

difficult times, and then to try to get these jobs created as quickly as possible.

What kind of work did you do?

*U.S. Auto Industry*

*Q. [Inaudible]*

*The President.* You looked into what?

*Q.* I worked in the auto industry for Toyota.

*The President.* In the auto industry. Well, let's talk about the auto industry for a second. Now, first of all, you worked for Toyota, which is, obviously, one of the best companies, and so you—when Toyota is having problems and laying off, that tells you how tough the problems are in the auto industry right now.

We are going to have to work to move in the direction of fuel-efficient cars and trucks. I would have expected you to say that you were working for an American car company, because they're having much bigger problems. But whether it's Toyota or GM or Chrysler or Ford or any company right now, the future is going to be in fuel-efficient cars; it's going to be in these plug-in hybrids; it's going to be in

developing the battery technology that allows electric cars to run for 150 miles for every gallon of gas.

And what we need to do is to invest in research and development around this clean energy auto technology. And one of the things that we've committed to doing in our budget is to spend \$15 billion every single year in new technologies that maintain cutting-edge auto technologies that will ensure that good, efficient, clean cars are made right here in the United States of America. And hopefully we're going to put you back to work in the process.

*Q.* Thank you.

*The President.* So—all right, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. at the Orange Country Fair and Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jerome Hunter, chancellor, North Orange County Community College District; and State Controller John Chiang and former State Controller Steven P. Westly of California.

## Statement on the Appointment of Major General J. Scott Gration as United States Special Envoy for Sudan

*March 18, 2009*

Today I am pleased to join Secretary Clinton in announcing the appointment of Major General J. Scott Gration as the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan. General Gration's personal and professional background, and his service to the country as both a military leader and a humanitarian, give him the insights and experience necessary for this assignment.

Sudan is a priority for this administration, particularly at a time when it cries out for peace and for justice. The worsening humanitarian crisis there makes our task all the more urgent.

I have made clear my intention to work with the international community to end the suffering. That means supporting the full, unobstructed deployment of the joint African Union/United Nations peacekeeping force and the negotiation of a political solution that will give the people of Darfur a meaningful voice

in the decisions that affect their future. The Government of Sudan's disastrous decision to expel humanitarian relief organizations leaves a void that will be filled by deprivation and despair, and they will be held accountable for the lives lost.

As we work to bring peace to Darfur, we will continue to work with both parties to Sudan's comprehensive peace agreement to ensure its full and complete implementation. All parties must see this through if Sudan and the surrounding region are to enjoy lasting stability.

I have worked closely and directly with General Gration for several years, and have traveled with him to refugee camps in Chad filled with those who were displaced by the genocide in Darfur. He is a valued personal friend, and I am pleased he has accepted this assignment. He knows the region, has broad

experience, and has my complete confidence. Standing alongside Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice, his appointment is a strong signal of my administration's commitment to support the people of Sudan, while seeking a last-

ing settlement to the violence that has claimed so many innocent lives.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; and Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

## Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation to Encourage Voluntarism

March 18, 2009

I'm pleased that the House of Representatives has passed the bipartisan GIVE Act, legislation to usher in a new era of service in this new century. I want to applaud all those who have worked so hard to see this bill through the House, and I am eager to see the companion legislation, the Serve America Act, passed through the Senate so I can sign it into law.

This legislation will help create new opportunities for millions of Americans to serve their communities and help us meet our most pressing challenges, from rebuilding our schools to providing opportunity for those in need, from helping America's veterans to helping get us on the path to energy independence. At this mo-

ment of economic crisis, when so many people are in need of help and so much needs to be done, this could not be more urgent.

We know that government alone is not the answer to the challenges we face. It will take all of us taking our share of responsibility. And while government can provide the opportunities to give back to our communities, as I hope it will through this legislation, it is up to each and every citizen to seize those opportunities. It is up to every one of us to do his or her small part to make the world a better place.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 1388.

## Remarks at Southern California Edison's Electric Vehicle Technical Center in Pomona, California

March 19, 2009

*The President.* Thank you, guys. Thank you. Please, everybody have a seat. Well, first of all, Levon, what a wonderful story. I can tell you're a great dad, and Alex is lucky to have you.

I want to make some additional acknowledgments. We've got a lot of dignitaries here, people who were helpful in helping to pull this together. First of all, the Congresswoman from this district, Grace Napolitano, there she is right there. We've got Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod. Did I pronounce that properly? No? Why don't you help me out?

*Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod.* Negrete McLeod.

*The President.* Negrete McLeod—so nice to see you. Assemblywoman Norma Torres, Senator Christine Kehoe, good to see you; Senator

Ron Calderon. We've got the mayor of Long Beach, Mayor Bob Foster is here; we've got the mayor of Pomona, Mayor Elliott Rothman. We've got Village Academy High School students who are here—in the house. Ted Craver, who is the CEO of Edison International, is here, and just helped us on the tour. Go ahead and stand. Thank you, Ted. We've got Al Fohrer, who is the CEO of Southern California Edison, who is here. We have Ed Kjaer, who just gave me the tour, right here; Pat Lavin, business manager, IBEW Local 47.

Thank you all for taking the time to be here. And it is good to be back in California. It's always nice to get out of Washington for a little bit, recharge your batteries. [Laughter] You know a little bit about that here. [Laughter] I