

advertisement

Fast, convenient, AND affordable

Save on select Wireless\* All-in-Ones, Photo Printers and Lasers

Save Today

Limited time offers

Shop Now >

msnbc.com

## 'The Rachel Maddow Show' for Wednesday, March 30th, 2011

Read the transcript to the Wednesday show

updated 3/31/2011 12:58:39 PM ET

Guests: Michael Isikoff, Bob Cavnar, David Sirota

RACHEL MADDOW, HOST: Good evening, Lawrence. Thank you.

And thanks to you at home for staying with us this hour.

There is breaking news tonight out of Washington, D.C. As the "Reuters" news agency reports, from they say are four separate government sources, that President Obama has authorized covert operations inside Libya to help the rebels there.

Quoting "Reuters," "President Barack Obama has signed a secret order authorizing covert U.S. government support for rebel forces seeking to oust Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. Obama signed the order known as a presidential 'finding,' within the last two or three weeks. Such findings are a principle form of presidential directive used to authorize secret operations by the Central Intelligence Agency."

Indeed, "The New York Times" then reports tonight that small groups of CIA operatives have been working in Libya for several weeks. The unknown number of American officers, according to "The Times," gathering

intelligence for military airstrikes and making contact with rebels.

Now, does this mean that the CIA is in Libya as a pseudo-military force to topple Gadhafi the way the CIA participated as a pseudo-military force in toppling the Taliban in Afghanistan back in 2001? "The Times" goes out of its way in its reporting tonight to say no.

First, in Afghanistan, the CIA worked with U.S. military forces on the ground in Afghanistan. In Libya, the U.S. is still ruling out ground troops.

Second, in Afghanistan, the CIA provided weapons to the opposition forces that were there fighting the Taliban.

advertisement

Fast, convenient, AND affordable

Save on select Wireless\* All-in-Ones, Photo Printers and Lasers

Save Today

Limited time offers

Shop Now >

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



So far in Libya, the U.S. is not saying we are doing that. The U.S. is not saying we are arming the rebels. But as I understand it, this presidential finding, if it has really happened, it would be the kind of instrument that President Obama would use to authorize something like arming the rebels.

Again, I am not totally clear on what the presidential finding would mean if there is one, and since we don't know for a fact that there definitely was one, it is hard to say exactly what its terms are. That's one of the things we're going to try to figure out with Michael Isikoff from NBC in just a moment.

What we know in terms, though, of the context here, of the legality of this, presidential findings have been around for decades, presidents using them to authorize covert actions have to notify the top Democrat and top Republican in the House and the Senate, as well as top Democrat and top Republican on the intelligence committees in both the House and the Senate. That is eight members of Congress all together, and they call that group the "gang of eight." A president using a presidential finding to authorize covert action has to notify that gang of eight members of Congress.

One of the Republicans in the gang of eight, his named is Mike Rogers. He is a congressman from Michigan. Check out his comment was on this subject today.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. MIKE ROGERS ®, MICHIGAN: Until we get a lot of very detailed information about who they are, and what they're for, I will be fairly strong voice against arming the rebels.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Against arming the rebels.

OK, one of the Democrats in that gang of eight is Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger of Maryland. Here's what he had to say about it today.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER (D), MARYLAND: First thing, I'm not going to discuss any covert action, and anything. Well, I'm not aware of that, of what Obama did or did not sign. I'm not sure if there's going to be an order, it's just an on-going issue that we deal with. But I'm a member of the gang of eight, so if there's

advertisement

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

Offer ends 2/29/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only. Device required. \$19.95 Hardware & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable state tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

**NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO START-UP COSTS!**

**Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**



anything involved in covert, I will be (INAUDIBLE).

REPORTER: Is there something statutorily or just out of—

RUPPERSBERGER: Research it. I don't know. No, the gang of eight really has to do with—I think it's law that's basically, from a check and balance that they need to notify Congress of certain covert type of situations.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: The gang of eight, they need to notify Congress of certain covert type of situations. He also says, "I'm not aware of anything President Obama did or did not sign."

He's in the gang of eight. Does he sound like he was looped in on this, if this, in fact, has happened? He does not sound like it to me.

Joining us now to figure out what this means is Michael Isikoff.

He's NBC News national investigative correspondent.

Mr. Isikoff, thank you for helping us out with this.

MICHAEL ISIKOFF, NBC NEWS: My pleasure, Rachel. Good to be with you.

MADDOW: Recognizing the ambiguity with which I have discussed this so far, as far as you understand a presidential finding, did I

essentially get that right? What else can you tell us about a presidential finding and what they are used for?

ISIKOFF: You did. I mean, this has been used by presidents for

decades, as you pointed out. And it's generally defined as authorization

by the president for covert action to topple the political, economic regime

and economic regime of another country, to actually influence action.

That's different than just gathering intelligence.

And so, as my old colleague Mark Hosenball for "Reuters" reported tonight, there was such a finding. I've confirmed that with a administration officials. It doesn't mean that

advertisement



**HEARTLAND QUALITY  
OMAHA STEAKS  
SINCE 1917**

**SAVE**  
up to **64%**  
to

**Plus, get  
3 FREE Gifts**

Special Code: **45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99**  
Send flowers for any occasion from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



the president has decided to arm the rebels, but this is a first step that would allow him to do so.

