

Obviously, our hearts go out to the family members of those who have been slain. We are going to get to the bottom of this, and we're going to get through this. But in the meantime, I think all of us need to make sure that we're offering our thoughts and prayers to those concerned.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:46 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christina-Taylor Green, who was killed in the shootings.

## Statement on the Shootings in Tucson *January 8, 2011*

This morning, in an unspeakable tragedy, a number of Americans were shot in Tucson, Arizona, at a constituent meeting with Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. And while we are continuing to receive information, we know that some have passed away and that Representative Giffords is gravely wounded.

We do not yet have all the answers. What we do know is that such a senseless and terrible act of violence has no place in a free society. I ask all Americans to join me and Michelle in keeping Representative Giffords, the victims of this tragedy, and their families in our prayers.

## Statement on the Southern Sudan Independence Referendum *January 9, 2011*

I am extremely pleased that polling has started for the Southern Sudan referendum and congratulate the people of Southern Sudan who are determining their own destiny. This is an historic step in the years-long process to fully implement the comprehensive peace agreement that ended the civil war between north and south. The international community is united and determined to ensure that all parties in Sudan live up to their obligations. We know that there are those who may try to disrupt the voting. Voters must be allowed access to polling stations and must be able to cast their ballots free from intimidation and coer-

cion. All sides should refrain from inflammatory rhetoric or provocative actions that could raise tensions or prevent voters from expressing their will. Violence in the Abyei region should cease. And while a successful vote will be cause for celebration, an enormous amount of work remains to ensure the people of Sudan can live with security and dignity. The world will be watching in the coming days, and the United States will remain fully committed to helping the parties solve critical postreferendum issues regardless of the outcome of the vote.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Nicolas Sarkozy of France and an Exchange With Reporters *January 10, 2011*

*President Obama.* We'll, I'm very grateful to have my dear friend Nicolas Sarkozy here. And I think Nicolas has agreed that at the top, I want to just make a few comments about the situation in Tucson, Arizona.

Obviously, all of us are still grieving and in shock from the tragedy that took place. Gabby Giffords and others are still fighting to recover. Families are still absorbing the enormity of their losses. We have a criminal investigation

that is ongoing and charges that no doubt will be brought against the perpetrator of this heinous crime.

I think it's important for us to also focus, though, on the extraordinary courage that was shown during the course of these events: a 20-year-old college student who ran into the line of fire to rescue his boss, a wounded woman who helped secure the ammunition that might have caused even more damage, the citizens who wrestled down the gunman. Part of what I think that speaks to is the best of America, even in the face of such mindless violence.

And so in the coming days, we're going to have a lot of time to reflect. Right now the main thing we're doing is to offer our thoughts and prayers to those who've been impacted, making sure that we're joining together and pulling together as a country. And as President of the United States, but also as a father, obviously, I'm spending a lot of time just thinking about the families and reaching out to them.

Now, I want to say to Nicolas that I want to offer my condolences to his countrymen as well. They just recently had two French citizens who were kidnapped in Niger. It points to the challenge of terrorism that we jointly share, and this is just one more area in which cooperation between France and the United States is so critical.

We don't have a stronger friend and a stronger ally than Nicolas Sarkozy and the French people. We have cooperated over the last several years on dealing with a global economic crisis, dealing with the challenges of terrorism, dealing with a range of geopolitical issues, from the Middle East to Iran to Afghanistan. And I've always found Nicolas to be an outstanding partner and an outstanding friend to the American people, as well as a leader on the world stage.

We spent the initial part of this meeting discussing the G-8 and G-20 agenda, because both in France and the United States and around the world, although we are in the process of healing and recovery from the disastrous recession that we went through, we're not yet where we want to be. Too many people are still out of work. Too many businesses are

still having problems getting financing. There's still too many imbalances in the world economy that are inhibiting the prospects of growth.

And so in our discussions, with the French in the lead both at the G-8 and the G-20 this year, we discussed how we can coordinate our agendas to make sure that we are as productive as possible in delivering the kinds of reforms and followthrough that will result in prosperity for peoples around the globe.

After this brief press appearance, we're going to be having lunch, and during that time, we'll be discussing issues in which there has been extraordinarily close collaboration. Obviously, the French are one of our strongest allies—a NATO ally. They are key members of ISAF; French troops have been sacrificing alongside Americans in uniform in Afghanistan. And we are very grateful for those sacrifices. So we will be discussing our strategies there, building off of the discussions we had in Lisbon.

We're also going to be discussing issues like Iran and the impact that sanctions are currently having on their nuclear program and our hope that we can resolve this issue diplomatically. But we will be building on our shared resolve to assure that we're not seeing nuclear weapons in Iran.

We'll discuss the Middle East, where Nicolas and I share a deep and abiding belief in the need for two states standing side by side in peace and security.

We'll be discussing issues like Cote d'Ivoire, where democracy is being threatened at this moment and where France has extraordinary historical ties and has shown great leadership; Sudan, where a referendum is taking place this weekend in which so much is at stake in preventing outbreaks of violence that could end up devastating the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, but also where there's a prospect of a peaceful transition that could result in a better life for people in both the north and the south of Sudan.

We'll also, finally, be discussing Lebanon, where I think we are all deeply concerned with the Special Tribunal there and making sure that justice is appropriately served.

