

the progress towards peace and destabilize the entire area and threaten existing peace agreements.

So it's very clear to us. I think we actually—we don't see closely on this; we see exactly eye to eye on this, that we want to move simultaneously and then parallel on two fronts: the front of peace and the front of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities.

On the front of peace, the important thing for me is to resume negotiations as rapidly as possible, and to—and my view is less one of terminology, but one of substance. And I ask myself, what do we end up with? If we end up with another Gaza—the President has described to you there's rockets falling out of Gaza—that is something we don't want to happen, because a terror base next to our cities that doesn't call—recognize Israel's existence, calls for our destruction, and asks for our destruction is not our view of peace.

If, however, the Palestinians recognize Israel as the Jewish state, if they fight terror, if they educate their children for peace and to a better future, then I think we can come at a substantive solution that allows the two peoples to live side by side in security and peace

and, I add, prosperity, because I'm a great believer in this.

So I think the terminology will take care of itself, if we have the substantive understanding. And I think we can move forward on this. I have great confidence in your leadership, Mr. President, and in your friendship to my country and in your championing of peace and security. And the answer is, both come together; peace and security are intertwined. They're inseparable.

And I look forward, Mr. President, to working with you to achieve both.

President Obama. Good. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan. A reporter referred to Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Lebanese political-paramilitary organization Hizballah; and Khaled Meshal, leader of the Palestinian political-paramilitary organization Hamas.

Statement on Haitian Flag Day

May 18, 2009

The United States and Haiti share a deeply intertwined history and a long standing friendship. In 1779, freemen from the French colony of Saint Domingue, now the Republic of Haiti, came to the aid of American patriots fighting for freedom at the Siege of Savannah. Today, we remain connected by a Haitian American community that contributes greatly to the economic, social, cultural, scientific, and

academic fabric of the United States and by my administration's steadfast commitment to come to the aid of those in Haiti working to ensure that Haiti's future is stable, sustainable, and prosperous. On this Haitian Flag Day, I am proud to send my warm wishes and those of the American people to the people of Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora as they celebrate during Haitian Heritage Month.

Remarks on Fuel Efficiency Standards

May 19, 2009

Thank you very much. Thank you. Please, everybody have a seat. What an extraordinary day. The sun is out because good things are happening. Before I get started, just some

preliminary introductions, I'll probably repeat them in my formal remarks, but I want to make sure that I acknowledge some people who have been critical to this effort and

critical to so many efforts at the State and Federal levels.

First of all, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has just been cracking the whip and, you know, making Congress so productive over these last several days; we are grateful for her. My wonderful Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, is in the house; Lisa Jackson, the outstanding Administrator of EPA. Some of the finest Governors in the country are here. Let me take them in order of good looks—sorry, Arnold—[laughter]—Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California.

Barbara Boxer just had to leave—but the head of the Environment Committee in the Senate, who's done just outstanding work. And Senators Feinstein, Levin, and Stabenow couldn't be here because they're busy voting on credit card legislation that we're going to get done before Memorial Day. And we've got two outstanding Members of the House of Representatives: John Dingell—where's John?—right here—the dean of the House and—who's done so much extraordinary work around these issues and Sandy Levin. Please give them a round of applause.

I also want to mention Ron Gettelfinger of the UAW, our president, who's just been a great leader during some very trying times in the auto industry, and Carol Browner, who helped to make this all happen today. Please give Carol Browner a big round of applause.

Since I'm acknowledging everybody—I'm in a voluble mood today—[laughter]—let me go ahead and acknowledge my other members of the Cabinet who are here who are part of our energy green team and do just outstanding work on an ongoing basis: first of all, my Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis; the guy who's just cleaning up the Department of Interior and doing an extraordinary job, Ken Salazar; our head of HUD, Shaun Donovan; and our Commerce Secretary, Gary Locke.

Now, thank you all for coming to the White House today and for coming together around what I consider to be a historic agreement to help America break its dependence on oil, re-

duce harmful pollution, and begin the transition to a clean energy economy.

This is an extraordinary gathering. Here we have today standing behind me, along with Ron Gettelfinger and leadership of the UAW, we have 10 of the world's largest auto manufacturers; we have environmental advocates as well as elected officials from all across the country.

And this gathering is all the more extraordinary for what these diverse groups, despite disparate interests and previous disagreements, have worked together to achieve. For the first time in history, we have set in motion a national policy aimed at both increasing gas mileage and decreasing greenhouse gas pollution for all new trucks and cars sold in the United States of America. And I want to applaud the leadership of the folks at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, and the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change, who've worked around the clock on this proposal which has now been embraced by so many.

Now, in the past, an agreement such as this would have been considered impossible. It's no secret that these are folks who've occasionally been at odds for years, even decades. [Laughter] In fact, some of the groups here have been embroiled in lawsuits against one another. So that gives you a sense of how impressive and significant it is that these leaders from across the country are willing to set aside the past for the sake of the future.