But the real key here, and this is why I think the comments you showed from Rogers and Ruppertsberger are so important is that without congressional approval of that, without congressional support, you can almost hear the echoes of Nicaragua and Contras in the 1980s. Remember the Boland Amendment, remember the big fights we had when presidents authorized covert action without the support of Congress.

MADDOW: So, explain that, though, about the Boland Amendment. I mean, as far as how this was authorized in the checks and balances, I get that the president has to inform the so-called gang of eight from Congress. But—I mean, do they have to sign off on what he's doing, and if what they are being notified of is a covert action, how can they complain if they're not allowed to talk about it publicly?

ISIKOFF: Well, that is always the problem you get into when you deal with the intelligence committees because they simply say we can't talk about it, it's classified, then it's very hard to learn anything.

But, look, the law does not say the president needs congressional approval for this. But it is awfully—he's on awfully shaky grounds if he goes forward without it. That's what happened with Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. The Boland Amendment, Congress always has the power of the purse. It can always vote to deny funds,

as it did in the Boland Amendment for arming the Contras, and this was, of course, the roots of the Iran Contra scandal. The president circumvented that, found another way to arm the Nicaraguan rebels.

What we have here in this finding—so far as reported by “Reuters”

is that one of the options the president is considering is sending arms through the Saudis and Qataris, that seems like a somewhat circuitous way of accomplishing the same goal. But, you know, whether he goes forward with this without congressional approval, I think it's going to be one of the biggest decisions of the Obama presidency.

MADDOW: So, to be clear, though, so that we understand as best we can based on what the reporting is right now, what has just happened—if he has issued a presidential finding, that is an authorization of covert

advertisement



**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
SINCE 1917

**SAVE**  
up to **64%**  
to

**Plus, get**  
**3 FREE Gifts**

Special Code: **45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement



**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

Offer ends 2/29/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only. Service required. \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable state tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

**NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO START-UP COSTS!**

**Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**



action, as you describe it, something that's designed to influence action, not just get information. And it could also be a way that the president was trying to at least lay the groundwork for starting to provide arms to the rebels. But we don't know what the finding is, and so we don't know exactly what it is authorizing.

ISIKOFF: We don't know precisely what it is, it's by its nature classified. So, we won't see this for decades, if at all. But, look, publicly, I talked to White House officials tonight and they say look, this is something—arming the Libyan rebels is something the president is certainly seriously considering. And what's more, he realizes—they realize that they've got to make decision on this soon, given the events on the ground, how fast it's moving and the set backs the Libyan rebels have faced over the last couple of days—you know, it may be to late if those arms, if this drags on for weeks or months.

So, I think, you know, we're approaching decision time. And it's a pretty big decision.

MADDOW: Not just for him, but for Congress. A fairly mooted reaction from coming thus far, but that, as you say, that can't continue.

Michael Isikoff, NBC News national investigative correspondent—this is complicated and important. And I am glad to have your help in sorting it out. Thanks.

ISIKOFF: Thank you.

MADDOW: All right. Something you may have heard today about oil from a pretty reputable source that I'm pretty sure wasn't true.

Also, something we worked out today with maps about Japan that made me have to lie down on the floor in my office and close my eyes and not think about it for a while.

Also, something about important ways to mispronounce important things.

And something about the '80s—something about the 1980s that oddly and weirdly, exactly matches what is going on in our world right now.

That is all ahead in a very busy hour. Please stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**

**Bouquets from \$19.99<sup>+s/h</sup>**

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.) **1-877-835-8373**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: (END VIDEO CLIP)

We cannot keep going from shock when gas prices go up to trance when they go back down. We can't rush to propose action when gas prices are high and then hit the snooze button when they fall again.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: President Obama today unveiled his new energy policy, his blueprint for a secure energy future—the promises of more electric cars, more biofuel, better gas mileage, more weather proofing, safer nuclear power and a pony for every natural born citizen under the age of 10.

Also, oil. Presidential energy policies always come down to the devil you really, really know very well, and that is oil. President Obama set a goal of cutting by a third the amount of oil that America buys overseas.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OBAMA: This begins my continuing to increase America's oil supply.

Last year, American oil production reached its highest level since 2003. And for the first time in more than a decade, oil we imported accounted for less than half of the liquid fuel we consumed. So, that was a good trend.

To keep reducing that reliance on imports, my administration is encouraging offshore oil exploration and production.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Stop, stop it for a second. Here's the thing about drilling for oil at home—you take the oil out of the ground. What do you do with it? You ship it around the world so it can be sold as a commodity on the global market to China, or India, or Brazil, the European Union, wherever else, including here.

Just because you found more oil in your own Gulf of Mexico, for instance, does not mean you made an appreciable dent in the amount of oil you import at home, to be clear. OK? It's a global market. You just contribute your supply to the global supply, I'm just saying.

There is another thing, though, about drilling for oil at home. If in the act of trying to get your oil out of your own Gulf of Mexico, if you find that something goes terribly wrong, then you get this—you get a lot of oil at home—more domestic oil that you can stand the sight

advertisement

**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
 SINCE 1917

**SAVE**  
 up to **64%**  
 to

**Plus, get**  
**3 FREE Gifts**

**Special Code: 45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
 or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



HEARTLAND QUALITY  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
SINCE 1917

Special Code: 45069ZWN

**SAVE** up to **64%**  
Plus, get  
**3 FREE Gifts**

To Order:  
[www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496



of or ever hope to mop up with your outdated equipment and your rented crews.

