house in Abbottabad May 2 in which terrorist leader and mass murder Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. military forces.

“This was an especially important visit because we have reached a turning point,” Clinton told reporters. “Osama bin Laden is dead, but al-Qaida and its syndicate of terror remain a serious threat to us both.”

Clinton told reporters that the United States will not abandon its alliance with Pakistan. The United States relies on Pakistan for a key supply route to allied forces in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan has also been a valuable ally in dealing with Taliban insurgents who use remote mountainous areas at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The United States seeks to defeat violent extremism, end the conflict in Afghanistan and ensure a secure, stable, democratic and prosperous future for Pakistan, Clinton said.

Mullen said that everyone in the discussions realized the challenges that the relationship faces. “But now is not the time for retreat or for recrimination. Now is the time for action and closer coordination; for more cooperation, not less; for the friendship to get stronger, not weaker,” Mullen said.

### **G8 Summit Sought Common Solutions to Global Challenges**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington – The Deauville Group of Eight (G8) Summit of major industrialized nations was focused on developing common solutions to some of the world’s most vexing security and economic challenges.

President Obama, who is on a four-nation, six-day European trip, praised French President Nicolas Sarkozy “for the leadership that he’s shown on the world stage over the last several years,” and for guiding to a successful conclusion the summit of G8 leaders in Deauville on the Normandy coast.

“As President Sarkozy indicated, we had an enormous convergence of approaches and views on the challenges that we face around the world,” Obama said at a brief May 27 joint press conference with Sarkozy.

The summit leaders discussed a wide range of issues from Afghanistan to Iran, the Arab Spring, Libya, Middle East peace, the needs of many African nations, and the world economy.

Obama, who has traveled to Ireland, Britain, France and a final stop in Poland, gave a sweeping address to the British Parliament in London May 25, paying tribute to protesters in Tehran, Damascus, Cairo, and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa. He called on Britain and the United States to support them in their quest for democratic governance and freedom.

"In country after country, people are mobilizing to free themselves from the grip of an iron fist," the president said. "We are the nations most willing to stand up for the values of tolerance and self-determination that lead to peace and dignity."

The president said at his press conference in Deauville that the G8 leaders agreed that the changes in the Middle East and North Africa have made the pursuit of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians more urgent.

"We agreed to coordinate closely in encouraging the parties to sit down around the negotiating table and to resolve this issue in a way that creates a Palestinian state that is sovereign and an Israeli state that is secure, the two states living side by side in peace," Obama said.

The G8 leaders also discussed the enormous opportunities and challenges that have been presented by the Arab Spring and how they can fully support Egypt and Tunisia as they transition to democracy, Obama said.

The leaders addressed the progress being made in the Libya campaign, but meeting the "U.N. mandate of civilian protection cannot be accomplished when [Muammar] Qadhafi remains in Libya directing his forces in acts of aggression against the Libyan people," Obama said.

France hosted the G8 summit in Deauville May 26-27, and will also host the Group of 20 (G20) major and emerging economies in Cannes November 3-4.

### **Homeland Security Reaches Diverse Communities**

By Mark Trainer  
Staff Writer

Washington — In the eight years since it was formed, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has received complaints from groups that feel they have been mistreated as they board airplanes, cross borders or even enter federal buildings. A large number of these complaints came from the American-Arab, Muslim, Sikh and South Asian communities. In an effort to respond to these criticisms and correct improper procedures, the department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties began in 2003 to reach out to diverse communities throughout the United States on which DHS policies have an impact.

"Often people don't know what the Department of Homeland Security is," says Kareem Shora, head of that office's Community Engagement Section. "They don't know we're 22 different agencies with a very diverse set of responsibilities."

More than 87,000 different governmental jurisdictions at the federal, state and local levels have homeland security responsibilities. The department's goal is to develop a complementary system connecting all levels of government in an effort to protect the American people and their homeland. Among the department's major components that regularly interact with citizens are Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Coast Guard.

The most visible tool used by DHS' Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties is regular community round tables. The first of these round tables took place in Detroit in 2003 in response to issues raised by the city's Arab-American and Muslim communities. One outcome of this first event was a commitment on the part of DHS to begin meeting regularly with community groups in that area. Over the next years, regular round tables were held in an additional seven cities. DHS now is engaging with a range of groups, including Somali, Latino, Asian and Asian-Pacific communities. In the last two years, the number of ongoing round tables has grown to 13 cities, among them Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle and Columbus, Ohio.

