

have learned,” he said, “to be citizens of the world, members of the human community.”

The United Nations was built by men and women like Roosevelt from every corner of the world: from Africa and Asia, from Europe to the Americas. These architects of international cooperation had an idealism that was anything but naive; it was rooted in the hard-earned lessons of war, rooted in the wisdom that nations could advance their interests by acting together instead of splitting apart.

Now it falls to us, for this institution will be what we make of it. The United Nations does extraordinary good around the world: feeding the hungry; caring for the sick; mending places that have been broken. But it also struggles to enforce its will and to live up to the ideals of its founding.

I believe that those imperfections are not a reason to walk away from this institution; they are a calling to redouble our efforts. The United Nations can either be a place where we bicker about outdated grievances, or forge common ground; a place where we focus on what drives us apart, or what brings us together; a place where we indulge tyranny, or a source of moral

authority. In short, the United Nations can be an institution that is disconnected from what matters in the lives of our citizens, or it can be an indispensable factor in advancing the interests of the people we serve.

We have reached a pivotal moment. The United States stands ready to begin a new chapter of international cooperation, one that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of all nations. And so, with confidence in our cause and with a commitment to our values, we call on all nations to join us in building the future that our people so richly deserve.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Ali Abdussalam Treki, President, 64th session of the U.N. General Assembly; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations in New York City *September 23, 2009*

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary-General. On behalf of the United States and on behalf of the extraordinary city of New York, we want to welcome all of you. We also want to encourage you to do some shopping while you're here. *[Laughter]* There are wonderful restaurants.

I've talked enough this morning, so I'm going to be very, very brief. But, Mr. Secretary-General, I just wanted to thank you for your unwavering commitment to the ideals upon which this body was founded. In your tenure at the United Nations, you've shown your dedication to the pursuit of peace and security, to protection of human rights, the promotion of democracy and development, and the advancement of international justice.

Over the past year, your leadership has directly helped to prevent the use and spread of nuclear weapons. It's improved this institution's peacekeeping efforts, to battle hunger and increase food security, and as we saw yesterday, you are reminding all the world of the urgency and magnitude of our climate challenge. And on this effort, you've led by example and spurred all of us on towards the common goal of saving our common home. And we're very grateful to you for that.

The institution that you lead was founded decades ago in a different world that faced different threats and different challenges. And yet the size and the scope of the challenges we currently face are immense. And the United Nations has never held more promise than it does today. Whether we realize that promise is far

from certain. As I said this morning, the magnitude of our challenges has yet to be met by the scope of our action. But days like this offer renewed hope that we will find it within ourselves the courage and the determination to meet our responsibilities to ourselves, to our citizens, and to future generations.

It falls to us. Progress will not come without setbacks. Cooperation does not come without debate and disagreement. And this institution will be what we make of it. So on this Septem-

ber day, I would like to offer a toast to what can be in the years to come, a place where we forge common ground and recognize our common humanity, a source of moral authority, a force of peace, and above all, an indispensable institution in helping all of us build a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

To the United Nations. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City *September 23, 2009*

President Obama. Well, first of all, I want to welcome President Medvedev to the United States and New York. As you all know, I had the great pleasure of visiting him in Moscow, and he extended extraordinary hospitality to both myself and my family. More importantly, we got a lot of work done that I think will be bearing fruit in the months and years to come.

And I have to say publicly how much I appreciate the excellent working relationship that President Medvedev and I have been able to develop during our meetings, not only bilaterally, but also at the various summits that we've attended.

We've had an excellent discussion that touched on a number of areas that our teams have been working on together over the last several months. In particular, we discussed the progress that's being made on the START Treaty. And both of us are confident that we can meet our self-imposed deadline to get an agreement that substantially reduces our nuclear missiles and launchers by the end of the year.

So we spent the bulk of our time talking about Iran. As I said in my speech today, the United States is committed to a strong non-proliferation regime. And we are committed to upholding the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that strikes a bargain with all countries. That bargain says that countries are able to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, that they commit not to pursuing nuclear weapons, and

those nations that have nuclear weapons make commitments to start reducing their stockpiles.

As the two major nuclear superpowers, we have made a commitment that we will reduce our nuclear stockpiles and move forward on our part of the bargain. And many other countries are abiding by the international commitments and norms that have been established by the NPT.

Unfortunately, Iran has been violating too many of its international commitments. So what we've discussed is how we can move in a positive direction that resolves a potential crisis, not just in the Middle East but that can cause enormous problems to the nonproliferation regime worldwide.

I believe that Russia and the United States shares the strategic objective that Iran can pursue peaceful energy sources but that it should not pursue nuclear weapons. I believe we also share the view that this should be resolved diplomatically, and I am on record as being committed to negotiating with Iran in a serious fashion to resolve this issue.

Russia, as a major leader, I think, believes that such an approach is possible as well. But I think we also both agree that if Iran does not respond to serious negotiations and resolve this issue in a way that assures the international community that it's meeting its commitments and is not developing nuclear weapons, then we will have to take additional actions