You want more domestic oil? Have some. Man, you've got oil on top of oil on top of oil, covering dead birds, dead dolphins, dead turtles, you got tar balls on beaches, underwater plumes that billow for miles and then mysteriously seem to disappear. But who knows? Bayous and hurricane breaks already fragile now covered in oil and at risk of never recovering.

One of the great challenges of the Obama administration was finding a way to stop BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster last year, to somehow plug that seemingly unpluggable well—and then to somehow find a way to get the oil industry going again without risking another catastrophe. Roll tape again, please.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OBAMA: My administration is encouraging offshore oil exploration and production as long as it's safe and responsible. I don't think anybody here has forgotten what happened last year, where we had to deal with the largest oil spill in history. I know some of the fishermen on the Gulf Coast haven't forgotten.

And what we learned from that disaster helped us put in place smarter standards of safety and responsibility. For example, if you're going to drill in deepwater, you've got to prove before you start drilling that you can actually contain an underwater spill. That's just common sense.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Just common sense. We learned from that disaster. We learned our lessons, President Obama is saying. That's why the administration has started issuing new permits for deepwater drilling. We have learned and now it's safer.

I don't actually think that is true. The reason why is because of information that we have reported on this show. What we have discovered would seem to prove that the president's assurances about learning from the BP disaster and higher safety standards, what we have reported seems to indicate that the president's assurances about those safety standards are unwarranted, not true.

And here's why I say that. I mean it for a specific reason. This animation here shows a blowup preventer on an oil rig.

advertisement



HEARTLAND QUALITY  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
SINCE 1917

Special Code: 45069ZWN

**SAVE** up to **64%**  
Plus, get  
**3 FREE Gifts**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

**SECURITY CHOICE** **ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER** **1-877-835-8373**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



This equipment, this blowout preventer, is attached to the top of an oil well. If the well blows out, if the pressure from the under seafloor blows up into the pipe, that blowout preventer essentially seals up the well, it holds the pressure and the oil in. That's the way a blowup preventer is supposed to work so you do not end up with this—with 11 men killed, a historic oil spill that continues for months.

As part of its investigation into the BP disaster, the government hired a Norwegian firm to perform a forensic examination of what went wrong with the blowout preventer at Deepwater Horizon. What they found is something that is scary and that is not just scary about that one blowout preventer but about every one of them. They found that even when they work as designed, when they are not busted, they do not work.

The pressure they are designed to keep in, that same pressure can render them useless, even if they're in fine shape. And instead of working properly, you get this, right? Despite your blowout preventer, you get a blowout.

The report calls for all sorts of new studies on blowout preventers and says, quote, "the findings of this study should be considered and addressed in the design of future blowout preventers and the need for modifying current blowout preventers."

This is really important. Blowout preventers don't need to be inspected more or maintained better or signed off on more by more third parties. These things need to be redesigned.

Your lead parachute may be in perfect working order. You may take it out and buff it every day. It still doesn't mean that your lead parachute is going to keep you alive if you jump out of a plane and deploy it.

"The blowout preventers are lead parachutes" report was released a week ago today. Despite these findings and this government report that this key piece of equipment is fundamentally flawed and prone to failure when used as directed—today, President Obama continued to assure the nation that drilling is safer than it used to be, that the lessons have been learned. And again, I am here to tell you that is not necessarily so and I am sorry about it.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, we got a copy of the oil spill response plan for first deepwater permit issued by the Obama administration since the BP disaster. It's for a well whose largest owner, I still love this, is BP, the well operator is Noble Energy.

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\***  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

**Call Now! 1-877-835-8373**

**SECURITY CHOICE** **ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

Print Powered By 

advertisement



**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

Offer ends 2/29/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only. Device required. \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable state tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

**NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO START-UP COSTS!**

**Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**

**msnbc.com**

And this is their oil spill response plan for a permit that was

issued last month. Their oil spill response plan is dated September 2009 -

eight months before the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

Whatever lessons we learned from that disaster, you will not find them in here, not unless you can bend the space, time continuum. In which case, please go back in time and tell me how to pronounce Mackinac before last night's show.

The Interior Department has said that it is essentially no big deal that the oil spill response plans predate the BP disaster. They say companies are allowed to go forward with permits as they update old emergency schemes. They tell us there are other safety measures they can't reveal to us because they are too proprietary, too secret for us.

But here is what we know we know: the oil spill response plan at least in this case is old, pre-BP. Blowout preventers do not work like they are supposed to. And the Interior Department is still handing out permits for new deep water wells one after another to companies with pre-BP response plans and to companies using the blowout preventer technology that led to the largest accidental offshore oil spill in the history of the world.

Tonight, we have learned something new in the scandal that the administration is trying really

hard to make not a scandal, and that new information, nowhere else, is next here.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: After the BP oil disaster prompted a moratorium on new deepwater drilling in the U.S., the Obama administration just last month started handing out permits again. Today was a new permit for Shell Oil off the coast of Louisiana. Last Friday, they approved state oil for drilling a new well in the Gulf. And a week before that, it was BHP Billiton getting approved to drill a well in the Gulf as well.

