

could be in the double digits. I want to thank the Congress for coming together around this hard-fought compromise. No one policy or program will solve the challenges we face right now, nor will this crisis recede in a short period of time. However, with this Act we begin the process of restoring the economy and making America a stronger and more prosperous nation.

My Administration will initiate new, far-reaching measures to help ensure that every dollar spent in this historic legislation is spent wisely and for its intended purpose. The Federal Government will be held to new standards of transparency and accountability. The legislation includes no earmarks. An oversight board will be charged with monitoring our progress as part of an unprecedented effort to root out waste and inefficiency. This board will be advised by experts—not just Government experts, not just politicians, but also citizens

with years of expertise in management, economics, and accounting.

So much depends on what we do at this moment. This is not about the future of my Administration. This effort is about the future of our families and communities, our economy and our country. We are going to move forward carefully and transparently and as effectively as possible because so much is on the line. That is what we have already begun to do—drafting this plan with a level of openness for which the American people have asked and that this situation demands.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
February 17, 2009.

NOTE: H.R. 1, approved February 17, was assigned Public Law No. 111–5.

## Statement on United States Troop Levels in Afghanistan *February 17, 2009*

There is no more solemn duty as President than the decision to deploy our Armed Forces into harm's way. I do it today mindful that the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan demands urgent attention and swift action. The Taliban is resurgent in Afghanistan, and Al Qaida supports the insurgency and threatens America from its safe haven along the Pakistani border.

To meet urgent security needs, I approved a request from Secretary Gates to deploy a Marine expeditionary brigade later this spring and an Army Stryker brigade and the enabling forces necessary to support them later this summer. This increase has been requested by General McKiernan and supported by Secretary Gates, the Joint Chiefs and the Commander of Central Command. General McKiernan's request for these troops is months old, and the fact that we are going to responsibly draw down our forces in Iraq allows us the

flexibility to increase our presence in Afghanistan.

This reinforcement will contribute to the security of the Afghan people and to stability in Afghanistan. I recognize the extraordinary strain that this deployment places on our troops and military families. I honor their service and will give them the support they need.

This increase is necessary to stabilize a deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, which has not received the strategic attention, direction, and resources it urgently requires. That is why I ordered a review of our policy upon taking office, so we have a comprehensive strategy and the necessary resources to meet clear and achievable objectives in Afghanistan and the region.

This troop increase does not predetermine the outcome of that strategic review. Instead, it will further enable our team to put together a comprehensive strategy that will employ all

elements of our national power to fulfill achievable goals in Afghanistan. As we develop our new strategic goals, we will do so in concert with our friends and allies as together we seek the resources necessary to succeed.

NOTE: The statement referred to Gen. David D. McKiernan, USA, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command.

## Interview With Peter Mansbridge of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation February 17, 2009

### Trade

*Mr. Mansbridge.* Mr. President, thank you for doing this. Canadians are very excited about your trip.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Mr. Mansbridge.* When they watch you today sign your recovery bill into law, how concerned should they be that the “Buy America” clause is still there, even though you’ve given assurances international trade agreements will be respected. How concerned should they be?

*The President.* I don’t think they should be too concerned. You know, I think that if you look at history, one of the most important things during a worldwide recession of the sort that we’re seeing now is that each country does not resort to “beggar thy neighbor” policies, protectionist policies. They can end up further contracting world trade. And my administration is committed to making sure that even as we take steps to strengthen the U.S. economy that we are doing so in a way that actually over time will enhance the ability of trading partners, like Canada, to work within our boundaries.

And my expectation is, is that where you have strong U.S. competitors who can sell products and services, that a lot of Governors and mayors are going to want to try to find U.S. equipment or services, but that we are going to abide by our World Trade Organization and NAFTA obligations just as we always have.

### North America Free Trade Agreement

*Mr. Mansbridge.* You mentioned NAFTA. A year ago you were pretty critical of NAFTA. In fact, you even suggested at one point that the U.S. opt out if it couldn’t renegotiate. Do you think that’s the time now to be making that case, or is it something that’s set aside now?

*The President.* As I said, I think there are a lot of sensitivities right now because of the huge decline in world trade. As I’ve said before, NAFTA, the basic framework of the agreement has environmental and labor protections as side agreements. My argument has always been that we might as well incorporate them into the full agreement so that they’re fully enforceable.

But what I’ve also said is that Canada is one of our most important trading partners. We rely on them heavily. There’s \$1.5 billion worth of trade going back and forth every day between the two countries, and that it is not in anybody’s interests to see that trade diminish.

*Mr. Mansbridge.* Especially now.

*The President.* Absolutely.

### Energy

*Mr. Mansbridge.* Part of that trade involves the energy sector; a lot of oil and gas comes to the United States from Canada and even more in the future with oil sands development. Now, there are some in your country—and Canada as well—who feel the oil sands is dirty oil because of the extraction process. What do you think? Is it dirty oil?

*The President.* Well, it—what we know is that oil sands create a big—creates a big carbon footprint. And so the dilemma that Canada faces, the United States faces, and China and the entire world faces is how do we obtain the energy that we need to grow our economies in a way that is not rapidly accelerating climate change. And that’s one of the reasons why the stimulus bill that I’ll be signing today contains billions of dollars towards clean energy development.

I think to the extent that Canada and the United States can collaborate on ways that we can sequester carbon, capture greenhouse gases before they’re emitted into the atmosphere,