

energy and launched an EU-U.S. ministerial energy council. Our foreign energy ministers will have their first meeting tomorrow, which we welcome. Secondly, we intensify our cooperation and dialogue on transatlantic economic integration in order to reduce the barriers of trade.

Thirdly, deliverance is restored on dialogue on development, on global food security, climate change litigation, and the Millennium Development Goals. And last, to intensify the EU-U.S. cooperation on antimicrobio resistance. So we are very glad for all of these deliverances, as well.

Thank you.

President Obama. Excellent.

President Barroso. I think President Obama and Prime Minister Reinfeldt already made the most important points regarding the very productive meeting we just had. I'd like to thank President Obama for his very kind words to the European Union. In fact, we believe that is more important than ever, this relationship.

In this age of globalization, it is quite obvious that the United States and Europe can make a real difference. There are so many issues in the global agenda, from climate change to financial and economic cooperation to trade, many issues that we have discussed today.

Regarding climate change, I want to tell that I am more confident now than I was in days before. The Copenhagen negotiations have been slow, but I would like once again to pay tribute to President Obama's leadership. As I said earlier, President Obama changed the climate on the climate negotiations because with the strong leadership of United States we can indeed make an agreement. We are working toward a framework agreement in Copenhagen

that will be an important agreement for the world. And we had, particularly, a very good discussion on this today, and I think that was one of the most important points of our exchange.

Of course, I will not repeat what President Obama and Prime Minister Reinfeldt just said. But it is extremely important on the other issues like Afghanistan and Pakistan and other issues of global security. Also, we work together now in the European Union with the Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty is the treaty that will give the European Union a reinforced capacity to act, a more coherent position also, externally working with our main partners, and, of course, working especially with our American friends.

President Obama. Javier.

High Representative Solana. I have nothing to add really meaningful, Mr. President. [Laughter] Mr. President, thank you very much for your hospitality. We appreciate it.

President Obama. Well, thank you very much. You should understand that the rule in Washington is even if you don't have anything to say, you should take a long time to say it. [Laughter] So obviously, we'll have to give you more training. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Prime Minister John Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden, in his capacity as President of the European Council; President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission; and Javier Solana Madariaga, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

Remarks to Students at James C. Wright Middle School in Madison, Wisconsin November 4, 2009

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Well, we're thrilled to be here, and this is a school that's getting better and better, and you guys are working really, really hard. And we've been lucky. We have a President here who has got a tough, tough job. Being President is tough with-

out the—he's fighting two wars, a really, really tough economy—I like your shirt.

Student. Thanks. [Laughter]

Secretary Duncan. And what amazes me is that week after week, month after month, he just keeps coming back to education, and he's absolutely passionate about it. He and his wife,

the First Lady Michelle Obama, received great educations. Neither one was born with a lot of money, but they worked really hard and had great teachers and great principals and made the most of it. And now he's our President. So it's a pretty remarkable journey. The only reason he's the President is because he got a great education.

So we're thrilled to be here. He might want to say a few things, and looks like you guys have questions for him. And so we'll be quick, and we'll open up to your questions.

The President. Well, it is good to see all of you. Thanks so much for having us.

First of all, I've got a great Secretary of Education in Arne Duncan. So he helps school districts all across the country in trying to figure out how to improve what's going on in the schools. And let me just pick up on something that Arne said earlier.

I was really lucky to have a great education. I didn't have a lot of money. My parents weren't famous. In fact, my father left when I was 2 years old, so I really didn't grow up with a father in the house; mostly it was my mom and my grandparents. But they always emphasized education, and they were able to send me to good schools, and by working hard I was, obviously, in a position to do some good stuff.

My wife Michelle, same thing; she grew up on the south side of Chicago. Her dad was actually disabled, he had multiple sclerosis, but he still worked every day in a blue collar job. And her mom didn't work, and when she did she was a secretary. But because she worked really hard in school she ended up getting a scholarship to Princeton and to Harvard Law School and ended up really being able to achieve a lot.

So that's the reason why we are spending a lot of time talking to folks like you, because we want all of you to understand that there's nothing more important than what you're doing right here at this school. And Wright has a great reputation; this school is improving all the time. But ultimately, how good a school is depends on how well you guys are doing.

