

Statement on Representative Charles A. Gonzalez's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

November 26, 2011

For a combined 50 years, Charlie Gonzalez and his father have represented Texas's 20th congressional district in the United States House of Representatives. In Congress, Charlie has fought tirelessly for a cleaner environment, Wall Street reform, and more accessible health care for Texans. As chair of the Con-

gressional Hispanic Caucus, he has worked nonstop to deliver much needed relief to deserving immigrant families and to protect the civil rights of Latinos and all Americans. Michelle and I wish him and his family the very best and join the people of Texas in thanking him for his many years of service.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Herman Van Rompuy of the European Union and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission

November 28, 2011

President Obama. Good afternoon, everybody. I am very pleased to welcome Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso to the White House. We have had several occasions to meet over the last year, but this is the first formal U.S.-EU summit that we've had an opportunity to have since the Lisbon summit last year.

Of course, much has changed over the last year. We've seen the incredible transformations that have been taking place throughout North Africa and the Middle East. What hasn't changed, though, is the fundamental bonds that exist between the European Union and the United States. Our common values, our common belief in the rule of law, in democracy, in freedom, in a free market system, all those things bind us together, as do the extraordinary economic and commercial relationships that we have and the people-to-people relationships that we have.

And so this is an extraordinarily important relationship. These aren't always the most dramatic meetings because we agree on so much that sometimes it's hard to make news. As the world's two largest economies and as each other's most important trading partners, we spent a lot of time focusing on how we can continue to grow our economies and create good jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. A large part of that conversation obviously revolved around the euro-zone crisis, and Presidents Van Rompuy and

Barroso have been very actively engaged with the heads of government and heads of state in Europe to try to resolve this crisis. I communicated to them that the United States stands ready to do our part to help them resolve this issue. This is of huge importance to our own economy. If Europe is contracting or if Europe is having difficulties, then it's much more difficult for us to create good jobs here at home because we send so many of our products and services to Europe; it is such an important trading partner for us.

And so we've got a stake in their success, and we will continue to work in a constructive way to try to resolve this issue in the near future. And I appreciate the leadership of both these gentlemen in trying to address this in a clear and forthright way.

With regard to security cooperation, we agreed to make sure that we continue to place pressure on the Iranian regime to stand down when it comes to the development of nuclear weapons, emphasizing that we continue to hope for a diplomatic resolution that allows them to use peaceful nuclear energy in a way that's consistent with their international obligations.

We have a shared stake in continued progress in Afghanistan, where the EU serves as a leading donor, and next week's Bonn conference will be an opportunity to make sure our