

their country. After years of working at cross purposes, the result was one of the most productive collaborations between the public and private sectors in American history.

Some, like the head of GM, hadn't previously known the President and, if anything, had seen him as an adversary. But he gathered his family, and he explained that he was going to head up what would become the War Production Board. And he said to his family, "This country has been good to me, and I want to pay it back." I want to pay it back.

And in the years that followed, automobile factories converted to making planes and tanks. And corset factories made grenade belts. A toy company made compasses. A pinball machine maker turned out shells. Nineteen forty-one would see the greatest expansion of manufacturing in the history of America. And not only did this help us win the war, it led to millions of new jobs and helped produce the great American middle class.

So we have faced hard times before. We have faced moments of tumult and moments of change. And we know what to do. We know

how to succeed. We are Americans, and as we have done throughout our history, I have every confidence that once again we will rise to this occasion, that we can come together, we can adapt, and we can thrive in this changing economy. And we need to look no further than the innovative companies in this room. If we can harness your potential and the potential of your people across this country, I think there's no stopping us.

So thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at U.S. Chamber of Commerce Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas J. Donahue, president and chief executive officer, and Thomas D. Bell, Jr., chairman of the board of directors, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Stephen M. Case, chairman, Startup America Partnership; Richard L. Trumka, president, AFL-CIO; and 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 Southern Sudan Independence Referendum *February 7, 2011*

On behalf of the people of the United States, I congratulate the people of Southern Sudan for a successful and inspiring referendum in which an overwhelming majority of voters chose independence. I am therefore pleased to announce the intention of the United States to formally recognize Southern Sudan as a sovereign, independent state in July 2011.

After decades of conflict, the images of millions of Southern Sudanese voters deciding their own future was an inspiration to the world and another step forward in Africa's long journey toward justice and democracy. Now all parties have a responsibility to ensure that this historic moment of promise becomes a moment of lasting progress. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement must be fully implemented, and outstanding disputes must be resolved

peacefully. At the same time, there must be an end to attacks on civilians in Darfur and a definitive end to that conflict.

As I pledged in September when addressing Sudanese leaders, the United States will continue to support the aspirations of all Sudanese—north and south, east and west. We will work with the governments of Sudan and Southern Sudan to ensure a smooth and peaceful transition to independence. For those who meet all of their obligations, there is a path to greater prosperity and normal relations with the United States, including examining Sudan's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. And while the road ahead will be difficult, those who seek a future of dignity and peace can be assured that they will have a steady partner and friend in the United States.