

In a volatile situation like this one, it is imperative that the nations and peoples of the world speak with one voice, and that has been our focus. Yesterday a unanimous U.N. Security Council sent a clear message that it condemns the violence in Libya, supports accountability for the perpetrators, and stands with the Libyan people.

This same message, by the way, has been delivered by the European Union, the Arab League, the African Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and many individual nations. North and south, east and west, voices are being raised together to oppose suppression and support the rights of the Libyan people.

I've also asked my administration to prepare the full range of options that we have to respond to this crisis. This includes those actions we may take and those we will coordinate with our allies and partners, or those that we'll carry out through multilateral institutions.

Like all governments, the Libyan Government has a responsibility to refrain from violence, to allow humanitarian assistance to reach those in need, and to respect the rights of its people. It must be held accountable for its failure to meet those responsibilities and face the cost of continued violations of human rights.

This is not simply a concern of the United States. The entire world is watching, and we will coordinate our assistance and accountability measures with the international community. To that end, Secretary Clinton and I have asked Bill Burns, our Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, to make several stops in

Europe and the region to intensify our consultations with allies and partners about the situation in Libya.

I've also asked Secretary Clinton to travel to Geneva on Monday, where a number of foreign ministers will convene for a session of the Human Rights Council. There she'll hold consultations with her counterparts on events throughout the region and continue to ensure that we join with the international community to speak with one voice to the Government and the people of Libya.

And even as we are focused on the urgent situation in Libya, let me just say that our efforts continue to address the events taking place elsewhere, including how the international community can most effectively support the peaceful transition to democracy in both Tunisia and in Egypt.

So let me be clear: The change that is taking place across the region is being driven by the people of the region. This change doesn't represent the work of the United States or any foreign power. It represents the aspirations of people who are seeking a better life.

As one Libyan said, "We just want to be able to live like human beings." We just want to be able to live like human beings—it is the most basic of aspirations that is driving this change. And throughout this time of transition, the United States will continue to stand up for freedom, stand up for justice, and stand up for the dignity of all people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:07 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House.

## Statement on the First Anniversary of the Death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo February 23, 2011

One year ago today, the selfless and tragic death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo galvanized the world's attention to the ongoing mistreatment of those unjustly held by Cuban authorities for bravely standing up for the rights of the Cuban people.

The attention brought to the plight of Cuba's political prisoners by Zapata's coura-

geous act and by the peaceful protests of *las Damas de Blanco* has helped free a number of his fellow activists through the good offices of the Catholic Church in Cuba. Today I join the Cuban people in marking this anniversary by again calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Cuba.

Sadly, the harassment and detention by Cuban authorities of Zapata's mother, Reina Luisa Tamayo, and others across Cuba as they sought to commemorate her son's death underscores how much of his dream remains unfulfilled.

Since taking office, I have reached out to the Cuban people to support their desire to freely

determine their future and enjoy liberty and justice. Today and every day, the Cuban people must know that their suffering does not go unnoticed and that the United States remains unwavering in our commitment to defend the inalienable right of the Cuban people to enjoy the freedoms that define the Americas and that are universal to all human beings.

## Remarks During a Meeting With the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness

*February 24, 2011*

Well, I don't want to waste too much time with a big windup. And I know that everybody here has already been busy today doing some terrific work. I just want to, first of all, thank Jeff. And I want to thank all of you for your willingness to participate in our jobs council.

Just in terms of genesis, I think many of you are aware of the fact that 2 years ago we set up a business advisory group to help guide us through a crisis that we hadn't—of the sort that we hadn't seen since the Great Depression—mostly focused on the financial sector, figuring out how we stabilize that, and how we make sure that the credit markets are working, and how we averted a Great Depression.

We have done that. The economy is now growing. In many sectors we're seeing recovery. But the biggest challenge that we're seeing right now is the fact that unemployment is still way too high all across the country. And so what we wanted to do was retool.

It's critical for us to have input from folks who are actually hiring, putting people to work, making payroll, making the products and services that make our economy so powerful. But we want to make sure that we narrowed the focus to think about how do we ensure, A, that we're putting people to work right now, but also how do we lay the foundation for us to win the future over the long term.

This is obviously a theme that I talked about during the State of the Union. It is my belief that we have all the pieces in place for us to make sure that the 21st century is the American century just like the 20th was. But we're

going to have to up our game in this newly competitive world. And that means that we've got to outeducate every other country in the world. We're going to have to outinnovate every country in the world. We've got to make sure that we've got the best infrastructure to move people and goods and services throughout the economy.

I want us to be an economy that is not simply buying from other people and borrowing to do it. I want us to be selling to other people and having some other folks owe us some money. And so it is going to be absolutely critical for us during a period of significant fiscal constraint that we create the kind of public-private partnership that makes that happen. And it's going to be very important for us to get ideas from people who've actually—are actually on the ground right now, trying to build your businesses and operate in an extraordinarily competitive world.

So my main purpose here today at this first meeting, I think, is to listen, to get a sense of where all of you think the economy is right now, what kinds of steps we need to be taking. As I talked about during the State of the Union, we want to remove any barriers and any impediments that are preventing you from success and from growth. At the same time, we want to put a challenge to America's businesses that even as we're working with you to streamline regulations, to reform our tax system, to take other steps that have been sitting on the shelf for quite some time—under both Democratic and Republican Presidents—we want to