Shora emphasizes the unique challenge of responding to the concerns of communities that are socially, economically and racially diverse. "We have to do our homework before we start a round table, so we meet with a lot of people informally. We meet with federal agencies in the local area, and then we work with community leaders — advocacy groups, faith-based groups, social services agencies, professional associations. There's no one-size-fits-all." In addition, the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hosts occasional round tables with young leaders from American-Arab, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian, Middle Eastern and Somali communities.

The round tables are intended to answer questions, address community concerns and clarify DHS policy. The primary aim, according to Shora, is to demystify homeland security. "We build a relationship of trust with community leaders. ... We meet with them on a regular basis," Shora said. "We tend to touch a lot of different interests in communities. We want to be as responsive as possible. We don't want to give the impression that we're just 'checking the box.'"

The round tables have evolved to the point where they no longer focus solely on the Department of Homeland Security. "We often find ourselves playing a liaison role for the federal government," Shora said. On a number of occasions, the office has invited colleagues from other federal agencies to respond to an issue raised by community leaders. The Treasury Department, for instance, has clarified guidelines related to charitable donations.

"So long as we're able to provide a certain level of responsiveness, we have the necessary buy-in from the community," said Shora. "Leaders come back and meet with us because they see a value in it as well."

### After 30 Years with AIDS, Solid Signs of Progress

By Jeff Baron  
Staff Writer

Washington — The director of the U.S. effort to stop HIV/AIDS around the world offers good news for the disease's 30th birthday: More people are being treated, their lives are better, fewer are dying and fewer are being infected.

The cost of treating people is even going down.

Ambassador Eric Goosby, the U.S. global HIV/AIDS coordinator and director of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, briefed reporters in advance of a United Nations meeting on HIV/AIDS June 8-10 to mark 30 years since the emergence of the disease.

With no vaccine or outright cure available for HIV infection, Goosby said, PEPFAR has achieved remarkable success in cutting the spread of HIV/AIDS and vastly improving and extending the lives of those infected, and it will meet its target of treating more than 4 million people by 2013.

The program has been especially effective at preventing the transmission of HIV from infected women to their babies during or after birth, preventing an estimated 386,000 infant infections in seven years. In each of the nine worst-hit African countries, the number of new infections dropped by 10 percent or more — in the case of Namibia, by 81 percent — from 2001 to 2009. HIV/AIDS-related deaths have dropped by a quarter in sub-Saharan Africa over seven years, from 1.6 million to 1.2 million, as PEPFAR funding has increased.

"We certainly can take some credit for that drop," Goosby said.

PEPFAR has been treating a larger and larger share of the estimated 33.6 million people worldwide who have HIV/AIDS: up from 1.7 million in 2008 to 3.2 million in treatment in 2010. And its treatment costs have dropped by about two-thirds, from \$1,300 per patient per year (including anti-retroviral drugs and the cost of doctors and nurses) to about \$450. The big savings, about \$380 million in 2010, came from the switch to generic drugs.

Goosby said PEPFAR will try to coordinate planning and purchasing with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in hopes of driving costs down

further, and his office is doing a country-by-country evaluation to look for more savings, but he said they won't be as dramatic.

In June 1981, when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control first reported on a mysterious outbreak that later became known as AIDS, Goosby was a chief resident at a hospital in San Francisco, and the disease has been central to his career ever since. He said he had been attracted to treating infectious diseases, "diseases that I could cure," but he soon was running a clinic that was losing 15 to 30 patients to AIDS each week. "We got very good at diagnosing and treating opportunistic infections early, but that was only for that one infection, two infections, usually three or four infections, and then the fourth or fifth one would take the patient," he said.

The contrast in the outlook for patients in 1980s San Francisco and those in today's sub-Saharan Africa is stark. New patients in Africa benefit from 30 years of advances, most notably a combination therapy of three anti-retroviral drugs with proven effectiveness.

PEPFAR has kept supplies available and patients have learned the importance of sticking with their medication. As a result only 2 percent to 3 percent of patients in Africa have had to move to a second line of medication, compared with 15 percent to 30 percent of U.S. patients.

"A person who's been on anti-retrovirals, they don't develop a resistant organism because the organism's not dividing," Goosby said.

PEPFAR cares for 3.8 million orphans and vulnerable children, and it has the world's largest program against gender-based violence, Goosby said. And although it is designed to combat AIDS, the systems built with PEPFAR support have helped improve maternal and child health care as well as treat such chronic diseases as high blood pressure and diabetes.

One factor in PEPFAR's success, Goosby said, is that it has begun turning over the direction of its programs to the countries in which it operates. With the help of some high-level diplomacy, he said, the gradual transition has been effective even in some countries that are less accepting of injection drug users and men who have sex with men — two groups whose treatment is critical to keeping HIV from spreading to the general population.

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