

little to show for it other than an increased acceleration of the climate change phenomenon. The time for talk is over. This is the bottom line: We can embrace this accord, take a substantial step forward, continue to refine it and build upon its foundation. We can do that, and everyone who is in this room will be part of a historic endeavor, one that makes life better for our children and our grandchildren.

Or we can choose delay, falling back into the same divisions that have stood in the way of action for years. And we will be back having the same stale arguments month after month, year after year, perhaps decade after decade, all while the danger of climate change grows until it is irreversible.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no time to waste. America has made our choice. We have charted our course. We have made our commitments. We will do what we say. Now I believe it's the time for the nations and the people of the world to come together behind a common purpose.

We are ready to get this done today, but there has to be movement on all sides to recognize that it is better for us to act than to talk; it's better for us to choose action over inaction, the future over the past. And with courage and faith, I believe that we can meet our responsibilities to our people and the future of our planet. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. at the Bella Center.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Copenhagen December 18, 2009

President Obama. Obviously, our main concern in coming to Copenhagen was to try to move forward with an accord on the issue of climate change. But on the margins of this meeting we thought it was important to continue to build on the excellent relationship that our two Governments have developed over the last several months.

Our main focus today was the START Treaty, the new START Treaty that we have been negotiating. We've been making excellent progress. We are quite close to an agreement, and I'm confident that it will be completed in a timely fashion. And I just want to thank President Medvedev for being a very effective partner in these negotiations.

And we wish him a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

President Medvedev. For my part, as an effective partner of President Obama, I will say all the same, but using different words, as the custom that we have in our diplomatic practice.

That's true that we arrived in Copenhagen not to have this bilateral meeting, but to move forward all the whole range of climate issues,

and in this respect our work is not over. But on the other hand, it would be unreasonable not to use this opportunity in order to—not to discuss what we've been doing for the recent days or the recent time in a very coordinated and persistent manner. And I would like to thank Mr. Obama and the U.S. negotiating team. I am talking about a new treaty on the reductions of strategic arms.

And our positions are very close and almost all the issues that we've been discussing for the last month are almost closed. And there are certain technical details which we can encounter, many agreements which require further work. I hope that we will be able to do it in a quite brief period of time. The outcome of our efforts will reflect good and close spirit of our relationship that we have established with the new U.S. administration.

[At this point, President Medvedev continued in English.]

And I would like to say merry Christmas and happy New Year to you.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at the Bella Center. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an

interpreter. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Observance of the Hmong New Year *December 18, 2009*

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to those who are celebrating the Hmong New Year. Over the course of decades, Hmong have come to this country in times of great difficulty, often as refugees escaping persecution. In Southeast Asia, many helped the people of the United States and emigrated here in a period of great strife. Through struggle and sacrifice, they built communities and families and have reminded us of what is best about America. Hmong men and women have come to this country to build a better life, and through their

culture and contribution, they have enriched America as well.

The Hmong New Year is traditionally celebrated at the end of the harvest season and marks a time filled with great food, colorful clothes, the music of the *qeej*, and enjoyable games. It is a time for family and community as people gather to bring good luck for the New Year. With that spirit in mind, I wish those celebrating Hmong New Year a prosperous and healthy New Year. *Xyoo tshiab*.

The President's News Conference in Copenhagen *December 18, 2009*

The President. Let me start with a statement, and then I'll take a couple of questions.

Today we've made meaningful and unprecedented—made a meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough here in Copenhagen. For the first time in history, all major economies have come together to accept their responsibility to take action to confront the threat of climate change.

Now let me first recount what our approach was throughout the year and coming into this conference. To begin with, we've reaffirmed America's commitment to transform our energy economy at home. We've made historic investments in renewable energy that have already put people back to work. We've raised our fuel efficiency standards, and we have renewed American leadership in international climate negotiations.

Most importantly, we remain committed to comprehensive legislation that will create millions of new American jobs, power new industry, and enhance our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

That effort at home serves as a foundation for our leadership around the world. Because of

the actions we're taking, we came here to Copenhagen with an ambitious target to reduce our emissions. We agreed to join an international effort to provide financing to help developing countries, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, adapt to climate change, and we reaffirmed the necessity of listing our national actions and commitments in a transparent way.

And these three components, transparency, mitigation, and finance, form the basis of the common approach that the United States and our partners embraced here in Copenhagen. Throughout the day, we worked with many countries to establish a new consensus around these three points, a consensus that will serve as a foundation for global action to confront the threat of climate change for years to come.

Now, this success would have not been possible without the hard work of many countries and many leaders. And I have to add that because of weather constraints in Washington, I am leaving before the final vote, but we feel confident that we are moving in the direction of a significant accord.

In addition to our close allies who did so much to advance this effort, I worked