

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 a 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

make sure that we're also putting a little pressure on you guys to figure out how do we make sure that the economy is working for everybody; how do we make sure that every child out there who's willing to work hard is going to be able to succeed; how do we make certain that working families across the country are sharing in growing productivity and that we're not simply creating an economy in which one segment of it is doing very well, but the rest of the folks are out there treading water.

So, Jeff, again, I want to thank you for your extraordinary work. I want to thank all of you for agreeing to participate.

Last point I'll make is that I'm not interested in photo ops, and I'm not interested in more meetings. I've got enough photo ops and enough meetings; I have a surplus of that. So I expect this to be a working group in which we

are coming up with some concrete deliverables. I don't think that we have to be trying to hit home runs every time. I think if we hit some singles and doubles, if we find some very specific things that this group can help us on and we can work on together, then we can build on that success, and in the aggregate, over time, this will have really made a difference at a critical juncture in our economy.

So thank you very much. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to you, Jeff.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. in Room 430 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey R. Immelt, chairman and chief executive officer, General Electric Co., in his capacity as Chair of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Statement on the Situation in Algeria *February 24, 2011*

I commend the Government of Algeria for taking an important step forward today by formally lifting the state of emergency that has been in place in Algeria for 19 years. This is a positive sign that the Government of Algeria is listening to the concerns and responding to the aspirations of its people, and we look forward to additional steps by the Government that enable the Algerian people to fully exercise their

universal rights, including freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The United States is committed to continuing our cooperation with the Government of Algeria as it works to represent and meet the needs of all Algerians. We will also continue speaking up for universal freedoms, justice, and the dignity of every human being.

Remarks at PBS's "The Motown Sound: In Performance at the White House" *February 24, 2011*

Good evening, everybody. Please have a seat. Tonight we continue one of my favorite traditions here at the White House by celebrating the music that's at the heart of the American story. And as we come to the end of Black History Month, I can't think of a better way to do it than by honoring the legendary sound of Motown.

I want to start by thanking our performers here tonight: Natasha Bedingfield, Sheryl Crow, Jamie Foxx, Gloriana, Nick Jonas, Ledi- si, John Legend, Amber Riley, Mark Salling,

Seal, Jordin Sparks, Smokey Robinson, and because we weren't sure that was enough, we thought we might throw Stevie Wonder in there. And obviously, we are grateful for all the other Motown legends who are gracing us with their presence. Thank you for being here.

Over the years, this room has hosted some of the most talented musicians in the world, from classical to country. But Motown is different. No one knows exactly when jazz began. Nobody knows who the first person was to sing a freedom song. But we know where Motown