

Statement on the Situation in Syria *April 22, 2011*

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 2 months since protests in Syria began, the United States has repeatedly encouraged President Asad 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 Asad 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 Asad 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 Asad 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.

The President's Weekly Address *April 23, 2011*

This is a time of year when people get together with family and friends to observe Passover and to celebrate Easter. It's a chance to give thanks for our blessings and reaffirm our faith, while spending time with the people we love. We all know how important that is, especially in hard times. And that's what a lot of people are facing these days.

Even though the economy is growing again and we've seen businesses adding jobs over the past year, many are still looking for work. And even if you haven't faced a job loss, it's still not easy out there. Your paycheck isn't getting bigger, while the cost of everything from college for your kids to gas for your car keeps going up. That's something on a lot of people's minds right now with gas prices at \$4 a gallon. It's just

another burden when things were already pretty tough.

Now, whenever gas prices shoot up, like clockwork, you see politicians racing to the cameras, waving three-point plans for \$2 gas. You see people trying to grab headlines or score a few points. The truth is, there is no silver bullet that can bring down gas prices right away.

But there are a few things we can do. This includes safe and responsible production of oil at home, which we are pursuing. In fact, last year, American oil production reached its highest level since 2003. On Thursday, my Attorney General also launched a task force with just one job: rooting out cases of fraud or manipulation in the oil markets that might affect gas prices, including any illegal activity by traders

and speculators. We're going to make sure that no one is taking advantage of the American people for their own short-term gain. And another step we need to take is to finally end the \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies we give to the oil and gas companies each year. That's \$4 billion of your money going to these companies when they're making record profits and you're paying near-record prices at the pump. It has to stop.

Instead of subsidizing yesterday's energy sources, we need to invest in tomorrow's. We need to invest in clean, renewable energy. That's the long-term answer that we need. That's the key to helping families at the pump and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. We can see that promise already. Thanks to a historic agreement we secured with all the major auto companies, we're raising the fuel economy of cars and trucks in America, using hybrid technology and other advances. As a result, if you buy a new car in the next few years, the better gas mileage is going to save you about \$3,000 at the pump.

But we need to do more. We need to harness the potential I've seen in promising start-ups and innovative clean energy companies across America. And that's at the heart of a debate we're having right now in Washington about the budget.

Both Democrats and Republicans believe we need to reduce the deficit. That's where we

agree. The question we're debating is how do we do it. I've proposed a balanced approach that cuts spending while still investing in things like education and clean energy that are so critical to creating jobs and opportunities for the middle class. It's a simple idea: We need to live within our means while at the same time investing in our future.

That's why I so strongly disagree with a proposal in Congress that cuts our investments in clean energy by 70 percent. Yes, we've got to get rid of wasteful spending, and make no mistake, we're going through every line of the budget scouring for savings. But we can do that without sacrificing our future. We can do that while still investing in the technologies that will create jobs and allow the United States to lead the world in new industries. That's how we'll not only reduce the deficit, but also lower our dependence on foreign oil, grow our economy, and leave our children a safer planet. And that's what our mission has to be.

Thanks for listening, and have a wonderful Easter weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:15 p.m. on April 22 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on April 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 23.

Statement on Armenian Remembrance Day *April 23, 2011*

We solemnly remember the horrific events that took place 96 years ago, resulting in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. In 1915, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire.

I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests. Contested history destabilizes the present and stains the memory of those whose lives were taken, while reckoning with the past lays

a sturdy foundation for a peaceful and prosperous shared future. History teaches us that our nations are stronger and our cause is more just when we appropriately recognize painful pasts and work to rebuild bridges of understanding toward a better tomorrow. The United States knows this lesson well from the dark chapters in our own history. I support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their common history. As we commemorate the *Meds Yeghern* and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished, we also recommit