

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama Dedicates Memorial to Martin Luther King Jr.

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama dedicated a new memorial in Washington to Martin Luther King Jr. the nation's foremost civil rights leader, saying King's legacy proves "change can come if you do not give up."

"An earthquake and a hurricane may have delayed this day, but this is a day that would not be denied," Obama said during the October 16 dedication ceremony on the National Mall. Postponed due to severe weather, the memorial dedication was originally scheduled for August 28 to coincide with the 48th anniversary of the civil rights March on Washington during which King delivered his famous I Have a Dream speech advocating racial harmony.

"This day, we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s return to the National Mall," Obama said to a crowd of thousands gathered at the memorial, which is situated just southeast of the Lincoln Memorial where King delivered his speech in 1963.

"It is right that we honor that march, that we lift up Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech. For without that shining moment, without Dr. King's glorious words, we might not have had the courage to come as far as we have," Obama said.

He said the United States today is more fair, free and just than during the 1950s and 1960s when King fought for racial equality. Obama said progress has expressed itself "in a million ways, large and small, across this nation every single day as people of all colors and creeds live together, and work together and fight alongside one another and learn together and build together and love one another."

"In this place, he will stand for all time among monuments to those who fathered this nation and those who defended it," Obama added. The memorial is the first on the National Mall to honor a man who was neither a president nor a war hero. King, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, is also the first African American to receive a memorial there.

The president said the monument stands not only for King, but also for all leaders and activists in the civil rights movement. He said the "massive and iconic" 30-foot-tall (9.14-meters-tall) granite statue stood for "all those men and women who, through countless acts of quiet heroism, helped bring about changes few thought were even possible."

Obama, the first African-American president of the United States, credits King for paving his road to the White House. Before his remarks, Obama left a copy of his 2009 inaugural speech in a time capsule at the monument site.

First lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Biden and his wife, Jill, joined the president at the dedication. A host of civil rights leaders, poets and musicians also took part in the ceremony, including celebrated singer Aretha Franklin, who delivered remarks and a performance.

Obama said King, who was assassinated in 1968, was a "black preacher with no official rank or title who somehow gave voice to our deepest dreams and our most lasting ideals." He commended King's nonviolent efforts to transform "not only laws, but also hearts and minds," and said King's legacy proves that "change can come if you do not give up."

Obama also called King "quintessentially American" because "for all the hardships we've endured, for all our sometimes tragic history, ours is a story of optimism and achievement and constant striving that is unique upon this Earth. And that is why the rest of the world still looks to us to lead.

"This is a country where ordinary people find in their hearts the courage to do extraordinary things; the courage to stand up in the face of the fiercest resistance and despair and say this is wrong, and this is right; we will not settle for what the cynics tell us we have to accept and we will reach again and again, no matter the odds, for what we know is possible."

Secretary Clinton's Statement on World Food Day

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson
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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Statement on World Food Day, October 16, 2011

Today we remember the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization and re-commit ourselves to ending global hunger. Food security is a foreign policy priority for the United States. We must continue to find new and innovative ways to get food into the hands of more people.

Rising food prices earlier this year added millions to the nearly one billion people worldwide who suffer from chronic hunger. Today in the horn of Africa, more than

13 million people are affected by a severe drought that has led to a food emergency and a refugee crisis, compounded by terrorist group al-Shabaab's complete disregard for fellow Somali citizens by blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid. This is the most severe humanitarian emergency in the world and it is critical that the international community continue to work to ensure families have access to adequate food and the resources to purchase it.

The United States will continue to provide food aid during these crisis situations, but long-term solutions to food security must be treated with the same sense of urgency. That's why the Obama Administration started our Feed the Future Initiative. Through it, the United States government is working with partner countries, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders to improve access and availability to nutritious food. And we are teaching families how to ensure their own food security, so that someday help from donors will no longer be needed.

While we recognize that food security cannot be achieved overnight, we are committed to taking steps in the right direction. We have the know-how, the tools, resources, and, increasingly, the political will to rise to this global challenge. If we unite as an international community and stay focused on both the challenges and opportunities, we will help more people around the world realize their God-given potential.

Economic Growth at Forefront of U.S. Foreign Policy, Secretary Clinton Says

By MacKenzie Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Support for global growth is at the forefront of 21st-century U.S. foreign policy, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says as she outlines the Obama administration's plans to strengthen and modernize international economic cooperation.

Clinton, in remarks to the Economic Club of New York October 14, said economic forces are transforming foreign policy realities around the world. Citing the European debt crisis and political change across the Middle East and North Africa, the secretary said countries are gaining influence now "less because of the size of their armies than because of the growth of their economies."

