

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Jakarta, Indonesia

July 17, 2009

I strongly condemn the attacks that occurred this morning in Jakarta and extend my deepest condolences to all of the victims and their loved ones.

The American people stand by the Indonesian people in this difficult time, and the U.S. Government stands ready to help the Indonesian Government respond to and recover from these outrageous attacks as a friend and partner.

Indonesia has been steadfast in combating violent extremism and has successfully curbed terrorist activity within its borders. However, these attacks make it clear that extremists remain committed to murdering innocent men, women, and children of any faith in all countries. We will continue to partner with Indonesia to eliminate the threat from these violent extremists, and we will be unwavering in supporting a future of security and opportunity for the Indonesian people.

Statement on the Death of Walter L. Cronkite

July 17, 2009

For decades, Walter Cronkite was the most trusted voice in America. His rich baritone reached millions of living rooms every night, and in an industry of icons, Walter set the standard by which all others have been judged.

He was there through wars and riots, marches and milestones, calmly telling us what we needed to know. And through it all, he never lost the integrity he gained growing up in the heartland.

But Walter was always more than just an anchor. He was someone we could trust to guide us through the most important issues of the day, a voice of certainty in an uncertain world. He was family. He invited us to believe in him, and he never let us down. This country has lost an icon and a dear friend, and he will be truly missed.

The President's Weekly Address

July 18, 2009

Right now in Washington, our Senate and House of Representatives are both debating proposals for health insurance reform. Today I want to speak with you about the stakes of this debate for our people and for the future of our Nation. This is an issue that affects the health and financial well being of every single American and the stability of our entire economy.

It's about every family unable to keep up with soaring out-of-pocket costs and premiums rising three times faster than wages; every worker afraid of losing health insurance if they lose their job or change jobs; everyone who's worried that they may not be able to get insurance or change insurance if someone in their family has a preexisting condition.

It's about a woman in Colorado who told us that when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, her insurance company, the one she'd paid over \$700 a month to, refused to pay for her treatment. She had to use up her retirement funds to save her own life.

It's about a man from Maryland who sent us his story, a middle class college graduate whose health insurance expired when he changed jobs. During that time, he needed emergency surgery, and woke up \$10,000 in debt, a debt that has left him unable to save, buy a home, or make a career change.

It's about every business forced to shut their doors or shed jobs or ship them overseas. It's about State governments overwhelmed by

Medicaid, Federal budgets consumed by Medicare, and deficits piling higher year after year.

This is the status quo. This is the system we have today. This is what the debate in Congress is all about: whether we'll keep talking and tinkering and letting this problem fester as more families and businesses go under and more Americans lose their coverage, or whether we'll seize this opportunity, one we might not have again for generations, and finally pass health insurance reform this year, in 2009.

Now, we know there are those who will oppose reform no matter what. We know the same special interests and their agents in Congress will make the same old arguments and use the same scare tactics that have stopped reform before because they profit from this relentless escalation in health care costs. And I know that once you've seen enough ads and heard enough people yelling on TV, you might begin to wonder whether there's a grain of truth to what they're saying. So let me take a moment to answer a few of their arguments.

First, the same folks who controlled the White House and Congress for the past 8 years as we ran up record deficits will argue, believe it or not, that health reform will lead to record deficits. That's simply not true. Our proposals cut hundreds of billions of dollars in unnecessary spending and unwarranted giveaways to insurance companies in Medicare and Medicaid. They change incentives so providers will give patients the best care, not just the most expensive care, which will mean big savings over time. And we've urged Congress to include a proposal for a standing commission of doctors and medical experts to oversee cost-savings measures.

I want to be very clear: I will not sign on to any health plan that adds to our deficits over the next decade. And by helping improve quality and efficiency, the reforms we make will help bring our deficits under control in the long term.

Those who oppose reform will also tell you that under our plan, you won't get to choose your doctor, that some bureaucrat will choose for you. That's also not true. Michelle and I don't want anyone telling us who our family's

doctor should be, and no one should decide that for you either. Under our proposals, if you like your doctor, you keep your doctor. If you like your current insurance, you keep that insurance. Period. End of story.

