

Statement Congratulating the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

October 7, 2011

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the recipients of this year's Nobel Peace Prize: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, and Tawakkul Karman of Yemen. Today's award honors three extraordinary individuals and sends a powerful message that the struggle for universal rights and human dignity can only be fulfilled with the full participation of women around the globe.

President Sirleaf has inspired the world through her journey from a prisoner to the first female President of her country. She has helped Liberia emerge from years of civil war and make great strides toward reconstruction and a democracy that values the contributions of all Liberians, including its women. As a warrior for peace, Leymah Gbowee led her fellow Liberian women as they bravely stood their ground against a brutal dictator in a nonviolent struggle to bring peace to their country and realize a full voice for Liberian women. In Yemen, Tawakkul Karman and her fellow women activists were among the first to take to the streets this year to demand their universal rights, and despite the threats and violence waged against peaceful protestors, she has remained a powerful voice for nonviolence in a country where guns outnumber people.

Each of this year's Nobel recipients have their own story, but their lives reveal a fundamental truth. Nations are ultimately more successful when all of their citizens can reach their full potential, including women. When women and girls have access to proper health care, families are healthier and communities are less subject to the ravages of disease and hunger. When women and girls have the opportunity to pursue their education and careers of their own choosing, economies are more likely to prosper. And when women assume their rightful place as equals—in the halls of government, at the negotiating table, and across civil society—governments are more effective, peaceful resolution of disputes are more lasting, and societies are more likely to meet the aspirations of all their citizens.

I commend President Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkul Karman for showing the world that the rights and voices of half of humanity cannot and will not be denied. And I reaffirm the commitment of the United States to advance the rights and role of women everywhere, in our own country and around the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia.

The President's Weekly Address

October 8, 2011

Next week, the Senate will vote on the "American Jobs Act." It's a bill that will put more people to work and put more money in the pockets of working Americans. And it will provide our economy with the jolt that it really needs right now.

This is not the time for the usual games or political gridlock in Washington. The challenges facing financial markets around the world could have very real effects on our own economy at a time when it's already fragile. But this

jobs bill can help guard against another downturn here in America.

This isn't just my belief. This is what independent economists have said. Not just politicians, not just people in my administration, independent experts who do this for a living have said that this jobs bill will have a significant effect for our economy and middle class families all across America. But if we don't act, the opposite will be true: There will be fewer jobs and weaker growth.