BHP Billiton hired Transocean to do the drilling on that well—yes, you remember Transocean. This drill ship with an unpronounceable name as you see here had been doing the drilling prior to the moratorium, and according to the latest available information from Interior Department's Web site, Transocean is still the driller of record.

advertisement



**HEARTLAND QUALITY  
OMAHA STEAKS  
SINCE 1917**

**SAVE**  
up to **64%**  
to

**Plus, get  
3 FREE Gifts**

**Special Code: 45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement

**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
SINCE 1917

Special Code: 45069ZWN

**SAVE** up to **64%**  
Plus, get **3 FREE Gifts**

To Order:  
[www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496



Why should you care about that particular drill ship drilling in your particular Gulf of Mexico? Because according to a 30-year veteran of the oil industry who we consulted with about this today, that drill ship is equipped with just about exactly the same blowout preventer that was used by the Deepwater Horizon—same blowout preventer that caused the worst oil spill in United States history.

All that happy talk about how much safer everything is now—they are using essentially the same equipment that was used in the BP disaster. Happy talk or not.

Joining us now is former oil industry executive, Bob Cavnar. He is that 30-year veteran of the oil and gas industry who we consulted with today. He’s currently CEO of Luca Technologies, which is in natural gas industry. Before that, Mr. Cavnar was president and CEO of an oil and gas drilling exploration firm called Milagro Exploration. Mr. Cavnar is author of the book, “Disaster on the Horizon: High Stakes, High Risks, and the Story Behind the Deepwater Horizon Blowout.”

Bob, thanks for being here. Appreciate it.

**BOB CAVNAR, FORMER OIL INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE:** Happy to be with you, Rachel.

**MADDOW:** What do we know about this Transocean drill ship’s blowout preventer as compared with Deepwater Horizon?

**CAVNAR:** This drill ship was built about the same time as Deepwater Horizon was. So, the b

lowout preventer is about that same vintage, around the year 2000. It’s essentially identical to Deepwater Horizon preventer has the same Cameron-manufactured preventers on top, and then the same Cameron rams on the top and bottom. The only difference is it has one more ram for a little more redundancy than the Deepwater Horizon.

**MADDOW:** So, one change. But other than that, pretty much the same.

**CAVNAR:** The control system is the same. Everything else is the same.

**MADDOW:** Do we know anything about this particular drill ship’s safety record?

**CAVNAR:** You know, it’s interesting. This drill ship received an MMS, which is predecessor to the BOEMRE safety award in 2005. But we did find out that it had emergency riser disconnects three times, once in 2002, once in

advertisement

**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

**Switch today!**

**1-888-778-0985**

NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO STARTUP COSTS!

Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only (lease required). \$39.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.) **1-877-835-8373**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



2004, and again in 2007.

The 2002 and 2004 incidents were caused by weather. This is a dynamically positioned ship that's held in place by GPS and thrusters.

MADDOW: OK.

CAVNAR: In severe weather, it can be pushed off location. And that's happened twice in those years. In 2007, it was operator error.

MADDOW: Operator error.

CAVNAR: The operator who runs the dynamic positioning system actually inputted the wrong data, had corrupted data and pushed it off location.

MADDOW: Are there upgrades? I mean, the Department of Interior is bragging that they say there have been safety upgrades. You and I have talked about whether or not you can do better inspections of your lead parachute, as I put it before.

But are there upgrades that could be made to a blowout preventer like this one that would make it less like the Deepwater Horizon, that would make it more likely to survive the kind of blowout that deep sixed that oil preventer?

CAVNAR: You know, the Norwegian company we're talking about recommended a complete redesign, and that's what they talked about that all through the report, redesigning the rams themselves. The only thing they can do to existing devices is redundancy. If they have

two of the blind shear rams that cut the pipe, hopefully, one of those will work. Or just having one on the Deepwater Horizon, obviously even that failed, it was complete failure. Short of that, you got to redesign the entire device.

MADDOW: It seems like the federal government is much more focused at this point on making sure that oil companies can contain an oil spill if it happens, rather than talking about preventing an oil spill from happening in the first place.

Is that a way of not focusing on the blowout preventer design flaw? Is that a way of essentially giving that away and saying, we'll just clean it up if that happens?

CAVNAR: Yes, absolutely. That's what I've been talking about the last several weeks. Everyone has focused on what happens when the blowout preventer fails. I think we should

advertisement

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99** +s/h  
Send flowers for any occasion from **ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at: [proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



focus on keeping the blowout preventer from failing in the first place.

MADDOW: Right.

CAVNAR: And maintaining well control where you don't have to use it. And so, if you keep well control solid and you have a reliable device, you don't need subsea well containment. It's good to have that also in case everything else goes wrong, but you really have to work on design of the blowout preventer where it does not fail when you have to activate it.

MADDOW: When it does not fail because of the thing that requires it in the first place. That's the thing that makes me crazy about this.

Have you seen post-Deepwater Horizon safety improvements that should make people feel reassured enough to be comfortable with these permits going out at a rate of one every four days now?

CAVNAR: You know, usually after one of these events, like after the Exxon Valdez, the industry really focuses for a couple of years—they really focus, they make sure the safety reports are filled out, everybody is trained and everybody is working according to the procedures.

But success breeds complacency. And over a period of time, you have this—slip into the same complacency where history could very well repeat itself if we don't improve the devices themselves.

MADDOW: Bob Cavnar, former oil industry executive, author of “Disaster on the Horizon,” 30-year veteran of the oil industry—I should note for viewers we tried to contact BHP Billiton and Transocean tonight, nobody was available to answer questions. But, of course, we will keep trying tirelessly.

Bob, thanks very much tonight. Appreciate it.

CAVNAR: Thanks, Rachel. You bet.

MADDOW: After that super heavy duty news, for our next segment, we have come up with an excuse to play a clip from the Michael J. Fox movie, “Back to the Future.” Yay!

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What is it, Einy (ph)? Oh, my God. They found me. I don't know how,

advertisement



**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\***  
(With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

**Call Now! 1-877-835-8373**

**SECURITY CHOICE** ADT Authorized Company **ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to joint checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.) **1-877-835-8373**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



but they found me. Run for it, Marty.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Who, who?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Who do you think? The Libyans!

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Who do you think? The Libyans!

This is the guy who was running Libya at the time that movie, “Back to the Future,” came out in 1985. Yes, same guy. What were we Americans doing vis-a-vis Libya at that time? A “Time” magazine cover from April 1986, “Target Gadhafi.” While not quite the same thing, still, ballpark.

Before the new Libyan war and new international nuclear disaster, not Chernobyl but Japan, my friend David Sirota turned his eerie gift of prescience into a book about how the 1980s are not only repeating themselves, they warped our national thinking in really surprisingly propagandistic ways the first time they came around.

The book is called “Back to our Future: How the 1980s Explained the World We Live in Now, Our Culture, Our Politics, Our Everything.” It is very, very funny. Also, spooky, kind of like David Sirota himself.

David, are you wearing “Save Ferris” t-shirt?

DAVID SIROTA, “BACK TO OUR FUTURE” AUTHOR: I am wearing a “Save Ferris” t-shirt.

MADDOW: Can we drop “The Interview” bug? Oh, yes, very good.

Excellent and perfect.

Let me ask you that—talk me through American-Libyan war/intervention 2011, and American-Libyan war/intervention 1980s. Can we learn anything from saying this is a rerun? I think we can.

I think one of the things that came out of the 1980s, both in the pop culture and politics was that war can really solve our problems, that we can solve problems through force. And I think we saw that in the 1980s through proxy wars, through bombing raids and through 25 years ago almost to the month bombing Libya. That was the idea.

And we saw it in pop culture of the 1980s, the Top Gun-ification of our debates, of our pop culture, of pop culture aimed at children, and

advertisement

**HEARTLAND QUALITY OMAHA STEAKS SINCE 1917**

**SAVE up to 64%**

**Plus, get 3 FREE Gifts** **Special Code: 45069ZWN**

**To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71) or call 1-877-605-0496**

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99**  
Send flowers for any occasion from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



now we're seeing really a rerun—this idea that every problem can be solved, every foreign policy problem apparently can be solved with a war. Another thing that comes out of the '80s is every domestic problem supposedly can be solved by a tax cut.

These all come out of the 1980s—and, again, both the political culture and I think the popular culture of the 1980s.

MADDOW: Well, the nice thing about that, though—I mean, it can be sort of a bummer when you think of it that way, but it can also be like the '80s where the pilot project for the 2000s is that—well, you know, we can look and see the effect was of those tax cuts or of whether or not military intervention solved all our foreign policy issues.

But one of the things I think you document is that when things in the '80s really didn't work out, they got mythologized so that the lesson that we learned about the '80s is that they did work.

SIROTA: That's right. That's what's so crazy about this. You're absolutely right.

If we're rerunning history from the 1980s, we should be able to learn about it, learn from our mistakes. But what's happened is that we've really created a legend out of what happened in the 1980s.

And I would argue that that was both—again, both from Ronald Reagan and from a lot of the entertainment culture that doesn't seem like

political messages. We learn from movies like "Iron Eagle," from "Top Gun," from TV shows like the "A-Team," like "The Dukes of Hazard," that the government can't do anything right, that the military is the ultimate institution in society, and we have created this monumental idea that everything we did in the 1980s was good and everything that we did in the 1980s we should keep doing.

MADDOW: One—on that one reference you just made to the "A-Team," I have to tell you, I was born in 1973. I know you're a little younger than me. But every reference in the book is something that I emotionally get.

And I have to tell you, I watched every single second of the "A-Team" that was ever put on television. I was absolutely obsessed with the "A-Team." Can you explain to me how that warped my mind?

SIROTA: Yes. Well, you were like many young

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**  
**Bouquets**  
from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99**  
Send flowers for any occasion from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



people. The “A-Team” was one of the top-rated shows among preteens in the mid-1980s. It had a big effect on people. And think about the story of the “A-Team,” right? The government unduly incarcerates our heroes, they escape because the government can’t even keep them incarcerated, and they solve the problems that the government refuses to solve. In fact, they are solving problems while the government is trying to apprehend them for solving society’s problems.

Obviously, we can see the analog now. This is how political culture talks about government, that you can’t rely on the government, you have to rely on outsiders. You have to rely on the outsiders. You have to rely on the private contractors, the Blackwaters, the Hallburtons, to solve our society’s problems.

I’m not making a direct link between Blackwater and the “A-Team,” but what I’m saying is, is when kids, when you and I as kids and 7 million other preteens are taught that government can’t do anything and that we have to hire the outsider, that becomes the way in which our government now speaks to us, our politics now speak to us.

