

As I said throughout my campaign and at the beginning of my administration, the United States is committed to a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. That includes a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that results in two states, Israel and Palestine, in which both the Israeli people and the Palestinian people can live in peace and security and realize their aspirations for a better life for their children.

That is why my Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and my Special Envoy, George Mitchell, have worked tirelessly to create the context for permanent status negotiations. And we have made progress since I took office in January and since Israelis—Israel's Government took office in April, but we still have much further to go.

Palestinians have strengthened their efforts on security, but they need to do more to stop incitement and to move forward with negotiations. Israelis have facilitated greater freedom of movement for the Palestinians and have discussed important steps to restrain settlement activity, but they need to translate these discussions into real action on this and other issues. And it remains important for the Arab States to take concrete steps to promote peace.

Simply put, it is past time to talk about starting negotiations; it is time to move forward. It is time to show the flexibility and common sense and sense of compromise that's necessary to achieve our goals. Permanent status negotiations must begin and begin soon. And more importantly, we must give those negotiations the opportunity to succeed.

And so my message to these two leaders is clear: Despite all the obstacles, despite all the history, despite all the mistrust, we have to find a way forward. We have to summon the will to break the deadlock that has trapped generations of Israelis and Palestinians in an endless cycle of conflict and suffering. We cannot continue the same pattern of taking tentative steps forward and then stepping back. Success depends on all sides acting with a sense of urgency, and that is why I have asked Secretary Clinton and Senator Mitchell to carry forward the work that we do here today.

Senator Mitchell will meet with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators next week. I've asked the Prime Minister and the President to continue these intensive discussions by sending their teams back to Washington next week, and I've asked the Secretary of State to report to me on the status of these negotiations in mid-October.

All of us know this will not be easy, but we are here today because it is the right thing to do. I look forward to speaking with my colleagues. I'm committed to pressing ahead in the weeks and months and years to come, because it is absolutely critical that we get this issue resolved. It's not just critical for the Israelis and the Palestinians, it's critical for the world. It is in the interests of the United States, and we are going to work as hard as necessary to accomplish our goals. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:26 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Hu Jintao of China in New York City

*September 22, 2009*

*President Obama.* We welcome your delegation to New York. I'm sorry that I didn't have a chance to see you in L'Aquila, but your Councilor, Dai, did an excellent job representing your country.

I also have to say that I enjoyed seeing Vice Premier Wang as well as Councilor Dai at the SED meeting. And Vice President Biden and I

both had excellent meetings with Chairman Wu 2 weeks ago in the White House. I should also mention that Vice Premier Wang showed me his jump shot, which is excellent. [*Laughter*] How do you say "basketball shot" in Chinese? [*Laughter*]

As you know, I'm committed to pursuing a genuinely cooperative and comprehensive

relationship with China. We need to make our relationship more dynamic and effective, given the growing number of common global and regional challenges that our countries face.

And I'm very much looking forward to my visit to China in November. I want to take cooperation on a range of global and regional and bilateral to a new level, and I appreciate the excellent cooperation that you have already showed to our advance team. So we're very welcome, and I think that will be an excellent visit.

*President Hu.* Thank you, Mr. President, for your warm and friendly remarks. I'm happy to see that now China-U.S. relationship has shown a sound growth momentum on the whole.

The agreement you and I arrived at, at our London meeting, in a number of areas is being implemented, and our two sides are now working together to build a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship for the 21st century.

I always agree that a good China-U.S. relationship not only serves the fundamental interest of both China and the United States and the two peoples but also contributes to peace,

stability, and the prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world at large.

The Chinese side is willing to work with the United States to keep our bilateral relationship firmly along the right course and deepen our pragmatic cooperation in a wide range of areas. The Chinese side is also willing to work with the United States to properly handle sensitive issues to ensure that our relationship will continue to grow on a sound and steady course.

I'd also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for—

*[At this point, the meeting continued, but no transcript was provided.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:47 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to State Councilor Dai Bingguo, Vice Premier Wang Qishan, and chairman of the National People's Congress Wu Bangguo of China. The President also referred to the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City September 22, 2009

Thank you very much. Please, please have a seat. Thank you. Thank you so much. Good evening. And thank you, President Clinton, for the extraordinarily brief introduction which—[laughter]—during the U.N. General Assembly week does not happen that often. [Laughter]

I want to acknowledge Bob Harrison and the outstanding work that he's doing as CEO of CGI, as well as Ed Hughes, the deputy director of CGI, for their excellent work.

Some of you are aware that last week, President Clinton and I were here in New York together; we were having lunch in a small Italian restaurant. And we talked about the economy; we talked about health care; we talked about pressing global challenges. And then he said to

me, "Would you pass the Parmesan?" [Laughter] And then he said to me, "Would you speak to our annual meeting?"

Now, I think everyone knows what it's like when Bill Clinton asks you to make a commitment. [Laughter] He looks you in the eye; he feels your pain. [Laughter] He makes you feel like you're the only person in the room. What could I say? I was vulnerable, just as all of you have been—[laughter]—vulnerable to his charms.

So I am happy to be here and honored by the invitation. And I've always appreciated President Clinton's valuable advice and the ideas that he's offered my administration. I do understand that the President's been having trouble getting ahold of my Secretary of State