

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama on the Horn of Africa Famine

22 December 2011

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

Statement by the President on the Horn of Africa Famine

As we enter the season of giving and renewal, more than 13.3 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia remain in urgent need of humanitarian assistance amid the worst drought the region has seen in 60 years. The heartbreaking accounts of lives lost and of those struggling to survive remind us of our common humanity and the need to reach out to people in need. I want to thank the many Americans who have reached out in support, and made donations over the last several months to support people in need in the Horn of Africa.

Today, on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I am announcing an additional \$113 million in emergency relief assistance for the Horn of Africa. This funding will support urgently needed food, health, shelter, water and assistance needs. To date, the U.S. has provided approximately \$870 million for relief purposes. Importantly, and even as we help to meet the emergency needs of the people of this region, we are also investing in their long-term food security <http://www.feedthefuture.gov/>.

“Notorious Markets” Infringe on Property Rights

22 December 2011

Washington – More than 30 marketplaces deal in goods and services that infringe on intellectual property rights (IPR) and help sustain global piracy and counterfeiting, according to a list released by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

This Notorious Markets List, although not exhaustive, identifies examples of both Internet and physical marketplaces that have been subject to enforcement actions because of counterfeiting and piracy, or that may merit further investigation for possible IPR infringements. The release of the list concludes a review process launched in September 2011.

“Piracy and counterfeiting continue to present a serious challenge to the innovation and creativity that is essential to supporting American jobs and creating economic growth around the world,” said U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk in a December 20 USTR press release.

“The notorious markets highlighted in this review

negatively impact legitimate businesses and industries of all sizes that rely on intellectual property to protect their goods and services,” Kirk said. “We hope that this review will continue to yield the kind of concrete action from highlighted markets that led to the removal of several markets from the list this year.”

The list does not reflect violations of law or analyze the general IPR protection and enforcement climate in the countries listed. Such analysis can be found in the annual “Special 301” Report, mandated by U.S. trade law and issued at the end of April, in which the USTR reviews the global state of IPR protection and enforcement.

However, the United States does urge the responsible authorities to intensify efforts to combat piracy and counterfeiting in the markets on the list, and those like them, and to use the information contained in the list to take legal action where appropriate.

LIST HIGHLIGHTS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The list also highlights positive developments since the previous Notorious Markets List was issued in February 2011. For example, the USTR applauds the Chinese website Baidu, one of the world’s most visited sites, for entering into a licensing agreement with U.S. and other rights holders in the recording industry. Baidu was previously listed as an example of a site linking to infringing content.

The list also notes that Hong Kong customs officials took action to remove allegedly infringing goods from the Ladies Market, and that management at the Savelovskiy Market in Russia implemented a plan to stop the distribution of infringing goods.

Several markets were identified because they make pirated and counterfeit goods and services available. The Chinese website Taobao, for example, continues to offer a variety of infringing products to consumers and businesses, while at the same time continuing its significant efforts to address the problem.

The list also identifies specific activities such as blogs and online forums that offer links to infringing content online, and key physical markets such as personal computer malls in China.

The USTR has identified notorious markets in the Special 301 Report since 2006 and began to publish the Notorious Markets List separately in February 2011 as an “Out-of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets.”

U.S. Sanctions Companies, Person Tied to Iran

21 December 2011

Washington — The U.S. Department of the Treasury designated for sanctions 10 shipping and front companies and one individual based in Malta that are affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), an entity facing international sanctions for its involvement in Iran's efforts to advance its missile programs and transport military cargoes.

The action is being taken as IRISL and its subsidiaries have increasingly relied upon multiple front companies and agents to overcome the impact of U.S. and international sanctions, the Treasury Department said in a news release.

"As IRISL and its subsidiaries continue their deceptive efforts to escape the grasp of U.S. and international sanctions, we will continue to take action ... to expose the front companies, agents and managers working with IRISL and work to stop this illicit business," said David S. Cohen, under secretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence.

The 10 companies and the individual are owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, IRISL, Irano Hind or ISI Maritime.

