

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