

But we've been plenty active on these issues. And we'll continue to be active on these issues because they're important issues for the U.S. security and for our interests.

Well, Mr. President, thank you. Like, press conference over. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 9:59 a.m. at Cadjehoun Inter-

national Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Chantal de Souza Yayi, wife of President Yayi; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; President Hu Jintao of China; and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda. President Yayi and some reporters spoke in French, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's Radio Address *February 16, 2008*

Good morning. At the stroke of midnight tonight, a vital intelligence law that is helping protect our Nation will expire. Congress had the power to prevent this from happening, but chose not to.

The Senate passed a good bill that would have given our intelligence professionals the tools they need to keep us safe. But leaders in the House of Representatives blocked a House vote on the Senate bill and then left on a 10-day recess.

Some congressional leaders claim that this will not affect our security. They are wrong. Because Congress failed to act, it will be harder for our Government to keep you safe from terrorist attack. At midnight, the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence will be stripped of their power to authorize new surveillance against terrorist threats abroad. This means that as terrorists change their tactics to avoid our surveillance, we may not have the tools we need to continue tracking them, and we may lose a vital lead that could prevent an attack on America.

In addition, Congress has put intelligence activities at risk even when the terrorists don't change tactics. By failing to act, Congress has created a question about whether private sector companies who assist in our efforts to defend you from the terrorists could be sued for doing the right thing.

Now, these companies will be increasingly reluctant to provide this vital cooperation because of their uncertainty about the law and fear of being sued by class-action trial lawyers.

For 6 months, I urged Congress to take action to ensure this dangerous situation did not come to pass. I even signed a 2-week extension of the existing law because Members of Congress said they would use that time to work out their differences. The Senate used this time productively and passed a good bill with a strong, bipartisan supermajority of 68 votes. Republicans and Democrats came together on legislation to ensure that we could effectively monitor those seeking to harm our people. And they voted to provide fair and just liability protection for companies that assisted in efforts to protect America after the attacks of 9/11.

The Senate sent this bill to the House for its approval. It was clear that if given a vote, the bill would have passed the House with a bipartisan majority. I made every effort to work with the House to secure passage of this law. I even offered to delay my trip to Africa if we could come together and enact a good bill. But House leaders refused to let the bill come to a vote. Instead, the House held partisan votes that do nothing to keep our country safer.

House leaders chose politics over protecting the country, and our country is at greater risk as a result.

House leaders have no excuse for this failure. They knew all along that this deadline was approaching because they set it themselves. My administration will take every step within our power to minimize the damage caused by the House's irresponsible behavior. Yet it is still urgent that Congress act. The Senate has shown the way by approving a good, bipartisan bill. The House must pass that bill as soon as they return to Washington from their latest recess.

At this moment, somewhere in the world, terrorists are planning a new attack on

America, and Congress has no higher responsibility than ensuring we have the tools to stop them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:45 a.m. on February 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on February 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 15, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 6-hour time difference, the address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Benin. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania *February 17, 2008*

President Kikwete. Mr. President, welcome. I stand before you with a deep sense of gratitude and satisfaction to once again welcome you, Mr. President, and your entire delegation to our dear country, Tanzania. The outpouring of warmth and affection from the people of Tanzania that you have witnessed since your arrival is a genuine reflection of what we feel towards you and towards the American people.

Welcome, Your Excellency, and your great wife Madam Laura Bush, as enduring partners for our empowerment as we struggle to pull ourselves to prosperity and back from backwardness and undevelopment, infested by poverty, disease, and deprivation of basic social and economic services. We welcome you, Mr. President, as a supportive and understanding partner as we take the necessary measures to promote democracy, human rights, and good governance. You are a dependable partner, indeed, in the pursuit of ensuring national,

as well as regional, peace and stability in the African Continent.

Mr. President, you have shown great compassion for Africa and its people. You have personally reached out using different initiatives, instruments, and moral leadership to support Africa's efforts to improve governance, to fight poverty, to seek shared prosperity, to resolve conflict, to improve security, and jointly to fight the scourge of terrorism. Tanzania has been and is committed and poised to continue being an important partner and beneficiary of your empathy and support towards the African peoples.

Mr. President, we thank you for your deep understanding and empathy for the challenges we face on the African Continent. And we truly appreciate what you have done to support us where we needed support for the sake of welfare and dignity of our people.

Ten days ago in Washington, DC, at the 56th National Prayer Breakfast, the keynote