

innocent civilians. It is not an action that we will pursue alone. Indeed, our British and French allies and members of the Arab League have already committed to take a leadership role in the enforcement of this resolution, just as they were instrumental in pursuing it. We are coordinating closely with them. And this is precisely how the international community should work as more nations bear both the responsibility and the cost of enforcing international law.

This is just one more chapter in the change that is unfolding across the Middle East and North Africa. From the beginning of these protests, we've made it clear that we are opposed to violence. We've made clear our support for a set of universal values and our support for the political and economic change that the people of the region deserve. But I want to be clear: The change in the region will not and cannot be imposed by the United States or any foreign power; ultimately, it will be driven by the people of the Arab world. It is their right

and their responsibility to determine their own destiny.

Let me close by saying that there is no decision I face as your Commander in Chief that I consider as carefully as the decision to ask our men and women to use military force. Particularly at a time when our military is fighting in Afghanistan and winding down our activities in Iraq, that decision is only made more difficult. But the United States of America will not stand idly by in the face of actions that undermine global peace and security. So I've taken this decision with the confidence that action is necessary and that we will not be acting alone. Our goal is focused, our cause is just, and our coalition is strong.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

## Statement on the Situation in Yemen *March 18, 2011*

I strongly condemn the violence that has taken place in Yemen today and call on President Salih to adhere to his public pledge to allow demonstrations to take place peacefully. Those responsible for today's violence must be held accountable. The United States stands for a set of universal rights, including the freedom of expression and assembly, as well as political

change that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people. It is more important than ever for all sides to participate in an open and transparent process that addresses the legitimate concerns of the Yemeni people and provides a peaceful, orderly, and democratic path to a stronger and more prosperous nation.

## The President's Weekly Address *March 19, 2011*

In recent days, we've seen turmoil and tragedy around the world, from change in the Middle East and North Africa to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. As I said on Friday, we will work with our partners in the region to protect innocent civilians in Libya and hold the Qadhafi regime accountable, and we will continue to stand with the people of Japan in their greatest hour of need.

As we respond to these immediate crises abroad, we also will not let up in our effort to tackle the pressing, ongoing challenges facing our country, including accelerating economic growth. That's why, over the weekend, I'll be in Latin America. One of the main reasons for my trip is to strengthen economic partnerships abroad so that we create good jobs here at home.