

currently in effect as shown in the attachment shall remain in effect in 2010.

The law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. As I said in August, I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. Since any pay raise above the amount proposed in this alternative plan would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to reduce hiring to pay the higher rates.

Statement on Romanian National Day *December 1, 2009*

I send my best wishes to all those who will celebrate Romanian National Day. Our nations share nearly 130 years of relations, and Romania remains a close ally and partner as we face

Moreover, the GS "quit" rate continues to be very low (2.1 percent on an annual basis), well below the overall average "quit" rate in private enterprise.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Statement on Central African Republic National Day *December 1, 2009*

On behalf of the American people, I extend my best wishes to all those who are celebrating the National Day of the Central African Republic.

the challenges of the world. I especially offer my congratulations to the Romanian American community that are observing this occasion.

Our Nation stands with the Central African Republic as both our countries work together to promote peace and prosperity.

Remarks at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York *December 1, 2009*

Thank you. Please be seated. Good evening. To the United States Corps of Cadets, to the men and women of our Armed Services, and to my fellow Americans: I want to speak to you tonight about our effort in Afghanistan, the nature of our commitment there, the scope of our interests, and the strategy that my administration will pursue to bring this war to a successful conclusion. It's an extraordinary honor for me to do so here at West Point, where so many men and women have prepared to stand up for our security and to represent what is finest about our country.

To address these important issues, it's important to recall why America and our allies were compelled to fight a war in Afghanistan in the

first place. We did not ask for this fight. On September 11th, 2001, 19 men hijacked 4 airplanes and used them to murder nearly 3,000 people. They struck at our military and economic nerve centers. They took the lives of innocent men, women, and children without regard to their faith or race or station. Were it not for the heroic actions of passengers onboard one of these flights, they could have also struck at one of the great symbols of our democracy in Washington and killed many more.

As we know, these men belonged to Al Qaida, a group of extremists who have distorted and defiled Islam, one of the world's great religions, to justify the slaughter of innocents. Al Qaida's base of operations was in Afghanistan,