MADDOW: And it makes—it makes those arguments now resonate in a way that is emotionally satisfying and that we can’t necessarily explain because it sort of shaped our subconscious. It is a deeply conspiratorial book that you have written, David Sirota, but it is also one that I have to say rang as true to me on just about every single page. I think it’s a real achievement. And I’m really happy you

had so much success with it. Thanks, David.

SIROTA: Well, thanks, Rachel.

MADDOW: The book is called “Back to our Future: How the 1980s Explained the World We Live in Now, Our Culture, Our Politics, Our Everything.” I will tell you, this book made me remember the muscle memory of how to win the Atari games that I was good at. I was really good at Kaboom.

All right. There is a town near where I live in western Mass called Savoy. Looks like Savoy, pronounce Savoy. There’s a town in Missouri called Versailles. It is spelled like Versailles, the French royal thing. But in Missouri, VERSAILLES is pronounced Versailles. I could go on and on.

In fact, I shall. There is so much more to this, including a deep apology—coming up.

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**  
**Bouquets**  
from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. **1-877-835-8373**  
 See important terms and conditions below.) **SECURITY CHOICE**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: If you phonetically read the name of think tank, it is Mackinac. They apparently preferred to be called Mackinaw. I'm going to keep calling them Mackinac.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Mackinac, Mackinaw—I knew the place in Michigan was Mackinac. I did not know the think tank was named for the place and that it should therefore sound the same. Still, totally wrong. Totally wrong.

Also, Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac. Fond du Lac. Secretary La Follette, Secretary Doug La Follette.

This whole saying things out loud, pronouncing things on television, it can be trouble.

OK. So, to be clear, the think tank in Michigan like the island is called Mackinac. I can be spiteful, but it's still Mackinac. The city in Wisconsin is called Fond du Lac. And the secretary of state of Wisconsin is Doug La Follette.

As long as we are talking about things that are hard for me to say out loud, I need you to know I am incapable of saying the word procurement any faster than I did just then. Procurement --- I cannot say it except that slowly. I cannot say it any faster or it comes

out garbled. Nuclear, no problem. Procurement, slow.

At the Maddow Blog today, we simultaneously corrected the record on the Mackinac thing and we solicited our readers favorite weird or surprising mispronunciations of American places.

From Mighty Ponygirl, "In Michigan, there's a town called Charlotte. You may think oh, Charlotte, like North Carolina." It turns out that's wrong. Michiganders pronounce this 'shar-LOT.' Emphasis on the lot. When it doubt, get Frenchy."

According to eaglelady11, quote, "I grew up in Colorado. We pronounce it Colorado. Rad rhymes with dad, not Colorado rhymes with rod or cod. Anybody who does that sounds snubby."

Blanch Elizabeth Debaro (ph) tells us in part,

advertisement

**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
 SINCE 1917

**SAVE**  
 up to **64%**  
 to

**Plus, get**  
**3 FREE Gifts**

**Special Code: 45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
 or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99**  
Send flowers for any occasion from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



quote, “Despite how the Golden Girls pronounce it, Boca Raton does not rhyme with baton. It is pronounced Boca Raton like phone.”

According to Andrew Eckhart, “Maryland is pronounced to rhyme with Merlin.”

But then Susan B says, “Pronounced about the same as Merlin actually, but don’t say it that way if you aren’t from Maryland, or you will sound silly.”

Sandy tells us, quote, “If you live in Kansas, the Arkansas River and Arkansas City are not pronounced Arkansas but rather Arkansas.”

According to Kathy, the capitol of South Dakota is pronounced Pierre. Looks like pier but it’s Pierre. Also, a small local town is spelled like Mt. Sinai, but pronounced Sinai. Which is so awkward, it is very awesome.

A commenter named Susan tells us that a small town n Iowa spelled PERU is Peru. One of the producers actually could not believe that last one could be true, so she called up and kind of interrogated the poor person who answered the phone at the chamber of commerce in Madison County, Iowa. And that person cheerily assured her that it is, in fact, pronounced pee-ru (ph). Peru, Iowa, not Peru, pee-ru.

In other words, I and the staff of the show, we have as much pronunciation trouble as anybody. Procurement.

But, luckily for us, there are solutions, even some that don’t involve harassing good-natured Midwesterners. Merriam Webster’s online dictionary has a really good pronunciation guide, even as it turns out if you are trying to pronounce something that looks like Mackinac.

VOICE: Mackinac.

MADDOW: There’s also the Voice of America Web site if you are looking to pronounce the name of a foreign leader. It is particularly helpful like, say, for example, you would like to give a phone call or something, a shout-out maybe to the president of Georgia.

VOICE: Mikheil Saakashvili.

MADDOW: Saakashvili. We don’t even have a way to indicate that one in phonetic spelling.

If you have a very specific need to know how

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**  
**Bouquets**  
from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement

**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch! **Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**  
 NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
 NO START-UP COSTS!

Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only (lease required). \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

msnbc.com

to pronounce the name of a person, place or thing in the state of Wisconsin, specifically, there is a great web based resource I found today, at misspronouncer.com. Check it out. At this Web site, here is the Secretary of State Doug La Follette pronouncing his own name for you.

VOICE: Doug La Follette.

MADDOW: See?

Best of all, though, there is this. Forvo, this pronunciation guide features people from places where things are located, pronouncing them. There are six pronunciations of Mackinac. Let's hear them.

VOICE: Mackinac, Mackinac, Mackinac, Mackinac, Mackinac.

