

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

going and the steps which need to be taken to show that the vision has a reality to it, and we're getting there.

So all four of us, Mr. President, support what you're doing. I would only have one word of slight disagreement. You said that you welcome the fact that this is bipartisan. And, well, it is. At the same time, I think all of us have said, when people have told that to us, that it's really non-partisan. This is a subject that ought to somehow get up above trying to get a partisan advantage. And it's of such importance that we need to take it on its own merits. And that's the way we've proceeded. And that's the way, at least it seems to us, you've proceeded.

The President. Thank you so much, George. And thank you all, gentlemen, for joining us. This is going to be an ongoing collaboration. We're very grateful to them. And we're grateful to you guys for taking time to listen.

Thanks a lot.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Secretary of State George P. Schultz; former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger; former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry; and former Sen. Samuel A. Nunn, Jr. Former Secretary of State Schultz referred to President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring National Small Business Award Winners May 19, 2009

The President. Well, thank you very much. Good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. And thank you, Lisa. I think you can see that she's pretty good at making a pitch. [Laughter] And we're grateful for sharing your story and your enthusiasm with all of us, and congratulations to you and everybody who is being honored here today as some of America's most outstanding business owners and lenders and counselors and coaches.

I want, also, all of you to know that I am so pleased with my selection as SBA Administrator. Karen Mills is somebody who is passionate about small business; she understands the ins and outs of it, the nuances of it. She is fighting for bringing SBA into the 21st century. And so I think you'll find just an outstanding partner in her, please give her a big round of applause.

Running a successful small business is impressive in any year, but it's especially impressive this year, at this moment when we're facing the most serious economic downturn in generations. And I know what you do isn't easy. I know that for every contract you've won, every sale that you've made and job you've created, you've had plenty of setbacks and false starts and late nights wondering how on Earth you're going to

keep everything together and why you decided to take this path in the first place.

But you kept going. You scrimped and you saved and you borrowed and you improvised. And your failures didn't discourage you, they educated you and they motivated you to succeed the next time around. And today we honor that courage and determination and daring just as much as we honor the success that it ultimately brought you.

And that's the spirit that led Lisa, a single mom, a former hairstylist—you know, the hair looks good, so you—[laughter]—

Lisa Anne Pineiro. I'm good. I'm good. I cut hair in the back room. [Laughter]

The President. In the back room, while she's scooping ice cream—[laughter]—

Ms. Pineiro. Running the construction company. [Laughter]

The President. —running the construction company, she's been doing her hair. [Laughter]

Ms. Pineiro. I do.

The President. I think there was a song about you, wasn't there? [Laughter]

Ms. Pineiro. "She works hard for the money"—[laughter].

The President. To set out a little over a year ago—a little over 10 years ago with nothing but a loan from her parents and a big idea, and her