

June 12 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009

arrangement. We want to institute those reforms that will ensure that in 18 months' time the people of Zimbabwe are given an opportunity to elect their own Government.

Yes, there have been a lot of progress, or progress made by the transitional Government, but there are also problems. It is the problems of implementation, and I do recognize that even by the standard of our own benchmarks, there are gaps that still exist and that we will strive. And I want to show my—to express my commitment that we will strive to implement those benchmarks, not because they are for the international community, but because for ourselves it gives people of Zimbabwe freedom and opportunity to grow.

I want to say, lastly—I want to thank you for that demonstrable leadership in assisting the people of Zimbabwe, and I want to take the opportunity to thank the humanitarian support that the West—we have experienced over the years and the continued expression of support. And of course, we continue to engage in ensuring that that support consolidates the process towards democratic change rather than strengthens a reverse in defense of the status quo.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

*President Obama.* Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Have a great weekend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on World Day Against Child Labor June 12, 2009

Even in this modern era, children around the world are forced to work in deplorable and often dangerous conditions at a time in their lives when they should be in classrooms and playgrounds. Global child labor perpetuates a cycle of poverty that prevents families and nations from reaching their full potential. That's why, earlier this week, Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis reaffirmed my administration's commitment to this issue by announcing \$60 million to fight child labor.

I also find it fitting that this year's World Day Against Child Labor focuses on drawing attention to the particular plight young girls face. Of the 218 million child laborers worldwide, 100 million are girls, more than half of whom are exposed to hazardous work. That's unacceptable, and this world cannot allow it. We must stand united in opposition to child labor and recommit ourselves to ending this practice in all its forms, today and every day.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons That Undermine Democratic Processes or Institutions in Belarus

June 12, 2009

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the

*Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the

property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus are to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2009.

Despite some positive developments during the past year, including the release of internationally recognized political prisoners, the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons that have undermined democratic processes or institutions, committed human rights abuses related to political repression, and engaged in public corruption pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these

reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
June 12, 2009.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## The President's Weekly Address *June 13, 2009*

Last week, I spoke to you about my commitment to work with Congress to pass health care reform this year. Today I'd like to speak about how that effort is essential to restoring fiscal responsibility.

When it comes to the cost of health care, this much is clear: The status quo is unsustainable for families, businesses, and government. America spends nearly 50 percent more per person on health care than any other country. Health care premiums have doubled over the last decade, deductibles and out-of-pocket costs have skyrocketed, and many with preexisting conditions are denied coverage. More and more, Americans are being priced out of the care they need.

These costs are also hurting business, as some big businesses are at a competitive disadvantage with their foreign counterparts and some small businesses are forced to cut benefits, drop coverage, or even lay off workers. Meanwhile, Medicare and Medicaid pose one of the greatest threats to our Federal deficit and could leave our children with a mountain of debt that they cannot pay.

We cannot continue down this path. I don't accept a future where Americans forego health care because they can't pay for it and more and more families go without coverage at all. And I don't accept a future where American business is hurt and our Government goes broke. We have a responsibility to act, and to act now.

That's why I'm working with Congress to pass reform that lowers costs, improves quality and coverage, and protects consumer health care choices.

I know some question whether we can afford to act this year, but the unmistakable truth is it would be irresponsible to not act. We can't keep shifting a growing burden to future generations. With each passing year, health care costs consume a larger share of our Nation's spending and contribute to yawning deficits that we can't control. So let me be clear: Health care reform is not part of the problem when it comes to our fiscal future, it's a fundamental part of the solution.

Real reform will mean reductions in our long-term budget. And I have made a firm commitment that health care reform will not add to the Federal deficit over the next decade. To keep that commitment, my administration has already identified how to pay for the historic \$635 billion downpayment on reform detailed in our budget. This includes over \$300 billion that we will save through changes like reducing Medicare overpayments to private insurers and rooting out waste in Medicare and Medicaid.

However, any honest accounting must prepare for the fact that health care reform will require additional costs in the short term, in order to reduce spending in the long term. So today I am announcing an additional \$313 billion in savings that will rein in unnecessary spending