MADDOW: Did you hear the last one? Mackinac. She gets two thumbs down for pronouncing it that way, but she got nothing like the rain of hell fire that Michiganders rained down on me last night for getting it wrong the same way.

I am deeply sorry. Also, I am also super edified and entertained by the process of coming up with this apology.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: It was a nightmare scenario when it happened. It is still a nightmare scenario today. A U.S. nuclear power plant on the outskirts of a big American city getting into

trouble because of an equipment accident inside the nuclear plant. The reactor's highly radioactive fuel rods began heating up at a dangerous rate. There was a partial nuclear reactor core meltdown, which caused the immediate shutdown of that nuclear power plant.

Was that Three Mile Island? No, that was Fermi 1, a nuclear reactor in Monroe County, Michigan, on the shores of Lake Erie. That American nuclear plant went through a partial core meltdown.

How about this one? A U.S. nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, just outside Harrisburg—forced to shut down after one of its reactors suffered two different equipment malfunctions in the span of nine days, forcing a leak of radiation into the air.

Was that Three Mile Island? No. That was Peach Bottom nuclear station in York County,

advertisement

**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch! **Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**  
 NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
 NO STARTUP COSTS!

Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only (lease required). \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only. Device required. \$19.95 Hardware & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax/adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

**NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO START-UP COSTS!**

**Switch today!**  
**1-888-778-0985**



Pennsylvania.

How about a U.S. nuclear power plant on the Eastern Seaboard suffering a catastrophic failure of its emergency shutdown system, the system in place to prevent a nuclear meltdown? The system failed and then the backup to the shutdown system failed. And then three days later, the same systems fail again.

Three Mile Island, right? No, that was Salem nuclear power plant in southern New Jersey.

How about this one? A U.S. nuclear plant employee carrying a lit candle accidentally causes a fire just below the plant's control room. That fire manages to take out the plant's primary and emergency cooling systems, causing the shutdown of first and then ultimately two reactors.

That's got to be Three Mile Island, right? No, that's the Browns Ferry nuclear plant in Athens, Alabama.

How about this? A U.S. power plant suffers severe malfunctions over the course of two days, releasing 600,000 gallons of boiling radioactive steam into the air.

Is that Three Mile Island? No. That's the Indian Point nuclear plant just north of New York City.

OK. How about a different U.S. nuclear power plant losing its main power source, forcing workers into an all-out scramble to keep the

radioactive fuel rods cool, temperatures begin to rise, putting the plant at risk of a meltdown?

Three Mile Island? No, the Davis-Besse nuclear station in Carroll Township, Ohio, right on the shores of Lake Erie.

A U.S. nuclear power plant suffers a catastrophic series of human and mechanical failures, cooling water drops so low in the one of the plant's reactors that fuel rods begin to melt down, radioactive gases released into the air, nearly 200,000 Americans are forced to flee their homes? That was Three Mile Island.

This week, 32 years ago, on March 30th, 1979, featured this lead story on "NBC Nightly News."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TV ANCHOR: Good evening.

advertisement



**HEARTLAND QUALITY  
OMAHA STEAKS  
SINCE 1917**

**SAVE**  
up to **64%**  
to

**Plus, get  
3 FREE Gifts**

**Special Code: 45069ZWN**

**To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496**

Print Powered By 

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19.99** +s/h  
Send flowers for any occasion from **ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



There was serious trouble today at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania—trouble serious enough to cause the evacuation of small children and pregnant women from a five-mile area around the endangered nuclear plant. The problem is that it is more difficult than had been thought to cool the radioactive nuclear fuel inside the power plant. And until it's cooled, it is very dangerous.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Three Mile Island is usually thought of as America's only big nuclear accident. That's because we tend to forget that 13 years before Three Mile Island was Fermi I 1966, the Browns Ferry nuclear accident in Alabama 1975, the Peach Bottom nuclear accident in Pennsylvania 1980, the Salem reactor accident in New Jersey 1983, and the Indian Point nuclear accident in New York was in 2000, the Davis-Besse nuclear accident in Ohio 2002. And that's not an exclusive list. I could go on, right?

Three Mile Island gets all the glory, but, really, it is in very crowded company when it comes to U.S. nuclear accidents over the last five decades.

Today, in Japan, the IAEA said it found radiation levels high enough to trigger evacuation recommendation, 40 kilometers away from the Fukushima reactors. To keep that in perspective, so far, the evacuation order around that plant extends to 20 kilometers. The government has advised a

voluntary evacuation to 30 kilometers.

But in this town, 40 kilometers away, well beyond even the voluntary evacuation zone, the U.N.'s nuclear agency said today they found radiation levels twice as high as the level at which that agency recommends that people evacuate.

You may remember that on Friday, on this show, we hosted a distinguished nuclear scientist named Professor Frank Von Hippel from Princeton University. Dr. Von Hippel described in our interview some mapping of high radiation readings in Japan that had been done by our American Department of Energy.

We posted this on our blog. You can see the bright red line there? It goes northwest from the reactor. That's what was measured in Japan as of a week ago.

Now, check this out. The town that the IAEA

advertisement



**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\***  
(With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

**Call Now! 1-877-835-8373**

**SECURITY CHOICE** ADT Authorized Company  
**ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to joint checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*** **Call Now!**  
 (With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.) **1-877-835-8373**

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.



says today showed dangerously high radiation levels, 40 kilometers from the plant, that town is here. So, that red line showed the extent of highest levels of detected radiation emanating from the plant as of last Wednesday, the town where today the U.N. says radiation levels are twice what should prompt an evacuation. That town is just about right in line with where we have been able to see that radiation traveling across Japan all of this time.