And the main message that I just wanted to deliver to you is, every single one of you could

be doing the same kinds of things that Arne is doing or I'm doing. Or you could be running a company, or you can be inventing a product or you could—look, anything you can imagine, you can accomplish, but the only way you do it is if you're succeeding here in school. And we are spending a lot of money to try to improve school buildings and put computers in and make sure that your teachers are well trained and that they are getting the support they need.

So we're working really hard to try to reform the schools, but ultimately, what matters most is how badly you want a good education. If you think that somehow somebody is just going to—you can tilt your head and somebody is going to pour education in your ear, that's just not how it works. The only way that you end up being in a position to achieve is if you want it, if inside you want it.

And part of the reason why we wanted to talk to you guys is, you're right at the point now in your lives where what you do is really going to start mattering. My daughters are a little younger than you—Malia is 11, Sasha is 8—but when you're in grade school, you're playing—hopefully, somebody is making sure you're doing your homework when you get it, but to some degree you're still just kind of learning how to learn.

By the time you get to middle school, you're now going to be confronted with a lot of choices. You're going to start entering those teenage years where there are a lot of distractions and in some places people will say you don't need to worry about school or it's uncool to be smart or, you know, all kinds of things. And look, I'll be honest, I went through some of that when I was in high school, and I made some mistakes and had some setbacks.

So I just want everybody to understand right now that nothing is going to be more important to you than just being hungry for knowledge. And if all of you decide to do that, then there are going to be teachers and principals and secretaries of education who are going to be there to help you. So hopefully, you guys will take that all to heart.

All right. Okay. Now we're going to kick out everybody so I can let you—you guys can ask

me all the really tough questions without having the press here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at James C. Wright Middle School in Madison *November 4, 2009*

Thank you, everybody. Hello, Madison! Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, please, have a seat. Have a seat.

It is good to see all of you. Good to be back in Madison. I want to first of all just say that Jim Doyle is not only one of the finest Governors we have in the country but is also a great friend, a great supporter; his entire family has been wonderful. And so I just could not be prouder to associate myself with the outstanding work that Jim has done in the State. Please give him a big round of applause.

We've got two wonderful mayors in the house. First of all, your own, Dave Cieslewicz, is here—Dave. And Milwaukee's outstanding mayor, Tom Barrett, is in the house.

I am so impressed with the work that's been done here at Wright Middle School, and I know that Principal Nancy Evans deserves a huge amount of credit, so please give her a big round of applause. And to the faculty and the staff, but most importantly, the students, who I had a chance to meet with earlier today, they are just some outstanding young people. So if there are any parents of students in the house, you should be proud, and give them all a big round of applause.

Now, it's great to be back in Madison, great to be back in Wisconsin. And I've heard great things about Wright, so I've got very high expectations for all the students here, and I told them this. I expect them to keep up the good work that you've already been putting in to make sure that you succeed not just in middle school, but also in high school, also in college, and for the rest of your lives. And parents, I want you to stay on them because that is an absolutely critical ingredient for their success.

You know, 1 year ago, Americans all across this country went to the polls and cast ballots for the future they wanted to see. Election day was a day of hope, it was a day of possibility, but

it was also a sobering one because we knew even then that we faced an array of challenges that would test us as a country. We already saw that there was a financial crisis that threatened to plunge our economy into a great depression, the worst that we've seen in generations. We had record deficits, two wars, frayed alliances around the world.

Facing this reality, my administration had two fundamental obligations. The first was to rescue the economy from imminent collapse. And while we still have a long way to go, we have made meaningful progress toward achieving that goal. We acted boldly and swiftly to pass a Recovery Act that has made a difference for families right here in Wisconsin, and Jim, your Governor, described the difference that it's made.

We've put a tax cut into the pockets of 95 percent of hard-working families. We created or saved over 1 million jobs, including 4,000 education jobs right here in Wisconsin. We've taken steps to unlock our frozen credit markets so that the ordinary American can get the loan that he or she needs to buy a home or a car, to go to college or start a new business. We've enacted measures to stem the crisis in our housing market to help responsible homeowners stay in their homes and curb the decline of home values overall.

So all these things contributed to the first quarter of economic growth that we've had as a nation in over a year. The rate of job loss is slowing, although not nearly fast enough yet. The work continues. But we're moving in the right direction, and we are going to keep on fulfilling our obligation to do every single thing we possibly can to pull this economy out of the ditch and to make sure that people can find jobs that pay good wages. That's our top priority.

So that was the rescue part of our job, just solving the immediate crisis. But we also came