

Statement on the Detention of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma *May 26, 2009*

I call on the Burmese Government to release National League for Democracy secretary general and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi from detention immediately and unconditionally. I strongly condemn her house arrest and detention, which have also been condemned around the world. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has issued opinions affirming that the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi dating back to 2003 is arbitrary, unjustified, and in contravention of Burma's own law, and the United Nations Security Council reaffirmed on May 22 their concern about the situation and called for the release of all political prisoners.

Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention, isolation, and show trial based on spurious charges cast serious doubt on the Burmese regime's willingness to be a responsible member of the

international community. This is an important opportunity for the Government in Burma to demonstrate that it respects its own laws and its own people, is ready to work with the National League for Democracy and other ethnic and opposition groups, and is prepared to move toward reconciliation.

By her actions, Aung San Suu Kyi has represented profound patriotism, sacrifice, and the vision of a democratic and prosperous Burma. It is time for the Burmese Government to drop all charges against Aung San Suu Kyi and unconditionally release her and her fellow political prisoners. Such an action would be an affirmative and significant step on Burma's part to begin to restore its standing in the eyes of the United States and the world community and to move toward a better future for its people.

Statement on the White House Organization for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism *May 26, 2009*

As President, my highest priority is the safety and security of the American people. That is why, in February, I issued a Presidential Study Directive to look at how the White House should be organized to deal with the critical issues of homeland security and counterterrorism. I have carefully reviewed the findings and recommendations of that study, and am announcing a new approach which will strengthen our security and the safety of our citizens. These decisions reflect the fundamental truth that the challenges of the 21st Century are increasingly unconventional and transnational, and therefore demand a response that effectively integrates all aspects of American power.

Key decisions that I have made include:

- The full integration of White House staff supporting national security and homeland security. The new "National Security Staff" will support all White House policy-making activities related to international, transnational, and homeland security mat-

ters. The establishment of the new National Security Staff, under the direction of the National Security Advisor, will end the artificial divide between White House staff who have been dealing with national security and homeland security issues.

- Maintaining the Homeland Security Council as the principle venue for inter-agency deliberations on issues that affect the security of the homeland such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters, and pandemic influenza. The Homeland Security Council, like its National Security Council counterpart, will be supported by the National Security Staff.
- The establishment of new directorates and positions within the National Security Staff to deal with new and emerging 21st Century challenges associated with cybersecurity, WMD terrorism,

transborder security, information sharing, and resilience policy, including preparedness and response.

- Retaining the position of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (AP/HSCT) as my principal White House advisor on these issues, with direct and immediate access to me. The security of our homeland is of paramount importance to me, and I will not allow organizational impediments to stand in the way of timely action that ensures the safety of our citizens.
- Creating a new Global Engagement Directorate to drive comprehensive engagement policies that leverage diplomacy, communications, international devel-

opment and assistance, and domestic engagement and outreach in pursuit of a host of national security objectives, including those related to homeland security.

The United States faces a wide array of challenges to its security, and the White House must be organized to effectively and efficiently leverage the tremendous talent and expertise of the dedicated Americans who work within it. The creation of the National Security Staff and the other recommendations from the study that I have approved will help to keep our country safe and our Homeland secure.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senator Harry Reid in Las Vegas, Nevada May 26, 2009

Thank you so much. It is good to be back in Vegas. I was telling people, I am back in Caesars. That was the hotel where we stayed at when we were campaigning here in Nevada. I thought I had a pretty nice room. *[Laughter]* But now that I'm President, they upgraded me. I got the upgrade. And it's a really nice room now, man. *[Laughter]*

It is good to see all of you. How about Bette Midler? Right? Sheryl Crow, Rachael Yamagata, Rita Rudner, and Clint Holmes, give it up for our outstanding performers.

I want to thank all of the hard-working elected officials in Nevada, many of whom are here tonight. But there are a handful that I've got to give a special shout-out to: first of all, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley; our new Congresswoman Dina Titus; a great friend of mine, our—of my earliest supporters, cochair for Nevadans for Obama, Steven Horsford. And although she's not here tonight, she's doing a great job on behalf of everybody here in Vegas, the Nevada assembly speaker, Barbara Buckley. Please give her a big round of applause.

It is a pleasure to be here tonight on behalf of my good friend, your Senator, this Nation's

Senate majority leader, Harry Reid. The last few years, Harry has done an extraordinary job as the leader of the U.S. Senate. And that's not easy, by the way. One of the last majority leaders wrote a book—titled it "Herding Cats." And that's what dealing with the Senate is all about. It is not easy. But Harry is somebody who has consistently fought on those issues that matter not just to Democrats but to middle class families all across America: good jobs, affordable health care, clean energy, world-class schools. This is a man who still makes his decisions and chooses battles based on the values that he was raised with in Searchlight, Nevada. *[Applause]* Are you from Searchlight? *[Laughter]* We got some Searchlight folks here. And that's why we need to keep Harry Reid exactly where he belongs, as the leader of the U.S. Senate, as somebody who carries the voices and the values of Searchlight and Nevada, all the small towns across America that have been forgotten for so long. He gives voice to forgotten people in Washington, DC.

Now, being back here with all of you in Nevada tonight reminds me of why I like getting out of Washington every so often. *[Laughter]* Because it brings back a lot of memories of all