

politics that too often has fallen prey to the lobbyists and special interests, that's fostered division and sustained the status quo. Passing health insurance reform is a great test of this proposition. Yes, it will make a profound and positive difference in the lives of the American people. But it also now represents something more: whether or not we as a nation are capable of tackling our toughest challenges; if we can serve the national interest despite the unrelenting efforts of the special interests; if we can still do big things in America.

I believe we can; I believe we will. And I urge every Member of Congress to stand

against the power plays and political ploys and to stand up on behalf of the American people who sent us to Washington to do their business.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:20 p.m. on October 16 at Texas A&M University's Rudder Auditorium in College Station, TX, for broadcast on October 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 17.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotic Traffickers Centered in Colombia October 16, 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 emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect beyond October 21, 2009.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, for-

eign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause an extreme level of violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property and interests in property that are in the United States or within the possession or control of United States persons and by depriving them of access to the U.S. market and financial system.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
October 16, 2009.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 19. The notice of October 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at Viers Mill Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland October 19, 2009

The President. Here's the reason that I wanted to stop by for lunch today, and that is, I have heard great things about this school. I

hear everybody here is reading all the time. Right? The motto here is?

Principal Matthew A. Devan. Viers Mill, what's our goal?

Students. Read! Read! Read!

Mr. Devan. Viers Mill, what's our goal?

Students. Read! Read! Read!

Mr. Devan. Because great readers have?

Students. Great choices!

The President. So you guys are readers. And so, being a reader myself, I wanted to come meet all these outstanding readers. Because you guys are reading so much and you're working so hard, you guys are doing great in terms of your test scores and how this school is doing. And so this was just a great example of how much improvement a school can make just in a really short time when you've got motivated kids.

So I wanted to come by and introduce myself, to say I'm very proud of you. I am hoping that you guys will continue to read, read, read, and that all of you are going to be really working hard not just this year, but all the way through high school and then all the way through col-

lege, because how many people here plan to go to college? Everybody, right? I just wanted to make sure everybody's going to college. But that means everybody's going to have to work hard.

So here's what I'm going to do. I didn't want to give a long speech. What I'm going to do is, I'm just going to come around, I'm going to shake people's hands, I'm going to say hi to folks, and I'm sure that somebody out there is going to be taking a bunch of pictures. [*Laughter*] And you guys can tell me what you've been reading. All right? So get ready to tell me what you've been reading lately and what's going on. All right? Okay, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Situation in Sudan October 19, 2009

Today my administration is releasing a comprehensive strategy to confront the serious and urgent situation in Sudan.

For years, the people of Sudan have faced enormous and unacceptable hardship. The genocide in Darfur has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and left millions more displaced. Conflict in the region has wrought more suffering, posing dangers beyond Sudan's borders and blocking the potential of this important part of Africa. Sudan is now poised to fall further into chaos if swift action is not taken.

Our conscience and our interests in peace and security call upon the United States and the international community to act with a sense of urgency and purpose. First, we must seek a definitive end to conflict, gross human rights abuses, and genocide in Darfur. Second, the comprehensive peace agreement between the north and south in Sudan must be implemented to create the possibility of long-term peace. These two goals must both be pursued simultaneously with urgency. Achieving them requires the commitment of the United States as well as the active participation of international partners.

Concurrently, we will work aggressively to ensure that Sudan does not provide a safe haven for international terrorists.

The United States Special Envoy has worked actively and effectively to engage all of the parties involved, and he will continue to pursue engagement that saves lives and achieves results. Later this week, I will renew the declaration of a national emergency with respect to Sudan, which will continue tough sanctions on the Sudanese Government. If the Government of Sudan acts to improve the situation on the ground and to advance peace, there will be incentives; if it does not, then there will be increased pressure imposed by the United States and the international community. As the United States and our international partners meet our responsibility to act, the Government of Sudan must meet its responsibilities to take concrete steps in a new direction.

Over the last several years, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals—and from around the world—have taken action to address the situation in Sudan and to end the genocide in Darfur. Going forward, all of our efforts must be measured by the lives