

Dr. Jerry Miller, United States of America

Official Reception Remarks

Ocean Glider Landing Event, Baiona, Spain

December 9, 2009

- Good morning distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.
- On behalf of Dr. John P. Holdren, President Obama's Science Advisor and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, where I am privileged to work, let me first say how pleased the United States government—and the United States scientific community—is to celebrate with you this history-making event in the city of Baiona—a city that is no stranger to historic transatlantic voyages.
- More than 500 years ago Christopher Columbus sailed into this port—back to the known world with news of a spectacular new land beyond any previously traversed horizon. Today we celebrate the ability, through man's ingenuity and international collaboration, to make the most unknown part of our world—our oceans— better known than they have ever been before.
- With no one on board, and guided by technology that Columbus could not have imagined—a network of man-made, orbiting satellites—this little craft has made its way across the Atlantic, gathering data along the way that will help us, as a global community of scientists and political leaders, understand and respond to some of the most pressing environmental and ecological challenges in human history.
- In his inaugural address in February, President Obama thrilled the nation and the world by announcing his intention to return science “to its rightful place.” Since then, he has reiterated that promise in a wide variety of fora, including a speech at our National Academy of Sciences, where he dismissed the idea that scientific research must wait until the economy recovers. Quote: *“There are those who say we cannot afford to invest in science that support for research is somehow a luxury at moments defined by necessities. I fundamentally disagree”* the President said, “. Science is more essential for our prosperity, our security, our health, our environment, and our quality of life than it has ever been before.” Close quote.
- At the same time, the President has expressed his strong commitment to science,

engineering, technology, and mathematics education—an appropriate subject here, given the central role played by students and faculty from Spain and Portugal who joined with their U.S. colleagues at Rutgers University to make the transoceanic voyage of the Scarlet Knight, as they have dubbed it, not only a scientific and engineering achievement but also an educational experience.

- It is especially gratifying that this craft—which is sharing with the world everything it learned on its historic voyage—is the epitome of the kind of transparency the Obama administration is committed to, in the firm belief that the best way for all of us to move ahead is to share data and information for the common good of all mankind.
- And of course it also epitomizes our commitment to international cooperation and collaboration. My boss, Dr. Holdren, has been very busy this past year refreshing and inaugurating science and technology collaborations with a number of nations around the world. And the President himself, speaking in Cairo and in other locales, has repeatedly emphasized his belief that science and technology—which amount to a global culture and community—should be used as tools of diplomacy and to speed advances that will benefit the entire world.
- The President’s statements underline a particularly important point in relation to Earth observing. Global environmental and resource issues—above all, mitigating and adapting to climate change and supporting global food security through sustainable agriculture and aquaculture—are among the most important and demanding challenges of our time, and integrated Earth observations will be indispensable to addressing them. But no one nation can bear the cost of this massive enterprise alone. For the Earth observation community, this means sharing our data and collaborating on developments such as the one we are celebrating here today.
- And speaking of being here in Spain today, please indulge me as I add a personal note. If there is a crowning achievement of my own research career, it is the work I did on developing technology for remotely sensing ocean salinity—much of it in close collaboration with Spanish scientists who, as it happens, just a few weeks ago succeeded in launching the first satellite with that important capability.
- Furthermore, and I doubt that even my closest American colleagues are aware of this, but my very first international experience as a young scientist was right here. Twenty-seven years ago I participated in a collaborative campaign with the oceanographic research institute in Vigo to study upwelling processes offshore of the Galician Rias—processes that are vital to the biological productivity of the Rias and which can now be studied autonomously with the new technologies available today. So I am really more

pleased than you can imagine to be in Baiona again, to be witness to yet another successful international collaboration.

- In closing, I will leave you with a quote from Bill Anders, the astronaut aboard Apollo 8 who took the famous photo depicting the Earth coming up over the moon's horizon—a photo now popularly known as "Earthrise." "We came all this way to explore the moon," Anders said, "and the most important thing is that we discovered the Earth."
- Ladies and gentleman, our discovery of the Earth continues to this day. Thank you for all of your efforts that led to this milestone, and may the quest continue for many years ahead, in friendship and international cooperation.

Public Reception Remarks (aka handover of glider by Spain to USA)

- Buenos Dias, Good Day Senor Minister, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.
- I am especially pleased to be here today because this autonomous craft, small as it is, represents three very large principles at the heart of the Obama Administration: Science-based decision making, open access to data and information, and increased international cooperation on science and technology. All of these ingredients are essential for our collective efforts to address the great global challenges of our time.
- As President Obama has said, and I quote: *"Science, technology, and innovation proceed more rapidly and more cost-effectively when insights, costs, and risks are shared.... That is why my administration is ramping up participation in – and our commitment to – international science and technology cooperation."* Close quote.
- Minister Blanco Lopez, the accomplishment we are celebrating here today is a superb example of such cooperation. As a representative of the Obama Administration and on behalf of the government of the United States of America, I am both pleased and honored to accept the return of the Scarlet Knight - now an historic artifact - which symbolizes cooperation among our nations. Thank you very much, and we look forward to celebrating many more such achievements in the future.