



Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
New Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20502

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2009

Contact: Rick Weiss
202 456-6037
rweiss@ostp.eop.gov

OSTP DIRECTOR HOLDREN ELECTED TO ROYAL SOCIETY

Honored for Achievements in Energy, Environment, and Nuclear Arms Control

John P. Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, today was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society, the prestigious national academy of science of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Holdren is one of 8 scientists from outside the British Commonwealth to be elected this year, along with 44 scientists from the Commonwealth who were elected Fellows. In total, the Society has about 1400 Fellows and Foreign Members.

At the induction ceremony in London on July 10, Holdren will sign a parchment membership book that contains the signatures of all those elected to the Society since its founding nearly 350 years ago, including the scientific giants Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawking.

“John Holdren is today pre-eminent in the fields of science and technology policy,” according to the Society’s announcement. “His contributions to our understanding of energy technology and the population-resource-environment nexus have justifiably received wide acclaim.” In addition, The Society noted, “Holdren has put his scientific and political judgments to enormous effect in furthering deliberations on international security and arms control.”

The Society noted in particular Holdren’s role as a leader of the Pugwash conferences on Science and World Affairs, which bring together scholars and other influential public figures dedicated to reducing the dangers from nuclear weapons and from armed conflict more generally. Holdren gave the acceptance speech for the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Pugwash Conferences, in which he served as Chair of the Executive Committee from 1987 to 1997.

Trained at MIT and Stanford in space science and engineering and theoretical plasma physics, Dr. Holdren spent most of his career prior to joining the Obama administration as a professor at U.C. Berkeley and Harvard and, most recently, as President of the Woods Hole Research Center. He also did stints at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Caltech’s Environmental Quality Laboratory, and served as a visiting professor at MIT and the University of Rome.

The six Americans elected to the Royal Society this year include Roger Kornberg, the Stanford University structural biologist and winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, the Columbia University economist and winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics.

“Our new Fellows are at the cutting edge of science worldwide,” said Martin Rees, President of the Royal Society. “Their achievements represent the vast contribution science makes to society.”

The Royal Society is an independent, charitable body, founded in 1660 by a dozen of the world’s then-greatest “natural philosophers,” including the astronomer-mathematician-physicist Christopher Wren and the chemist Robert Boyle. Created as a “Colledge for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall Experimentall Learning,” its earliest members met regularly to conduct experiments and discuss an array of scientific topics. Since then its mission has expanded to include the funding of research, publishing of scientific journals, provision of science policy advice to the British government, and the promotion of science education and scientific understanding.

###

OSTP was created by Congress in 1976 to serve as a source of scientific and technological analysis and judgment for the President with respect to major policies, plans, and programs of the federal government. Specifically, OSTP is authorized to:

- Advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the impacts of science and technology on domestic and international affairs
- Lead interagency efforts to develop and implement sound science and technology policies and budgets
- Work with the private sector to ensure that federal investments in science and technology contribute to economic prosperity, environmental quality, and national security
- Build strong partnerships among the federal government; state and local governments; other countries; and the scientific community
- Evaluate the scale, quality, and effectiveness of the federal effort in science and technology.

For more information on OSTP, visit www.ostp.gov

###