

Foreign Relations; David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Howard L. Ber-

man, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The President's Weekly Address

November 25, 2010

Today, like millions of other families across America, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will sit down to share a Thanksgiving filled with family and friends—and a few helpings of food and football too. And just as folks have done in every Thanksgiving since the first, we'll spend some time taking stock of what we're thankful for: the God-given bounty of America and the blessings of one another.

This is also a holiday that captures that distinctly American impulse to give something of ourselves. Even as we speak, there are countless Americans serving at soup kitchens and food pantries, contributing to their communities, and standing guard around the world.

And in a larger sense, that's emblematic of what Americans have always done. We come together and done what's required to make tomorrow better than today. That's who we are.

Consider our journey since that first Thanksgiving. We are among the world's youngest of peoples, but time and again, we have boldly and resiliently led the way forward. Against tough odds, we are a people who endure, who explored and settled a vast and untamed continent, who built a powerful economy and stood against tyranny in all its forms, who marched and fought for equality and connected a globe with our science and imagination.

None of that progress was predestined. None of it came easily. Instead, the blessings for which we give thanks today are the product of choices made by our parents and grandparents and generations before whose determination and sacrifice ensured a better future for us.

This holiday season, we must resolve once more to do the same.

This is not the hardest Thanksgiving America has ever faced. But as long as many members of our American family are hurting, we've got to look out for one another. As long as many of our sons and daughters and husbands and wives are

at war, we've got to support their mission and honor their service. And as long as many of our friends and neighbors are looking for work, we've got to do everything we can to accelerate this recovery and keep our economy moving forward.

And we will. But we won't do it as any one political party. We've got to do it as one people. And in the coming weeks and months, I hope that we can work together, Democrats and Republicans and Independents alike, to make progress on these and other issues.

That's why next week I've invited the leadership of both parties to the White House for a real and honest discussion. Because I believe that if we stop talking at one another and start talking with one another, we can get a lot done.

For what we are called to do again today isn't about Democrats or Republicans. It's not about left or right. It's about us. It's about what we know this country is capable of. It's about what we want America to be in this new century: a vibrant nation that makes sure its children are the best educated in the world; a healthy, growing economy that runs on clean energy and creates the jobs of tomorrow; a responsible government that reduces its deficits; an America where every citizen is able to go as far as he or she desires.

We can do all this, because we've done it before. We're made of the same sturdy stuff as the travelers who first sat down to that Thanksgiving dinner, and all who came after, who worked and sacrificed and invested because they believed that their efforts would make the difference for us.

That's who we are. We shape our own destiny with conviction and compassion and clear and common purpose. We honor our past and press forward with the knowledge that tomorrow will be better than today. We are Americans. That's the vision we won't lose sight of. That's the legacy

that falls to our generation. That's the challenge that together, we are going to meet.

To every American, I am thankful for the privilege of being your President. To all our servicemembers stationed around the world, I am honored to be your Commander in Chief. And from the Obama family to yours, have a very happy Thanksgiving. Thanks.

Remarks on Fiscal Responsibility

November 29, 2010

Good morning, everybody. Let me begin by pointing out that although Washington is supposed to be a town of sharp elbows, it's getting a little carried away. For those of you who are worried about my lip, I should be okay. The doctor has given me a clean bill of health, and I will continue to be playing basketball whenever I get a chance. In fact, I played yesterday with Sasha and Malia, and they took it easy on me because they were feeling pity.

I hope everybody had a great Thanksgiving, but now it's time to get back to work. Congress is back in town this week. And I'm looking forward to sitting down with Republican leaders tomorrow to discuss many issues, foremost among them the American people's business that remains to be done this year. My hope is that tomorrow's meeting will mark a first step towards a new and productive working relationship. Because we now have a shared responsibility to deliver for the American people on the issues that define not only these times, but our future, and I hope we can do that in a cooperative and serious way.

Our two most fundamental challenges are keeping the American people safe and growing our economy, and it's in that spirit that I look forward to sitting down tomorrow and talking about urgent matters like the ratification of the new START Treaty, which is so essential to our safety and security, and the status of the Bush-era tax cuts that are set to expire at the end of this year. And this is just one of the many economic issues we've got to tackle together in the months ahead.

As I said a few weeks ago, the most important contest of our time is not the contest between

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Democrats and Republicans, it's between America and our economic competitors all around the world. And winning that contest means that we've got to ensure our children are the best educated in the world, that our research and development is second to none, and that we lead the globe in renewable energy and technological innovation.

It also means making sure that in the future we're not dragged down by long-term debt. This is a challenge that both parties have a responsibility to address: to get Federal spending under control and bring down the deficits that have been growing for most of the last decade.

Now, there's no doubt that if we want to bring down our deficits, it's critical to keep growing our economy. More importantly, there's still a lot of pain out there, and we can't afford to take any steps that might derail our recovery or our efforts to put Americans back to work and to make Main Street whole again. So we can't put the brakes on too quickly. And I'm going to be interested in hearing ideas from my Republican colleagues, as well as Democrats, about how we continue to grow the economy and how we put people back to work.

But we do have to correct our long-term fiscal course. And that's why earlier this year I created a bipartisan deficit commission that is poised to report back later this week with ideas that I hope will spark a serious and long-overdue conversation in this town. Those of us who have been charged to lead will have to confront some very difficult decisions, cutting spending we don't need in order to invest in the things that we do.