I generally think that learning more about something is a way to alleviate your fear about it, but in this case, when I asked the producer Will Femia here on this show to put those maps together, and this is what he came up with, it did not make me feel better, it made me feel bad about what is going on there and how out of control this still is.

Meanwhile, the United States Congress has convened hearings on how safe our nuclear reactors are here, putting the nuclear energy industry in the not all that hot but still a little hot seat.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANTHONY PIETRANGELO, NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE: One thing I can say going forward is that, you know, our industry, our hallmark is learning from operating experience. We learned a lot from TMI in terms of operator training, as well as design enhancements, and we will enhance safety as a result of Fukushima. We will get these lessons learned.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: We will get these lessons learned.

I have a suggested lesson already. The simple point—remember how at Fukushima when the power went out the backup power was those diesel generators? But the same thing that knocked out power off the grid also knocked out the generators? Right.

So, they needed a backup system for their backup system. The backup backup they had at Fukushima was battery-powered. It was powered by batteries that could fuel the cooling system at that plant for eight hours. And after that eight hours was up, and the batteries went dead, then the catastrophe really began.

America has about twice as many nuclear plants as Japan does. We have the same kind of backups and backup backup systems here as they do in Japan—except frankly, on average, Japan’s are better. Of America’s 104

advertisement

**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
 SINCE 1917

**SAVE**  
 up to **64%**  
 to

**Plus, get**  
**3 FREE Gifts**

**Special Code: 45069ZWN**

To order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
 or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement



**HEARTLAND QUALITY**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**  
SINCE 1917

Special Code: 45069ZWN

**SAVE** up to **64%**  
Plus, get **3 FREE Gifts**

To Order:  
[www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71)  
or call 1-877-605-0496



nuclear plants, we've got 11 plants that have the same eight-hour batteries that were not enough in Japan. The other 93 are even worse. The other 93 reactors we've got have only got four hours worth of battery power.

Congressman Ed Markey is sponsoring legislation to require 72 hours worth of battery power at these reactors. That seems like a start.

But in addition, any blindingly obvious and very upsetting new lessons to be learned from Fukushima disaster, in addition to those, there are also a lot of old lessons still waiting to be learned. One day before the nuclear disaster in Japan—one day, U.S. officials signed off on a 20-year license extension for the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant.

Here's the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant. Look familiar at all? The Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor shares the exact same design as the now crippled Fukushima reactors—a G.E.-made reactor whose design flaws have resurfaced over the last few weeks.

Full disclosure: we are part owned by G.E.

You may only hear about the Three Mile Island accident when you hear about U.S. nuclear safety issues. But an ABC News review of Nuclear Regulatory Commission records turned up 56 separate safety violations at U.S. nuclear power plants in the last four years alone—everything from mishandled radioactive material to backup generators that don't work.

California's Diablo Canyon nuclear plant, which has been the subject of much interest on this show recently, the Diablo Canyon now seeing one of its reactors shut down—the result of a failed pump that was supposed to be supplying water to the steam generators. A majority of the county's supervisors where the Diablo Canyon reactor is located are now asking the owner of that reactor to withdraw its license renewal application until better earthquake studies can be done. They're joining with their Republican state senator who is also a geophysicist who is also a guest on this show recently, and voicing their concerns about our aging, accident-prone nuclear reactors, even though they don't start from an anti-nuclear position at all.

Two hundred and fifty miles south of Diablo Canyon, another California nuclear plant announced that it will go through with new earthquake testing. That announcement coming from the operators of the San Onofre

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**

**Bouquets**

from **\$19.99** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

advertisement



**Bouquets \$19<sup>99</sup>**  
Send flowers for any occasion from **\$19<sup>99</sup>** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133



nuclear power plant on the same day that a former manager at that facility filed a lawsuit saying he was fired by the plant's owner for reporting safety concerns.

The Obama administration has brought a new high-profile bipartisan cast to support for nuclear energy, support that used to be disproportionately Republican.

Everybody gets nuclear power is better than fossil fuels in terms of carbon emissions and climate change, but making that case is not the same as realistically assuring the country that nuclear power is safe. How long after a power outage could the battery packs hold off the start of a nuclear meltdown at the reactor nearest to where you live? There is an 11 percent chance those batteries would hold out exactly as long as the batteries that failed at Fukushima. There is an 89 percent chance they would only hold out half that long.

That does it for us. Now it's time for "THE ED SHOW." Have a good night.

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT. THIS COPY MAY NOT BE IN ITS FINAL FORM AND MAY BE UPDATED.

END

Copyright 2011 CQ-Roll Call, Inc. All materials herein are protected by

United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed,

transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written

permission of CQ-Roll Call. You may not alter or remove any trademark,

copyright or other notice from copies of the content.>

PASTE THE TRANSCRIPT HERE, LEAVE THE BELOW PART ALONE

*WATCH 'THE RACHEL MADDOW SHOW'*  
*WEEKDAYS AT 9:00 P.M. ON MSNBC.*

advertisement



**Send flowers for any occasion**  
**Bouquets**  
from **\$19<sup>99</sup>** +s/h

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**