

July 7 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

The bottom line is this: For a long time we were trapped, I think, in a false political debate in this country where business was on one side, labor was on the other. There were partisan divides. The argument was either you were pro-trade or you were antitrade. What we now have an opportunity to do is to refocus our attention where we're all in it together. Businesses, workers, Government—everybody is focused on the same goal.

We live in an interconnected world. There are global challenges and global opportunities. This Nation has never shied away from the prospect of competition. We thrive on competition. And we are better positioned than anybody—as uniquely positioned as ever—to compete with anyone in the world. We've got the most respected brands, the best products, the most vibrant companies in the world. We've got the most productive workers in the world. We've

got the finest universities in the world. We've got the most open, dynamic, and competitive market in the world. When the playing field is even, nobody can beat us. And we are upping our game for the playing field of the 21st century.

But we've got to do it together. We've got to all row in the same direction. There's no doubt that these are challenging times. But I am absolutely convinced that we will rise to meet them, to grow our economy, to put our people back to work, to forge our own future once more. We are Americans, and that is what we do.

I appreciate all your participation, and I'm looking forward to getting busy working with you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on Food Safety Modernization Legislation

July 7, 2010

A year ago today, the Food Safety Working Group, chaired by Health and Human Service Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, announced key findings on how to upgrade the food safety system. Since then, my administration has taken steps to reduce the prevalence of *E. coli*, implemented new standards to reduce exposure to *Campylobacter*, and issued a rule to control *Salmonella* contamination. Among other accomplishments, the FDA has conducted a pilot study on a tracing system, and HHS, in collaboration with USDA, has rolled out an enhanced and updated

www.foodsafety.gov site to provide consumers rapid access to information on food recalls.

But there is more to be done. Today I thank the House for its work and support efforts in the Senate to pass S. 510, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. This bipartisan bill would complement the work already undertaken by the Food Safety Working Group. The bill addresses longstanding challenges in the food safety and defense system by promoting a prevention-oriented approach to the safety of our food supply and provides the Federal Government with the appropriate tools to accomplish its core food safety goals.

Statement on the Elections in Guinea

July 7, 2010

On behalf of the American people, I extend my congratulations to the people of Guinea, who peacefully and successfully conducted an initial round of voting in the country's first free elections since becoming an independent state in 1958. Just months ago, the world was

shocked by the September 28 massacre and rape of prodemocracy demonstrators in Conakry. Many feared that brutality and instability would consume Guinea and even spread across its borders to threaten the recovery of a war-weary region. The Guinean people, however,

demonstrated extraordinary courage and determination to pull their country out of crisis and to chart a new course toward a democratic future. They were supported by the leadership of Interim President General Sekouba Konate, who has focused intensely and urgently on transitioning the country to civilian rule. The United States joined other members of the international community, including the African Union and ECOWAS, in supporting these elections, but it was the Guinean Government, the electoral commission, civil society, the political party leadership, and the people of Guinea who

made it succeed. Indeed, the character and resilience of the Guinean people in claiming their democratic rights sends a powerful message around the world.

The people of Guinea now have an opportunity to build on this historic achievement as they move toward a second round of voting. I urge all parties in Guinea to continue to choose the rule of law and peaceful political participation over ethnic division and violence. They can continue to count on the support of the United States as they move forward.

Interview With Yonit Levi of Israel's Channel 2 News *July 7, 2010*

Ms. Levi. President Barack Obama, shalom, and thank you so much for talking with us today.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Outlook for Middle East Peace

Ms. Levi. I'd like to actually open up by asking you about hope, which was such a prominent notion in your campaign and in your Presidency. And how can you convey that concept of hope to Israelis, who've seen so many failed attempts at a peace process?

The President. Well, look, it's always a challenge. And one of the things I used to say during the campaign, but also at the beginning of my Presidency, is, being hopeful is not the same as being blindly optimistic. I think you have to be clear eyed about the situation. And Israelis rightly look at the past and have skepticism about what's possible. They see the enmity of neighbors that surround them in a very tough neighborhood. They see a track record of attempts at peace where, even when concessions were made, a deal could not be consummated. They see rockets fired from Gaza or from areas in Lebanon and say to themselves that the hatreds or history are so deep-seated that change is not possible.

And yet if you think back to the founding of Israel, there were a lot of people who thought

that that wasn't possible either. And if Herzl or Ben-Gurion were looking at Israel today, they would be astonished at what they saw: a country that's vibrant, that is growing economically at an extraordinary pace, that has overcome not just security challenges, but also has been able to overcome challenges related to geography. And so that should be a great source of hope.

Middle East Peace Process

Ms. Levi. Is a peace agreement, in your opinion—can—it can be reached in the first term of your Presidency?

The President. I think so. I had an excellent meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu. And I think that he is somebody who understands that we've got a fairly narrow window of opportunity. On the Palestinian side, moderates like Abu Mazen and Fayyad are, I think, willing to make the concessions and engage in negotiations that can result in peace. But their timeframe in power may be limited if they aren't able to deliver for their people.

There's a constant contest between moderates and rejectionists within the Arab world. And then there's the demographic challenges that Israel is going to be facing if it wants to remain not only a Jewish state but a democratic state. So you look at all these pressures and you say to yourself, we probably won't have a better opportunity than we have right now. And that