IRISL has facilitated shipments of military-related cargo destined for Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics and its subordinate entities, which are designated by the United States for sanctions and listed in United Nations Security Council resolutions 1737 in 2006, 1747 in 2007 and 1929 in 2010.

In September 2009, the Treasury Department designated Irano Hind, a joint venture of IRISL and the Shipping Corporation of India. The U.N. Security Council designated Irano Hind in Resolution 1929.

Designation is aimed at freezing the assets of proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their supporters and excluding them from the U.S. financial and commercial systems.

The 10 Malta-based companies are BIIS Maritime Limited, ISIM Amin Limited, ISIM Atr Limited, ISIM Olive Limited, ISIM Sat Limited, ISIM Sea Chariot Limited, ISIM Sea Crescent Limited, ISIM Sinin Limited, ISIM Taj Mahal Limited and ISIM Tour Limited.

The designated individual is the chief executive and managing director of Irano Hind, Jamshid Khalili, who is an Iranian national.

The European Union also sanctioned the companies as IRISL front companies, the Treasury Department said.

USTR Kirk: Trade Is Vital to Global Economy

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

21 December 2011

Washington — The commitment of the United States to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the international trading system is not new, fleeting or superficial, but long-standing, because a rules-based trading system is vital to global economic well-being, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk says.

"The benefits of this system trickle not downward, but upward, and out. When trade works properly, it is a foundation for jobs — essential for all of our people, their families and their communities," Kirk said at the opening of the 8th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference.

"Trade has been a primary engine of growth in the most successful developing economies, and ever-increasing South to South trade is good news for all of us," he said.

The WTO, which held its biennial trade ministers' conference December 15-17 in Geneva, sets the rules that govern global commerce and provides a forum for resolving trade disputes.

At the ministerial meeting, the 153-member organization discussed the current status of the Doha Round of global trade-liberalization negotiations, gave final approval for membership to Russia, Samoa and Montenegro, and concluded a revision of the WTO Government Procurement Agreement — which will expand opportunities for goods and services providers in markets around the world, Kirk said following the meeting.

While negotiations to expand trade liberalization began a decade ago in the Qatari capital of Doha, the talks have been stymied over reluctance by many developed and developing nations to end or curb farm subsidies and industrial tariffs — both of which are major impediments to global free trade.

Kirk said the trade ministers in Geneva agreed to find a resolution to the Doha impasse and are willing to make progress wherever possible. "But ministers have emphasized that 'business as usual' has not worked, and will not work going forward," he said.

Kirk praised the trade organization for inviting Russia, Samoa and Montenegro to join. Accepting Russia after 18 years ends the problem of having Russia outside the world trade system. Russia, with a population of 142

million, is the last major world economy to join the organization. Russia is also a member of the Group of Eight advanced economies and the Group of 20 advanced and emerging global economies, and is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said that with Russia's membership, more than 97 percent of all world trade will take place among member countries. Before Russia's admission to the WTO, it had been about 95 percent.

Clinton Condemns Violence Toward Women, Calls Women Peacemakers

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer
20 December 2011

Washington — As the United States launches a new national action plan to advance women's participation in making and keeping peace worldwide, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton decries recent violence against women in Egypt.

"This systematic degradation of Egyptian women dishonors the revolution, disgraces the state and its uniform, and is not worthy of a great people," Clinton said in a speech on the campus of Georgetown University December 19. The violence is part of a "deeply troubling pattern," Clinton said, to bar women from participation in the construction of a new political and social system that protestors demanded earlier in the year.

Starting in January, Egyptians took to the streets by the millions, demanding social, political and economic change. Their outcry forced the resignation of longtime President Hosni Mubarak. Military rulers took over to calm the situation, announcing a temporary government and promising elections. Egypt began a three-stage election process in November, and will finish the rounds of voting and runoffs in early January.

Referring both to Egypt and all nations working toward a better future, Clinton said the U.S. initiative to promote women's roles is guided by knowledge that countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women have full rights and opportunities.

"Whether it's ending conflict, managing a transition or rebuilding a country, the world cannot afford to continue ignoring half the population," Clinton said.

