

[An English translation for the questions asked in Arabic was provided by the interpreter, as follows.]

Interpreter. The first question to President Abbas: Mr. President, did you receive any kind of clear-cut commitments from President Obama, or any pledges that would help you to strengthen your hands when you are dealing with the Palestinian public and opposition among Palestinians that this peace process activities could be viable and could be actually productive?

And the second question was, did President Obama ask you to have a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu?

President Abbas. President Obama basically talked and reaffirmed the international commitments that we all agreed to, and they are all embodied in the roadmap. He talked about the necessity to have two states; he talked about the importance of stopping settlement activities; and he also talked about the importance of achieving peace through negotiating all permanent status issues.

Obviously, without discussing and negotiating permanent status issues there will be no progress. We know that all the six issues of permanent status were discussed with the previous Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Olmert, and what it—is needed right now is to resume the discussions with the current Israeli Government.

President Obama. And in terms of a timetable, I have not put forward a specific timetable. But let me just point out, when I was campaigning for this office, I said that one of the mistakes I would not make is to wait until the end of my first term, or the end of my second term, before we've moved on this issue aggressively. And we've been true to that commitment.

From the first week that I arrived in this office, I've insisted that this is a critical issue to deal with, in part because it is in the United States interest to achieve peace. The absence of peace between Palestinians and Israelis is a impediment to a whole host of other areas of increased cooperation and more stable security for people in the region, as well as the United States. And so I want to see progress made, and we will work very aggressively to achieve it.

I don't want to put an artificial timetable, but I do share President Abbas's feelings, and I believe that many Israelis share the same view that time is of the essence, that we can't continue with a drift, with the increased fear and resentments on both sides, the sense of hopelessness around the situation that we've seen for many years now. We need to get this thing back on track. And I will do everything I can, and my administration will do everything I can. My special envoy, George Mitchell, is working as diligently as he can, as is my entire national security team, to make sure that we jump-start this process and get it moving again.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, USA, U.S. security coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority; King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Saud of Saudi Arabia; and U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell. President Abbas referred to former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel. President Abbas and some reporters spoke in Arabic, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Beverly Hills, California

May 27, 2009

The President. It's good to be back in L.A. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Who

knows the score? [Laughter] Lakers by one—what is it, third quarter? All right, well,

good luck. It's not the Bulls. [Laughter] Joe Baca is not the Bulls, man. [Laughter] But the Lakers are pretty good, I got to admit.

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary performance this evening: first of all, Chicago's own, Jennifer Hudson; the group I grew up with, Earth Wind & Fire; Roberto Granados; the Crenshaw High School Choir—

Audience member. We love you!

The President. —I love you back—and the Rickey Minor Band. Give it up for Rickey Minor, they were sounding good. I was going to come out and sing—[laughter]—but my political advisers told me not to. [Laughter]

It is good to be back in L.A. My main task here tonight is just to say thank you. First of all, I want to thank so many of you who were knocking on doors and making phone calls and traveling to other cities, turning an election into a movement, a movement for change.

But the fact that you're here tonight indicates that you understand the campaign just gave us a chance to bring about change. It didn't actually deliver the change, it gave us the chance, the opportunity; it put us in place to bring about change. So now the hard part starts.

So I decided I should come back to Los Angeles with all my great supporters—[applause]—and just to give you a little progress report, just a little progress report.

We started off in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And so what we decided to do was pass the largest economic recovery package in the history of the United States of America, and we got it done in one month. All across America you've got folks who are going to work rebuilding roads and bridges, but also building an electric grid that can help move renewable energies from production to conception, saving teachers' jobs that might have been eliminated if we hadn't passed it, making sure that folks who lose their jobs still have health care, providing a whole host of support services to communities that were in need.

Then we signed something called the Lilly Ledbetter Act because we thought it made sense that women should get equal pay for equal work—I don't know if you agree with that. We removed the ban on funding stem cell

research because we believe in the possibilities of science.

