

all around the world wanting to be here, but also making sure that we're doing it in orderly way.

And we sure have got a lot of work to do on the international front. When I came into office, we had two active wars. By the end of this year, one war will be done. And we will be transitioning in Afghanistan to turn over more and more security to the Afghan people.

But there's also enormous challenges and opportunities to all that's happening in the Arab world right now. And it requires us to articulate clearly what we stand for, what our values are, to reject isolationism, but it also requires us to recognize that us having influence in these affairs is going to have less to do with our firepower and more to do with our ideas and our example, our economic engagement, the quality of our diplomacy. We've still got more work to do.

So the bottom line is this. Back in 2008, on election night, in Grant Park—it was a nice night in Chicago—I said to people, this is not the end, this is the beginning. We've got a steep climb ahead of us to get to that summit where we want to be, where every single American knows that if they work hard, if they're doing the right thing, if they're carrying out their responsibilities, they have a chance at the American Dream.

We're just part of the way up that mountain. And the only way we're going to get all the way up that mountain is if we are as engaged, as motivated, as involved, as excited, working as hard as we were in 2008. And that may be a little bit of challenge. Because, let's face it, back in 2008, I was new. *[Laughter]*

Now I'm gray. *[Laughter]* I've got dings and dents. The old posters are all faded. *[Laughter]*

## Statement on the Situation in Sudan June 22, 2011

On Monday, the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed an agreement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to reduce tensions in Abyei and allow U.N. peacekeepers from Ethiopia into the region. I commend the parties for taking this

People make fun of hope and change. And some folks have said, "Well, change didn't happen as fast as I wanted." Or, "It's not exactly as I expected." Or, "Why can't he just change the minds of all those Republicans?" *[Laughter]*

The thing is, change is never easy because we live in a democracy. And that's what's wonderful about this country, is we argue it out and ideas are tested. And sometimes we lurch this way or that way, and mistakes are made, but our general trajectory has always been to advance prosperity and equality and opportunity.

And so this process, as difficult as it has been, has also been invigorating. And I've never had more confidence in the possibilities of this great American experiment, partly because I get a chance to see and talk to Americans from every walk of life. And we are a good, decent people. And as hard as things have been, we are resilient, and we come back.

And so if you're willing to join with me in what will be my last campaign—*[laughter]*—if you're willing to dig deep and talk to your friends and neighbors and coworkers and recognize, yes, we're a little older, we've matured a little bit, but that that fundamental project of delivering the American Dream for that next generation, that's just as urgent and as vital as ever, then I'm confident not only will we win in 2012, more importantly, we'll get a little further up that mountain. That's our job.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental hotel. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

step forward toward peace, and I urge them now to build on that progress and agree to an immediate cease-fire in Southern Kordofan. Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, both parties committed to resolve their differences peacefully, and both parties have a re-

sponsibility to end the current violence and allow immediate humanitarian access to desperate people who have been driven from their homes and are now cut off from outside help.

The situation in Southern Kordofan is dire, with deeply disturbing reports of attacks based on ethnicity. The United States condemns all acts of violence, in particular the Sudanese Armed Forces aerial bombardment of civilians and harassment and intimidation of U.N. peacekeepers. With a cease-fire in Southern Kordofan alongside the agreement to deploy peacekeepers to Abyei, we can get the peace

process back on track. But without these actions, the roadmap for better relations with the Government of Sudan cannot be carried forward, which will only deepen Sudan's isolation in the international community. Without a cease-fire and political negotiations, the people of Southern Kordofan cannot enjoy the right to have their political grievances addressed. The negotiations now under way in Addis Ababa demand the urgent commitment from both sides to peace and to the agreement for immediate help to those civilians caught up in this conflict.

## Address to the Nation on the Drawdown of United States Military Personnel in Afghanistan

*June 22, 2011*

Good evening. Nearly 10 years ago, America suffered the worst attack on our shores since Pearl Harbor. This mass murder was planned by Usama bin Laden and his Al Qaida network in Afghanistan and signaled a new threat to our security, one in which the targets were no longer soldiers on a battlefield, but innocent men, women, and children going about their daily lives.

In the days that followed, our Nation was united as we struck at Al Qaida and routed the Taliban in Afghanistan. Then, our focus shifted. A second war was launched in Iraq, and we spent enormous blood and treasure to support a new government there. By the time I took office, the war in Afghanistan had entered its seventh year. But Al Qaida's leaders had escaped into Pakistan and were plotting new attacks, while the Taliban had regrouped and gone on the offensive. Without a new strategy and decisive action, our military commanders warned that we could face a resurgent Al Qaida and a Taliban taking over large parts of Afghanistan.

For this reason, in one of the most difficult decisions that I've made as President, I ordered an additional 30,000 American troops into Afghanistan. When I announced this surge at West Point, we set clear objectives: to refocus on Al Qaida, to reverse the Taliban's momentum, and train Afghan security forces to

defend their own country. I also made it clear that our commitment would not be open-ended and that we would begin to draw down our forces this July.

Tonight I can tell you that we are fulfilling that commitment. Thanks to our extraordinary men and women in uniform, our civilian personnel, and our many coalition partners, we are meeting our goals. As a result, starting next month, we will be able to remove 10,000 of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year, and we will bring home a total of 33,000 troops by next summer, fully recovering the surge I announced at West Point. After this initial reduction, our troops will continue coming home at a steady pace as Afghan security forces move into the lead. Our mission will change from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security.

We're starting this drawdown from a position of strength. Al Qaida is under more pressure than at any time since 9/11. Together with the Pakistanis, we have taken out more than half of Al Qaida's leadership. And thanks to our intelligence professionals and special forces, we killed Usama bin Laden, the only leader that Al Qaida had ever known. This was a victory for all who have served since 9/11. One soldier summed it up well. "The message," he