"We have to position ourselves to lead in a world where security is shaped in boardrooms and on trading floors, as well as on battlefields," Clinton said.

To do so, she said, the State Department is committed to help companies seize opportunities around the world while working to "bring down barriers to trade,

investment and fair competition." U.S. ambassadors are leading whole-of-government efforts to support new business initiatives and to fulfill President Obama's goal of doubling American exports by 2015.

She commended the passage of free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea by Congress on October 12. The secretary said the United States also is moving forward in negotiating a "cutting-edge, multilateral free trade agreement" with the Asia-Pacific region. The Trans-Pacific Partnership aims to lower trade barriers, raise the standards of economic competition and promote free, transparent and fair trade across the Pacific Basin.

"These victories also give us new momentum to take on a broader agenda of promoting fair competition around the world," she said.

Clinton called on countries around the world to create and enforce new agreements and mechanisms to guarantee an open, free, transparent and fair economic system. She said promoting a level global playing field is a cornerstone of the U.S. approach to economic statecraft.

"All who benefit from the rules of the global economy have a responsibility to follow them," she said, calling this expectation "not an ideal that we strive for case by case, but a universal expectation everywhere and always."

The secretary said that because so much of the world's commerce now takes place in developing nations, exempting those nations from the rules "would render the whole system not just unfair, but unworkable."

Clinton called China's currency policy an example of an unsustainable economic approach. The Chinese government has held down the value of the currency to boost exports, which has created a trading surplus that has hurt other major economies and denied the Chinese people "the full fruits of their own labor," she said.

The secretary defended the U.S. right to an "assertive response" in securing a win-win economic relationship with China, a reference to the U.S. Senate's recent approval of legislature threatening higher tariffs against China if the currency imbalance continues.

Clinton said another barrier the international community needs to address is the participation of women in the global economy "because when half of the world isn't invited, that makes a mockery of the ideal of free, open and fair economic competition." During the past decade, she said, women's increased participation in the global labor market in the developed world accounted for a greater share of global growth than that of China.

"It's up to all of us to keep tearing down these walls that prevent business and individuals from seeking their own full potential," she added.

Noting that energy security remains a vital component of both economic and foreign policy, Clinton announced the States Department is establishing a new Bureau of Energy Resources to promote international energy security.

U.S. Seeks Iran Sanctions Enforcement After Assassination Plot

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is urging the international community to consider the ramifications of the alleged plot involving members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force to assassinate a Saudi Arabian diplomat. U.S. officials are asking other nations to join the Obama administration in implementing financial sanctions to further isolate Iran's regime and pressure it to comply with international demands concerning its nuclear activities, support for terrorism and the repression of its people.

In testimony October 13 before the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman said the alleged plot that targeted Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel al-Jubeir and could have killed Americans in the United States was "a flagrant violation of international law and a dangerous escalation of the Iranian government's longstanding use of political violence and sponsorship of terrorism."

"This conspiracy also violates the Convention on Internationally Protected Persons, including diplomatic agents, which Iran has agreed to, as well as U.N. Security Council resolutions," Sherman said. Iran "must be held accountable for its actions," she added.

Although Ambassador al-Jubeir was the target, Sherman said it was "in fact, a plot against all diplomats. And we will be asking all countries to consider appropriate actions, including denying Quds Force officers any platform to operate within their countries."

Since the case became public on October 12, "we have instructed every one of our ambassadors to demarche the highest levels of their host governments to inform them about the facts behind this plot," by "meticulously and rationally laying out the facts," she said. The European Union and many countries, including Nigeria, Estonia, Poland, Croatia, the United Kingdom and Canada, have issued their own condemnatory statements in response.

The United Nations, the European Union, the United States and other countries have sanctioned Iran for its

human rights abuses, support for terrorism and for violating agreements about its nuclear program. Those sanctions also have hit the Revolutionary Guard Corps and companies it controls, and many top Iranian officials are under visa bans for the European Union as well as the United States.

Sherman said sanctions are "most effective and they are strongest when they are internationalized and people throughout the world and governments throughout the world are enforcing those sanctions."

U.S. officials, including President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and assistant secretaries of state, have spoken with governments in "every capital," to encourage other countries to "enforce the sanctions that are on the books, to look at their own bilateral sanctions, to look at the designations that [U.S.] Treasury [Department] has made and make them themselves," she said.