For what everyone here believes, even as views differ on many important issues, is that the status quo is no longer acceptable. While the United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's population, we create roughly a quarter of the world's demand for oil. And this appetite comes at a tremendous price, a price measured by our vulnerability to volatile oil markets, which send gas prices soaring and families scrambling. It's measured by a trade deficit where as much as 20 percent of what we spend on imports is spent on oil. It's measured in billions of dollars sent to oil-exporting nations, many that we do not choose to support, if we had a choice. It's measured in a changing climate, as sea levels rise and droughts spread, forests burn and storms rage.

And what is all the more tragic is that we've known about these costs in one way or another since the gas shortages of the 1970s. And yet all too little has been done. Calls for action rise and fall with the price of a barrel of oil. Worn arguments are traded across entrenched divides, urgency fades, complacency grows, and time passes.

As a result, we have done little to increase the fuel efficiency of America's cars and trucks for decades. Think about this. Consider how much has changed all around us. Think of how much faster our computers have become. Think about how much more productive our workers are. Think about how everything has been transformed by our capacity to see the world as it is, but also to imagine a world as it could be.

And that's what's been missing in this debate for too long, and that's why this announcement is so important, for it represents not only a change in policy in Washington, but the harbinger of a change in the ways business is done in Washington. No longer will we accept the notion that our politics are too small, our Nation too divided, our people too weary of broken promises and lost opportunities to take up a historic calling. No longer will we accept anything less than a common effort made in good faith to solve our toughest problems. And this is what this agreement seeks to achieve.

Right now the rules governing fuel economy in this country are inadequate, uncertain, and in flux. First, there is the standard for fuel economy administered by the Department of Transportation. On top of that, the Environmental Protection Agency, in response to a decision by the Supreme Court, may have to set limits on greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, establishing another standard. California has sought permission under the Clean Air Act to require that vehicles sold in California meet yet another, even stricter emission rule. And 13 States and the District of Columbia have agreed to adopt California greenhouse gas reductions if the permission, called a waiver, is granted.

Now, car companies might then face three different sets of overlapping requirements,

one administered by the Department of Transportation, one administered by the EPA, and still a third administered by California and 13 other States. This proposed national policy, under the leadership of two agencies and bringing together 14 States, 10 companies, as well as auto workers and environmental groups, changes all that. The goal is to set one national standard that will rapidly increase fuel efficiency, without compromising safety, by an average of 5 percent each year between 2012 and 2016, building on the 2011 standard my administration set shortly after taking office.

A series of major lawsuits will be dropped in support of this new national standard. The State of California has also agreed to support this standard, and I want to applaud California and Governor Schwarzenegger and the entire California delegation for their extraordinary leadership. They have led the way on this, as they have in so many other efforts to protect the environment. In addition, because the Department of Transportation and EPA will adopt the same rule, we will avoid an inefficient and ineffective system of regulations that separately govern the fuel economy of autos and the carbon emissions they produce.

And at a time of historic crisis in our auto industry, when domestic auto manufacturers are making painful choices and restructuring their businesses to be viable in the future, this rule provides the clear certainty that will allow these companies to plan for a future in which they are building the cars of the 21st century.

Yes, it costs money to develop these vehicles, but even as the price to build these cars and trucks goes up, the cost of driving these vehicles will go down as drivers save money at the pump. And this is a point I want to emphasize: If you buy a car, your investment in a more fuel-efficient vehicle, as a result of this standard, will pay off in just 3 years. In 3 years time, you will have paid off the additional investment required. So this is a winning proposition for folks looking to buy a car. In fact, over the life of a vehicle, the trip—typical driver would save about \$2,800 by getting better gas mileage.

And the fact is, everyone wins. Consumers pay less for fuel, which means less money

going overseas and more money to save or spend here at home. The economy as a whole runs more efficiently by using less oil and producing less pollution. And companies like those here today have new incentives to create the technologies and the jobs that will provide smarter ways to power our vehicles.

And that's why, in the next 5 years, we're seeking to raise fuel-economy standards to an industry average of 35.5 miles per gallon in 2016, an increase of more than 8 miles per gallon per vehicle. That's an unprecedented change, exceeding the demands of Congress and meeting the most stringent requirements sought by many of the environmental advocates represented here today.

As a result, we will save 1.8 billion barrels of oil over the lifetime of the vehicles sold in the next 5 years. Just to give you a sense of magnitude, that's more oil than we imported last year from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Libya, and Nigeria combined. Here's another way of looking at it: This is the projected equivalent of taking 58 million cars off the road for an entire year.

I also want to note that the agreement we have announced today is part of a far larger effort. In fact, on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Henry Waxman is chairing a meeting of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is working on an equally historic energy bill that will not only help our dependence on foreign oil, prevent the worst consequences of climate change, and build a clean energy economy but will provide more than \$15 billion to help build the cars and trucks of the future right here in America.

