

Jan. 9 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

House for broadcast on January 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 8, but was embar-

goed for release until 6 a.m. on January 9. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Senator Harry M. Reid *January 9, 2010*

Harry Reid called me today and apologized for an unfortunate comment reported today. I accepted Harry's apology without question because I've known him for years, I've seen the

passionate leadership he's shown on issues of social justice, and I know what's in his heart. As far as I am concerned, the book is closed.

Statement on the Earthquake in Haiti *January 12, 2010*

My thoughts and prayers go out to those who have been affected by this earthquake.

We are closely monitoring the situation, and we stand ready to assist the people of Haiti.

Remarks on Earthquake Relief Efforts in Haiti *January 13, 2010*

Good morning, everybody. This morning I want to extend to the people of Haiti the deep condolences and unwavering support of the American people following yesterday's terrible earthquake.

We are just now beginning to learn the extent of the devastation, but the reports and images that we've seen of collapsed hospitals, crumbled homes, and men and women carrying their injured neighbors through the streets are truly heart wrenching. Indeed, for a country and a people who are no strangers to hardship and suffering, this tragedy seems especially cruel and incomprehensible. Our thoughts and prayers are also with the many Haitian Americans around our country who do not yet know the fate of their families and loved ones back home.

I have directed my administration to respond with a swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort to save lives. The people of Haiti will have the full support of the United States in the urgent effort to rescue those trapped beneath the rubble and to deliver the humanitarian relief—the food, water, and medicine—that Haitians will need in the coming days. In that effort, our Government, especial-

ly USAID and the Departments of State and Defense, are working closely together and with our partners in Haiti, the region, and around the world.

Right now our efforts are focused on several urgent priorities. First, we're working quickly to account for U.S. Embassy personnel and their families in Port-au-Prince, as well as the many American citizens who live and work in Haiti. Americans trying to locate family members in Haiti are encouraged to contact the State Department at 888-407-4747. I'm going to repeat that: 888-407-4747.

Second, we've mobilized resources to help rescue efforts. Military overflights have assessed the damage, and by early afternoon our civilian disaster assistance team are beginning to arrive. Search and rescue teams from Florida, Virginia, and California will arrive throughout today and tomorrow, and more rescue and medical equipment and emergency personnel are being prepared. Because in disasters such as this, the first hours and days are absolutely critical to saving lives and avoiding even greater tragedy, I have directed my teams to be as forward leaning as possible in getting the help

on the ground and coordinating with our international partners as well.

Third, given the many different resources that are needed, we are taking steps to ensure that our Government acts in a unified way. My national security team has led an interagency effort overnight. And to ensure that we coordinate our effort going forward, I've designated the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Dr. Raj Shah, to be our Government's unified disaster coordinator.

Now, this rescue and recovery effort will be complex and challenging. As we move resources into Haiti, we will be working closely with partners on the ground, including the many NGOs from Haiti and across Haiti, the United Nations Stabilization Mission, which appears to have suffered its own losses, and our partners in the region and around the world. This must truly be an international effort.

Finally, let me just say that this is a time when we are reminded of the common humanity that we all share. With just a few hundred

miles of ocean between us and a long history that binds us together, Haitians are our neighbors in the Americas and here at home. So we have to be there for them in their hour of need.

Despite the fact that we are experiencing tough times here at home, I would encourage those Americans who want to support the urgent humanitarian efforts to go to whitehouse.gov, where you can learn how to contribute. We must be prepared for difficult hours and days ahead as we learn about the scope of the tragedy. We will keep the victims and their families in our prayers. We will be resolute in our response, and I pledge to the people of Haiti that you will have a friend and partner in the United States of America today and going forward.

May God bless the people of Haiti and those working on their behalf. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House.

Remarks on Earthquake Relief Efforts in Haiti *January 14, 2010*

Good morning, everybody. I've directed my administration to launch a swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort to save lives and support the recovery in Haiti. The losses that have been suffered in Haiti are nothing less than devastating, and responding to a disaster of this magnitude will require every element of our national capacity: our diplomacy and development assistance, the power of our military, and most importantly, the compassion of our country. And this morning I'm joined by several members of my national security team who are leading this coordinated response.

I've made it clear to each of these leaders that Haiti must be a top priority for their departments and agencies right now. This is one of those moments that calls out for American leadership. For the sake of our citizens who are in Haiti, for the sake of the Haitian people, who have suffered so much, and for the sake of our common humanity, we stand in solidarity with our neighbors to the south, knowing that, but for the grace of God, there we go.

This morning I can report that the first waves of our rescue and relief workers are on the ground and at work. A survey team worked overnight to identify priority areas for assistance and shared the results of that review throughout the United States Government and with international partners who are also sending support. Search and rescue teams are actively working to save lives. Our military has secured the airport and prepared it to receive the heavy equipment and resources that are on the way and to receive them around the clock, 24 hours a day. An airlift has been set up to deliver high-priority items like water and medicine. And we're coordinating closely with the Haitian Government, the United Nations, and other countries who are also on the ground.

Now, we have no higher priority than the safety of American citizens, and we've airlifted injured Americans out of Haiti. We're running additional evacuations and will continue to do so in the days ahead. I know that many Americans, especially Haitian Americans, are desper-