

And that's something that Secretary Clinton, during her trip in Egypt, spoke extensively about and will probably be rolling out some additional plans on that front.

Last question.

2011 Federal Budget/Budget Debate

Q. Mr. President, Speaker Boehner says it's not just the specifics of what you guys want to cut and not cut, but that your cuts, the ones you have put on the table, are "smoke and mirrors." How do you answer that?

The President. Well, here's—I'll let Jay or Jack Lew or others get into all the details, but here's sort of a thumbnail of what's happened.

The vast majority of the cuts that have been put forward, just as was true in the Republican budget, are direct cuts out of domestic discretionary spending. There are some cuts that are—that we've proposed that have to do with mandatory spending. These are real cuts—for example, Pell grants. What we've said is, instead of being able to finance year-round Pell grants so that you can get a Pell grant for summer school as well, we're going to have to cut that out. It's a little too expensive. And we want to make sure that we preserve the levels for those young people or not-so-young people who are going to school full time during the year.

And the way they are categorized means that those are called mandatory spending cuts, as opposed to discretionary spending cuts. But they're still cuts. They're still reducing the size of Government. They're still getting rid of those things that we don't need in order to pay for the things that we do need.

And I think that if you ask the budget analysts out there, independent budget analysts, including the CBO, about the composition of what we've proposed versus what was in House bill—the House bill that passed a while back, H.R. 1, this is consistent with those basic principles.

So this notion that somehow we're offering smoke and mirrors, try telling that to the Democrats out there, because part of what we've done is, we've been willing to cut programs that we care deeply about, that are really important, but we recognize that given the fiscal situation that we're in, everybody's got to make some sacrifices, everybody's got to take a haircut. And we've been willing to do that.

But what we're not willing to do is to go out there and say we're going to cut another 60,000 head slot starts—Head Start slots. We're not going to be willing to go out there and say that we're going to cut medical research. We're not going to cut those things that we think are absolutely vital to the growth of the American economy and putting people back to work.

And that means we've got to make some choices. And that is not just true for us, that's true for the Republicans as well. Nobody gets a hundred percent of what they want. And we have more than met the Republicans halfway at this point.

Okay? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney.

Statement on the Situation in Cote d'Ivoire

April 5, 2011

I remain deeply concerned by the security situation in Cote d'Ivoire. I strongly support the role that United Nations peacekeepers are playing as they enforce their mandate to protect civilians, and I welcome the efforts of French forces who are supporting that mission. Tragically, the violence that we are seeing

could have been averted had Laurent Gbagbo respected the results of last year's Presidential election. To end this violence and prevent more bloodshed, former President Gbagbo must stand down immediately and direct those who are fighting on his behalf to lay down their arms. Every day that the fighting persists will

bring more suffering and further delay the future of peace and prosperity that the people of Cote d'Ivoire deserve.

The people of Cote d'Ivoire have suffered too much throughout this period of unrest. The United States joins with the international community in our deep concern about reports of massacres in the western region of the country and the dangers faced by innocent civilians, particularly the most vulnerable. All parties

must show restraint and respect the rights of the Ivorian people, and I welcome President Ouattara's pledge to ensure accountability for those who have carried out attacks against civilians. Meanwhile, the United States will continue to support a future in which Laurent Gbagbo stands down and President Ouattara and the Government of Cote d'Ivoire can move beyond this current crisis and serve all of the Ivorian people.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Accident at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia

April 5, 2011

On the 1-year anniversary of the tragedy at the Upper Big Branch Mine, America's thoughts and prayers are never far from the miners who lost their lives and the loved ones they left behind.

During the past year, my administration has worked to investigate the cause of the explosion, bring those responsible to justice, and take the steps necessary to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring again. The Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration launched a thorough investigation into the cause of the explosion and took aggressive steps to combat mine operators who fail to meet their obligations to provide for the safety and health of their miners. The Justice Department's investigation into the mine owner's practices in West Virginia has led, so far, to two criminal indictments.

While these collaborative efforts have changed the way some mine operators do business, we know we can also improve our mine safety laws to better provide for the safety of the men and women who work in America's mines and for their families' peace of mind.

That's why the Department of Labor has worked aggressively to institute new measures to help prevent future incidents, including an impact inspection process to target mines with persistent violations. That's why, for the first time in more than 30 years, the Department of Labor successfully argued that a Federal court could temporarily close a mine with severe safety problems. And that's why I continue to support Chairman Harkin and Chairman Kline and their efforts to strengthen America's mine safety laws. Because we owe the men and women who do this important work and the families who love them our best efforts, not just in memory of the 29 miners who lost their lives in last year's tragedy, but to ensure that such a tragedy doesn't happen again.

NOTE: The statement referred to Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, in his capacity as chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and Rep. John P. Kline, in his capacity as chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Gamesa Technology Corporation Manufacturing Facility in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania

April 6, 2011

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat.

Hello, Fairless Hills! Hello, Gamesa! It is good to be here. I was here 3 years ago. I was