

is preferable to war and freedom is preferable to suppression and prosperity is preferable to poverty. That's the message that comes not from capitals, but from citizens, from our people.

And when the cornerstone of this very building was put in place, President Truman came here to New York and said, "The United Nations is essentially an expression of the moral nature of man's aspirations." The moral nature of man's aspirations. As we live in a world that is changing at a breathtaking pace, that's a lesson that we must never forget.

Peace is hard, but we know that it is possible. So, together, let us be resolved to see that it is defined by our hopes and not by our fears.

Together, let us make peace, but a peace, most importantly, that will last.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President, 66th Session of the U.N. General Assembly; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; former President Laurent Gbagbo and President Alassane Dramane Ouattara of Cote d'Ivoire; former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia; former President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, former leader of Libya.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel in New York City *September 21, 2011*

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu both to the United States and to New York. As I just said in the speech that I gave before the U.N. General Assembly, the bonds between the United States and Israel are unbreakable. And the United States commitment to Israel's security is unbreakable. Indeed, I think it's fair to say that, today, our security cooperation is stronger than it has ever been.

I'm looking forward to a good discussion with Prime Minister Netanyahu about the events not only here in the United Nations, but also developments that have been taking place in the region.

As I just indicated, peace cannot be imposed on the parties. It's going to have to be negotiated. One side's actions in the United Nations will achieve neither statehood nor self-determination for the Palestinians. But Israelis and Palestinians sitting down together and working through these very difficult issues that have kept the parties apart for decades now, that is what can achieve what is, I know, the ultimate goal of all of us, which is two states, side by side, living in peace and security.

Recent events in the region remind us of how fragile peace can be and why the pursuit of Middle East peace is more urgent than ever. But as we pursue that peace, I know that the Prime Minister recognizes that America's commitment to Israel will never waver and that our pursuit of a just and lasting peace is one that is not only compatible, but we think puts Israel's security at the forefront.

So it is a great pleasure to have the Prime Minister here. I want to thank him for his efforts and his cooperation, and I'm looking forward to an excellent discussion.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I want to thank you, Mr. President, for standing with Israel and supporting peace through direct negotiations. We both agree that this is the only way to achieve peace. We both agree that Palestinians and Israelis should sit down and negotiate an agreement of mutual recognition and security. I think this is the only way to get to a stable and durable peace.

But you've also made it clear that the Palestinians deserve a state, but it's a state that has to make that peace with Israel. And therefore, their attempt to shortcut this process, not

negotiate a peace—that attempt to get membership—state membership in the United Nations will not succeed.

I think the Palestinians want to achieve a state through the international community, but they're not prepared yet to give peace to Israel in return. And my hope is that there will be other leaders in the world, responsible leaders, who will heed your call, Mr. President, and oppose this effort to shortcut peace negotiations, in fact, to avoid them. Because I think that avoiding these negotiations is bad for Israel, bad for the Palestinians, and bad for peace.

Now, I know that these leaders are under enormous pressure, and I know that they're al-

so—and this—from personal experience, I can tell you the automatic majority is against Israel. But I think that standing your ground, taking this position of principle—which is also, I think, the right position to achieve peace—I think this is a badge of honor. And I want to thank you for wearing that badge of honor, and also, I would express my hope that others will follow your example, Mr. President. So I want to thank you for that.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan in New York City September 21, 2011

President Obama. I want to welcome Prime Minister Noda and his delegation to New York City and to the United States. As all of you are aware, we have an extraordinary alliance with Japan. They are one of our closest friends, our closest allies. We have worked cooperatively on a range of issues related to security, related to economics. And the bonds of friendship between our peoples is equally strong.

Prime Minister Noda and I have had the opportunity to speak by phone, although this is the first time that we've had a meeting face to face. I know that he, like all of us, has some extraordinary challenges that we have to address. And I know that at the top of his list is rebuilding Japan in the aftermath of the horrific tsunami that occurred. I've repeatedly pledged that America will do everything that we can to make sure that that rebuilding is a success.

At the same time, obviously, we have other important work to do together. As the two largest economies in the world, we have to continue to promote growth that can help put our people to work and to improve standards of living. We have to modernize our alliance to meet the needs of the 21st century. And so I'm looking forward to a very productive discussion and what I'm sure will be an excellent working

relationship with the Prime Minister as well as his team.

Prime Minister Noda. The biggest priority and the immediate challenge for the Noda Government is the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster and the degrading situation with the nuclear power plant. But at the same time, even from before the earthquake took place, we had a lot of challenges, both in domestically and in foreign policy areas. And those cohorts must be dealt with one by one and thereby creating a stable policy. That's the challenge and—for my Government.

My—our top priority is the reconstruction from the disaster of the earthquake in Japan, the great Japan—Great East Japan Earthquake. The United States has provided enormous amount of support, including Operation Tomodachi and a lot of efforts made by Ambassador Roos. And on behalf of the all Japanese nationals, I thank you. And thank you for your support.

I had a firm belief that the Japan-U.S. alliance is the key pillar of our foreign policy. And through the assistance that we received after the earthquake, this bridge has become an even more unwavering one. And the Japanese