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<http://tinyurl.com/gayrightsforforeignaid>

US to weigh gay rights in foreign aid
By JULIE PACE
Associated Press
6 December 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Obama administration will begin considering how countries treat gay and lesbian citizens when making decisions about allocating foreign aid, an official familiar with the decision says.

The White House is expected to issue a presidential memorandum announcing the change Tuesday morning. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will follow up the announcement with a speech in Geneva later in the day.

The presidential memorandum is the first U.S. government strategy to deal with human rights abuses against gays and lesbians abroad.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss the announcement before it was announced.

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http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57337524/u.s-to-use-foreign-aid-to-promote-gay-rights/

U.S. to use foreign aid to promote gay rights
CBS News
6 December 2011

(AP) WASHINGTON - The Obama administration is announcing a wide-ranging effort to use U.S. foreign aid to promote rights for gays and lesbians abroad, including combating attempts by foreign governments to criminalize homosexuality.

In a memorandum issued Tuesday, President Barack Obama directed U.S. agencies working abroad, including the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, to use foreign aid to assist gays and lesbians who are facing human rights violations. And he ordered U.S. agencies to protect vulnerable gay and lesbian refugees and asylum seekers.

"The struggle to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons is a global challenge, and one that is central to the United States' commitment to promoting human rights," Obama said in a statement.

The policy news comes as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is telling other diplomats that cultural practices or religious tradition are no excuse for discriminating, or worse, against gay people.

Making an unusually strong statement in defense of gay rights, Clinton says they are equal to women's rights and racial equality and should be universal human rights. She criticized nations that criminalize gay behavior or tolerate abuse of gay, bisexual or transgendered people, though she did not identify those nations by name.

Clinton's audience in Geneva, home of the United Nations' human rights body, included diplomats from Arab, African and other nations with poor records on gay rights.

The White House said Tuesday's announcement marked the first U.S. government strategy to combat human rights abuses against gays and lesbians abroad.

The order also directs U.S. government agencies to use foreign assistance to protect human rights and advance

non-discrimination, and work with international organizations to fight discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Gay rights groups praised the order as a significant step for ensuring that gays and lesbians are treated equally around the world.

"Today's actions by President Obama make clear that the United States will not turn a blind eye when governments commit or allow abuses to the human rights of LGBT people," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, a gay advocacy organization.

The presidential directive applies to all U.S. agencies involved in foreign aid, assistance and development, including the Departments of States, the Treasury, Defense and Homeland Security.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton defends the rights of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender persons from around the world in a speech entitled "Free and Equal in Dignity and Rights", at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2011, International Human Rights Day.

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