

is able to stand in the other person's shoes and see through the other person's eyes; that people are no longer simply "the other," or simply foreigners, but are in fact our brothers and sisters.

And if we're insistent enough about the capacity to understand each other, then that translates concretely into some war that doesn't happen, some village that isn't destroyed, some child that gets something to eat, some disaster that is averted. That's what all of you do. That's your essential task. And you do it very, very well.

And so to Secretary Clinton, to the State Department, thank you for doing so much extraordinary work over the past year, much of it to little notice and little acclaim. I know what you do, and I know how important you are.

And to the diplomats and dignitaries from our friends and partners around the world, let me say to you that we are absolutely confident that in the new year we will have more opportunities to work together and that if we stay focused on our task, then the world is going to be a better place for our children and our grandchildren.

So merry Christmas and happy holidays, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:04 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to David and Anthony Holbrooke, sons, and Elizabeth and Christopher Jennings, stepchildren, of Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke.

Statement on the Death of United States Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard C. Holbrooke *December 13, 2010*

Michelle and I are deeply saddened by the passing of Richard Holbrooke, a true giant of American foreign policy, who has made America stronger, safer, and more respected. He was a truly unique figure who will be remembered for his tireless diplomacy, love of country, and pursuit of peace.

For nearly 50 years, Richard served the country he loved with honor and distinction. He worked as a young Foreign Service officer during the Vietnam war and then supported the Paris peace talks which ended that war. As a young Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, he helped normalize relations with China. As U.S. Ambassador to Germany, he helped Europe emerge from a long cold war and encouraged NATO to welcome new members.

As Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, he was the tireless chief architect of the Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia 15 years ago this week, saving countless lives. As Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard helped break a political impasse and strengthen our Nation's relationship with the U.N. and elevated the cause of AIDS

and Africa on the international agenda. And throughout his life, as a child of refugees, he devoted himself to the plight of people displaced around the world.

When I became President, I was grateful that Richard agreed to serve as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The progress that we have made in Afghanistan and Pakistan is due in no small measure to Richard's relentless focus on America's national interest and pursuit of peace and security. He understood, in his life and his work, that our interests encompassed the values that we hold so dear. And as usual, amidst his extraordinary duties, he also mentored young people who will serve our country for decades to come. One of his friends and admirers once said that "if you're not on the team and you're in his way, God help you." Like so many Presidents before me, I am grateful that Richard Holbrooke was on my team, as are the American people.

Earlier this evening at the State Department, I met with Richard's wife Kati and their family, David, Anthony, Lizzie, Christopher, and Sarah, and I spoke to Kati after Richard's passing. I expressed to them the gratitude of the

American people for his lifetime of service. They are in our thoughts and prayers tonight.

Tonight, there are millions of people around the world whose lives have been saved and enriched by his work. As I said earlier this evening, the United States is safer and the world is more secure because of the half century of pa-

triotic service of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke.

NOTE: The statement referred to Kati Marton, wife, David and Anthony, sons, Elizabeth and Christopher Jennings, stepchildren, and Sarah, daughter-in-law, of Ambassador Holbrooke.

Remarks on Legislation To Extend Tax Cuts and Unemployment Insurance Benefits

December 15, 2010

Good morning, everybody. Today the Senate is poised to pass tax cuts and unemployment insurance, putting the House of Representatives in the position to send me this critical economic package so I can sign it into law.

I am absolutely convinced that this tax cut plan, while not perfect, will help grow our economy and create jobs in the private sector. It'll help lift up middle class families, who will no longer need to worry about a New Year's Day tax hike. It will offer emergency relief to help tide folks over until they find another job. And it includes tax cuts to make college more affordable, help parents provide for their children, and help businesses—large and small—expand and hire.

I know there are different aspects of this plan to which Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle object. That's the nature of compromise. But we worked hard to negotiate an agreement that's a win for middle class families and a win for our economy, and we can't afford to let it fall victim to either delay or defeat. So I urge Members of Congress to pass these tax cuts as swiftly as possible.

Getting that done is an essential ingredient in spurring economic growth over the short run. And spurring economic growth is what I'll talk about later this morning when I meet with some of America's top business leaders. That includes Jim McNerney of Boeing, who also heads up my Export Council, and several members of my Economic Recovery Advisory Board. This is one of many discussions we'll be having in the months ahead to find new ways to spur hiring,

put Americans back to work, and move our economy forward.

As I said when I was running for President and as I've said since, I believe that the primary engine of America's economic success is not government. It's the ingenuity of America's entrepreneurs. It's the dynamism of our markets. And for me, the most important question about an economic idea is not whether it's good short-term politics or meets somebody's litmus test, it's whether it will help spur businesses, jobs, and growth.

That's why I've set a goal of doubling U.S. exports in the next 5 years to create more jobs selling more products abroad. That's why I'm so pleased that earlier this month, after intensive negotiations, we finalized a trade agreement with our ally South Korea that will boost the annual exports of American goods by \$11 billion, a deal that, all told, will support at least 70,000 American jobs. It's an agreement that won support from business and labor because it's good for the economy.

This morning I hope to elicit ideas from these business leaders that will help us not only climb out of recession, but seize the promise of this moment: ideas about tax reform, ideas about a balanced approach to regulation that will promote rather than undermine growth, ideas that will help encourage businesses to invest in America and American jobs at a time when they're holding nearly \$2 trillion on their books. I want to discuss our shared mission of building a strong economy for the long run.

We know some of what we need to do to out-compete other countries in the 21st century.