So I just want to say how much I appreciate not only Nicolas's friendship, but also his leadership. And I also want to point out that the last time that Nicolas and his lovely wife Carla were here, we sent them to Ben's Chili Bowl. I can't say that half-smokes will be on the menu here at the White House—the First Lady is having lunch with Carla while Nicolas and I have a working lunch—but I hope you find the hospitality outstanding nevertheless.

And on behalf of the American people, we want to again express our friendship to the French people and wish everybody in your country a happy new year.

*President Sarkozy. Merci, Barack.*

I first of all want to say to the American people how deeply moved and upset the French people have been at your loss and tragedy.

And I also want to thank President Obama for his expression of solidarity to the French people in light of the loss that we have felt at the cowardly killing of two young Frenchmen who were killed in a barbaric fashion by terrorists.

Both the U.S. and France are determined to stand firm as allies on this issue of terrorism. Both of us believe that any show of weakness would be culpable. And we have no choice but to go after these terrorists wherever they may be. When values as fundamental as those we cherish are being challenged, democracies cannot afford to give in. They must—they must—combat.

With the American President, we talked about the future of the G–20, and I said to him in no—in very clear terms that we wish to work hand in glove, France and the United States, on these issues.

We are in the 21st century, and we need new ideas for this new century. And with President Obama, we are determined to forge ahead, come up with these new ideas for the greater benefit of the peoples of the world, for their prosperity, and for the stability of this world of ours.

I've always been a great friend, a tremendous friend of the United States, and I know how important a role the U.S. plays in the

world, how important the U.S. dollar is as the world's number-one currency. And with Barack Obama, we are determined to propose new ideas to get things moving, both within the framework of the G–8 and the G–20.

And our teams are going to be working very hard together to come up with common papers and common positions on the issues which are of interest and which come within the remit of the G–20, such as the matter of currencies, of commodity prices, and all that needs to be done in order to reduce the current and present imbalances.

Lastly, I want to thank Barack Obama, my host, for his show of leadership, and also point out that something that has always struck me about him is his ability to get to the fundamentals, the root of issues, the root causes of things. I appreciate his openness, the way he speaks very frankly about things with me. And I am convinced, ladies and gentlemen, that in 2011, we will be able to come up with the structural solutions that will enable us to settle, or at least to tackle, the world's imbalances and problems.

*President Obama.* Thank you. Thank you very much.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

#### *Shootings in Tucson, AZ*

*Q.* Will you go to Tucson, Mr. President?

*President Obama.* You know, the—we're in close consultations with the families who have suffered these losses, as well as Governor Brewer, congressional leadership. There is no doubt that we will establish some mechanism, memorial, during the course of the next several days. And when we have that, we will announce it.

But I think it's going to be important, I think, for the country as a whole, as well as the people of Arizona, to feel as if we are speaking directly to our sense of loss, but also speaking to our hopes for the future and how out of this tragedy, we can come together as a stronger nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to Rep. Gabrielle D. Giffords, who was shot while meeting with constituents in Tucson, AZ, on January 8; Jared L. Loughner, suspected gunman in the January 8 shootings in Tucson, AZ; Daniel Hernandez, Rep. Giffords's intern; Tucson residents Patricia Maisch, Bill Badger, Roger Salzgeber, and Joseph Zamudio, who helped subdue Mr.

Loughner; Antoine de Leocour and Vincent Delory, French citizens kidnaped in Niger by suspected terrorists on January 7 and killed during a rescue attempt by French and Nigerian troops; and Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, wife of President Sarkozy. President Sarkozy spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

### **Statement on the First Anniversary of the Earthquake in Haiti** *January 11, 2011*

As we mark 1 year since the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti, we honor the memory of the quarter of a million Haitians who were lost, along with more than 100 Americans, many United Nations personnel, and citizens from dozens of nations. We recall how Americans, civilian and military, joined with people from around the world in one of the largest humanitarian efforts ever attempted. And we continue to be inspired by the Haitian people and our vibrant Haitian American community, who have faced unimaginable loss with extraordinary courage and faith.

Since the first moments of the disaster, the United States has helped to rally international support for Haiti's recovery and reconstruction and respond to new challenges, such as the outbreak of cholera and Hurricane Tomas. This global effort, led by the Haitian Government, continues today and has been matched by the tremendous compassion of the American people, who, in difficult economic times, have given generously to help.

Over the past year, countless lives have been saved, and many Haitians affected by the earthquake now have better access to food, water, and health care than they did before the disaster. Still, too much rubble continues to clog the streets, too many people are still living in tents, and for so many Haitians, progress has not come fast enough. As we have said all along, helping the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere recover from one of the worst natural disasters ever to strike our hemisphere will take years, if not decades.

So on this day, when our thoughts and prayers are with the Haitian people, my message is the same as it was last year: Haiti can and must lead the way with a strong vision for its future. The international community must now fulfill the pledges it has made to ensure a strong and sustained long-term effort. And as they forge ahead with the hard work of rebuilding their proud country, the people of Haiti will continue to have an enduring partner in the United States.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996** *January 11, 2011*

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_:*

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114)(the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension, for 6 months beyond

February 1, 2011, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA