

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen of Denmark in Copenhagen

*October 2, 2009*

*Prime Minister Rasmussen.* So, Mr. President, welcome to Copenhagen. We have had the pleasure of your lovely wife's company for the last 2 days, and I am, indeed, very proud and honored and happy that you also found your time to stop by.

I realize that you are here to support the bid for Chicago's Olympic Games 2016. In that regard, I wish you the very best. And I hope you will be successful and you will enjoy your visit to such an extent that you will return very soon.

We have a long-lasting friendship. We have common values. We have a lot of common issues to discuss. And I'm really looking forward to discussing some of these issues on our common agenda.

So once again, Mr. President, welcome to Copenhagen.

*President Obama.* Well, thank you so much, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for your hospitality and the hospitality of the people of Denmark. We have had obviously a remarkable time in the last 2 days. Michelle has been just so thrilled to be interacting with the people of Denmark. Unfortunately, my stay has not been so long, but I hope that I'll be able to return. I've been here before, and I love the city.

I want to say that, as the Prime Minister indicated, the relationship between the United States and Denmark has always been strong. We share common values. We have worked together on a whole range of international matters of great importance.

Something that obviously is pressing now is the issue of climate change, and Prime Minister

Rasmussen has been a great leader on this issue. We've had occasion of discussing this in the context of the G-8, as well as the recent U.N. General Assembly meeting, and Secretary Ban Ki-moon organized a dinner in which the Prime Minister participated. The upcoming meeting here in Copenhagen around climate change is something that we are keenly interested in, and I'm looking forward to discussions in depth about how we can move that process forward. So we appreciate your leadership.

I should add that we are grateful generally for the sacrifices of the people of Denmark with respect to our efforts in Afghanistan. They are very difficult, but Denmark is a country that has consistently, I think, been willing to sacrifice both time, resources, and obviously, most importantly, personnel in the broad efforts there to stabilize the country. And we're grateful for that as well.

And finally, I want to thank the royal family and Her Majesty for the extraordinary hospitality that she's shown since we've been here.

So I thank the people of Denmark. I thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for hosting us. And I'm looking forward to a fruitful conversation and continued strengthening of the bond between the United States and your country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. at Christiansborg Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

## Remarks on Arrival From Copenhagen

*October 2, 2009*

One of the things that I think is most valuable about sports is that you can play a great game and still not win. And so although I wish that we had come back with better news from Copenhagen, I could not be prouder of my hometown of Chicago, the volunteers who were

involved, Mayor Daley, the delegation, and the American people for the extraordinary bid that we put forward.

I do want to congratulate Rio de Janeiro and the nation of Brazil for winning the 2016 Olympics. I think this is a truly historic event, as

these will be the first Olympic Games ever to be held in South America. And as neighbors in the Americas, as friends to the Brazilian people, we welcome this extraordinary sign of progress and the fact that the 2016 games will be in the Americas. I had a chance to talk to President Lula and gave him a hearty congratulations and told him that our athletes will see him on the field of competition in 2016.

Again, I want to thank everybody who worked so hard to put America's bid together—not just Mayor Daley and the delegation—Pat Ryan—but most especially the thousands of Chicagoans who volunteered over these past few years. They put in their heart and soul into this bid. I have no doubt that it was the strongest bid possible, and I'm proud that I was able to come in and help make that case in person. I believe it's always a worthwhile endeavor to promote and boost the United States of America and invite the world to come see what we're all about. We, obviously, would have been eager to host these games, but as I said, this Nation and our athletes are still very much excited to compete in 2016. And we once again want to just say how much we are committed to the Olympic spirit, which I think represents some of the best of humanity.

I also want to say a few words about the unemployment numbers that came out today. As I've said before, my principle focus each and every day, as well as the principle focus of my economic team, is putting our Nation back on the path to prosperity. And since the period last winter, when we were losing an average of 700,000 jobs per month, we've certainly made some progress on this front. But today's job report is a sobering reminder that progress comes in fits and starts and that we're going to need to grind out this recovery step by step.

From the moment I took office, I've made the point that employment is often the last

thing to come back after a recession. And that's what history shows us. But our task is to do everything we can possibly do to accelerate that process. And I want to let every single American know that I will not let up until those who are seeking work can find work, until businesses that are seeking credit are able to get credit and thrive, until all responsible homeowners can stay in their homes.

That's our ultimate goal, and it's one that we are working every single day here in the White House to accomplish, whether it involves implementing the Recovery Act that's already helped to bring back America from the brink of a much worse situation or lowering the cost of health care for businesses and families. And that's why I'm working closely with my economic advisers to explore any and all additional options and measures that we might take to promote job creation.

Whenever I see statistics like the one we saw today, my mind turns to the people behind them: honest, decent Americans who want nothing more than the opportunity to contribute to their country and help build a better future for themselves and their families. And building a 21st-century economy that offers this opportunity—an economy where folks can receive the skills and education they need to compete for the jobs of the future—will not happen overnight. But we will build it. Of that I am both confident and determined. And on behalf of every American, I will continue in that effort each and every day for as long as I am in this White House.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; and Patrick G. Ryan, chairman and chief executive officer, Chicago 2016.

## Statement on Senate Action on Health Care Reform Legislation *October 2, 2009*

Thanks to the unyielding commitment of Senator Baucus and members of the Senate Finance Committee, we have reached another

milestone in our effort to pass health insurance reform. Over the past 2 weeks, the committee has engaged in long hours of thoughtful