Finally, opponents of health reform warn that this is all some big plot for socialized medicine or government-run health care with long lines and rationed care. That's not true either. I don't believe that Government can or should run health care. But I also don't think insurance companies should have free reign to do as they please.

That's why any plan I sign must include an insurance exchange, a one-stop shopping marketplace where you can compare the benefits, costs, and track records of a variety of plans, including a public option to increase competition and keep insurance companies honest, and choose what's best for your family. And that's why we'll put an end to the worst practices of the insurance industry: no more yearly caps or lifetime caps, no more denying people care because of preexisting conditions, and no more dropping people from a plan when they get too sick. No longer will you be without health insurance, even if you lose your job or change your jobs.

The good news is that people who know the system best are rallying to the cause of change. Just this past week, the American Nurses Association, representing millions of nurses across America, and the American Medical Association, representing doctors across our Nation, announced their support because they've seen first hand the need for health insurance reform.

They know we cannot continue to cling to health industry practices that are bankrupting families and undermining American businesses large and small. They know we cannot let special interests and partisan politics stand in the way of reform, not this time around.

The opponents of health insurance reform would have us do nothing. But think about what doing nothing, in the face of ever-increasing costs, will do to you and your family. So today I am urging the House and the Senate, Democrats and Republicans, to seize this opportunity and vote for reform that gives the

American people the best care at the lowest cost, that reins in insurance companies, strengthens businesses, and finally gives families the choices they need and the security they deserve.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on July 17 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on July 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 18.

Remarks at the Children's National Medical Center *July 20, 2009*

Hello, everybody. Please have a seat. Well, I just first of all want to thank the Children's Hospital for hosting us today, and I want to thank the participants: Joseph Wright, Brian Jacobs, Yewande Johnson, Michael Knappe, Regina Hartridge, and Kathleen Quigley.

I just had the opportunity to talk to doctors, nurses, physician's assistants, and administrators at this extraordinary institution. We spoke about some of the strains on our health care system and some of the strains our health care system places on parents with sick children.

We spoke about the amount of time and money wasted on insurance-driven bureaucracy. We spoke about the growing number of Americans who are uninsured and underinsured. We spoke about what's wrong with a system where women can't always afford maternity care and parents can't afford checkups for their kids and end up seeking treatment in emergency rooms like the ones here at Children's. We spoke about the fact that it's very hard even for families who have health insurance to access primary care physicians and pediatricians. In a city like Washington, DC, you've got all the doctors in one half of the city, very few doctors in the other half of the city. And part of that has to do with just the manner in which reimbursement is taking place and the disincentives for doctors, nurses, and physician's assistants in caring for those who are most in need. And we spoke about where we're headed if we once again delay and defer health insurance reform.

Now, these health care professionals are doing heroic work each and every day to save the lives of America's children. But they're being forced to fight through a system that works better for drug companies and insurance companies than for the American people that all these

wonderful health professionals entered their profession to serve.

And over the past decade, premiums have doubled in America, out-of-pocket costs have shot up by a third, deductibles have continued to climb. And yet even as America's families have been battered by spiraling health care costs, health insurance companies and their executives have reaped windfall profits from a broken system.

Now, we've talked this problem to death, year after year. But unless we act—and act now—none of this will change. Just a quick statistic I heard about this hospital: Just a few years ago, there were approximately 50,000 people coming into the emergency room. Now they've got 85,000. There's been almost a doubling of emergency room care in a relatively short span of time, which is putting enormous strains on the system as a whole. That's the status quo, and it's only going to get worse.

If we do nothing, then families will spend more and more of their income for less and less care; the number of people who lose their insurance because they've lost or changed jobs will continue to grow; more children will be denied coverage on account of asthma or a heart condition; jobs will be lost, take-home pay will be lower, businesses will shutter, and we will continue to waste hundreds of billions of dollars on insurance company boondoggles and inefficiencies that add to our financial burdens without making us any healthier.

So the need for reform is urgent and it is indisputable. No one denies that we're on an unsustainable path. We all know there are more efficient ways of doing it. We just—I spoke to the chief information officer here at the hospital, and he talked about some wonderful ways in which we could potentially gather up electronic