The secretary of state's speech came hours after the White House unveiled the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Clinton and the White House present the plan as a change in the way the United States will approach diplomatic, military and development-based

support to women in areas of conflict.

"This is not just a woman's issue," Clinton told the Georgetown University audience. "It cannot be relegated to the margins of international affairs. It truly does cut to the heart of our national security and the security of people everywhere."

The award of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize to women who were influential in resolving conflict in their countries should broaden international understanding of the importance of the issue, Clinton said. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee, both of Liberia, and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen. They won the honor "for their nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work," according to the Nobel Committee.

A White House fact sheet outlines the objectives of the action plan and specific steps to achieve them. Wielding U.S. diplomatic power to ensure that women are included in peace talks is one important objective. Clinton said recent conflict negotiations have shown that women have different perspectives and gender-specific experiences that contribute to peacemaking.

"During 2006 peace negotiations in Darfur, male negotiators deadlocked over the control of a particular river until local women, who have the experience of fetching water and washing clothes, pointed out that the river had already dried up," Clinton said.

The Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security aims to strengthen the efforts of U.S. government agencies to protect women and children from abuse and exploitation. The plan also asserts that women can contribute to conflict prevention and the creation of stable societies based on lasting peace.

In the aftermath of conflict or natural disaster, Clinton said, the needs of women are often overlooked, though their capabilities to influence recovery should not be underestimated. "Women are often among the most vulnerable in crises, yet they rarely receive a proportionate share of assistance or have the chance to help set post-conflict priorities. But with the right tools and support, women can lead recovery efforts and help get their communities back on their feet."

An array of U.S. government agencies charged with foreign policy activities will follow the action plan, including the departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury and Homeland Security, and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of the U.S. Trade

Representative.

These agencies are directed to build women's skills to serve in government and security and support nongovernmental organizations on behalf of women's participation in decisionmaking. U.S. agencies will also be supporting other nations in developing laws and policies to advance women's participation in making public policy.

U.S. Frees \$30 Billion for Libya

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer
20 December 2011

Washington — The Obama administration says most U.S. sanctions against Libya have been lifted, and it has freed up more than \$30 billion that was frozen in March to prevent former Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's regime from using the assets to perpetrate violence against the Libyan people.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said the move to unfreeze the assets was taken after careful consultation with Libya's new transitional government. Along with keeping Libyan assets out of Qadhafi's reach, the sanctions had "preserved Libya's wealth for its rightful owners, the Libyan people," Carney said in a December 16 statement.

"The United States is proud of the role we played in supporting the Libyan peoples' efforts to end the Qadhafi regime. We look forward to a continued close partnership with the new government of Libya during this transitional period and beyond, and believe that these assets can be an important resource for the Libyan people," Carney said.

The U.S. assets of the Qadhafi family and former Qadhafi regime members remain frozen. However, nearly all Libyan government and Libyan Central Bank funds within the United States have been released. Carney said that along with the United Nations Security Council's December 16 decision to remove Libya's Central Bank and the Libyan Foreign Bank from its sanctions list, the Libyan government will be able to access most of its worldwide holdings.

He said the release of these assets will help the government "oversee the country's transition and reconstruction in a responsible manner," and that the United States is assisting the Libyan government "with the technical steps required to make these assets available from financial institutions as soon as possible."

LIBYANS EARNED RIGHT TO DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta visited Tripoli December 17 and told Libyans that he had come to pay tribute to their courage and determination in challenging and ultimately prevailing against Qadhafi's 42-year regime.

"They bravely came together, they rose up against an oppressive regime, they fought, and many died to chart a better future for themselves and for their children," he said in a press conference with Prime Minister Abdul Raheem al-Keef.

"Libya is now in the hands of the Libyan people. They will chart their future. They will determine what assistance they require from the United States and the international community," Panetta said.

The secretary told Libyans that "the blood that you have spilled has earned you the right to determine your future, to work through the security issues that you are going to confront." He acknowledged the difficulty Libyans will face as they work to bring together the many revolutionary forces and weapons stockpiles, and develop free governing institutions and professional security forces.

"This will be a long and difficult transition, but I have every confidence that you will succeed in realizing the dream of a government of, by and for all people and achieve a more secure and prosperous future," he said.

Panetta also said he was proud that the United States had been able to work with NATO to help protect and support the Libyans during their revolution, and that it had been "a very unique alliance against tyranny and for freedom."

Libya and the United States now share a common legacy of revolution and the fight for human rights and equal justice under the law, Panetta said: "We are and will be your friend and your partner."

Obama Statement on Death of Vaclav Havel

18 December 2011

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

Statement of President Obama on the death of Vaclav Havel

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing today of Vaclav Havel, a playwright and prisoner of conscience who became President of Czechoslovakia and of the

Czech Republic. Having encountered many setbacks, Havel lived with a spirit of hope, which he defined as “the ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.” His peaceful resistance shook the foundations of an empire, exposed the emptiness of a repressive ideology, and proved that moral leadership is more powerful than any weapon. He played a seminal role in the Velvet Revolution that won his people their freedom and inspired generations to reach for self-determination and dignity in all parts of the world. He also embodied the aspirations of half a continent that had been cut off by the Iron Curtain, and helped unleash tides of history that led to a united and democratic Europe.

Like millions around the world, I was inspired by his words and leadership, and was humbled to stand with the Czech people in a free and vibrant Hradcany Square as President. We extend our condolences to President Havel’s family and all those in the Czech Republic and around the world who remain inspired by his example. Vaclav Havel was a friend to America and to all who strive for freedom and dignity, and his words will echo through the ages.

Presidential Candidates Step Up Campaigns in Critical States

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer
16 December 2011

Washington – Even though the presidential election is still months away, candidates are working feverishly to win over voters in key states to gain an early edge in receiving their party’s nomination ahead of the November 6, 2012, national vote.

“Primaries and caucuses allow the ordinary American to influence the selection of a president and the policies that he will follow,” presidential historian Richard Norton Smith said in a phone interview December 13. He said that while these early races can seem confusing and even unnecessary, they are a “defining process” for U.S. democracy.

Held by some state political parties, caucuses take the form of public meetings where people speak to persuade others to back their chosen candidate. Those in attendance then vote. Results from caucuses across the state then are gathered, and the most popular candidate overall is said to have won the state’s caucus. The first such caucus takes place in Iowa on January 3, 2012.

Primaries, on the other hand, are races in which registered voters mark down their preferred candidate on a ballot. The chosen delegates then attend the national parties’ conventions, where voters’ preferences as expressed in

primaries and caucuses across the country determine who will run as the party’s nominee for president. New Hampshire holds the first primary in the nation on January 10, 2012.

The process is sometimes criticized for lasting too long and costing too much money. But Smith says these early votes, while “messy and loud,” are critical in the democratic process of determining a leader.

“Democracy does not fit neatly into any labels or pigeonholes because democracy, when it works, is a perfect reflection of humanity itself, with all of its contradictions and its appetites and its demands and its resentments and its ideals all jumbled together,” Smith said.

He said primaries and caucuses serve both as a “safety valve for the anger and opposition people sometimes feel” as well as a “platform for means of channeling the idealism, conviction and passion that people feel.”

Presidential historian Allan Lichtman said that at this early stage, presidential debates are “extremely important” for voters and candidates alike. Speaking December 6 at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, he said debates offer a great way for voters to get to know the full field of candidates before selecting one to support.

President Obama is currently uncontested for the nomination of the Democratic Party, but at least seven Republican candidates will compete for their party’s nomination to challenge Obama in the November 6, 2012, vote. The most prominent Republican candidates currently are:

- Michele Bachmann, U.S representative from Minnesota.
- Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from Georgia.
- Jon Huntsman Jr., former U.S ambassador to China and former governor of Utah.
- Ron Paul, U.S representative from Texas.
- Rick Perry, governor of Texas.
- Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts.
- Rick Santorum, former senator from Pennsylvania

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