"We have encouraged them to make sure that the Quds Force stops doing business in their countries, to look at high-level visits that might be coming from Iranians to their country, and to consider, let's say, postponing, if not cancelling outright, those visits," she said.

Sherman said during a conversation with one of her counterparts, she had told the official, "Think about what your country needs to do and think about it in terms of what you would have done and what the international community would have done if this [plot] had been successful."

The various sanctions in place offer "many tools" that countries can use to apply pressure to Iran's government, she said. "[A]ll countries have to do is pick them up and make them real."

Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen told the Senate committee that U.S. officials have met with banks, regulators and government officials in nearly 50 countries. The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) that President Obama signed in 2010 offers a clear choice, he said.

"A foreign bank can have access to the largest and most important financial sector in the world, the United States, or it can do business with sanctioned Iranian banks. But it cannot do both," Cohen said.

"For the overwhelming majority of foreign banks, the choice has been a simple one. Those with potentially sanctionable relationships quickly elected to stop that business. And where we learn of potentially sanctionable

activity under CISADA, we have actively investigated it, engaging in particular with foreign banks' regulators and their home government," he said.

As a result of increased international cooperation, Iran has not been able to stop a steady erosion in the value of its currency, and increasingly has been unable to attract foreign investments, Cohen said. Iran faces a projected loss of \$14 billion a year in oil revenues through 2016, he said.

"We are making progress, but there is still much to be done to prevent Iran from evading sanctions already in place and to apply sufficient additional pressure on Iran," he said.

GLOBAL TARGETING OF IRAN'S CENTRAL BANK COULD HAVE POWERFUL IMPACT

In October 14 testimony before the House of Representative Foreign Affairs Committee, Cohen said the Obama administration is looking into designating the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) as a target for sanctions. He said that although U.S. financial institutions are already generally prohibited from doing business with Iranian banks, including the CBI, "further U.S. action against the CBI, if it attains multilateral support, could further isolate the CBI with a potentially powerful impact on Iran."

As the bank already is essentially cut off from the United States, "the real question is can we, by taking another action against the CBI ... either under our nonproliferation authority or under our counterterrorism authority — can we elicit multilateral respect for that action?"

"That work is under way," Cohen told U.S. lawmakers.

"Climate Migration" Gains the World's Attention

By Karin Rives | Staff Writer

Washington — A changing climate that raises sea levels and triggers crop-threatening droughts is driving an increasing number of people from their homes.

At a recent discussion in Washington among climate and migration experts, several said that, for the first time, the international community is acknowledging that movement of people will occur as a result of climate change and that such relocation must be addressed.

Countries are openly addressing "climate migration" in national climate action plans, said participants in the forum "Conversations about Climate Change Adaptation: Displacement, Migration and Planned Relocation," held at the Brookings Institution in Washington October 7.

"You see it with Bangladesh and Cambodia, and a few others, talking about increased crop loss, food shortages and migration particularly from rural to urban areas," said Susan Martin, a professor at Georgetown University. Eritrea and Ethiopia discuss their history of migration in their strategy for dealing with recurring droughts, while Gambia talks about unpredictable rainy seasons affecting movement of people, she said.

It is important to plan ahead for such migration to avoid further environmental degradation, said Chaloka Beyani, a lecturer at the London School of Economics and a specialist on internally displaced people for the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Beyani told the audience of a recent trip he took to a resettlement area for refugees in Kenya that lacked services and adequate water. Because environmental risks were not studied before the area was opened, the influx of people now could result in new environmental problems, he said.

"The more relocation and migration can be proactively planned and facilitated, the less costly and disruptive the future of displacement will be," said Robin Mearns, a World Bank specialist on climate change.

Mearns said that estimates of how many people will be displaced due to climate change vary wildly, from hundreds of millions down to the thousands. Early reports painted a much more alarming picture than did more recent research, which suggests that people are likely to follow already established migration patterns, he said. Environmental problems tend to be one of several reasons people move and when a catastrophic event such as a flood is over, many return home, he said.

"The climate change tends to amplify existing patterns, rather than provoke entirely new flows of people," Mearns said. "We know that migration related to climate change is likely to be predominately from rural areas to towns and cities within developing countries, and that most of the world's migrants — including those moving due to climate change — are likely to move within their own borders rather than across international borders."

An agreement forged at the United Nations-led climate negotiations in Mexico in 2010 included a first-of-its-kind provision calling for countries to coordinate their work to address "climate-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation."

Rich nations have pledged to raise \$100 billion annually by 2020 in public and private-sector funds to help developing nations better prepare for such challenges as they will suffer from the brunt of the harmful effects from climate change.

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