

Statement on the Awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo *December 10, 2010*

One year ago, I was humbled to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, an award that speaks to our highest aspirations and that has been claimed by giants of history and courageous advocates who have sacrificed for freedom and justice. Mr. Liu Xiaobo is far more deserving of this award than I was.

All of us have a responsibility to build a just peace that recognizes the inherent rights and dignity of human beings, a truth upheld within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In our own lives, our own countries, and in the world, the pursuit of a just peace remains incomplete, even as we strive for progress. This past year saw the release of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, even as the Burmese people continue to be denied the democracy that they deserve. Nobel laureate Jose Ramos-Horta has continued his tireless work to build a free and prosperous East Timor, having made the transition from dissident to President. And this past year saw the retirement of Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu, whose own career demonstrates

the universal power of freedom and justice to overcome extraordinary obstacles.

The rights of human beings are universal; they do not belong to one nation, region, or faith. America respects the unique culture and traditions of different countries. We respect China's extraordinary accomplishment in lifting millions out of poverty and believe that human rights include the dignity that comes with freedom from want. But Mr. Liu reminds us that human dignity also depends upon the advance of democracy, open society, and the rule of law. The values he espouses are universal, his struggle is peaceful, and he should be released as soon as possible. I regret that Mr. Liu and his wife were denied the opportunity to attend the ceremony that Michelle and I attended last year. Today, on what is also International Human Rights Day, we should redouble our efforts to advance universal values for all human beings.

NOTE: The statement referred to Liu Xia, wife of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo.

Statement on United States Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard C. Holbrooke *December 10, 2010*

Earlier today I spoke to Richard Holbrooke's wife Kati and told her that Michelle and I are praying for Richard. Richard Holbrooke is a towering figure in American foreign policy, a critical member of my Afghanistan and Pakistan team, and a tireless public servant who has won the admiration of the American people and people around the world. I know that Secretary Clinton, Admiral Mullen, Tom Donilon, and

other members of our team have been with him at George Washington hospital, and we continue to pray for his recovery and support his family in this difficult time.

NOTE: The statement referred to Kati Marton, wife of Ambassador Holbrooke; and National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon.

The President's Weekly Address *December 11, 2010*

Right now there's a big debate taking place in Washington that'll affect how much you pay in taxes next year. If Congress doesn't act, tax rates

will automatically go up for just about everyone in our country. Typical middle class families would end up paying an extra \$3,000.