And the recovery plan we've put in place, as well as the budget that builds on it, makes historic investments in a clean energy economy, doubling our capacity to generate renewable energy like wind and solar, investing in new battery technologies for plug-in hybrids, and building a smarter, stronger grid on which the homes, businesses, and vehicles of the future will run.

Now, too often lost in the back-and-forth of Washington politics, absent in arguments where the facts opponents use depend on the conclusions they've already reached, absent all that is

this: Ending our dependence on oil, indeed, ending our dependence on fossil fuels represents perhaps the most difficult challenge we have ever faced, not as a party, not as a set of separate interests, but as a people.

We have, over the course of decades, slowly built an economy that runs on oil. It has given us much of what we have, for good, but also for ill. It has transformed the way we live and work, but it's also wreaked havoc on our climate. It has helped create gains in prosperity unprecedented in history, but it also places our future in jeopardy.

Ending this dependence will take time. It will take an incredible effort. It will take a historic investment in innovation. But more than anything, it will take a willingness to look past our differences, to act in good faith, to refuse to continue the failures of the past, and to take on this challenge together, for the benefit not just of this generation, but generations to come.

All the people who have gathered here today, all the auto executives, all our outstanding elected officials and appointees, Ron Gettelfinger, Members of Congress, Governors, all these folks here today have demonstrated that this kind of common effort is possible. They've created the template for more progress in the months and years to come. Everything is possible when we're working together, and we're off to a great start.

So thank you everybody. Appreciate it.

[At this point, the President greeted participants of the event on stage. He then returned to the podium and continued as follows.]

By the way, I just want to mention, I think I still have my Ford parked in Chicago. *[Laughter]* It's a Ford hybrid—runs great. You guys should take a look. *[Laughter]* But there are also some outstanding hybrids and energy-independent cars represented up here, so I didn't want to just advertise for one. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:22 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ron Gettelfinger, president, International Union, United Automobile,

Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW); and Assistant to the

President for Energy and Climate Change Carol M. Browner.

Remarks Following a Meeting on the United States Nonproliferation Policy May 19, 2009

The President. Hello, everybody. I just had a wonderful discussion with four of the most preeminent national security thinkers that we have, a bipartisan group of George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, Bill Perry, and Sam Nunn, all who've come together and helped inspire policies of this administration in a speech that I gave to Prague, which set forward a long-term vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

I don't think anybody would accuse these four gentlemen of being dreamers. They're hard-headed, tough defenders of American interests and American security. But what they have come together to help galvanize is a recognition that we do not want a world of continued nuclear proliferation, and that in order for us to meet the security challenges of the future, America has to take leadership in this area.

This is particularly true at a time when countries like North Korea and Iran are in the process of developing nuclear weapons capacity, at a time when we see a country like Pakistan with a large nuclear arsenal on the other side of a long-running conflict in the subcontinent with India, at a time when terrorist organizations like Al Qaida are trying to seek fissile material. It is absolutely imperative that America takes leadership, working with not just our Russian counterparts, but countries all around the world, to reduce and ultimately eliminate the dangers that are posed by nuclear weapons.

And we can take some very specific steps in order to do this. We can revitalize our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We can work with the Russians, as the two countries with by far the largest nuclear stockpiles, to continue to reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons. We can move forward on a comprehensive test ban treaty. It's going to require more work, but I think that we can get something accomplished there and we can lock down loose nu-

clear weapons that could fall into the hands of terrorists.

We are going to be pushing this as one of our highest priorities, to take specific steps, measurable steps, verifiable steps, to make progress on this issue, even as we keep a long-term perspective and a long-term vision about what can be achieved. And we can think of no better advisers, counselors, and partners in this process than the four gentlemen who joined us here today.

We also think this is a reminder of the long tradition of bipartisan foreign policy that has been the hallmark of America at moments of greatest need, and that's the kind of spirit that we hope will be reflected in our administration.

So with that, let me just allow George to make a brief statement on behalf of the group.

Former Secretary of State George Schultz. All four of us support enthusiastically what the President is doing, as expressed eloquently in his speech in Prague. First of all, we all noted on your White House web site that the first sentence was: "We will work for a world free of nuclear weapons." That's the vision we all support.

The second sentence is: "As long as nuclear weapons are around, we will be sure we have a strong deterrent ourselves." So we support that notion that we must be conscious of our national security all the way along to zero.

Then we were really impressed to see that you had such a constructive meeting with the President of Russia. And there the two of you, the countries with most of the—over 90 percent of the nuclear weapons, pledged together to seek a world free of nuclear weapons.

And in your Prague speech, you linked the vision to steps, and you identified a few of the steps. And we think that's just the way to proceed, that there is an interaction between the vision, which you need, which requires you to think of the steps and know where you're