What else did we do? [Laughter] Let's see, we put in place a whole series of measures to stabilize the housing market, to stabilize the credit markets. We passed—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. I'm getting to that, relax. [Laughter] We passed historic legislation to crack down on predatory abuses on credit cards so you guys aren't paying those extra fees. We expanded the Children's Health Insurance Program so that 11 million children who didn't have health insurance now have it, including the children of undocumented workers. That was all just in the first couple of months.

This past week, just this past week, we brought together—in an historic meeting we brought together auto executives, labor unions, Democrats, Republicans, to announce for the first time ever a national fuel efficiency standard that applies across the board, 35.5 miles per gallon, which will save the United States 1.8 billion dollars of oil and may just help us save the planet in the process. We're dealing with climate change in a way that we haven't dealt with.

And then a couple of days ago I nominated this lady—[applause]—Sonia Sotomayor to be the next Supreme Court Justice of the United States of America. I mean, think about the journey this woman has traveled: from South Bronx, goes to Princeton, summa cum laude—summa cum laude, not just, you know, magna or laude laude—[laughter]—but summa cum laude; goes on to Yale, serves on the Law Journal; Manhattan DA; private practice, partner in a big law firm; goes on to become a district trial judge and then an appellate judge; has more experience than any of the current Supreme Court Justices when they were nominated. This woman is brilliant, she is qualified, I want her confirmed, I want her walking up those marble steps and starting to provide some justice.

So we've made some progress. Yes, we have. But we've got more work to do. We can't rest on our laurels because we've got a lot of work to do. All across America, right now, millions have lost their jobs or are fearful of losing their jobs. All across America people have lost their homes

or are fearful of losing their homes. All across America people have lost their health care or are waking up in the middle of the night wondering if their child gets sick will they be bankrupt because they don't have decent health care or they just can't afford the premiums they're paying. All across America there are children who are trapped in schools that don't educate them, and they look out and they see very little hope on the horizon.

And around the world we've got a host of challenges: ending a war in Iraq, making sure that we come to a—that we're able to achieve our goals of rooting out Al Qaida in Afghanistan, making sure that we reconcile our need for security with our need to uphold our values even when it's difficult, even when it's hard, even when we'd like to just push those ideals aside. That's not who we are as a people, so we've got some work to do there.

We have to deal with climate change here in the United States and internationally. We've got to be leaders and not followers. So we've got a full menu. We've got a lot of work to do.

But I am confident that we're going to get it done, because what you taught me during the campaign, and what you continue to teach me through your involvement in this process is that when the American people decide it's time to bring about change, change happens. When the American people are determined to bring about justice, justice happens. When the American people decide we're going to give opportunity to all children and not just some

children, then we can make sure that those children are going to get a decent shot at life.

So your determination, your willingness to provide support—not just to me, but to the Democratic Party—to dig deep even when times are tough, to continue to get involved not just through your financial contributions, but through all the activism that you represent on a whole host of issues all across this State and all across the country, that's my insurance that change is going to come. Administrations come and go, but the American people and that spirit of innovation and that willingness to take on the toughest challenge and that belief that there are always brighter days ahead if we're willing to work for it. That's my insurance policy, that's how we're going to bring about change. So take heart of the change we've already brought.

But I want you to know, Los Angeles, you ain't seen nothing yet. We are going to deal with these issues. We are going to bring about a better America. And you and me, we're going to do it together, arm in arm. We're going to march forward.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. at the Beverly Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Joe Baca; and entertainers Jennifer Hudson, Roberto Granados, Earth Wind & Fire, and Rickey Minor. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 29. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Designations Under the Kingpin Act May 28, 2009

Dear _____:

This report to the Congress, under section 804(b) of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, 21 U.S.C. 1901–1908 (the “King-

pin Act”), transmits my designations of the following four foreign entities as appropriate for sanctions under the Kingpin Act and reports my direction of sanctions against them under the Act: