

whole host of other national security issues that are of vital importance to America.

So Colin is one of a number of former National Security Advisers, Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of State—from both Democratic and Republican administrations—that have emphasized how important it is to get this done. And we discussed the fact that the Senate appropriately has a role in advice and consent, and it ultimately needs to ratify this treaty. That's why we have made sure that we have had 18 separate hearings. We have answered over a thousand questions. We have offered to brief every single Senator—Republican and Democrat—around these issues. But now it's time to get this done.

I'm gratified by the leadership of the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Richard Lugar, as well as the ranking Democrat, the chairman, John Kerry, for their extraordinary cooperation and work on this issue.

It is important for us to make sure that we complete the evaluation process, we finish the debate, and we go ahead and finish this up before the end of the year.

And so I just want to again thank General Powell for his good counsel, his friendship, most importantly his service to our country. And I very much appreciate the fact that he supports an effort that all of us should support in order to make America more safe.

[*At this point, former Secretary of State Powell made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

*Mr. Powell.* And so I'm sorry I missed the meeting the President had with the other Sec-

retaries and National Security Advisers the week before last, but I'm glad I had this opportunity to share my thoughts with the President.

So I hope that the Senate will move quickly and give its advice and consent to the ratification of this treaty.

*The President.* Thank you so much, everybody.

#### *Meeting With Republican Leaders/Bipartisanship*

*Q.* —Senate Republicans, what McConnell did today, is that—didn't break the spirit? Didn't break the spirit of yesterday, what Senator McConnell did?

*The President.* I am absolutely—I am confident that nobody wants to see taxes on middle class families go up starting January 1, and so there's going to be some lingering politics that have to work themselves out in all the caucuses, Democrat and Republican. But at the end of the day, I think that people of good will can come together and recognize that given where the economy is at right now, given the struggles that a lot of families are still going through right now, that we're going to be able to solve this problem. And I think we got off to a good start yesterday. There are going to be ups and downs to this process, but I'm confident that we're going to be able to get it done. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alma J. Powell, chair, America's Promise Alliance. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former Secretary of State Powell.

## Statement on the 55th Anniversary of the Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama *December 1, 2010*

Fifty-five years ago, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus, an act that challenged the moral conscience of an entire nation. The Montgomery bus boycott marked a turning point in American history: the moment where we began the march toward the civil rights

movement and the eventual outlawing of racial segregation and discrimination. Rosa Parks and the many other leaders and foot soldiers in that struggle for justice championed our founding principles of freedom and equality for all, and today, as we commemorate the anniversary of

the Montgomery bus boycott, I encourage all Americans to honor their legacy, the legacy of Americans who marched bravely, worked tire-

lessly, and devoted their lives to the never-ending task of making our country a more perfect Union.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Newly Elected Governors

*December 2, 2010*

Thank you very much. Please, have a seat, have a seat. Well, congratulations, first of all, to all of you for your victories, and welcome to the Blair House. You are part of a long line of illustrious visitors in this space. Winston Churchill used to hang out here when he was in the midst of working with FDR during World War II. Truman stayed here for 4 years when they were redoing the White House residence. And Abraham Lincoln was a close friend of the Blairs, so he used to visit here almost every night.

And as some of you I'm sure are aware, I read Lincoln a lot and think about Lincoln a lot. And I think one story that comes to mind right now is, at the time that he was President, visitors used to be able to come in, Secret Service weren't there to nag you and frisk you. And somebody demands to see him and insists on waiting. And finally, Lincoln lets him in, and then the guy says, "I'm responsible for you being elected President of the United States." And Lincoln says, "Really?" He says, "Yes, I did all the work. I was one of your hardest workers. And now I expect some help." And Lincoln says, "Well, let me tell you, if you are indeed responsible for helping me get elected, I forgive you." [Laughter]

Now, some of you may feel the same way, or at least you will in a month or so. But the truth is that as somebody who served in State government, I'm aware of the fact that State government and local government is where rubber hits the road. A lot of times we have a lot of abstract debates here in Washington, but each day—and every day—you are close to the ground and you are seeing the impacts of the decisions that are made, whether in Washington or in your State capitals, in very intimate ways.

And so I have nothing but respect and regard for the chief executives of all 50 of our States. And I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you. I want to spend most of

my time in a dialogue, so I'm not going to give a long speech. I'm just going to remark on a couple of points.

Point number one, we have just had a very vigorously contested election, but the election is over. And now I think it's time for all of us to make sure that we're working together. I am a very proud Democrat, as some of you in the room are, although not as many as I had expected. [Laughter] Some of you are very proud Republicans. But we're all prouder to be Americans.

And this country has just gone through a wrenching 2 years: the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and the toughest economy that most of us have seen in our lifetimes. And so as a consequence, I think it's absolutely critical that whatever our positions, whatever our parties, that wherever we can we can pull together to make sure that we're doing right by the American people. And I know that everybody in this room believes that.

In that spirit, just earlier this week, we had a meeting with both Democratic and Republican leaders here in Washington to start talking about how we can find ways to agree on promoting growth and promoting jobs across all 50 States. And I'm actually optimistic that before the end of the year we are going to have come to some agreements on some critical issues.

Obviously, issue number one is making sure that on January 1, middle class families aren't seeing their taxes go up as a consequence of the expiration of some of the Bush tax cuts that are currently in place and some of the tax cuts that we've put in place over the last 2 years. And so that's going to be an important discussion over the next several days. I believe it will get resolved.

That doesn't mean there may not be some posturing over the next several days. But I'm confident in the end people are going to recog-