

still coming out of an extraordinarily deep recession, it would be inexcusable, given the relatively narrow differences when it comes to numbers between the two parties, that we can't get this done.

So my expectation is that folks are going to work through the night. In the morning I will check in with the respective staffs of the Speaker and the majority leader, as well as my team here. If we haven't made progress, we're going to go back at it again. And we're going to keep on pounding away at this thing because I'm absolutely convinced that we can get this done.

There is no reason why we should not be able to complete a deal. There is no reason why we should have a Government shutdown, unless we've made a decision that politics is more important than folks like J.T. Henderson.

That's not why we're elected. That's not why we were sent here. And I want to meet the expectations of the American people in terms of delivering for them.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia

April 7, 2011

*President Obama.* It is my great pleasure to welcome President Santos and the rest of the delegation from Colombia here to the White House.

I had the pleasure of meeting President Santos shortly after he was elected, on the sidelines of meetings at the United Nations, and we are now continuing our conversation.

The United States has an enormous interest in the development of Latin America and an enormous interest in progress in Colombia. We have been a partner there as Colombia dealt with some very difficult times and has now blossomed into a strong democracy that is respectful of human rights and is moving forward vigorously to provide economic opportunity for all of its people.

President Santos, I think, is at the forefront of a progressive and thoughtful agenda within Colombia. He's obviously initiating a whole range of reforms. Colombia is also a leader when it comes to security in the region, and we are glad that we've been able to partner with Colombia not only to deal with security situations inside Colombia, but now increasingly Colombia can be a role model for the rest of the region.

And I just realized I was going to have translation, so let me stop there, and then we can continue.

In short, Colombia is one of our strongest partners not only in the region, but around the world. And when we met in September, I suggested to President Santos that we should do even more to deepen and strengthen our relationship. And in pursuit of that deepening relationship, I dispatched my team to Colombia to discuss how we can finally move forward on trade agreements between our two countries.

So today I am very pleased to announce that we have developed an action plan for labor rights in Colombia, consistent with our values and interests, but more importantly, consistent with President Santos's vision of a just and equitable society inside of Colombia. And we believe that this serves as a basis for us moving forward on a U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement.

Now, there's obviously a lot of work to do to translate this action plan into reality. And we are going to continue to engage with President Santos and his administration in an active process to ensure good working conditions, to make sure that trade unionists are protected, to make sure that we're creating a level of playing field for business and workers here and around the world.

And so I very much appreciate President Santos's efforts. He emphasized to me how important this is to him personally and the fact that Colombia sees a vision for its country in which all workers are treated fairly. And I have great confidence in his ability to be able to execute on this plan, and we look forward to working with him on it.

Now, obviously, the United States represents an important market for Colombian businesses, and so this is going to be a win for Colombia. It's also a win for the United States. This represents a potential \$1 billion of exports, and it could mean thousands of jobs for workers here in the United States. And so I believe that we can structure a trade agreement that is a win-win for both our countries, and I'm looking forward to working with President Santos to ensure that both countries benefit. And this will help me meet my goal of making sure the United States has doubled exports over the coming years and that we're as competitive as we can be in a global marketplace in the 21st century.

Finally, let me just say that President Santos obviously has strong connections with the United States and particularly with the Kansas Jayhawks. *[Laughter]* We were both disappointed that Kansas did not go all the way, but President Santos assures me that there's always next year. *[Laughter]*

And so I appreciate President Santos not only for having faith in my bracket, but also having faith in the strong relationship and friendship between the United States and Colombia.

And I am looking forward to visiting Colombia next year for the Summit of the Americas, in which I think, under President Santos's leadership, I'm confident we'll be able to do a lot of work to strengthen relations with all the countries in the hemisphere.

So, President Santos, welcome.

His English is better than mine, but he may decide to present in Spanish and have it translated to English so he can speak to his people back home.

Thank you.

*President Santos.* Well, I'm going to be speaking in Spanish because I'd like to have all

of my countrymen in Colombia able to hear me.

First of all, I want to thank President Obama very deeply. I want to thank him personally, and I also want to thank him on behalf of the Colombian people and thank his administration for welcoming us to the White House and to the United States at this time. I know it's a very intense political time for you, so I thank you very specially.

We met back in September, as the President said, and we decided then that we wanted to strengthen our relationship and we wanted to broaden our relationship. And I think that since then we've made good progress. And within that progress that I've referred to, the most important thing for Colombia, of course, is the good news that we've had with regard to the free trade agreement today. We've been working on getting a green light for this to go to Congress for 5 years, and we got that green light today.

This is a very important event for Colombia. It's important not just because of our foreign trade, but also because of our relationship with the United States and for the progress and development of Colombia. We're extremely pleased as a result, because this is part of the development plan that we're working on for Colombia to achieve development and even better progress with social justice.

And President Obama and I share common values—values having to do with democracy, the progressive ideas that we share—and this event takes us one step further in the defense of those values. The free trade agreement for Colombia means more jobs; it means more trade, more investment, more prosperity as a result. But the same is true for the United States. The United States has been losing markets in Colombia because of the free trade agreements that we have already signed with other nations. Now that relationship is going to become more balanced and the trade balance between us is going to be corrected.

The action plan that is giving the green light to the free trade agreement is one that establishes stronger defense of workers—physical defense of workers. And in it, we put down in

black and white objectives and, along with those objectives, a date for each one.

The first date we have set forth is April 22. April 22 is going to carry with it a series of commitments with regard to worker protections, worker rights, the strengthening of justice. And so we are going to start off on April 22 with making a presentation to Congress.

And so a number of measures are going to be taken after that with regard to objectives having to do with democracy, where the rights of all, and especially the rights of workers, are going to be guaranteed and protected. This important step is going to strengthen our democracy, and it's going to strengthen the capacity that we have to defend our workers' rights.

And finally, the President and I had an opportunity to touch on the other issues on the agenda that we share. Opening up the way for the free trade agreement allows us to take our strategic relationship even further. We discussed things like the upcoming Summit of the

Americas, which is going to be hosted by Colombia in April of 2012, in the city of Cartagena.

We talked about how we will work together to follow up on President Obama's historic Latin America visit, a visit in which in his speech he presented an outline of how the United States will be working with Latin America. And we want to take specific actions now on Latin America and the United States in the relationship that they will be developing in the future.

As you know, the United States has a growing Hispanic population. This is a very important link with Latin America, and we want to strengthen it even more.

Thank you.

*President Obama.* Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Santos spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Statement on the 17th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda *April 7, 2011*

Seventeen years ago today, the world watched as an unimaginable slaughter began to unfold in Rwanda. One hundred horrific days later, more than 800,000 innocent people—men, women, and children—lay dead in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. Today we join the Rwandan people in honoring the memory of the loved ones they lost so senselessly, and we reaffirm the lessons of that tragic chapter in history. For just as the Rwandan genocide exposed man's capacity for evil, it also revealed man's capacity for good: courageous Rwandans who risked their lives to save friends and neighbors from the massacre. As an international community, we must summon the same courage to ensure that such mass atrocities and genocides never happen again.

Today we also reflect on Rwanda's progress. Out of the ruins of genocide, Rwandans have welcomed home refugees and former combatants and worked to build a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic society for all its citizens. And as a leading contributor to peacekeeping missions around the world, Rwanda reminds us of our obligations to each other as fellow human beings and our shared responsibility to prevent attacks on innocent civilians, as the international community is doing today in Libya. As they reflect on this painful day, Rwandans must know that the United States will be their partner in pursuit of the secure and peaceful future that they and their children deserve.